



## Case study: Bonkers Beat Value of embedded music and wellbeing programs

Bonkers Beat Music Kinder and Childcare, Aspendale, VIC

**'B**onkers Beat is the first dedicated music kinder in Australia that provides a holistic approach to learning, and has music and wellness as the foundation for its curriculum' says Galina Zenin, the program's founder and director.

'The program empowers children, educators and parents by embedding music, yoga and meditation practices into the daily curriculum. We believe this lays the foundation for children to enhance their wellbeing and instils a lifelong love of learning.'

Educators guide children through daily practices in:

- singing, dancing and music making
- breathing exercises and positive affirmations
- stretching, yoga and physical activities
- mindfulness games and meditation
- reflexivity walks, laughter and releasing emotions.

Parental engagement is an important element of the program: parents are invited to be involved in many activities at Bonkers Beat, and are encouraged to continue the music and wellbeing practices at home. Bonkers Beat provides families with take-home resources, including music, yoga and meditation CDs.

Critical to the success of the program is providing specialised and ongoing training for educators and staff, which also enhances educators' own wellbeing. Training includes national wellness summits for professional and personal development, regular workshops, and a range of online resources.

Staff understand the benefits of sustainable music and wellbeing practices, and can relate educational experiences to the Early Years Learning Framework

Bonkers Beat received an excellent rating due to the music and wellbeing (yoga and meditation) practices embedded into the everyday curriculum, education, music and wellbeing resources for parents to support learning at home.

(EYLF). They also become more confident and knowledgeable about incorporating music, yoga and meditation into everyday routines.

Originally established as a sessional kinder in 2006 in Brighton East, Melbourne, the service experienced a period of growth and in 2009 Bonkers Beat Music Kinder & Childcare Aspendale was opened.

The Bonkers Beat curriculum draws on numerous resources, inspired by the progressive approach of Reggio Emilia and influenced by philosophies of Howard Gardner and Maria Montessori.

It has been proven that there is no other art form, hobby or activity that can produce the same level of lasting neurological benefits as music. Music making engages both halves of the brain equally.

Bonkers Beat Music Program incorporates the highly regarded teaching approaches of Kodaly and Orff and is an integral part of all areas of curriculum including arts, physical development, sign language (Auslan), literacy and numeracy.

In recognition of its innovative approach, Bonkers Beat in Aspendale was awarded an 'Excellent' rating by ACECQA in early 2018.

'At Bonkers Beat, music is featured as an integral part of all lessons, including physical movement, languages, literacy and numeracy.' – ACECQA

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Bonkers Beat programs. Live events include wellness summits, and Early Learning Connect weekly sessions online.

By empowering and training more educators in different services across Australia, the benefits of Bonkers Beat programs can reach more children. The aim is to use music as a language and wellbeing practice on a daily basis to enhance children's learning outcomes and overall wellbeing. By giving parents educational wellbeing resources, they find it easier to continue wellbeing practices and music at home, which further supports children's development, and bonding as a family through the power of music.

Due to the program's outstanding outcomes for children, families refer the kinder and its programs to other families, which results in full capacity at the service, regardless of the marketplace challenges in the local area.

'The benefits to children and their families are quite profound. We see inspiring examples every day of how our programs support children in their development – in social and communication skills, confidence and school readiness.'

The Bonkers Beat program is also successfully run in other services throughout Australia.

'Bonkers Beat is leading innovative ways in developing children's whole wellbeing through the use of music, cognitive and physical stimuli, such as yoga and meditation. It is wonderful to see such a progressive kindergarten that could be a model to many others to ensure holistic child development and learning.' – Sivanes Phillipson, PhD (Associate Professor of Family Studies, Monash University, Melbourne) [↗](#)