ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

FREE KINDERGARTEN (FOR SERVICES THAT ARE PART OF THE FREE KINDER INITIATIVE)

QUALITY AREA 6 | ELAA VERSION 1.4

PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at Middle Park Kindergarten
- the orientation of new families and children into Middle Park Kindergarten
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education [DE] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to DE's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child are the paramount consideration and must guide all decisions, actions and practices of educators within the education and care service.

VALUES

Middle Park Kindergarten is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten *(refer to Definitions)* eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Middle Park Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

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RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
1. Ensuring that copies of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection	R	√			
2. Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Middle Park Kindergarten, as described in the Department of Education's [DE] *The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)*	R	√	√		
3. Working with local council, other local kindergarten services, key stakeholders and the local ECIB to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place	√	√			
4. Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood, VIT registered teacher, and offering at least: • 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or • 600 hours per year	R				
5. Ensuring children eligible for Pre-Prep *(refer to Definitions)* are enrolled for a minimum of 16 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year (or 640 hours per year)	R	√			
6. Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering between 5 to 15 hours a week or 200 to 600 a year	R				
7. Providing communication to families explaining their access to one year of three-year-old and one year of four-year-old funded kindergarten program	R	√			
8. Ensuring families sign DE's one funded kindergarten place form in Term 4 and confirm in writing in Term 1. Service providers must use the form provided on the department's template and must not adapt the content into service's own templates *(refer to Sources)*	R	√			
9. Ensuring that attendance data collection is implemented as per the Arrival requirements *(refer to Sources)*	R	√			
10. Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and	R				

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child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations					
11. Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April *(refer to Sources)*	√	√	√		√
12. Ensuring the following is displayed: • the current Kindergarten Program Certificate • information promoting ESK • information promoting the KFS in services not participating in Free Kinder • operating times and name(s) of the qualified teachers delivering the program.	R	√			
13. Communicating to parents: • waiting lists • access and inclusion policies • availability of ESK and KFS where applicable • details of the annual kindergarten parent opinion survey to parents, carers or legal guardians • that the service will prepare a Transition Statement for all children to help them transition to school.	R	√			
14. Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): • Early Start Kindergarten *(refer to Definitions)* • Early Start Kindergarten extension grants *(refer to Definitions)* • Access to Early Learning *(refer to Definitions)* • Additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten *(refer to Definitions)*	R	√	√		
15. Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption *(refer to Attachment 2)*	√	√	√		
16. Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			
17. Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year	R	√		√	
18. Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	√	√		
19. Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes: • statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) • Medicare card	R	√			

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• letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth • doctor's note attesting to a child's age • passport • citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard.					
20. Complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*	R	R	√	√	√
21. Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
22. Ensuring families have access to: • Parent information handbook • Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety • Fees Policy • Privacy Statement • Code of Conduct Policy • Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations • Dealing With Medical Conditions • Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness	R	√	√		
23. Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy *(refer to Attachment 2 and 3)*	R				
24. Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		
25. Where applicable; considering access and inclusion for children experiencing vulnerability/disadvantage in the allocation of places at the service *(refer to Attachment 1 and 2)*	R	√			
26. Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes *(refer to Attachment 2)*	R	√			
27. Complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√
28. Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the open days to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program	√	√	√		
29. Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition	R	√	√	√	
30. Ensuring that medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	R	√	√	√	

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31. Providing any required authorisations, such as for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and, if required, transportation by an ambulance service				√	
32. Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (*refer to Sources*) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week support period *(refer to Definitions)*	R	√	√		
33. Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements *(refer to Definitions)* have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the support period *(refer to Definitions)* have confirmed places in the program	R	√	√		
34. Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* and who are not eligible for the support period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services *(refer to Attachment 4)*	R	√	√		
35. Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a support period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (**Note:** the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	√	√		
36. Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing all associated enrolment documents and AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* of their child's immunisation status				√	
37. Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks support period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* to the service				√	
38. Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval *(Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)*	R	√	√		
39. Ensuring all authorised nominees *(refer to Definitions)* have been completed on the enrolment record for each child *(refer to Definitions)* (*Regulations 160 and 161)* as well as authorisations from parents relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	√		√	
40. Ensuring that the enrolment record for each child *(refer to Definitions)* both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of *Regulations 160, 161, 162* and DE funding	R	√	√		

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requirements (Arrival) and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service					
41. Ensuring that enrolment record for each child *(refer to Definitions)* is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances	R	√	√	√	√
42. Ensuring that enrolment records for each child *(refer to Definitions)* are kept confidential *(Regulations 181, 182)* are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service *(Regulation 183 (1a) (2d))*	R	√	√		
43. Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	√	√		
44. Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	√	√	
45. Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for *(Regulation 157)*, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the *National Law: Section 167*	R	R	√	√	√
46. Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment *(refer to Attachment 5)*	√	√	√		
47. Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (*refer to Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)	√	√	√		
48. Encouraging parents/guardians to: • stay with their child as long as required during the orientation period, keeping in mind the best interest of the child • make contact with educators at the service, when required	√	√	√	√	
49. Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	√	√	√	√	
50. Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	√	√	√	√	
51. Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
52. Developing strategies to assist new families to:	√	√	√	√	

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• feel welcomed into the service and help them to become familiar with service policies and procedures • share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe • share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs • value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs • discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning • providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating					
53. Reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*	R	R	R	√	√
54. Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	
55. Notifying Middle Park Kindergarten in writing [if possible] if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	

PROCEDURES

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation period
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
    - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
    - they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time
    - the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
    - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
    - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (refer to the information and Communication Technology Policy). Note: For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child
    - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.

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- [As required] Arrange telephone, on-site or video interpreters to assist with orientation conversations with parents/carers who speak a language other than English or use Auslan. See Early Childhood Language Services for more information.

- Refer to *Attachment 2* for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Refer to *Attachment 5* for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation *(Regulation 168(2) (k))*.

All eligible Victorian children *(refer to Definitions)* will have access to two years of Free Kinder before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to their eligibility and DE's Priority of Access criteria *(refer to Definitions and Attachment 1)* in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in DE's Kindergarten Funding Guide *(refer to Sources)*, the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme are required to comply with the registration and/or enrolment procedures of that scheme.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), co-designed by DE provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. Currently more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)*.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

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The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Access to Early Learning (AEL): is an early intervention program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment. It aims to provide intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).

Authorised nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances *(refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy) (refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition).*

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES): CRES provides a single point for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

Central Registration System (CRS): Provides an equitable and transparent application and allocation process, enabling families to access local kindergarten services within a local government area.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free kindergarten each week led by a qualified early childhood registered with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- the family have had contact with child protection.

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These children can also access free kindergarten the year-before-school through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Eligible child: as defined by the Victorian DE Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks support period

Enrolment: An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide education and care to a child.

Enrolment deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This should not act as a barrier to enrolling for any families. Services must ensure that families understand that the enrolment deposits will only be refunded if the child commences in the service *(Refer to Fees - Free Kinder policy)*

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations *(Regulations 160, 161, 162)* and DE funding requirements (Arrival) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Free Kinder: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing a free 15-hour program to 4-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5 to 15-hour program to 3-year old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for 3 and 4-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Kindergarten registration fee: a payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service, if applicable. *(Refer to Free Kindergarten Fees policy)*

Kindergarten registration form: The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the kindergarten service. This includes collection of basic contact information and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten *(refer to Attachment 3)*

Support period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the support period eligibility form with families during enrolment and keep a copy with each child's enrolment record. The 16-week support period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the support period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* and to encourage families to access immunisation services. Note: services are not required to exclude the child from the program at the end of the support period if an up-to-date history statement is not provided, except in the instance of an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Local Government Area (LGA): a geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

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Orientation: Process to support the child's transition to the service, whereby families spend time at the service with the child a few times before leaving the child on their own. The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family.

Pre Prep: From 2026 across the state, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection services can access to up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep a week, increasing to up to 30 hours a week from 2028. Children from this priority cohort can be enrolled in more than 1 group at a single service (including 4-year-old, mixed age, and 3-year-old groups). In addition, any child who was supported by the Access to Early Learning program as a 3-year-old is eligible for these same hours of Pre-Prep as a 4-year-old from 2026.

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate places using the criteria outlined in the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide *(refer to Attachment 1 and Sources).*

Registration: The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the service provider. This includes collection of basic contact information and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

School Readiness Funding: funding provided by DE for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

Additional year of funded kindergarten: Eligibility for a second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is determined by the child's early childhood teacher, if the child is observed as having developmental delays in at least 2 VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcomes and there is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school. From 2026, across Victoria, children who meet the eligibility requirements due to their learning or developmental needs can access an additional year of either, three-year-Old Kindergarten; or Pre-Prep (or Four-Year-Old Kindergarten for children not eligible for Pre-Prep), but not both.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Department of Education, Arrival: Information for sessional services: https://www.vic.gov.au/arrival-information-sessional-kindergarten#more-information
- Department of Education: Stating age calculator
- Department of Education: Early Childhood Language Services
- Department of Education: Supporting CALD families to engage in kindergarten
- Department of Education: Information about kindergarten in your language
- Department of Education, Resources for funded kindergartens: www.vic.gov.au/resources-funded-kindergartens
- Free Kinder funding requirements for long day care providers: www.vic.gov.au
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education): www.education.vic.gov.au
- Going to kindergarten if your child is 6 years old: www.vic.gov.au

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RELATED POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Compliments and Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Disease
- Dealing With Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Fees
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk *(Regulation 172)*.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
- Attachment 2: Waitlist important dates and information
- Attachment 3: Waitlist registration form
- Attachment 4: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
- Attachment 5: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance
- Attachment 6: Enrolment criteria

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Middle Park Kindergarten on 26th May 2026.

REVIEW DATE: May 2027

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ATTACHMENT 1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access (PoA) policy that applies when they enrol their child.

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, services must:

- prioritise children based on the Department of Education (DE) criteria listed in the table below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional DE office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

These criteria must be used by the approved provider when prioritising enrolments. Guidance is available from the Department's local ECIB, if required.

Service providers should build flexibility into their enrolment processes that consider the circumstances of families from priority groups.

Services must first apply the DE's PoA criteria, and following this may apply locally developed criteria, as per examples below.

All information relating to PoA criteria should be respectfully collected from families upon enrolment, recorded in each child's confidential enrolment record and entered into Arrival, where applicable.

DE's Priority of Access criteria

High priority children	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s)

Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	The child is:
	• eligible for ESK or AEL, and/or
	• family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or
	• referred by one of the following:
	  ○ 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
	  ○ 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 Arrival
Asylum seeker and refugee children	Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents, carers or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker and/or Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.
From 2026 across the state, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection services can access to up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep a week, increasing to up to 30 hours a week from 2028. Children from this priority cohort can be enrolled in more than 1 group at a single service (including 4-year-old, mixed age, and 3-year-old groups). In addition, any child who was supported by the Access to Early Learning program as a 3-year-old is eligible for these same hours of Pre-Prep as a 4-year-old from 2026.	
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or The child is identified on their birth certificate as one of a set of triplets, quadruplets or more.

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High priority children	Process that could be used to verify need(s)

Children with additional needs, defined as children who:
• with an identified specific disability or developmental delay
• who require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program
• who require a combination of services which are individually planned
	The child:
	• holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or
	• has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program, and/or
	• has been referred by:
	  ○ the National Disability Insurance Scheme
	  ○ Early Childhood Intervention Services
	  ○ Kindergarten Field Officer
	  ○ Maternal and Child Health nurse, or
	• is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is declared eligible for a second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Examples to consider for second priority
• children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten; or • children who turn three years of age* by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten • children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DE • children who have a sibling that has previously attended the same kindergarten as their first preference • home address falls within the same suburb as the kindergarten • family lives, works, studies or attends child care in [LGA]
Examples to consider for third priority
• service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers • date of application • local community zoning • full fee paying families

Note: DE's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, PoA guideline will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three- and four-year old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

*** Early Start Kindergarten and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten**

During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) *(refer to Definitions)* will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours

It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service. This guarantees that ESK eligible children can continue to access 15-hour kindergarten programs and allows the correct calculation of the service's SRF entitlement.

The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023 states for ESK funding, service providers should:

- provide up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of charge and maximise access to 15 hours of kindergarten (children accessing ESK can be enrolled in a 3-year-old group, a 4-year-old group, a mixed age group or a combination of groups in order to access the full 15 hours per week)

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

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Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- have had contact with Child Protection
- have a refugee or asylum seeker background*

*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and office.

Refer to the Department of Education's website for up-to-date information: www.education.vic.gov.au

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ATTACHMENT 2. WAITLIST IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

This registration form contained in Attachment 3) is the first step toward getting your child into kindergarten. The information collected with this form will be used to allocate your child a place in Middle Park Kindergarten.

Timelines for the kindergarten registration

Date	Activity
1 February, two years prior to the year the child is due to commence **Eg. Applications for three-year-old kindergarten in 2028 commenced 1 February 2026** **Applications for three-year-old kindergarten in 2029 will commence 1 February 2027**	Registrations open
June/July	First round offers
July/August	Acceptance of first round offers due
Beginning of September	Second round offers
Mid-September	Acceptance of second round offers due
Weekly or when vacancies become available	Subsequent offers

Eligibility

Age

Only complete below form if you are planning on sending your child to kindergarten in 2027/2028. Your child will be eligible for kindergarten only if they meet the following age criteria:

- To be eligible for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, your child must turn 3 by April 30 (the year they attend)
- To be eligible for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, your child must turn 4 by April 30 (the year they attend)

Starting age calculator: Use the starting age calculator to enter your child's birth date to find out what year they can start Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Immunisations

According to the No Jab, No Play law in Victoria, your child must be fully vaccinated to start kindergarten. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is not required for this registration form, but you should ensure that your child's immunisations are up to date and you have a copy of this statement before commencing the enrolment process that will likely happen in October.

A support period applies for families who may find it difficult to provide an up-to-date statement by October.

Further information on immunisation requirements for enrolment in early childhood services is available through the DE website: www.education.vic.gov.au

Priority of access

Middle Park Kindergarten follows the Department of Education's Priority of Access criteria *(refer to Attachment 1),* that prioritises allocation of kindergarten places for children who:

- are at risk of abuse or neglect, including out of home care
- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- are, or have parents or carers who are, asylum seekers or refugees
- have additional developmental needs
- hold or have parents who hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card.

Children that fit one or more of those criteria will be allocated to a place in kindergarten as a high priority. This form will collect all the information required to determine if a child is eligible for Priority of Access.

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If you believe you or your child are in exceptional circumstances which require prioritisation and are not covered by any of the above criteria, please contact Middle Park Kindergarten to discuss.

Fees

Refer to the *Free Kindergarten Fees Policy* for more information about fees.

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ATTACHMENT 3. WAITLIST REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION FORM FOR ENROLMENT AT MIDDLE PARK KINDERGARTEN, INC.

☐ 3 YEAR OLD KINDER 2026 only	☐ 4 YEAR OLD KINDER 2027 only	☐ **BOTH 3 & 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN**
☐ 3 YEAR OLD KINDER 2027 only	☐ 4 YEAR OLD KINDER 2028 only	☐ **BOTH 3 & 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN**
☐ 3 YEAR OLD KINDER 2028 only	☐ 4 YEAR OLD KINDER 2029 only	☐ **BOTH 3 & 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN**
Child's Name:		
DOB:	**Gender: Female** ☐ **Male** ☐	**Language at home?**
Parent/Guardian's Name:		
Child's Address:		
Email Address:		
Mobile Phone:		
Does the child have siblings who attended Middle Park Kindergarten?	If yes, name and year:	
Has this child already attended a kindergarten program?	☐ 3-Year-Old ☐ 4-Year-Old ☐ No	
Are this child's immunisations up to date? Your child must be fully vaccinated by the time they attend kindergarten under the No Jab No Play law.*	☐ Yes ☐ No *If you have answered no, please visit a health professional or Maternal and Child Health nurse to organise your immunisations before the kindergarten year begins.*	
Is this child Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	☐ Yes, Aboriginal ☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander ☐ Yes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ☐ No	
Does the child meet any of the following criteria?	☐ Attends a 3-Year-Old program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning ☐ Known to Child FIRST, Child Protection or family services ☐ Been referred by a Maternal and Child Health nurse, support service or Out of Home Care provider	
Does the child require any additional support due to a disability including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please provide details:	
Do you or your child hold any of the following cards? *Application fee waived	☐ Commonwealth Health Care Card ☐ Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card ☐ Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card ☐ Humanitarian or refugee visa	

Return to: Middle Park Kindergarten Enrolments, middle.park.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

Note: ***$60 administration fee (non refundable) must accompany application to be valid***

Direct Deposit – BSB: 063 100 Account: 1005 1032 (Child name as reference)

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date:** _____

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ATTACHMENT 4. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION

Middle Park Kindergarten

131 Mills St, Middle Park, VIC 3206

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Middle Park Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Middle Park Kindergarten in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided AIR Immunisation History Statement.

AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence of immunisations and is used to assess whether you child is fully vaccinated for their age.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16 week support period, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- City of Port Phillip Immunisation Service: https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/council-services/family-youth-and-children/immunisation
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register
- Better Health Channel website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by an AIR Immunisation History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Middle Park Kindergarten's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Middle Park Kindergarten

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Example of an immunisation history statement

Australian Government
Department of Human Services
medicare

Immunisation history statement

As at: 01 June 2019

For: ARMANDO D BOWERS

Date of birth: 01 Nov 2017

Immunisation status: up to date

Schedule	Immunisation	Date given	Brand name given	Provider type
Birth	Hepatitis B	01 Nov 2017	Engerix-B	Hospital
2 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib Pneumococcal Rotavirus	01 Jan 2018	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 RotaTeq	GP
4 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib Pneumococcal Rotavirus	01 Mar 2018	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 RotaTeq	GP
6 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib Pneumococcal Rotavirus	01 May 2018	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 RotaTeq	GP
12 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Meningococcal C Hib	01 Nov 2018	MMR II Menitorix	GP
18 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	01 May 2019	Priorix-Tetra	GP

Next immunisation/s due	Date due
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Poliomyelitis	01 Nov 2020

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ATTACHMENT 5. CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE

FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Middle Park Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees will continue to be generated for that place until the Middle Park Kindergarten is notified.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children *(refer to Definitions).* Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

Non-attendance

Term One

- Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

Families Traveling Overseas

- Families are required to notify Middle Park Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees are paid if they wish to return to the service.

Non-contactable Families

  - After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
  - After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, early childhood teacher or educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, Educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
  - After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.

- Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.

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ATTACHMENT 6. ENROLMENT CRITERIA

Four-year-old kindergarten enrolment criteria

Children enrolled in the 3-year-old kinder program will be prioritised for entry into the 4-year-old program in the following year.

4-year-old kinder vacancies will only be available if there are children in the 3-year-old kinder program that do not elect to continue into 4-year-old kinder.

Any vacancies will be filled in the following sequence, with children in each category prioritised by the earliest date of the original enrolment registration:

1. Children who meet the Department of Education's Priority of Access criteria (refer to Attachment 1)
2. Repeating 4-year-old Middle Park Kindergarten students who would benefit from an additional year of 4-year-old funded kindergarten
3. New 4-year-old kindergarten enrolments from children that have not previously accessed funded 4-year-old kindergarten
4. Repeating 4-year-old kindergarten students from other centres who would benefit from an additional year of 4-year-old funded kindergarten

Three-year-old kindergarten

Parents of children born from 1 January to 30 April may choose to enrol their children into 3-year-old kinder in the year that their child turns 3, or the year that their child turns 4.

Parents should note the following:

* Children must have had their third birthday before they are able to attend the program.

* Under the Government funded program that Middle Park Kindergarten access, there is no option to undertake a repeated year of 3-year-old kindergarten. Under these requirements, children in 3-year-old kindergarten are required to progress into 4-year-old kindergarten the following year.

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