



**ALL EYES:** The Smith Family team leader Brenton Hancock, maternal and child health nurse Angie Browning and one-year-old Aidan Tudball with his mother Nikita Tudball. **PICTURE:** LACHLAN BENICE

# Parents encouraged to read aloud

BALLARAT parents are being encouraged to read aloud to babies as young as four months old, as part of a program developed by the Centre for Community Child Health.

The 'Let's Read' Program, created at the Royal Children's Hospital, hopes to build literacy skills in toddlers in order to allow for a successful start to a child's school years.

The Smith Family, in conjunction with the City of Ballarat and the Maternal and Child Health team,

## JESSICA HOWARD

will be co-ordinating the program throughout the four maternal and child health centres in the area.

The centres and outreach services will endorse the idea by providing families with resource packs and a free book upon their child's 12 month check up.

The Girrabanya Child Care Centre passed on their first book

to 12-month-old Aidan Tudball yesterday, with members from the Smith Family and Belinda Coates from the Ballarat council present.

"With the kids learning to read at a young age, it gives them a good start when it comes to learning and education," Aidan's mother Nikita said.

The percentage of children attending their Maternal and Child Health check at age one is currently 84 per cent of all babies in Ballarat.