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ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

LONG DAY CARE AND KINDER

QUALITY AREA 6 |

Version no.	Reviewed by	Authorised by	Date of issue	Amendments made
V1.1	CPELC FY2022 Committee & Management	CPELC FY2022 Committee & Management	5/5/22	
V1.2	CPELC FY2023 Committee & Management	CPELC FY2023 Committee & Management	5/5/23	Orientation is based on families up to 2 weeks.
V1.3	CPELC FY2024 Committee & Management	CPELC FY2024 Committee & Management	14/5/2024	<p>Long day care integrated with Kinder. 2 weeks orientation dependant on family's needs.</p> <p>Families qualify for kinder if they do long day care with Columbia Park Early Learning Centre.</p> <p>4 yrs kinder a minimum of 3 days 3 yrs kinder minimum of 1-3 days Free Kinder in long day care is offered.</p> <p>The kinder program is offered for 25 hours per week during the school term 5 hrs per day.</p>
V1.4	CPELC FY2025 Committee & Management	CPELC FY2025 Committee & Management	5/5/2025	Long day care integrated with Kinder. 2 weeks orientation dependant on family's needs.
V1.5	CPELC FY2026 Committee & Management	CPELC FY2026 Committee & Management	26/5/2026	<p>2027 Enrolment Timeline</p> <p>2027 Kindergarten enrolments will begin in mid-June. Current families will have two weeks to respond to their re-enrolment offer.</p> <p>Discuss with Families pre-prep for those eligible. What you need to know about Pre-Prep vic.gov.au</p> <p>By mid-July, all 2027 Kindergarten enrolments will be finalised. This will allow vacant Kindergarten positions at CPELC to be offered to other families seeking placement.</p> <p>Offers for non-Kindergarten positions will be made in November 2027.</p> <p>Kinder information in your language</p>

				Kinder: information in your language vic.gov.au Re-enrolments for children under 3 years of age will begin in August 2027. Orientation for new families will commence at the start of November 2026 to give families enough time to become familiar with the centre, teaching team, and routines prior to commencing in Jan 2027.
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PURPOSE

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

- enrolling a child at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre
- the orientation of new parents/guardians and children into Columbia Park Early Learning Centre
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Family Assistance Law
- 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

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre is committed to:

- engaging collaboratively and respectfully with parents/guardians during enrolment and orientation to learn about their expertise, culture, values and beliefs and priorities for their child’s learning and wellbeing
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- ensuring the enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting parents/guardians to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information and communication
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information gathered for enrolment.
- 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

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 Columbia Park Early Learning Centre.

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					
Ensuring that copies of the <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i> and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection	R	√			
Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, as described in the Department of Education's [DE] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)</i>	R	√			
<p>1. 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or • 600 hours per year • 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year] 	R	√			
Ensuring children eligible for Pre-Prep (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are enrolled for a minimum of 16 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year (or 640 hours per year)	R	√			
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	√			

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	√			
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 (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	√	√	√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that attendance data collection is implemented as per the Arrival requirements (<i>refer to Sources</i>) 	R	√	√		
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	√	√	√		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	R	R	√	√	√
<p>2. Ensuring the following is displayed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the current Kindergarten Program Certificate information promoting ESK information promoting the KFS in services not participating in Free Kinder <p>operating times and name(s) of the qualified teachers delivering the program.</p>	R				
<p>3. Communicating to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>that the service will prepare a Transition Statement for all children to help them transition to school.</p>	√	√	√		
<p>4. Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Start Kindergarten (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) Early Start Kindergarten extension grants (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) Access to Early Learning (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) <p>Additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)</p>	R	√			
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√

Providing opportunities for interested parents/guardians to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program 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 <i>National Law: Section 167</i>	R	√	√		
Seeking information from parents/guardians 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	√	√	√	
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	√	√	√	
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				√	
Informing families if they are receiving Child Care Subsidy, they must update Centrelink on any changes to their income, activity and other circumstances via their Centrelink online account	R	√			
Gathering information from parents/guardians to support continuity of care between home and the service	√	√	√		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and accessing immunisation services	R	√	√		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the support period	R	√	√		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (<i>refer to Source</i>) 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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the support period (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have confirmed place in the program (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√	√		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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 (<i>refer to Attachment 3</i>)	R	√	√		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year,	R	√	√		

timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i>)					
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) of their child's immunisation status (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)				√	
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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to the service				√	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i>)	R	√	√		
Once payment has been made to secure the placement, providing parents/guardians a confirmation letter stating the starting date, days and hours (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√			
Once an enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) has been completed for each child, review the enrolment record to ensure that no section/question has been left blank.	R	√			
Ensuring all authorised nominees (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been completed on enrolment record for each child (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (<i>Regulations 160 and 161</i>) as well as authorisations from parents / guardians relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	√		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record for each child (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of <i>Regulations 160, 161, 162</i> (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>) and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	√	√	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record for each child (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is kept up to date if family circumstances change	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that enrolment records for each child (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are kept confidential (<i>Regulations 181, 182</i>) 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 (<i>Regulation 183 (1a) (2d)</i>)	R	√	√		
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	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (<i>refer to Definitions</i> and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	√	√		

Accessing the Inclusion Support Program (<i>refer to Sources</i>) when applicable	R	√			
Review enrolments to see if the family qualifies for CCS preschool exemption	√	√	√		
Supporting families make an informed decision on when is the best time for their child to start kindergarten					
Ensuring that the orientation program meets the individual needs of children and parents/guardians	√	√	√		
Communicating with parents/guardians when their child will be eligible for a funded year of kindergarten	√	√	√		
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.	√	√	√		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new parents/guardians and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	√	√	
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 (<i>Regulation 157</i>), 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 <i>National Law: Section 167</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Encouraging parents/guardians during orientation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period make contact with educators at the service, when required 	√	√	√	√	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	√	√	√	√	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	√	√	√	√	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.					
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
Developing strategies to assist new parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel welcomed into the service 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 	√	√	√	√	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 					
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	R	R	R	R	√
Notifying Columbia Park Early Learning Centre in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment. (2 weeks notice)				√	
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	



PROCEDURES

The information contained within the procedure is to be used as a guide and modified according to the services context.

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 parents/guardians 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
- Providing reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation and once the child commences
- 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 educator(s) at an agreed
 - the educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in time
 - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Refer to *Attachment 1* for the general enrolment 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)*).

Childcare services providing approved child care (*refer to Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 (refer to Legislation and standards)*. Australian families receive help with the cost of child care through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Australian Government, through the Department of Education (DE) and Services Australia, administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Providers must be approved by the department to receive CCS.

DE is responsible for the legislation that underpins CCS. This legislation is called Family Assistance Law (FAL). All providers that receive CCS must follow the rules under FAL. DE monitors providers' compliance with FAL.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of child care. State and territory governments are responsible for the health, safety, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children.

CCS is paid directly to approved providers and passed on to families as a fee reduction.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (*refer to Sources*) provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality child care on a child's health, wellbeing and development; and the importance of continuity of care.

There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing): to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent): to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship): to help families experiencing financial hardship.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work): to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.

The Inclusion Support Program is designed to assist early childhood education and care services to include children with additional needs by providing support, in the form of practical and tailored advice and strategies on effective inclusive practice, from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

The Community Child Care Fund is designed to help eligible child care providers address barriers to child care participation, particularly in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous communities.

The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule or have an approved exemption from being immunised.

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*). To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule (*refer to Sources*) set out by the Australian Government Department of Health.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- 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)
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017
- 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)

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.

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. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. 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). In order to confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have, medical contraindication and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

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 record

Centrelink: The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government.

Child care software: software developed and provided by commercial providers to interact with the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy System (information technology system) and to support other administrative and management activities for child care providers.

Child Care Safety Net: Targeted assistance to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families, as well as supporting child care services in disadvantaged communities to address barriers in accessing child care.

The Child Care Safety Net has three components:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Program.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers (*refer to Definitions*).

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*).

Complying Written Arrangement: A written arrangement between a child care provider and an individual to provide child care in return for fees. The arrangement includes certain required information:

- the names and contact details of the provider and the individual(s)
- the date the arrangement starts
- the name and date of birth of the child (or children)
- if care will be provided on a routine basis and if so
 - details about the days on which sessions of care will usually occur
 - the usual start and end times for these sessions of care
 - whether care will be on a casual or flexible basis (in addition to, or instead of, a routine basis)
- details of fees charged under the arrangement (providers can reference a fee schedule or information available on their website), which the parties understand may vary from time to time.

Additional information can be included to support the individual's understanding of their payment obligations

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.

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.

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 care to a child and the provider submits an enrolment notice in the Child Care Subsidy System. It is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend child care (or have an arrangement for care) to have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status

Enrolment notice: The notice given by a provider through the Child Care Subsidy System that they have an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child.

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) 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.

Support period: allows specific categories of children of parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians during enrolment and keep a copy with the 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 parents/guardians to access immunisation services.

Inclusion Support Program: A program that assists child care services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

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*).

Provider Entry Point: The online interface that providers can use to sign in and access the Child Care Subsidy System.

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 VEYLD 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.

School Exemption

- Children who will turn six during the kindergarten year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant their local ECIB that their child is seeking an exemption from school by submitting an [Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program form](#) to the appropriate departmental regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning 6.
- The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption form from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Community Child Care Fund: www.education.gov.au/community-child-care-fund
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing): www.education.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
- Inclusion Support Program: www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-program
- Priority of Access Guidelines for child care service: www.education.gov.au
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): www.education.gov.au
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- 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

Related Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
 - Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
 - 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 \(2\)](#)).
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ATTACHMENTS



- Attachment 1: General enrolment procedures
 - Attachment 2: Enrolment record requirements
 - Attachment 3: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
 - ATTACHMENT 4. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION
 - ATTACHMENT 5. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA
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AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Columbia Park Early Learning Centre on 26/5/2026.

REVIEW DATE: 26/5/2026



ATTACHMENT 1. GENERAL ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

PRIORITY OF ACCESS

There are no requirements for filling vacancies. The approved provider can set their own rules for deciding who receives a place.

Approved providers are asked to (but are not legally obliged to) prioritise children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

This meets the Australian Government's aims of helping parents/guardians who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

The approved provider can set their own rules for deciding who receives a place, this can include but not limited to:

- Siblings attending the service
- Length of time on the waitlist
- Proximity to the service
- Family works or studies close to the service

The information contained within Enrolment Procedure is to be used as a guide and modified accordingly.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

Enrolments will be taken throughout the year subject to availability. If there are no placements available, the child will be placed on a waiting list. Once a family has decided to commence at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre they will need to:

- Complete separate enrolment records (*refer to Definitions*) for each child attending the service
- Provide the following information:
 - child's name, address and details of any special needs
 - information about themselves and any other parents, carers or guardians
 - details of the people who can pick up the child
 - child's birth certificate or other identity documents
 - details of any parenting orders or legal matters to do with the care or safety of the child (*refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
 - the child's medical health and AIR Immunisation History Statement status.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, the enrolment process should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- All enrolments must be accompanied by an enrolment fee in line with Columbia Park Early Learning Centre *Fees Policy* of \$20.00. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is not refundable.
- Completed enrolment records are to be forwarded to the person responsible for the enrolment process at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre
- Access to completed enrolment records will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the approved provider and/or nominated supervisor at the service, unless otherwise specified by the approved provider.
- Parent/guardians to create or access their Centrelink online account to lodge a Child Care Subsidy claim for each of their children (*refer to Diagram 1*).
- The service and parent/guardian to complete and sign a Complying Written Agreement (*refer to Definitions*), which includes:
 - The names and contact details of the approved provider and the parent/guardians(s)
 - the date the arrangement starts
 - the name and date of birth of the child (or children) if care will be provided on a routine basis and if so

- details about the days on which sessions of care will usually occur
- the usual start and end times for these sessions of care
- whether care will be on a casual or flexible basis (in addition to, or instead of, a routine basis)
- details of fees charged under the arrangement (providers can reference a fee schedule or information available on their website), which the parties understand may vary from time to time.
- additional information can be included to support the individual's understanding of their payment obligations.
- once the CWA is signed, it is then filed in the child's record

IMMUNISATION – NO JAB NO PLAY

- The purpose of this legislation is to encourage the highest attainable rates of vaccination to protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- The person in charge of an early childhood service has the responsibility of communicating with families of children seeking enrolment about requirements of No Jab No Play legislation and its links to enrolment in an early childhood setting. This includes asking for a current immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows the child is up to date with all the immunisations due for their age unless the child qualifies for an exemption under the support period.
- The Immunisation Statement is assessed as outlined in the Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services by the person responsible for the enrolment process on behalf of the approved provider.
- The “Key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment” in the Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services is used to determine the date at which immunisations must be up to date. The toolkit also provides guidance on assessing immunisation documentation to determine if a child is up to date or qualifies for an exemption. The following documents and resources can be accessed from www2.health.vic.gov.au:
 - The Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services (search ‘Immunisation enrolment toolkit’)
 - The Key dates work form for Immunisation and enrolment (search ‘Key Dates work form’)
 - Hard copies of the immunisation resources (search ‘immunisation resources order form’)
- The acceptable outcomes of the assessment for offering a confirmed place are:
 - That the next due vaccine for the child on the AIR Immunisation History Statement is within the acceptable timeframe for an enrolment, or;
 - That the child has been assessed by [Service Name] as being eligible for a 16-week support period
- The person responsible for the enrolment process advises the parent/guardian in writing whether a confirmed place is offered, and the enrolment can proceed.
- Parents/guardians who do not have an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement and whose child is not eligible for the support period cannot be offered a place and are referred to Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or to an immunisation provider (*refer to Attachment 3*).

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY ENROLMENT PROCESS

Enrolling children is a requirement under *Family Assistance Law* for all children who attend child care (or have an arrangement for care) regardless of their parent’s or guardian’s eligibility for Child Care Subsidy.

- The person responsible for the enrolment e.g. the approved provider must lodge an enrolment notice (through their child care software or the PEP) in the Child Care Subsidy System to show they have made an arrangement with the parent/guardian and the child is enrolled (*refer to Diagram 1*).
- The approved provider for the enrolment may need to provide several enrolment notices for a child if there is more than one arrangement to provide care for that child (because those arrangements are considered different enrolments under *Family Assistance Law*)—for example, where either:
 - a child is a dependent child of two families, such as when separated parents share care for a child
 - the fees for some sessions of care provided to a child are paid by a third party (such as an employer) and other sessions are paid by the parent(s).
- The agreement through which families can receive Child Care Subsidy is called a Complying Written Arrangement (*Refer to Definitions*). A Complying Written Arrangement is an agreement to provide care in return for fees.
- Complying Written Arrangements must have certain information. If the Complying Written Arrangement includes this information in writing, it can be made through the same enrolment form or process the provider uses to enrol a child.
- An arrangement must be recorded, either on paper or electronically, and must be kept by the approved provider. An arrangement can cover more than one child if multiple children in a family will attend the same child care service (each child must have their own enrolment).
- Once the approved provider enters into a Complying Written Arrangement with a family, they must submit an enrolment notice within seven days of the end of the week in which the arrangement started.
- If the approved provider enters into a Complying Written Arrangement more than 14 weeks before the child starts care, the enrolment will cease in the system before the child starts care. Therefore, the provider and individual would need to re-establish the Complying Written Arrangement and the provider would need to submit another enrolment notice. The Complying Written Arrangement would need to contain up-to-date details (where any have changed). At minimum, a new start date for the arrangement would be needed.
- Once the provider has made an arrangement with an individual, they can create a new enrolment notice through their child care software or the PEP. The provider must submit an enrolment notice for each child at each service. If an arrangement covers more than one child, or more than one service, a separate enrolment notice must be provided for each child at each service.

What information is required for an enrolment notice?

Through their child care software or the PEP, providers will be able to view, create, update or cease enrolments for all children attending their service(s). Providers will also be able to see the complete enrolment history (all current and ceased enrolment notices) for each child enrolled with them.

Category	Details to be provided
Enrolment circumstances	Whether either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an arrangement for care has been made • a certificate or determination has been made for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing). Whether the arrangement is any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Complying Written Arrangement • a Relevant Arrangement • Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)—provider eligible • an arrangement with an organisation (third party)
Expected pattern of care	Whether this includes any of the following:

Category	Details to be provided
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routine sessions, with possible casual care • casual enrolment—no routine sessions are included • routine sessions only—casual care is not included
Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date the care arrangement was made • End date for the arrangement (not mandatory—if known at the time the arrangement was created)
Parties to the arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of individuals (or organisation) who have made the arrangement—usually the same as the Child Care Subsidy claimant, but it can be someone else (for example, where one parent is the Child Care Subsidy claimant, but the other parent enters into the arrangement with the service to provide care) • If both parents are parties to the arrangement, enter the parent who is also the Child Care Subsidy claimant
Child receiving care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's name • Child's Customer Reference Number • Child's date of birth
Service providing care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service ID • Regular educator (mandatory for Family Day Care)
Child Care Subsidy claimant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual's name • Individual's Customer Reference Number • Individual's date of birth
Session details and liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of routine sessions. • Session start time. • Session end time. • Routine session — usual fee (hourly fee or session fee); casual session (if applicable) — hourly or session fee

- After the approved provider submits an enrolment notice for a child, the parent/guardian will be notified and asked to check the main enrolment notice details. This will occur through their Centrelink online account. Where an individual cannot access myGov, they can confirm their enrolment over the phone with Centrelink or by visiting a Centrelink office.
- The parent/guardian must then indicate that either:
 - the enrolment details are correct
 - one or more enrolment details are incorrect (do not reflect their arrangement)
 - the child is not enrolled at the service.
- The approved provider will be notified through their child care software or the PEP when an enrolment has been confirmed.

Updating and ending arrangements and enrolments

Where there are changes to the arrangement for care between the approved provider and an family, the approved provider must update the arrangement in writing (electronic or hard copy).

The approved provider must update an enrolment notice if:

- the family disagrees with details of an enrolment and the approved provider agrees an update is required

- an arrangement for care is changed at the request of, or in discussion with, the family (and this has been updated in the Complying Written Arrangement)
- the approved provider finds out that the information provided in an enrolment is (or becomes) wrong either at the time of or after the enrolment notice was created
- the arrangement for care ends.

The corresponding enrolment notice must be updated in the Child Care Subsidy System within seven days of the change or event which caused the change to the arrangement.

The Approved Providers should update an existing enrolment notice through their child care software or the PEP by updating only the fields where information has changed and submitting the update.

Where an enrolment has an end date, the approved provider will be notified through the Child Care Subsidy System four weeks before that date.

If care is going to continue under the arrangement, the enrolment end date must be updated or else the arrangement will end. If that happens, the child will need to be re-enrolled and a Complying Written Arrangement will need to be re-established.

An enrolment will end for Child Care Subsidy purposes if a child does not attend a session of care for 14 continuous weeks. The approved provider will be notified after four weeks of no sessions of care being reported.

If the child starts attending the service again after 14 weeks or more, the provider will need to re-establish the Complying Written Arrangement with the family and submit a new enrolment notice.

Adapted from the Child Care Provider Handbook, October 2023

WAITLIST

- If there are no suitable vacancies, the child / children's details will be placed on a waitlist
- Families on the waitlist are not guaranteed a place at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre
- Applications will be entered on the wait list using the priority of access criteria
- Recognition is given to siblings of current children who attend Columbia Park Early Learning Centre
- A non-refundable waiting list application fee will apply to all new applications
- It is the responsibility of families to update personal information, as required
- Columbia Park Early Learning Centre will update the wait list annually by written correspondence
- To remain on the wait list families will need to provide written response within two weeks working days from the date of the correspondence
- Families who do not respond to the annual waiting list update request will be removed from the waitlist
- Families who have been offered a place at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre will have two weeks to accept or decline the offer. If no response is received, the offer will be deemed to have been declined, but the applicant will remain on the waitlist

ATTACHMENT 3. ENROLMENT FORM REQUIREMENTS VIA HUBHELLO

The approved provider must ensure that an enrolment record (*refer to Definitions*) is kept for each child enrolled at [Service Name]. *Regulations 160, 161, 162* outlines the enrolment record requirements for services under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law)*, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations)*.

The approved provider must keep enrolment records available for inspection by an authorised officer (*National Law: Section 175*). An approved provider must also take reasonable steps to ensure the enrolment records are:

- accurate
- made available to the parents of the child upon request unless otherwise required by a court order (*Regulations 177 and 178*).

Information that **must** be included in enrolment record:

- Full name, date of birth and address of the child
- The name, address and contact details of:
 - each known parent of the child
 - any emergency contact
 - any authorised nominee
 - any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or administration of medication
 - any person authorised to give permission to the educator to take the child off the premises
- Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans
- Gender of the child
- Language used in the child's home
- Cultural background of the child and their parents
- Any special considerations for the child, such as cultural, dietary or religious requirements or
- additional needs
- Authorisations for:
 - the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment and/or ambulance transportation for the child
 - the service to take the child on regular outings
 - for regular transportation of the child
 - any person who is authorised to authorise the education and care service transport the child or arrange transportation of the child
- Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service
- Medicare number (if available)
- Details of any specific healthcare needs of the child, including any medical conditions, allergies, or diagnosis that the child is at risk of anaphylaxis
- Any medical management plan, anaphylaxis medical management plan or risk minimisation plan
- Dietary restrictions
- Immunisation status (In Victoria, AIR Immunisation History Statement, as required under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*)

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

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at [Service Name] 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 that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age; or
- has been assessed by our service as being eligible for a 16 week support period.

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
- [insert details of local government immunisation service]
- 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 AIR History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Columbia Park Early Learning Centre's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre



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 Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Poliomyelitis				Date due 01 Nov 2020

ATTACHMENT 5. 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.

If participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme, the CRES/CRS provider will allocate places in accordance with DE's PoA criteria, and other local criteria if applicable

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	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <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 • 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	<p>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</p> <p>Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.</p>
<p>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.</p>	
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.
High priority children	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<p>During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023 states for ESK funding, service providers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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