

KINDERGARTEN POLICY

Our Service is committed to providing a high-quality Integrated Kindergarten program that prepares all children for school whilst minimising the financial burden to families by utilising all available funding opportunities. Our Kindergarten programs are delivered by qualified early childhood teachers who runs the program on a year basis not term basis. We aim to identify children that require additional support and seek assistance through a range of initiatives to ensure inclusion of vulnerable children into our programs. Broadmeadows Early Learning Centre operates in accordance with the Child Safe Standards. <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/#TOC-5>

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE		
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development
QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2.3	Child Protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
89	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
358	Working with children check to be read

RELATED POLICIES

<i>Fees Policy</i> <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i> <i>Inclusion & Equity Policy</i> <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i>	<i>Curriculum Development Policy</i> <i>Supervision Policy</i> <i>Staffing Policy</i> <i>Transition to School Policy</i>
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PURPOSE

To ensure our Service accesses and meets all legislative requirements of kindergarten funding available from State and Federal Government and informing families of variety of funding services available to their needs.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management, educators, families, and children of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to relieve the financial burden of families using our Service, we have a responsibility to maintain awareness of and utilise all possible funding opportunities that we, or families may be eligible for subsidy.

FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

An Educational Learning Program for children 2 years prior to transitioning to formal schooling.

An Educational Learning Program for young children which is integrated already into our long day care service and delivered by a University Qualified Early Childhood Teacher. Broadmeadows Early Learning will be delivering two years of funded kindergarten prior to the transition to formal schooling.(prep).

The Victorian Government Provides funding to Early Childhood Services to contribute to the cost of running a funded kindergarten program to help keep fees affordable for families.

In line with the school starting age in Victoria (which stipulates those children born between January and April can start school at four years of age), some children will be two years old when their three-year-old Kindergarten year starts.

Under the National Quality Framework, the minimum educator to child ratio for children under three is 1:4. For children over three years of age the ratio is 1:11. We may be able to accept a child or children in the 3 yr old, funded program if we can commit to the required ratios for children under three years old. If we cannot commit to the required ratio for children under 3 yrs old we will need to wait till the child has turned 3 yrs old to be included in the program. Vic DET will fund these children for the full duration of their enrolment, even before they are able to attend

In circumstances where children are not given access to the program from the beginning of the kindergarten year because they are not yet three years old, fees cannot be charged by a service for the period for which the child cannot attend.

As every child's development is unique, we will endeavour to work with families to consider the best time for a child to start three and four year-old kindergarten. We encourage all Families to talk to our kindergarten teachers and/or other early childhood professionals such as Maternal Child Health nurses to help inform their decision.

ENROLMENT

In accordance with the DET *Kindergarten Funding Guide*, the following children are eligible for one year of funded kindergarten. Children must not be enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service. Therefore, children MUST only be enrolled at ONE service ONLY.

- Children who are at least three for the three yr old program or four years of age for the four year old program by 30 April in the year they are to attend Kindergarten (proof of birth is required on application in the enrolment process).
- Children born between 1 January and 30 April may attend in their eligible year, or families may choose to enrol in the following year but need to ensure they remain eligible as per the DET Kindergarten guide.
- Children turning six years of age in their year of kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional office of DET
- Children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted a written request to their regional DET office and have been approved for their child to attend Kindergarten the following year.
- proof of vaccinations must be submitted before our service can approve an enrolment in accordance to the *No Jab No Play* legislation. Children must be fully vaccinated for their age or on a recognised catch-up schedule or have a medical reason not to be vaccinated.
- If Families are unsure about their child's readiness for kindergarten they are encouraged to speak to our Centre Director or Kindergarten Teacher.

MAINTAINING SERVICE DELIVERY

There may be times when it is not possible to deliver the scheduled funded kindergarten program hours in a given week due to public holidays, unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations.

What our Service will do;

- Identify closures such as public holidays throughout the year.
- communicate to families at the beginning of the year about the days and times the service will operate
- Communicate with families at the beginning of the year about the hours and days the program will run.
- manage disruptions in program delivery to ensure that staff, families and children are considered
- Inform the Department if a qualified replacement teacher cannot be sourced to deliver the funded program.

Where possible, we aim to minimise the amount of disruption to normal service delivery, including:

- appointing relief staff to ensure sessions can continue

PRIORITY ACCESS CRITERIA

Priority of Access is a condition of all Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten funding. It must be applied to all of our enrolments. To ensure equity for both three and four-year-old children with the introduction of universally funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten in Victoria, the PoA criteria includes:

- services with separate three and four-year-old groups will be required to apply the PoA policy to each age cohort separately; and
- in mixed-age groups, three and four-year-old children considered vulnerable under the policy are equally prioritised.
- Also note:

- children who are eligible for ESK funding continue to have Priority of Access to a place in a 15-hour-a-week kindergarten program, regardless of where they live.
- Priority of access is given to children residing in the LGAs before applications from families outside the LGA are considered.
- Once all PoA children have been accommodated, local criteria can be applied to prioritise children such as those enrolled from a previous year, those with a sibling in the service and/or those living closest to the service.

High priority children	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending a three year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, or is • referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child Protection – Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) – Maternal and Child Health nurse, or – Out-of-Home Care provider.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIM.
Asylum seeker and refugee children	An appropriate visa identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker.
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or • multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets).
<p>Children with additional needs, defined as children who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program • require a combination of services which are individually planned • have an identified specific disability or developmental delay 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the National Disability Insurance Scheme – Early Childhood Intervention Service – Preschool Field Officer, or – Maternal and Child Health nurse.

OUR FRAMEWORKS

Our kindergarten program adheres to the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)* as the approved learning framework declared in the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations core funding agreement.

We are also guided by *Belonging, Being and Becoming* - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

CURRICULUM

The foundations we lay in kindergarten, become the building blocks for your child's success at school. Through our unique, age-appropriate programs, children can transition to school equipped with the familiarity of a structured learning environment and the support and encouragement of our educators. Tailoring our programs to children and their families, we can blend the formal requirements of the curriculum with the real-world needs of our community delivering a well-rounded learning experience for all. We help to lay the foundations for future learning through environments that are rich in numbers, words and creative activity.

The Approved Provider will ensure:

- a child's eligibility for kindergarten fee subsidy is discussed with families.
- before confirming a child's enrolment, families must present an immunisation history statement as evidence that the child.
 - is fully vaccinated for their age
 - is on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their vaccinations or
 - has a medical reason not be vaccinated.
- our kindergarten program is planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher for at least:
 - 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year.
 - 5 hours per week for 3 yr old's in 2022.
- Early Childhood Teachers are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- graduate teachers are provisionally registered with the VIT and provided with support of a mentor to help them achieve Proficient Teacher level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- all staff and educators hold current and checked Working with Children Checks (WWCC)
- they have read each person's WWCC before engaging educators, staff and volunteers
- the program delivered to children adheres to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and operates in accordance with Child Safe Standards at all times.

PROGRAMS

Our Service offers the following programs for which the Victorian Government Department of Education offers 15 hours of funding for four-year-old kindergarten for each eligible child each week. And in 2022, five hours of funding for three-year-old kindergarten for each eligible child each week.

Your child/children MUST be enrolled a least 2 days per week X 7.5yrs per week for a four-year-old and one day per week for 3yr old to be included in the program.

PROGRAMS	DAYS	HOURS
Program 1	Monday <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/>	7.5HRS
Program 2	Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friday <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5HRS

PROGRAM FEES

The kindergarten fees are inclusive of our Daily Long Day Care Fees less the Child Care Subsidy.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Our educators delivering Kindergarten programs have the following qualifications

(Masters or above, Graduate diploma, Dual bachelor qualifications (early childhood), Bachelor degree, Pathway degree, Diploma)

TEACHERS NAME	QUALIFICATION/S HELD	QUALIFICATION WORKING TOWARDS
Melissa Mecuri	Bachelor of Early Childhood Teaching	

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to eligible families to ease the financial burden of Early Childhood Education Care and Service fees. CCS is funded by the Federal Government through the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Due to our service being approved and receiving Child Care Subsidy we are not able to access Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, however families are advised that they may be able to access 15hours of Kindergarten program free of charge at another service.

Note that CCS cannot be used in conjunction with the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

For more information visit <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (DET) PAYMENTS/FUNDING

EARLY START KINDERGARTEN GRANT

Targeted funding for vulnerable or Aboriginal children to attend a free kindergarten program two years before school

Funding is provided for each child who is:

- Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or is known to Child Protection.
- three years old by 30 April in the year of enrolment
- Refugee and Asylum seekers

Early Start Kindergarten grants are able to be used in combination with the Child Care Subsidy to reduce costs to parents and carers

EARLY START KINDERGARTEN EXTENSION GRANTS.

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants are available to assist vulnerable and Aboriginal children who are not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy to access a free kindergarten program in the year before school

Funding is provided for each child who meets all the criteria:

- the child is at least four years old on 30 April in the year in of enrolment.

SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING

Extra support for kindergartens to help children to get the most out of their early learning. School Readiness Funding is a permanent and ongoing part of the Victorian kindergarten funding model. It funds programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

SECOND YEAR OF KINDERGARTEN FUNDING

For children who have delays in key areas of development and would benefit from a second year of kindergarten, as determined by an early childhood teacher.

Funding is provided for each child who:

- is observed by an early childhood teacher as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning (see the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework) and
- will achieve better outcomes through a second year of kindergarten than they would at school.

If a child at our Service is demonstrating delays in key outcomes of learning and development, a second.

The five key outcome areas identified in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development framework will be assessed:

- Outcome 1: Identity
- Outcome 2: Community
- Outcome 3: Wellbeing
- Outcome 4: Learning
- Outcome 5: Communication

In regard to Second Year of Kindergarten funding, educators will complete the following assessments with consent from the child's parent/carer.

Complete all required documentation including:

- Ongoing child observations (as required)
- Term three learning and development plan
- Second year discussion
- Second year statement
- Second year checklist

Liaise with other professionals as required, including but not limited to:

- Preschool Field Officer
- Early Childhood Intervention Service Worker
- The child's Maternal and Child Health nurse
- Family doctor or other allied health professionals
- School principal of child's intended school

TRANSITION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENTS.

A Transition Learning and Development Statement (Transition Statement) is required for every child transitioning into school in the following year. The Transition Statement is a tool for families and educators to share information about a child's learning and development. It is designed to assist schools, particularly Prep teachers, to:

- build relationships with the child and family.
- identify the child's capabilities and interests.
- understand how the child can best be supported as they transition into school.
- plan for individual children's learning responding to their strengths, abilities, and interests.

In fourth term, the Kindergarten Teacher will provide each family with a completed Transition Statement for their child. With parental permission, the Kindergarten Teacher will pass the statement on to the nominated school.

KINDERGARTEN FEE SUBSIDY

Currently our service is not eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy however families are advised that they may be able to access 15hrs of Kindergarten Program free of Charge at another Service

Families can access a sessional kindergarten service at low or no cost if the child:

- is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- is a triplet or quadruplet
- is covered by a Health Care Card or other eligible concession card
- holds a refugee, humanitarian or asylum seeker visa, or their parent or guardian does.

KINDERGARTEN INCLUSION SUPPORT AND ACCESS

Commonwealth Government program to assist Services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted inclusion specialists, as well as funding to support more challenging inclusion barriers.

The programs are to support access and participation for children with:

- a disability or developmental delay
- high support medical needs or
- complex medical needs

This support is in addition to other funding that the child may be receiving.

Children with developmental concerns may also be eligible for the Preschool Field Officer Program (PSFO) to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in the kindergarten program.

NO JAB, NO PLAY LEGISLATION

The **No Jab No Play** Legislation specifies that parents and carers must provide the service with evidence that their child continues to be up to date with immunisations while attending the service at intervals of no greater than seven months.

GOING TO KINDERGARTEN IF YOUR CHILD IS SIX YEARS OLD

Children can go to kindergarten when they're six years old if they have a disability, developmental delay or it's a special situation.

If your child will turn six before or while they're in their first or second year of funded kindergarten, you must get an exemption from starting school.

EXEMPTION FROM STARTING SCHOOL IN PREP

You can apply for an exemption from school if one or more of these circumstances apply:

- Your family has moved from interstate or overseas where the school entry age is different to Victoria.
- Your child's early education has been delayed due to chronic illness, disability or developmental delay.
- Your child is a refugee or asylum seeker who has suffered trauma and would benefit from a year of kindergarten before starting school.
- Your child has not been able to access kindergarten because of transient family circumstances.
- Other special considerations.

You need to get written confirmation from a professional (such as a kindergarten teacher, doctor or an allied health professional) to confirm the circumstance. The professional must also explain why it's best for your child to go to kindergarten instead of starting school.

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- comply with Department of Education requirements as per the *Kindergarten Funding Guide* (2016) and *Kindergarten Funding Guide* key policy changes and updates.
- meet all core requirements and operational requirements as per National Quality Standard and National Law and National Regulations
- maintain educator to child ratios as per regulations (for children aged 36 months of age or over, one educator to 11 children)
- designate one person as organisation administrator for Kindergarten Information Management system (KIM)
- submit annual 'confirmation of data' in KIM by required dates.
- ensure attendance details for each child enrolled and information on fees paid is completed in KIM by August each year for annual National Kindergarten Census Week
- maintain current knowledge of funding available and eligibility requirements.
- support educators in meeting their requirements regarding funding assessments.

RESOURCES

Funding information and forms:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderdatacollection.aspx>

Kindergarten Funding Guide key policy changes and updates:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/funding/Kindergarten%20Funding%20Guide%20key%20policy%20changes%20and%20updates.pdf>

Kindergarten Funding Rates:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundrates.aspx>

Kindergarten Information Management System (KIM) access:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderim.aspx>

The Kindergarten Funding Guide (2016):

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/funding/The%20Kindergarten%20Guide%202016.pdf>

Types of kindergarten funding (for parents): <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/kindergarten-programs.aspx>

Source

Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Department of Education and Training. (2016). *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. For all children birth to eight years*

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011)

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training. (2016). *The kindergarten funding guide*

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	JULY 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JULY 2022
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