

# Kindergarten Funding Guide





# Foreword



The Victorian government is making Victoria the Education State. This begins with giving every child a strong start in life, with evidence showing the difference early intervention can make in shaping their happiness, wellbeing and success. Participation in quality early childhood education programs that adhere to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) can significantly increase positive educational and life outcomes for children, especially those from more disadvantaged circumstances.

With this in mind, the Victorian Government is committed to ensuring all eligible children can access kindergarten programs delivered by qualified early childhood teachers and educators in the year before school, and supporting families to understand and engage in children's learning. The Department provides a range of funding with the aim of improving service delivery, identifying vulnerability and promoting participation, particularly among children that require additional support, such as children with disability and Aboriginal children.

Ensuring inclusion of vulnerable children remains a key objective of the Victorian Government. Evidence suggests that highly vulnerable children such as those in out-of-home care may be missing out on high-quality early education, despite standing to gain the most from participation. Kindergarten services provide an important role in identifying children and families that may be vulnerable and delivering services that meet their needs.

Alongside participation and inclusion, the Department is committed to the ongoing improvement of kindergarten services to maximise positive outcomes for all children. The Department assists organisations to enhance program delivery through various mechanisms, such as supporting services to comply with The National Quality Framework, provision of professional development for educators and strengthening partnerships with local government and the community.

Local government – as a key provider and major owner of kindergarten facilities – plays a central role in improving quality, provision and access at the local level. This includes leading on a range of initiatives including:

- the development of Municipal Early Years Plans (MEYPs) which provide the strategic direction for education, health and care programs
- provision of central enrolment systems to enable equitable access for eligible children within a municipality
- partnership in the Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care
- partnership in the Early Years Management platform.

The objective of this guide is to inform kindergarten service providers about the range of funding that is available, how to apply and their obligations and accountability in receiving funding. Ensuring service providers receive appropriate assistance is fundamental to improving Victoria's kindergarten service, and enhancing children's access and participation in high-quality education.



# Department support for service providers

The Department is committed to ensuring service providers receive adequate support and guidance about kindergarten funding. Department regional offices are located across Victoria to provide assistance and further information, with designated staff available to:

- assist with and receive applications for funding
- process and consider funding applications for approval
- manage service agreements with service providers
- manage payment processes
- monitor compliance with funding criteria and operational requirements
- provide support and advice for service providers that may experience operational challenges.

Specialist staff are also able to assist with:

- Children's Facilities Capital Grants
- Early Years Management
- participation of Aboriginal children in kindergarten programs
- participation of children known to Child Protection and children in out-of-home care in kindergarten programs
- Early Childhood Intervention Services.

## Department regional office contact details

### North Eastern Victoria Region

Benalla	(03) 8392 9500
Glen Waverley	(03) 8392 9300

### North Western Victoria Region

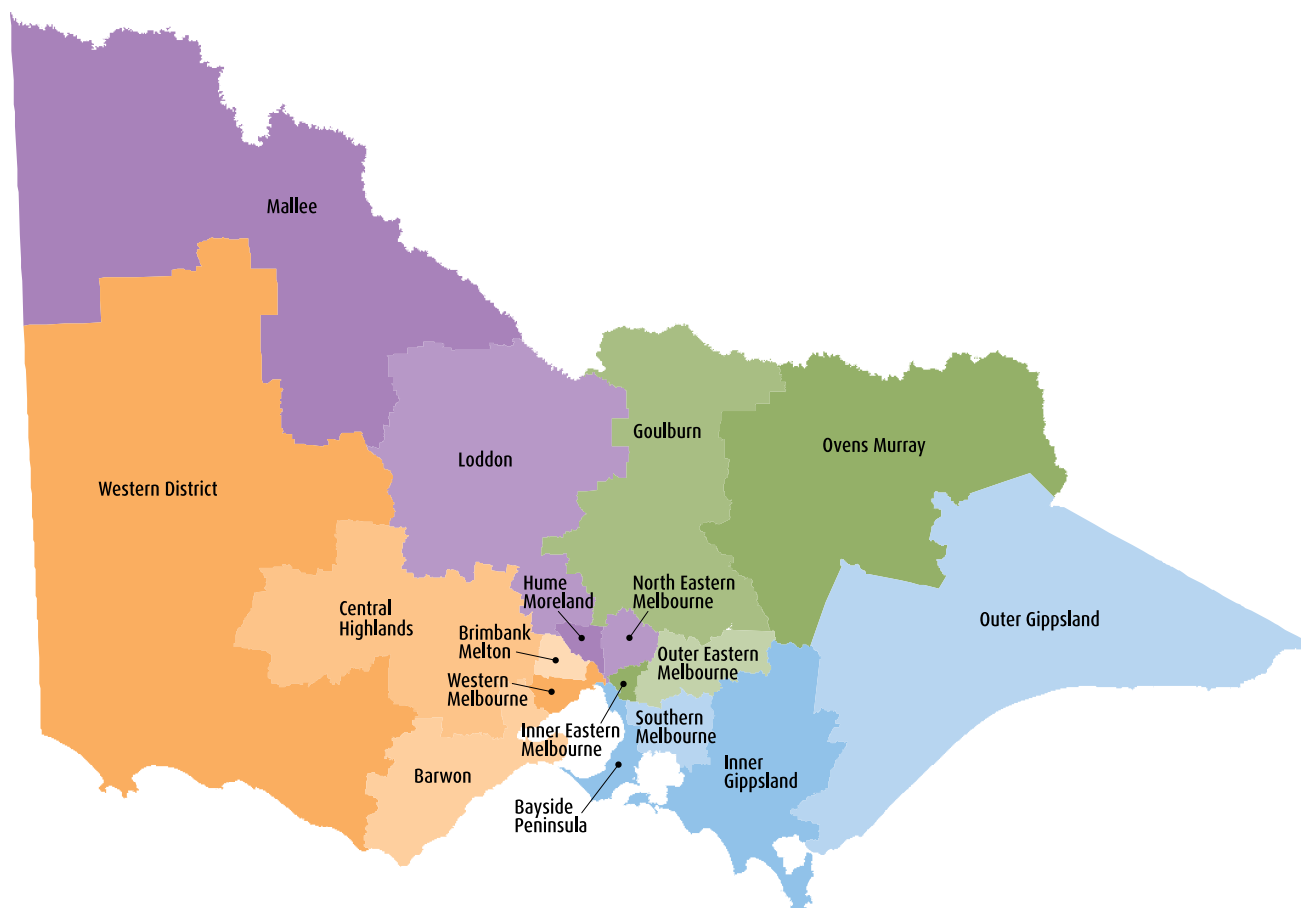
Bendigo	(03) 5440 3111
Coburg	(03) 9488 9488

### South Eastern Victoria Region

Dandenong	(03) 8765 5600
Moe	(03) 5127 0400

### South Western Victoria Region

Ballarat	(03) 5337 8444
Footscray	(03) 8397 0300
Geelong	(03) 5225 1000



# Contents

About this guide	6	5. Early Years Management (formerly Kindergarten Cluster Management)	57
1. General eligibility requirements	7	Joining an Early Years Management organisation	57
Approved service provider	7	Operational requirements	57
Core requirements	8	Funding for Early Years Management	58
2. Available kindergarten funding	11	Adding an existing kindergarten service to an Early Years Management organisation	59
Kindergarten funding quick guide	13-19	Adding a new service	59
3. Funding eligibility and how to apply	21	How funding works	59
The Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system	21	Inactive services in Early Years Management	59
Kindergarten per capita funding	22	6. How to...	61
Ratio Supplement Funding	24	How to become a funded service provider	62
Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	25	How to apply for funding for a service	62
Early Start Kindergarten grants	26	How to add a service for funding	62
Early Start Kindergarten extension grants	28	How to transfer funding for a service	62
Early childhood teacher supplement	29	How recurrent funding is calculated	63
Travel allowance	29	How to cease funding for a kindergarten program	63
Parental leave allowance	30	How to apply for funding in exceptional circumstances	64
Second year of funded kindergarten	30	Appendices	
Long service and sick leave payments for educators employed prior to 1994	33	Appendix A: Glossary	67
4. Operational Requirements	35	Appendix B: Training and Resources for Service Providers	70
Operational requirements quick guide	37-39	Index	72
Managing quality	41		
Managing enrolments	42		
Managing the service	45		
Managing teachers	48		
Maintaining engagement of children and families	50		
Displaying information and communicating effectively	52		
Providing reports and data	53		

# About this guide

The Kindergarten Funding Guide (the guide) is designed to assist service providers that:

- provide kindergarten programs in Victoria
- currently receive kindergarten funding from the Department of Education and Training (the Department) or wish to receive kindergarten funding in the future.

Occasionally information contained in the Kindergarten Guide may change. The most up-to-date information about kindergarten funding, eligibility and compliance can be found on the Departments website.

## The guide is structured as follows:

### Section 1: General eligibility requirements

Contains information about service provider eligibility and requirements.

### Section 2: Available kindergarten funding

Provides an overview of funding in a **quick guide**, including eligibility for each funding type and how to apply. The quick guide will direct you to further information within the guide and relevant external sources.

### Section 3: Funding eligibility and how to apply

Outlines criteria specific to each type of funding and how service providers can apply.

### Section 4: Operational requirements

Includes a **quick guide** outlining the requirements service providers must comply with to receive and maintain funding, with links to further information within the guide and relevant external sources.

### Section 5: Early Years Management

Contains information for service providers on Early Years Management funding, how to apply and operational requirements.

### Section 6: 'How to'

Contains information on the process for becoming a funded service provider, adding and transferring services, recurrent and ceasing funding, as well as funding in exceptional circumstances.

In addition to the eligibility criteria and operational requirements for kindergarten funding, education and care services providing a funded kindergarten program must also meet the relevant regulatory requirements. This guide does not provide comprehensive information about regulatory requirements. More information about regulatory requirements can be found on the Department's website.

## Terminology

In this guide, to simplify language, the following terminology is used:

- Throughout this document the term **Aboriginal** is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms Koorie, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of programs and initiatives and unless noted otherwise are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- **service provider** is an organisation that receives or is seeking to receive funding from the Department and is the approved provider of the service delivering the kindergarten program
- **funded service provider** is a service provider that has a service agreement with the Department and receives any type of kindergarten funding from the Department
- **funded kindergarten program** refers to a kindergarten program for children in the year before school for which per capita funding is received from the Department
- **Kindergarten Information Management (KIM)** refers to the online web-based system developed by the Department for service providers to apply for kindergarten funding and submit mandatory data.







# 1 General eligibility requirements



In order to be eligible for all types of kindergarten funding, services providers must:

- be an approved service provider (see page 7)
- comply with core requirements (see page 8)
- comply with funding requirements (from page 22).

## Approved service provider

In order to receive kindergarten funding, a service provider must be one of the following:

- an approved provider operating approved education and care services – as regulated by the National Quality Framework (NQF)
- operating a service under the Children’s Services Act 1996.

## Core requirements

Service providers must meet the following criteria outlined in the below table:

Requirement	For more information see:
Must have ABN.	<a href="http://www.business.gov.au">www.business.gov.au</a>
The kindergarten program must be located in Victoria.	
Must be compliant with all regulatory requirements.	Search <a href="#">regulation and quality assessment</a> on the Departments website
Must have a business plan and budget showing ongoing financial viability.	
Must have strong links with local government including alignment with Municipal Early Years Plans and participation in central enrolment and registration processes where possible.	Make contact with a relevant local government officer: Search <a href="#">council details</a> at <a href="http://www.mav.asn.au">www.mav.asn.au</a> for a full list of council contact details
Must provide a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by a qualified teacher (see below) and offers at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or</li> <li>600 hours per year.</li> </ul>	See page 9 Provision of 15 hours See page 9 Maintaining Service Delivery Search <a href="#">universal access</a> on the Department's website
Early Childhood Teachers must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Graduate teachers must be provisionally registered with the VIT and working towards full registration. Educators working towards an approved early childhood teaching qualification or those holding a diploma level education and care qualification are not considered to be qualified early childhood teachers for the purpose of kindergarten funding.	See <a href="http://www.vit.vic.edu.au">www.vit.vic.edu.au</a> for further information or contact the relevant Departmental regional office for further advice on qualifications. See Exceptional Circumstances – temporarily replacing an early childhood teacher page 64
Must sign and comply with the Department's service agreement and operate in accordance with the stipulated standards and guidelines.	See Glossary page 67
Must declare to the Department any previous legal or financial misconduct.	See page 9 Declaration of financial or legal misconduct
Must deliver a program that adheres to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework as an approved learning framework in the Education and Care Services National law.	Search <a href="#">VEYLDF</a> on the Department's website See <a href="#">EYLF</a> on the Department's website
Must operate in accordance with Child Safe Standards.	Search <a href="#">child safe standards</a> on the Department's website
Must operate a ratio of 1 educator: 11 children or less.	Search <a href="#">educator to child ratio</a> on the Department's website

### Provision of 15 hours

All children in the year before school must be enrolled in a 15 hour kindergarten program to be eligible for kindergarten funding. Services are required to ensure all eligible children have access to a program for a minimum of 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year), however it is acknowledged that children have individual needs and some parents, after discussion with the early childhood teacher, may choose not to have their child attend the kindergarten program for a full 15 hours at the start of the year.

### Maintaining service delivery

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

Service providers are required to:

- communicate to families at the beginning of the year about the days and times the service will operate
- identify any planned closures, including public holidays and child-free days
- provide details of any planned alternative sessions
- manage disruptions in program delivery to ensure that staff, families and children are considered
- inform the Department if a qualified replacement teacher cannot be sourced to deliver the funded program.



Where possible, service providers are encouraged to minimise the amount of disruption to normal service delivery, including:

- appointing relief staff to ensure sessions can continue
- scheduling closures so that the same group of children are not continually missing out on program hours
- offering alternative sessions throughout the year.

Where possible, service providers should avoid cancelling sessions or changing session times during the year if the closure has not been planned and communicated to families at the beginning of the year.

### Declaration of financial or legal status

Organisations must declare if they are:

- insolvent, in administration or in liquidation
- the subject of an investigation by a State, Territory or Australian Government regulator.

The organisation or its directors or office bearers who have been directors or office bearers of another organisation, must declare if it or they have previously:

- been found not to meet eligibility criteria after the submission of an application for funding
- had a Victorian Government funding agreement terminated
- had Victorian Government funding and services suspended or ceased or substantially varied
- persistently breached (without remedy) funding agreements with the Victorian Government
- not repaid monies owing to the Victorian Government
- received an adverse finding by a State, Territory or Australian Government regulator.

This page has been intentionally left blank







## 2 Available kindergarten funding

### Kindergarten funding quick guide

The Kindergarten funding quick guide is intended to provide an overview of the range of funding available from the Department, and additional sources (such as Commonwealth assistance).

This guide directs service providers to further information within this document on eligibility, funding and compliance as well as identifying external resources for further information.



This page has been intentionally left blank



Kindergarten per capita funding

Type of funding/support	What is it?	Who is eligible?	Funding	Apply via	Further information
Standard kindergarten per capita grant	<p>The main type of kindergarten funding offered to services providers.</p> <p>Funding for each eligible child who is enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program in the year before school.</p>	<p><i>Approved service providers</i> operating under the National Quality Framework.</p> <p>Funding for children who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>at least four years old on 30 April in the year of enrolment</li><li>enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year</li><li>not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service.</li></ul>	<p>Per capita funding is paid in advance on the first Tuesday of each month.</p> <p>Search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website for current funding amounts</p> <p>Grant rates vary depending on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of enrolments.</li></ul>	<p>Where a service agreement exists: Apply online via KIM.</p> <p>Service providers without a service agreement: Contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss eligibility and to set up a service agreement.</p>	<p>See further information on page 22</p>
Rural Kindergarten per capita grant	<p>Funding for each eligible child who is enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program in the year before school in a rural service.</p>	<p><i>Approved service providers</i> who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>located in rural areas as defined by the Department</li><li>not operated by a non-government school</li><li>offering the only kindergarten program in a rural town.</li></ul>	<p>Per capita funding is paid in advance on the first Tuesday of the month.</p> <p>Search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website for current funding amounts.</p> <p>From 2017, all rural services with 18 or fewer enrolments will receive a base funding amount that is equivalent to 18 enrolments at the rural per capita rate.</p> <p>Services with 19 or more enrolments will receive the rural per capita rate for all enrolments up to 45 children, and where applicable, the standard per capita rate for the 46th enrolment and above.</p>	<p>Where a service agreement exists: Apply online via KIM.</p> <p>Service providers without a service agreement: Contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss eligibility and to set up a service agreement.</p>	<p>See further information on page 22</p>
Non-government school per capita grant	<p>Kindergarten funding for non-government schools.</p>	<p>Catholic or Independent schools not operated by or on behalf of the Victorian Government.</p>	<p>The Department provides kindergarten funding for non-government schools at two different rates.</p> <p>Search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website for current funding amounts.</p>	<p>Where a service agreement exists: Apply online via KIM.</p> <p>Service providers without a service agreement: Contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss eligibility and to set up a service agreement.</p>	<p>See further information on page 23</p>

This page has been intentionally left blank

Other kindergarten funding

Type of funding/support	What is it?	Who is eligible?	Funding	Apply via	Further information
Ratio supplement funding	To support services with group sizes of 23 or more to transition to the improved ratio requirements of 1:11.	Community based service providers in receipt of Kindergarten per capita funding who operate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>sessional group/s with 23 or more and</li><li>at the required teacher child ratio of 1:11</li></ul> Exclusions and exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Non-government schools are not eligible for this type of funding</li><li>Services operating with a regulatory staffing waiver.</li></ul>	A one off payment based on the number of eligible children in groups of 23 or more. Search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website for current funding amounts.	Ratio supplement funding is automatically applied to eligible services following annual confirmation.	See further information on page 24
Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	To promote participation by enabling eligible children to attend a funded kindergarten program free of charge in the year before school. This is paid in addition to per capita grants.	<i>Approved service providers</i> in receipt of Kindergarten per capita funding. Funding is provided for each child who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or</li><li>holds, or has a parent/guardian who holds a Humanitarian or refugee Visa (see page 25), or</li><li>is a multiple birth child (triplets or more), or</li><li>holds, or has a parent who holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Veteran’s Affairs Card.</li></ul> Exclusions and exceptions: Not available for long day care services in receipt of Commonwealth Child Care Benefit.	Payments are included within the service provider’s monthly payments as part of base funding. Service providers are paid the subsidy for the whole term in which an eligible child is enrolled regardless of whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>enrolment commenced after the start of the term</li><li>the child becomes eligible after the start of the term</li><li>the relevant card or visa expires during the term.</li></ul> Search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website for current funding amounts.	Via KIM: Services are required to provide updated numbers of eligible children in each year through the annual confirmation of data and adjust throughout the year where applicable.	See further information on page 25
Early Start Kindergarten grant	Targeted funding for vulnerable or Aboriginal children to attend a free kindergarten program two years before school (some long day care services may charge additional fees depending on the amount of Commonwealth funding the child attracts).	Service providers that meet the eligibility criteria for (however are not required to be in receipt of) kindergarten funding. Funding is provided for each child who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or is known to Child Protection (see page 26)</li><li>three years old by 30 April in the year of enrolment</li></ul> Early Start Kindergarten grants are able to be used in combination with the Child Care Benefit to reduce costs to parents and carers.	Service providers do not need to be in receipt of kindergarten per capita grants in order to receive Early Start Kindergarten grants. However, services must register for KIM and complete the kindergarten funding application process. The grant amount per child is based on the per capita rate plus the kindergarten fee subsidy. Services offering a three year old kindergarten program of fewer than 15 hours receive funding on a pro rata basis. Early Start Kindergarten grants will be paid directly to service providers as an annual one off-payment, regardless of child’s enrolment or cease date.	Service providers with a service agreement should apply via KIM in consultation with, and on behalf of, the family. Service providers without a service agreement: Contact the relevant Departmental regional office.	See further information on page 26
Early Start Kindergarten extension grants	Early Start Kindergarten extension grants are available to assist vulnerable and Aboriginal children who are not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy to access a free kindergarten program in the year before school.	Service providers that meet the eligibility for kindergarten funding (however are not required to be in receipt of it). Funding is provided for each child who meets all the criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the child is at least four years old on 30 April in the year in of enrolment.</li><li>the child has previously accessed an Early Start Kindergarten grant or has participated in an Access to Early Learning program or is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</li><li>the child is ineligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.</li></ul>	Unlike other types of kindergarten funding, service providers do not need to be in receipt of kindergarten per capita grants in order to receive Early Start Kindergarten extension grants. However, services must register on KIM and complete the kindergarten funding application process.	Service providers with a service agreement should apply via KIM in consultation with, and on behalf of, the family. Service providers without a service agreement: Contact the relevant Departmental regional office.	See further information on page 28

This page has been intentionally left blank



Type of funding/support	What is it?	Who is eligible?	Funding	Apply via	Further information
<b>Early childhood teacher supplement</b>	To offset the cost of employing more experienced teachers.	<p><i>Approved service providers</i> in receipt of Kindergarten per capita funding, and employing a registered teacher/s deemed to be at or above Level 2.3 of the teacher career structure (see relevant employee agreement)</p> <p>The Early Childhood Teacher Supplement is paid for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>permanent staff members or</li> <li>relief teachers engaged for periods of three months or more.</li> </ul> <p>Exclusions and exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not available for services operated by non-government schools</li> <li>Not available for teachers employed at the service for fewer than three months</li> <li>Not available for staff covering lunch breaks or working three hours or fewer per day.</li> </ul>	<p>Annual payment to the service provider for each eligible teacher.</p> <p>Payments are made to the service provider as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a retrospective one-off annual payment for the calendar year for teachers employed for the entire kindergarten year, or</li> <li>a part-year payment where a teacher is not employed for the entire kindergarten year or when a teacher is employed part-way through the year from 2016.</li> </ul> <p>Once payment has been made, the supplement can't be adjusted to reflect a change in the number of children being taught or the teacher classification level.</p> <p>Rates are calculated on the number of children eligible for a kindergarten per capita grant being taught by the eligible teacher (number of children x appropriate annual rate at either Level 2 or Level 3 dependent on the teacher classification).</p> <p>Search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website for current rates.</p> <p>For team teaching supplement, contact the Department.</p>	<p>Submitting a paper based application with certification of the teacher's classification and pay level.</p> <p>Applications can be submitted from the start of Term 3 to 31 December in the calendar year for which payment is sought. No payments will be made for applications submitted after 31 December.</p> <p>Applications received after the end of October will be paid the following year.</p>	Contact your Departmental regional office for further information
<b>Travel allowance</b>	To help funded kindergarten programs in rural areas attract qualified early childhood teachers.	<p><i>Approved service providers</i> in receipt of per capita funding where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher delivers a funded kindergarten program at two or more services, and</li> <li>one of the services which the teacher travels to or from is funded at the rural or small rural rate.</li> </ul>	<p>Calculated per kilometre to a maximum of 20,000 kilometres of approved travel per teacher per year.</p> <p>For rates per kilometre search <i>kindergarten funding</i> on the Departments website.</p>	<p>Online via KIM.</p> <p>Applications only to be made following completion of annual confirmation of kindergarten data.</p> <p>Multiple applications can be made for the same teacher, however the allowance is capped at 20,000 km.</p> <p>Teachers should make applications from a rural service if working at both a rural and non-rural service.</p>	See further information on page 29
<b>Parental leave allowance</b>	Reimbursement for service providers that have paid parental leave to early childhood educators delivering a funded kindergarten program.	<p><i>Approved service providers</i> who have paid parental leave to early child educators.</p> <p>Exclusions and exceptions: Non-government schools are not eligible to receive parental leave reimbursement.</p>	<p>Up to 14 weeks paid maternity or adoption leave and up to one week paid partner leave.</p> <p>Payment is made to the employer as a retrospective one-off payment.</p> <p>Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave scheme is also available (contact Centrelink for information).</p>	Online via KIM after parental leave has been taken.	See further information on page 30
<b>Funding for second year of kindergarten</b>	For children who have delays in key areas of development and would benefit from a second year of kindergarten, as determined by an early childhood teacher.	<p><i>Approved service providers</i> who are in receipt of kindergarten per capita funding. Funding is provided for each child who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is observed by an early childhood teacher as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning (see the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework) and</li> <li>will achieve better outcomes through a second year of kindergarten than they would at school.</li> </ul>	The kindergarten per capita rate.	Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten must be completed via KIM in the year prior to the second year of funded kindergarten.	See further information on page 30
<b>Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) packages</b>	Assistance to improve access for children with a disability and high support needs and/or complex medical needs.	Funded kindergarten services.	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specialist training and consultancy for staff</li> <li>minor building modifications</li> <li>additional staffing support.</li> </ul>	Contact the relevant Departmental regional office for further information.	Search <i>kindergarten inclusion support packages</i> on the Departments website
<b>Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) program</b>	Assistance to support access and participation of children with additional needs.	Funded kindergarten services and services supporting children through Early Start Kindergarten grants.	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consultative support</li> <li>resourcing</li> <li>advice to early childhood teachers.</li> </ul>	Contact the relevant Departmental regional office for further information.	For further information search <i>preschool field officer</i> on the Departments website or contact the relevant Departmental regional office

This page has been intentionally left blank

## Commonwealth assistance\*

Type of funding/support	What is it?	Who is eligible?	Further information
<b>Approved Child Care Benefit (CCB)</b>	Means-tested payment from the Commonwealth Government to help cover cost of child care in long day care services.	CCB approved child care service. <b>Exclusions and exceptions:</b> Approved CCB cannot be used in conjunction with Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. Services can only claim the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy if families using their service claim the lower rates of Registered CCB.	Visit the Commonwealth Human Services website for more information.
<b>Child Care Rebate (CCR)</b>	Commonwealth Government subsidies to cover cost of child care in long day care services.	CCB approved child care service. <b>Exclusions and exceptions:</b> Cannot be used in conjunction with Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.	Visit the Commonwealth Human Services website for more information.
<b>Inclusion Support Programme – commences 1 July 2016</b>	Commonwealth Government program to assist early childhood education and care services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted inclusion specialists, as well as funding to support more challenging inclusion barriers.	Eligible early childhood education and care services.	Visit the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training website for more information.
<b>Inclusion Support Subsidy</b>	Contributions towards the costs associated with including children with ongoing high support needs.	Eligible early childhood education and care services.	Visit the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training website for more information.

\* The Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Bill 2015 is currently before federal Parliament at the time of publication. This Bill includes a range of changes to family assistance including the introduction of a simplified means tested Child Care subsidy with a minimum level of activity required to be eligible to replace the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate from July 2017.

This page has been intentionally left blank







### 3 Funding eligibility and how to apply



#### The Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system

KIM is an online system for service providers to apply for kindergarten funding and submit mandatory service delivery and child enrolment data.

Information provided by service providers in KIM is submitted and recorded in accordance with the Department's Information Privacy Policy. Data should be updated immediately when service delivery or child enrolment changes occur.

- For information about accessing KIM and the process for registration, search *KIM* on the Departments website.

KIM is separate from:

- the Funded Agency Channel (FAC) which allows service providers to see an overview of funding, payment information and details of their service agreement with the Department
- the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITs) which allows approved providers under the National Quality Framework to submit applications and notifications and pay invoices to the Victorian Regulatory Authority
- the Commonwealth Government's Childcare Management System (CCMS).

#### How KIM data is used by the Department

Data provided by service providers is used to:

- create a baseline enrolment number and minimum per capita funding entitlement for the year (funding will not fall below this amount, regardless of enrolment adjustments)
- revise funding that was paid before the annual confirmation of data was submitted
- report state-wide participation rates to the Commonwealth
- assist with Local Government planning.



## Kindergarten per capita funding

### Standard kindergarten per capita grant

The kindergarten per capita grant is the main type of funding available from the Department. Service providers can apply to receive a grant for each eligible child who is enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program in the year before school, provided that the child:

- is at least four years old on 30 April of the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program (unless they have applied for early entry – refer to page 44)
- is enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year
- is not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service.

Children do not have to be Australian citizens in order to be eligible for the kindergarten per capita grant.

### Rural Kindergarten per capita eligibility

To be eligible for rural per capita funding, service providers must meet all of the following criteria:

- the service is located in a rural area as defined by the Department
- the service offers the only kindergarten program in a rural town
- the service is not operated by a non-government school.

### 2017 Rural funding

To be eligible for rural per capita funding, a service provider must meet all of the per capita and rural per capita criteria. (Eligible services must provide a sessional kindergarten program to access a new base level of funding in 2017).

A new base level of funding will be introduced from 1 January 2017 for rural kindergarten services. All rural classified services with 18 or fewer enrolments will receive a minimum per capita funding amount equivalent to 18 enrolments at the rural per capita rate.

Services with 19 or more enrolments will continue to receive the rural per capita rate for all enrolments up to 45 children, and where applicable, the standard per capita rate for the 46th enrolment and above.

The new base level of funding introduces a simpler payment model by replacing the small rural per capita rate and small rural grant.

Additional subsidies and supplementary funding such as Early Childhood Teacher Supplement, Kindergarten Inclusion Support, Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and travel allowance are still available to all rural services.



## Non-government school per capita grants

Catholic or Independent schools not operated by or on behalf of the Victorian Government may be eligible for non-government school per capita grants.

Two different per capita grant rates are available, based on the school's historical Index of Economic Resources rating as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the 2011 Census:

- the type one non-government school per capita grant rate is paid if the service provider is classified by the Department as a type one non-government school (previously deemed to have an Index of Economic Resources rating of 1–4)
- the type two non-government school per capita grant rate is paid if the service provider is classified by the Department as a type two non-government school (previously deemed to have an Index of Economic Resources rating of 5–12).

## How to apply for per capita funding grants

Service providers are required to complete the annual confirmation of data in KIM by 30 April each year for each of its services that offer a funded kindergarten program.

Information about each child enrolled and attending the funded kindergarten program must be entered in the KIM system. This includes:

- the child's name, gender, address and date of birth (this information is presented in a de-identified format to the Department)
- the date the child commenced the funded kindergarten program
- the child's Indigenous status
- if the child is known to Child Protection
- if the child is living in out-of home care
- the child's immunisation status
- the main language spoken at home (if not English)
- whether the child is attending a second year of funded kindergarten
- whether the child has a disability or developmental delay.

Annual confirmed data can only be submitted once. Service providers must therefore:

- ensure the data is correct before submission, including finalising enrolment numbers and checking child details are correct
- verify that the child is not enrolled in a funded program at another service. Only one service can apply for funding for a child at any one time
- not include children who cease to attend the funded kindergarten program before completing the confirmed data collection. Children included in 'annual confirmation' are expected to be enrolled and intending to access at least 600 hours of kindergarten that year
- not include children when it is known a family is intending to cease a child's attendance at a kindergarten program
- record any changes to enrolments following annual confirmation of data in the KIM system, such as removing a child's details when they leave the service. Adjustments must be made in the KIM system as changes occur, by 31 October.

For further information, search Kindergarten Information Management on the Department's website.

## How per capita funding is calculated

Per capita funding is calculated from the annual confirmation of data. The data creates a baseline enrolment number and minimum per capita funding entitlement for the calendar year. Kindergarten funding is paid based on the service's previous year's enrolment numbers (known as pre-confirmed enrolment numbers) until the annual confirmation of data is submitted for the service in the KIM system. The annual confirmation of data must be submitted by 30 April each year.

The funding entitlement based on the annual confirmation of data is compared to the pre-confirmed funding entitlement. There are three possible actions depending on the result:

- if the revised funding entitlement is more than the pre-confirmed funding amount, a positive adjustment occurs and the extra funding due to the service provider is incorporated into increased monthly payments for the remainder of the calendar year



- if the revised funding entitlement is less than the pre-confirmed funding amount, a negative adjustment occurs and monthly payments are reduced for the remainder of the calendar year
- if the two amounts are the same, no action is taken.

Funding will be adjusted if any amendments to enrolments are made following annual confirmation. Adjustments can move funding entitlements up or down depending on new enrolments and withdrawals after confirmation; however, funding will generally not be reduced below the minimum baseline funding set by the annual confirmed data. In cases where there are significant decreases in enrolments without reasonable explanation, the Department may reduce per capita and Kindergarten Fee Subsidy funding to the service.

Service providers can access a funding report in KIM which provides a breakdown of funding per service. The report is updated when a payment is made and can be viewed and downloaded at any time.

### How funding is paid

Kindergarten per capita funding is paid in advance, in monthly payments, made on the first Tuesday of each month in accordance with the service agreement.

Where enrolments are added after the annual confirmation of data and there is an increase in the funding entitlement (above the baseline amount), the additional per capita funding is calculated from the first day of the month after a child's commencement date at the service.

Where enrolment numbers at the service fluctuate after the annual confirmation of data and the calculated total funding based on enrolments has fallen below the baseline, new enrolments will not attract additional per capita funding until the total funding based on enrolments exceeds the baseline amount.

### Key timing considerations

For service providers or services that commence offering a funded kindergarten program before 30 April in the calendar year, the annual confirmation of data must be submitted by the end of April.

For service providers or services that commence offering a funded kindergarten program after 30 April in the calendar year, the annual confirmation of data should be submitted as soon as the service provider has access to the KIM system, and the number of enrolments and other service details are known.

Kindergarten funding will not be paid until the service provider submits the annual confirmation of data in the KIM system for each service offering a funded kindergarten program.

## Ratio supplement funding

From 1 January 2016, Victorian kindergarten services are required to move from an educator to child ratio of 1:15 to 1:11.

Ratio supplement funding is available to community based kindergarten service providers, including Early Years Management organisations, offering sessional kindergarten programs to groups of 23 children or above. This funding is provided to contribute to the cost of employing an additional educator.

For the purpose of kindergarten funding, a group is defined as children attending a kindergarten session at the same time in a room with a qualified early childhood teacher. The number of children in each group should not exceed 33 children at any one time.

In the case of rotational programs, a number of smaller subgroups may be brought together to create a larger group as defined above.

In isolated instances where a group exceeds 33, approval must be sought from the Department by sending an email to [kindergarten.funding@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergarten.funding@edumail.vic.gov.au).

### How ratio supplement funding is calculated

A ratio supplement grant is paid for each child enrolled in a group of 23 children or above.





## Applying for ratio supplement funding

Service providers are not required to apply for ratio supplement funding. Funding will be automatically paid to services that have groups of 23 or more children entered in the KIM system at the time of annual confirmation.

## How funding is paid

Ratio supplement payments are made as a one off payment following annual confirmation.

## Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy enables eligible children to attend a funded kindergarten program for 15 hours free of charge. This funding is paid in addition to per capita grants to subsidise the cost of parent fees.

Service providers can apply for each child in receipt of a per capita grant in any of the following circumstances:

- the child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (note: the parent, carer or legal guardian should not be asked to provide verification of this)
- the child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more)
- the child individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds one of the following:
  - a Commonwealth Health Care Card
  - a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
  - a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card
  - Refugee visa (subclass 200)
  - In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
  - Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)
  - Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786)
  - Protection visa (subclass 866)
  - Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
  - Woman at risk visa (subclass 204)
  - Bridging visas A-E.

Service providers should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office if a child or family has a humanitarian or refugee visa listed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection which is not included in the above list as the child may be eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

Services should sight the relevant concession card, visa, travel document or letter of visa status and record the expiry date.

Delays in obtaining health care cards for children in out of home care should not provide a barrier to accessing the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy where a carer identifies that the child is in out of home care. The application should proceed with a note made in the child's enrolment records that the health care card has not yet been sighted. Information in the enrolment record should then be updated once the health care card is sighted.

In relation to the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, service providers are required to:

- promote the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy to eligible families
- provide eligible children with access to a kindergarten program free of charge for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year
- charge eligible families no more than the services average hourly rate for additional hours of service provision (that is, more than 15 hours per week)
- keep fees affordable for all families
- provide inclusive programs with equitable access that does not stigmatise any family.

## Kindergarten Fee Subsidy in long day care services

A child enrolled in a long day care service is not eligible for a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy where approved Child Care Benefit (a Commonwealth Government subsidy) is applied to the fee charged for the time spent in the kindergarten program. In this case, long day care services should ensure families of children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy are aware that they may be able to access a 15 hour kindergarten program free of charge at another service.

Service providers can apply for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for eligible families only if the child is enrolled in a long day care service where fees for the kindergarten program are charged separately, and where fees paid for the kindergarten program do not attract the Approved Child Care Benefit.

### Alternative kindergarten services

Independent schools or those offering specialised programs such as Montessori or Steiner will receive the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for any eligible families to reduce the fees paid. The fee subsidy must be used to directly discount the fees paid by eligible families. Families choosing to access these services pay the difference between the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and the applicable annual service fee.

Alternative services that do not offer a 15 hour program free of charge for children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy should ensure families understand that they may be able to access a 15 hour program free of charge at a different service.

### Applying for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Service providers should:

1. verify eligible children through the annual confirmation of data in the KIM system
2. update children's Kindergarten Fee Subsidy status as necessary throughout the year, through to 31 October.

### How the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy is calculated

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy payments are included in the service provider's monthly payments. Service providers are paid for the whole term in which an eligible child enrolls and attends, or in which an enrolled child becomes eligible or ineligible. For example, the subsidy will be paid for the whole term if:

- an eligible child enrolls after the beginning of a term
- an enrolled child becomes eligible for a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy after the beginning of a term
- the relevant card or visa expires during a term
- a child receiving KFS leaves the service throughout the term.

Any adjustments should be reflected in the fees charged for the eligible child.

### Early Start Kindergarten grants

Aboriginal children and children known to Child Protection are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten grants. Funding is available to enable these children to attend kindergarten two years before school, to improve access and overcome barriers to participation.

Service providers do not need to be in receipt of kindergarten per capita grants in order to receive Early Start Kindergarten grants for eligible children. However, services must register with KIM and complete the kindergarten funding application process, and either open or revise a Service Agreement Management System (SAMS) service agreement in order to receive payment.

There are two types of Early Start Kindergarten grants:

- Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten Grant
- Early Start Kindergarten grant for children known to Child Protection.

### Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant

Service providers can apply if the child is three years old by 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program, and has been identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This may be verified from a parent or carer verbally or a written referral/verification from a professional such as a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO).

Parents or guardians who identify a child as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander should not be asked to provide verification of this.



### Early Start Kindergarten grant for children known to Child Protection

Service providers can apply if the child is three years old by 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program, and the child is known to Child Protection.

A child known to Child Protection means:

- a child who has a current, or a history of, involvement with Child Protection, including those in out-of-home care, or
- a child who has been referred by Child Protection, Child FIRST, Integrated Family Services or Services Connect.

A child's eligibility can be advised by:

- a parent or carer who verbally identifies their child is currently supported by Child Protection or Child FIRST services or has been supported in the past, or
- written referral/verification from a Child Protection, Child FIRST, Integrated Family Services or Services Connect professional.

For both types of Early Start Kindergarten Grants, service providers should:

- document and maintain Early Start Kindergarten eligibility in the child's enrolment records
- provide up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of charge
- avoid imposing financial barriers to families seeking access: providers are strongly encouraged to waive any refundable deposit or other charges required upon confirming acceptance/waiting list entry.

### Applying for Early Start Kindergarten grants

Applications can be made at any time during the year, although it is encouraged that applications are submitted prior to the end of term one or as soon as they are received. Applications should be completed in consultation with, and on behalf of, the family.

### How Early Start Kindergarten funding is calculated

Rates are based on the number of hours offered by a service provider as follows:

- 15 hours per week (600 hours a year) the service provider is paid the full Early Start Kindergarten rate for eligible children
- less than 15 hours per week the service provider is paid Early Start Kindergarten funding on a pro rata basis. For example, a service offering an eligible child seven hours per week in a kindergarten program will receive 7/15ths of the applicable full grant rate. If the fee normally charged exceeds the pro rata grant amount, the grant will be adjusted to be equivalent to the fee normally charged for the number of hours the child is enrolled, capped at an amount equivalent to the standard grant rate for a 15 hour program.

In instances where the number of hours a child is enrolled to attend increases, the service provider should update KIM as this may increase the funding rate paid to the service. If a child leaves the service, the service provider must remove their enrolment from KIM. Withdrawal of an ESK enrolment does not affect the amount of funding received.

### How funding is paid

Early Start Kindergarten grants will be:

- paid directly to the service provider as an annual one-off payment, regardless of the child's enrolment or cease date.



## Early Start Kindergarten extension grants

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

The child must meet one of the following criteria:

- previously accessed an Early Start Kindergarten grant
- participated in an Access to Early Learning program, or
- identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Where children have accessed Early Start Kindergarten at another service, the following people may advise of the child's eligibility:

- the child's parent/guardian or carer
- a Child Protection professional
- a Child FIRST professional
- a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- a central enrolment officer
- Department of Education and Training staff.

Service providers are required to document the date and source of advice of eligibility in the child's enrolment records.

### Service provider requirements

Service providers are encouraged to waive any payment required upon confirming acceptance/waiting list entry to minimise financial barriers to participation and must not set fees for eligible families that are higher than for other families.

With the exception of alternative kindergarten services (see below), service providers are required to:

- provide eligible families with the first 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) of the program free of charge when charging annual fees greater than the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant, and
- charge no more than the average hourly rate (for that service) for any additional hours provided.

Service providers offering more than 15 hours (such as integrated long day care settings) should:

- consider ways of providing the entire program to eligible children free of charge
- ensure that any fees normally charged for additional hours do not present a financial barrier to families seeking access to Early Start Kindergarten
- if charging for additional hours, inform families that they may be able to access 15 hours per week/600 hours per year for free at another service
- use the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant in combination with CCB to reduce costs to parents and carers
- explore all avenues for funding to reduce fees, including Commonwealth Special Child Care Benefit where appropriate.

### Alternative kindergarten services

Independent schools or those offering specialised programs such as Montessori or Steiner will receive the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant for any eligible families to reduce the fees paid. The fee subsidy must be used to directly discount the fees paid by eligible families. Families choosing to access these services pay the difference between the annual Early Start Kindergarten extension grant and the applicable annual service fee, where the fee exceeds the extension grant rate.

Alternative services that do not offer a 15 hour program free of charge for children eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant should ensure families understand that they may be able to access a 15 hour program free of charge at a different service.

### How to apply

Complete enrolment information in KIM, indicating the child's participation in Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning in the previous year, or their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status.

Applications can be made up until 31 October. However, service providers are strongly encouraged to submit applications prior to the end of term one or as soon as they are received.

If a family informs the service provider that a child is eligible after the child has been entered on the KIM system, the service provider should update this information and adjustments will be made accordingly.



### How funding is paid

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants are paid directly to service providers for each eligible child enrolled at a service, as an annual one-off payment, regardless of the child's enrolment or cease date.

This is paid in addition to the kindergarten per capita grant for eligible children.

## Early childhood teacher supplement

Service providers in receipt of kindergarten per capita funding are eligible to apply for an early childhood teacher supplement if they employ a registered teacher/s in the funded kindergarten program for children in the year before school deemed to be at or above Level 2.3 of the relevant employee agreement.

Rates are based on the classified level of the teacher (either Level 2 or Level 3) and the number of children enrolled at annual confirmation.

### Eligibility

The Early Childhood Teacher Supplement is paid for:

- permanent staff members, or
- relief teachers engaged for periods of three months or more.

The Early Childhood Teacher Supplement is not payable for staff covering lunch breaks or working three hours or less per day.

Service providers that apply a team teaching model are eligible if two or more teachers deliver the kindergarten program to the same group of children but at different times, or deliver the program concurrently with both teachers in the room at the same time.

Services operated by non-government schools are not eligible for the early childhood teacher supplement.

Please contact your Departmental regional office for further information.

### Applying for Early childhood teacher supplement

Service providers apply by:

1. completing the annual confirmation process
2. submitting a paper based application to the Departmental regional office certifying the teacher's classification and pay level.

Applications can be submitted from the start of Term 3 to 31 December in the calendar year for which payment is sought. No payments will be made for applications submitted after 31 December.

Applications received after the end of October will be paid the following year.

### How funding is paid

Payments are made to the service provider as:

- a retrospective one-off annual payment for the calendar year for teachers employed for the entire kindergarten year, or
- a part-year payment when a teacher is not employed for the entire kindergarten year or when a teacher is employed part-way through the year from 2016.

NB: Once paid, the supplement cannot be adjusted to reflect a change in the number of eligible children being taught or the classification level of the eligible teacher.

## Travel allowance

Service providers may be eligible to receive a travel allowance if the teacher (including relief teachers) delivers a funded kindergarten program at two or more services, and one of the services which the teacher travels to or from is funded at the rural or small rural rate. Travel to two or more services is not required to occur on the same day.

Service providers should:

- ensure teachers make the application from the rural service if they are working at both a rural and non-rural service
- request that teachers, including relief staff, maintain a log book of travel to verify travel claims. Log books should be kept by services as documentary evidence.



## Applying for travel allowance

Service providers apply by:

1. ensuring the annual confirmation process is completed
2. submitting an application using the KIM system.

The travel allowance is calculated:

- on a 'per kilometre per annum' basis (up to a maximum of 20,000 km per year) and is applicable to school terms only
- based on anticipated travel, that is, the number of kilometres from one kindergarten service (base location) to the second or third kindergarten service. If the service provider approves the teacher to travel from home to a service located in another town to deliver the funded program, and that distance is less than that from the base location, then the shortest distance applies.

## How funding is paid

The travel allowance is included in the service provider's monthly payments. This should be passed on to the travelling teacher, where the teacher uses their own vehicle for travel or retained by the service provider to offset the costs of providing a vehicle for the teacher.

## Parental leave allowance

Service providers that make a parental leave entitlement payment to educators employed to deliver a funded kindergarten program can apply to the Department for reimbursement of the parental leave payment. Service providers can claim reimbursement for up to 14 weeks paid maternity and adoption leave, and up to one week paid partner leave.

Services operated by non-government schools are not eligible for the parental leave allowance.

Service providers and educators are advised to examine the full provisions relating to parental leave in the relevant agreements and awards to check that educators are paid the correct amount and eligibility is verified.

In addition to parental leave provided by the Department, paid parental leave may be offered by the Commonwealth Government. Visit [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au) for more information.

## Applying for Parental leave allowance

Service providers should ensure that the period of paid parental leave has been completed, as the payment is a reimbursement of payments already made.

Service providers apply by submitting an application in KIM.

## How funding is paid

The payment is made to the employer (not the educator) and is made as a retrospective one-off payment.

## Second year of funded kindergarten

During the kindergarten year, the early childhood teacher and the child's parents will work together to plan for the child's transition to school. In exceptional circumstances where a child is observed to display delays in key outcome areas of learning and development, a second year of funded kindergarten may be considered when:

- the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program and environment for that individual child
- the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

For more information on choosing the best time to start kindergarten go to:

- Communications at the beginning of the kindergarten year on page 52
- Enrolment of children outside the eligible age for kindergarten on page 43.

Eligibility is determined by the early childhood teacher. Assessment should be based on:

- ongoing observations over the time they have spent with the child
- any formal assessments undertaken, which can be supported by tools such as Early Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (search [early ABLES](#) on the Departments website)
- consultation with the child's parents.

Children in receipt of Early Childhood Intervention Services may be eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten, but this should not be assumed. A full second year assessment process must be carried out for each individual child for whom a second year is being considered. The early childhood teacher should declare the child eligible if:

- the child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the VEYLDF (search [VEYLDF](#) on the Departments website) and
- there is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

### Applying for second year of funded kindergarten

The early childhood teacher must complete the following templates provided by the Department (search [kindergarten funding](#) on the Departments website for forms):

1. Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten form (submitted on KIM in the year prior to the second year of funded kindergarten)
2. Second Year Statement as the child transitions into a second year of funded kindergarten (to be retained with the child's enrolment record).

The Declaration of eligibility advises the Department that a child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten and provides the child's parent with written confirmation of eligibility. It can also be used when the child is re-enrolling at a service as evidence that they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place.

A parent/carer of a child applying for a second year of funded kindergarten must also apply for an exemption from school if the child is turning six at any point during the school year. Refer to page 44 for more information.

The process for applying for a second year of funded kindergarten is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: High level process: applying for a second year of funded kindergarten

The Term three plan is designed to assess the child's learning and development against the five outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and to develop goals and strategies to build the child's skills in key areas. This should help support the child's attendance at school in the following year.

The Second Year Discussion is conducted if the Term three plan goals have not been achieved. The discussion incorporates questions around the support required for the child to achieve outcomes and whether these are more likely to be achieved by attending school or a second year of kindergarten, and guides the decision-making process.

Second Year Statement provides information to facilitate the child's transition to second year kindergarten, and is equivalent to the Transition Learning and Development Statement. This is particularly important when the child is to attend a program with a different teacher.



## Timelines and tasks

The following table provides an indicative timeline to guide early childhood teachers in determining if a child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten, and identifies the processes and documents that need to be completed.

Search [kindergarten funding](#) on the Departments website for forms referenced in this table.

Table 1: Key timelines and tasks: applying for a second year of funded kindergarten

Timeline	Task
During term one and term two	As part of the regular assessment processes, identify children with an observed delay in learning and development who may benefit from a second year of funded kindergarten, using the <i>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework</i> outcomes.
End of term two	In collaboration with the child's parent, develop a <i>Term three plan for learning and development</i> which identifies strategies that focus on the developmental outcome areas where a delay has been identified and will be implemented in term three.
Towards the end of term three	Review the <i>Term three plan for learning and development</i> . Discuss the child's level of learning and development with the parent and use the <i>Second Year Discussion</i> questions to guide the conversation. Teachers and parents should carefully consider the implications of children attending prep in the year they turn seven when their grade peers may be turning five or six.
End of term three	<i>Evaluate the Term three plan</i> If the planning and discussion processes detailed above have been completed, and the parents agree that a second year of funded kindergarten will be the most appropriate environment to address the child's learning and development delay, and better outcomes will be achieved at kindergarten than if they go to school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete and submit a <i>Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten</i> using the KIM system by the last week of term three (NB – Declarations made after this date may make it difficult for re-enrolment since available places may already be allocated to new enrolments. Contact your Department office to discuss declarations after this date)</li> <li>provide a copy of the <i>Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten</i> to parents and retain a copy on the child's enrolment record</li> <li>ensure the child is re-enrolled for funded kindergarten in the following year</li> <li>retain (on the child's enrolment record) the <i>Term three plan for learning and development</i>, <i>Second Year Discussion</i>, and a copy of the <i>Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten</i>.</li> </ul>
Term four and beyond	Complete the Second Year Statement for children as they transition into a second year of funded kindergarten.  NB – if Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package documentation has been completed and stored in the child's enrolment record, this can be referred to, to avoid duplication of work.  If the parent subsequently decides to send the child to school, transfer the information from the Second Year Statement to the Transition Learning and Development Statement.

To support planning for the child and decision-making assistance, it is recommended the following professionals contribute information and advice about the child's level of learning and development where appropriate:

- Preschool Field Officer (see page 17 of the quick guide)
- Early Childhood Intervention Service Worker
- the child's Maternal and Child Health nurse (search [Maternal and Child Health](#) on the Departments website)
- family doctor or other allied health professionals
- School Principal.

For more information about transition to school, please see Appendix B.

## How funding is paid

Funding is paid in advance, in monthly payments as per kindergarten per capita funding.

## Long service and sick leave payments for educators employed prior to 1994

The Department holds funds accrued by educators employed in kindergartens prior to 24 January 1994.

All enquiries regarding payment to educators who were employed prior to 1994 and have become eligible for long service leave or sick leave after this time should be directed to the kindergarten payroll service contractor (page 46). Payment will be made in accordance with relevant legislation.

A service provider should only pay leave entitlements after checking that the educator is eligible for long service leave or sick leave.

The Department will only provide payment for sick leave if the service provider has already paid the equivalent of one full year's sick leave for that educator in the current calendar year.

To make a claim for a long service leave or sick leave payment, contact the kindergarten payroll service contractor for a Kindergarten long service leave pre-1994 form or a Kindergarten sick leave pre-1994 form. Funding for the sick leave entitlement is paid directly to the service provider as a payment separate from the payment cycle.

This page has been intentionally left blank









## 4 Operational requirements



Once a kindergarten funding application has been successful, the service provider must:

- continue to be an approved service provider and meet the core requirements as detailed on page 8, including meeting the relevant regulatory requirements
- continue to meet the criteria specific to the type(s) of funding which it receives, and
- meet the operational requirements (outlined in the navigation table overleaf).

In some cases service providers unable to meet operational requirements may be eligible for continued funding by applying to the Department for funding in exceptional circumstances.

### Operational requirements quick guide

The Operational requirements quick guide is intended to provide an overview of operational requirements and direct service providers to further information within this Guide and externally.

Service providers should read these requirements in conjunction with regulatory requirements (search [regulation and quality assessment](#) on the Departments website).

This page has been intentionally left blank

Operational criteria	Requirements	For further information
<b>1. Managing Quality</b> Outlines compliance with the NQF requirements if service providers are regulated by the NQF	Service providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standard (NQS).</li> <li>• work towards achieving an exceeding rating in all seven quality areas defined in the NQS</li> <li>• implement the practice principles of the VEYLDF</li> <li>• operate at an educator child ratio of 1:11 or less for children aged 36 months and older</li> <li>• services operating a bush kinder must adhere to the requirements of the National Law and National Regulations.</li> </ul>	Consult the NQS for advice on the seven quality areas (search <i>national quality framework</i> on the Departments website)  Search <i>VEYLDF</i> on the Departments website. Search <i>EYLF</i> at <a href="http://www.education.gov.au">www.education.gov.au</a>  Visit the Department’s website for compliance with National Law and National Regulations
<b>2. Managing enrolments</b> Providing equal access to all eligible children through enrolment procedures and policies	Service providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have policies in place to enable participation of all enrolled children</li> <li>• allocate spaces using the Priority of Access criteria – or if in receipt of CCB or CCR – comply with the Commonwealth Government’s policy for allocating places</li> <li>• have flexible processes for families and carers enrolling high priority children</li> <li>• have a locally agreed criteria to allocate places to non-high priority children</li> <li>• ensure kindergarten enrolment processes are clear and transparent</li> <li>• optimise available places and spaces (i.e. increase group size to full capacity, employ an additional assistant or a rotational model)</li> <li>• provide advice on late or early entry to kindergarten</li> <li>• sight an approved exemption from school form for children who turn six during the kindergarten year</li> <li>• include a copy of the letter from parents to the Department for early entry to school on the child’s enrolment record</li> <li>• comply with the ‘No Jab, No Play’ legislation.</li> </ul>	See page 42 See page 43 See page 43 See page 43  See page 44 See page 44 See page 44 See page 44
<b>3. Managing the service</b> Outlines business practice and principles, including governance and financial operations	Service providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• report their financial position to the Department each year Financial accountability reporting (FAR) requirements are set out in the service agreement</li> <li>• operate in accordance with good governance principles and practice</li> <li>• have a comprehensive written fees policy</li> <li>• keep budgets (whilst there is no requirement to submit annual budgets, the Department may request to examine budget calculations)</li> <li>• maintain accounts relating to staff entitlements, and a separate provisions account for leave entitlements</li> <li>• community-based not-for-profit organisations must use the Department’s contracted payroll service or certify use of an equivalent service</li> <li>• report alleged misappropriation of funds to Victoria Police and provide a serious incident report to the Department</li> <li>• ensure comparable insurance coverage for service providers not covered under the VMIA Community Service Organisations Education Program (CSO)</li> <li>• maintain an up-to-date Emergency Management Plan (EMP)</li> <li>• report emergency service closures to the appropriate Departmental regional office.</li> </ul>	For detailed information about FAR requirements, visit the Funded Agency Channel website and download the Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations Contact the Departmental regional office with any concerns about financial viability  See page 45 See page 45 See page 46 See page 46 Go to <a href="http://www.adppayroll.com.au">www.adppayroll.com.au</a> or email: <a href="mailto:payline_vic@au.adp.com">payline_vic@au.adp.com</a> See page 46 See page 47. Search <i>CSO Education Program</i> at <a href="http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au">www.vmia.vic.gov.au</a> See page 47 See page 47
<b>4. Managing teachers</b> Provides details on teaching standards and workforce practices	Service providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support teachers to practise in accordance with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</li> <li>• ensure that early childhood teachers and graduate teachers are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)</li> <li>• ensure that provisionally registered early childhood teachers are supported by a trained VIT registered teacher-mentor to achieve Proficient Teacher level</li> <li>• support registered teachers to complete professional development each year to maintain their VIT registration</li> <li>• ensure that registered early childhood teachers and educators understand their obligations around reporting child abuse</li> <li>• facilitate teachers access to the early childhood teacher validation process in accordance with applicable employment agreements</li> <li>• notify the Departmental regional office of teacher absence in instances where another registered early childhood teacher is not available to deliver the program</li> <li>• notify the Departmental regional office of a change in teacher</li> <li>• notify the Department regional office where a teacher is not immediately replaced to discuss funding arrangements.</li> </ul>	See page 48. Search <i>APST</i> at <a href="http://www.vit.vic.edu.au">www.vit.vic.edu.au</a> Visit the <i>Victorian Institute of Teaching</i> website for more information about teacher registration. Search <i>early childhood effective mentoring</i> on the Departments website  Search <i>mandatory reporting</i> on the Departments website See page 49 for Early childhood teacher validation process See page 49 for teacher absence See page 50 for change in teacher See page 50. Contact Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) by phone (03) 9489 3500 or email <a href="mailto:elaa@elaa.org.au">elaa@elaa.org.au</a> for further advice about teacher breaks

This page has been intentionally left blank

Operational criteria	Requirements	For further information
<b>5. Maintaining engagement of children and families</b> Covers strategies for improving access to kindergarten services, particularly for children who face barriers to participation	Service providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment</li> <li>• support families and children experiencing vulnerability to establish consistent attendance</li> <li>• improve access for children experiencing vulnerability</li> <li>• support children with additional needs and encourage their ongoing participation</li> <li>• undertake training and utilise resources for supporting children with additional needs</li> <li>• support the cultural inclusion and consistent attendance of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families and children</li> <li>• support the cultural inclusion and consistent attendance of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• ensure that children experiencing disability can access education on the same basis as children without disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>See page 50</p> <p>See page 50</p> <p>See page 50 and search <a href="#">VEYLDF</a> on the Departments website</p> <p>See page 51</p> <p>See Appendix B for list of resources</p> <p>See page 51</p> <p>See page 51</p> <p>See the Australian Government Disability Standards for Education 2005</p>
<b>6. Displaying information and communicating effectively</b> Summarises key information to be displayed at kindergarten services, and methods to communicate information effectively	Service providers must display: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the current Kindergarten Program Certificate</li> <li>• information promoting the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Start Kindergarten</li> <li>• operating times and name(s) of the qualified teachers delivering the program.</li> </ul> Service providers must communicate to parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice regarding children born between January and April about the best time to commence kindergarten</li> <li>• Session times, planned closures and child free days. This should be advised to families at program commencement.</li> <li>• that one years’ funded kindergarten has been claimed for their child</li> <li>• fees</li> <li>• waiting lists</li> <li>• access and inclusion policies</li> <li>• availability of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy where applicable</li> <li>• availability of Early Start Kindergarten where applicable</li> <li>• availability of Early Start Kindergarten extension grant where applicable.</li> </ul> Service providers must ensure early childhood teachers prepare a Transition Learning and Development Statement for all children	<p>See Appendix A – Glossary. For downloadable materials from the Department search <a href="#">kindergarten communications</a> on the Departments website</p> <p>See page 52 and search <a href="#">choosing a kindergarten</a> on the Departments website</p> <p>See page 52</p>
<b>7. Providing reports and data</b> Lists the required data that should be submitted to the Department	Service providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide accurate and current information in KIM</li> <li>• comply with reporting requirements which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– compliance with the Information Privacy Act 2000 and the Health Records Act 2001,</li> <li>– provide data to the Department upon request</li> <li>– store data securely</li> <li>– request parental consent to the sharing of information</li> </ul> </li> <li>• comply with data collection requirements of the service agreement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– undertake mandatory online data collection during annual confirmation</li> <li>– the annual August kindergarten census.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>See page 53</p> <p>See page 53</p> <p>See page 54</p> <p>See page 54</p>



This page has been intentionally left blank



## Further information

### 1. Managing quality

#### Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Ongoing improvement to kindergarten service delivery is a Victorian Government priority. The NQF and the VEYLDF drive quality and consistency across education and care services.

Providers of funded kindergartens are required to adhere to each aspect of the NQF and the VEYLDF.

Visit [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) for information about the NQF or search VEYLDF on the Department's website.

#### Child safe standards

From 1 January 2016, all early childhood services are required to comply with new child safe standards designed to ensure that organisations that work with children take steps to create a culture of child safety and protect children from all forms of abuse.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an early childhood service must have in place:

- strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

In complying with the child safe standards, the early childhood service must include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

For more information, search *child safe standards* on the Departments website.

## 2. Managing enrolments

### Priority of access criteria

Service providers must notify all families of the priority of access 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 criteria listed below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional Department office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

This criteria must be used by services providers when prioritising enrolments. Funding guidance is available from the Department's regional offices if required.

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

### Central enrolment schemes

Many councils operate a central enrolment or registration system for kindergarten services. Central enrolment schemes enable equitable access to kindergarten places for all eligible children within a municipality and support increased access to kindergarten through linkages between Maternal and Child Health services and kindergartens. Service providers are encouraged to approach their local government to discuss joining their central enrolment scheme. A list of local council contact details can be found by searching *council details* at [www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au).

### Flexible processes

Service providers should build flexibility into their enrolment processes that take into account the circumstances of families from priority groups (identified in page 42), for example exempting high priority children from registration fees. Where a service reserves places for late enrolments, the service should consider high priority children when determining how these places are filled.

### Locally agreed criteria for children not identified as high priority

Service providers may apply one or more locally agreed criteria to prioritise children and determine the order in which offers are made, such as residential proximity or a demonstrable link to the service. This criteria must be documented and communicated with families and kindergarten places should be allocated in accordance with anti-discrimination and human rights laws.

### Clear and transparent kindergarten enrolment processes

Services must ensure their application and enrolment policies:

- promote fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs
- adhere to the Department's priority of access requirements (as above)
- support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program including those who face barriers to participation
- do not inadvertently present barriers to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensure early entry applicants (children younger than 4 years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equal access to enrolment.

In order to achieve these objectives, enrolment policies must:

- comply with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination and human rights laws<sup>1</sup>
- be developed on the basis of local need, determined through consultation with the local community and key stakeholders such as local government
- support children who are experiencing disadvantage
- address issues of eligibility for funded places
- outline how waiting lists will be prioritised
- be effectively communicated to families and the local community.

### Early or late entry to kindergarten

Services should encourage families considering early or late entry to kindergarten to seek advice from early childhood professionals to inform their decision. This could include a prep teacher or principal at the family's school of choice, a Maternal and Child Health nurse, family doctor or speech therapist. A kindergarten educator should also meet the child in order to provide the family with a professional opinion about whether the child would benefit from late or early entry into a kindergarten program.

For children born between 1 January and 30 April, parents have a choice about whether they commence school in the year they turn five, or in the following year, and therefore whether they commence kindergarten in the year they turn four or the year they turn five.

Service providers should therefore:

- encourage families to carefully consider the best time for their child to start kindergarten, as all children learn and develop in different ways
- encourage families to consult with relevant early childhood professionals for guidance
- provide families with advice and reassurance about how the kindergarten program will support their child's learning and development
- advise families that children are expected to complete a full year of kindergarten in the year they enrol and begin attending and that funding is limited to one year for each child (unless they are eligible for an Early Start Kindergarten grant or a second year of funded kindergarten).

<sup>1</sup> Services may elect to seek independent legal advice if concerned about the compliance of their policies

### Exemption from school

Children who turn six at any time during the kindergarten year, including children attending a second year of funded kindergarten, must be exempted from attending school. Parents should be advised to apply for an exemption before the child starts kindergarten 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 six.

In this instance, service providers must:

- sight the approved exemption form
- note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record for later reporting through the annual confirmation process.

### Early entry to kindergarten

Early entry to kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child. However, it is important to note that most children who enrol early in kindergarten are not accepted for early entry into school, and the decision regarding early entry should be discussed with parents and take into account the following:

- children are not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend kindergarten early
- early entry to school requires a formal cognitive assessment that can only be undertaken once the child has turned four years of age and where the cost is met by parents. A child must be assessed as exceptionally gifted (WPPSI-IV results of at least 130 FSIQ) and considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if they do not commence school.
- applications for early entry to school are usually not determined until Term 4 of the year prior to the requested early entry to school
- children are eligible for only one year of funded kindergarten, so careful consideration should be made as to which year families enrol their child in kindergarten.

Should parents decide to request early entry to kindergarten for their child, the following requirements must be met:

- the child must be at least 3 years and six months on or before 30 April in the year they attend the funded kindergarten program
- parents must make a written request for early entry to school to either the Regional Director of the appropriate Regional Office or directly to the principal of a non-government school dependent on whether the child is intending to attend a government or non-government school
- parents must provide the kindergarten service provider with a written response from the Department or the non-government school acknowledging the family has requested early entry to school
- the kindergarten service provider must keep a copy of the written response from the Department or non-government school with the child's kindergarten enrolment records and upload a copy on KIM.

### No Jab, No Play

The 'No Jab, No Play' legislation aims to reduce the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases through increased immunisation rates in the community.

The legislation requires all children enrolling in early childhood education and care services to be up to date with their vaccinations or to meet the criteria for exemption at the point of enrolment. Services can obtain an up to date immunisation status from families up to two months prior to the first day of attendance at kindergarten in order to confirm kindergarten enrolment. The legislation does not require services to monitor or document the ongoing immunisation status of children following enrolment.

Prior to confirming enrolment, service providers must obtain evidence that the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age (via an immunisation status certificate), or
- is immunised in accordance with a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their vaccinations, or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.

Service providers:

- may give eligible children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage a 16 week grace period to produce proof of up-to-date immunisation and
- should provide information and assistance to families about the immunisation process and
- must keep immunisation documentation with the child's enrolment record in accordance with the applicable regulations.

While the legislation requires that services obtain an up-to-date immunisation status certificate prior to confirming a child's enrolment, a two month period prior to the first date of attendance has been included in order to allow time for the enrolment process to be completed before the child begins attending the service, and to provide certainty for parents and services with regard to enrolments. You may therefore find it preferable – for your administrative practices and for the convenience



of parents – to obtain and process immunisation status certificates as far in advance as possible prior to the first day of kindergarten. A toolkit to assist kindergarten service providers with their responsibilities and record management can be found by searching Immunisation enrolment toolkit on [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au). A frequently asked questions fact sheet is also available by searching no jab no play FAQ at [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)

Section 3 of the Immunisation Toolkit provides details about how to assess whether a child's immunisations are up to date. Section 7 of the Toolkit contains a key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment to assist services to assess whether a child's enrolment can be confirmed.

### 3. Managing the service

#### Good governance practices

Service providers are expected to operate in accordance with good governance principles by incorporating the following principles into their practices:

- accountability to assess whether the service is performing effectively, efficiently and ethically in the best interests of all stakeholders, and in accordance with the law, regulations, probity, accountability and openness
- leadership to develop a vision, plans, policies and strategies focused on improving outcomes and performance, and building strong and productive partnerships between all stakeholders.

National Quality Framework (NQF) approved services are also required to meet the governance standards under National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7 'Leadership and service management', specifically:

- effective leadership that promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
- a commitment to continuous improvement
- administrative systems that enable effective management of a quality service.

Governance of private sector organisations is also subject to corporate law requirements.

The Department funds the Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) to assist service providers receiving kindergarten funding to operate in accordance with good governance and sound operation and management principles, with a particular focus on meeting the requirements of the NQF. The support is provided through an advisory service (telephone and email), online and face-to-face training, resource materials, and intensive support to service providers with complex management issues.

For further information visit [www.elaa.org.au](http://www.elaa.org.au).

#### Good financial practices

Services should be able to demonstrate good financial management policies, procedures and practices. This includes policies about fees, financial delegations, fund raising, purchasing, budgeting and requirements for provisions and reserves.

#### Written fees policy

Service providers receiving kindergarten funding are required to have a comprehensive written fees policy.

The fees policy must provide information about:

- the total annual fee amount, including all non-refundable components (such as excursions, maintenance costs, etc.)
- payment options and procedures (for example, payment plans for low income families)
- action that will be taken if fees are not paid (refer to maintaining engagement of families and children, on page 50)
- any refundable levies (if applicable)
- plans for fundraising (if applicable)
- how parents will be notified of any fee changes throughout the year
- any deposits required to secure a place on a waiting list or to accept an offered place (note that deposits should not act as a barrier to enrolment of vulnerable children, refer to maintaining engagement of families and children, on page 50)
- how the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Start Kindergarten grants are applied and how eligible families access subsidies
- exempting children from priority groups (see page 42) from enrolment fees
- operating hours including term dates, planned closures and additional hours to account for closures.

When calculating annual fees, service providers should set an amount that balances the capacity of parents to pay, the provision of a high-quality service and the overall financial viability of the service.

### Keep budgets

Annual budgets serve as an important tool for service providers to monitor their financial performance.

When budgeting, service providers should consider all anticipated expenditure and costs. The difference between income (from government funding and other sources) and anticipated expenditure (such as staffing, maintenance costs and excursions) are fundamental to determining the annual fees to be charged for each family. Refundable levies should not be factored into annual fees and should not act as a barrier to participation.

The Department funds ELAA to provide advice to kindergarten service providers on preparing budgets – see [www.elaa.org.au](http://www.elaa.org.au) for more information.

### Maintain accounts

Service providers are required to:

- maintain detailed staff records to ascertain staff entitlements
- keep a separate provisions account for staff long service leave and sick leave entitlements
- budget for and deposit into the provisions account on an annual basis.

### Payroll

The Department funds a free payroll service for the following services:

- a community-based, not-for-profit incorporated association
- a co-operative operating through a committee of management
- an Early Years Management organisation that is not a local government.

The payroll service covers early childhood staff and/or ancillary staff who work at a service or who provide administrative, management or professional support from a central office/location.

The payroll contractor provides the following support services:

- calculation and processing of staff salaries and other entitlements
- processing of taxation, superannuation and other contributions as required
- electronic lodgement of employer declaration forms
- payslips and payment summaries
- fortnightly reports of salary expenditure for management bodies
- telephone and email advisory service
- training for committees of management
- advice regarding pay and entitlements
- manages assessment of entitlements accrued by staff employed in Victorian kindergartens prior to 24 January 1994.

This payroll service is currently provided by ADP. Go to [www.adppayroll.com.au](http://www.adppayroll.com.au) for more information.

Community-based, not-for-profit organisations that do not use the Department's contracted service must certify that they use an equivalent payroll service in KIM.

### Misappropriation of funds

In addition to the Department's requirements, there are statutory obligations for corporations and incorporated associations, particularly in terms of financial management and accountability. For incorporated committees of management, there are legal obligations under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

If a service provider believes funds have been misappropriated, it has a duty to act on this suspicion by:

- notifying the Department
- organising an audit of relevant financial records relieving the person suspected of the misappropriation of any financial responsibilities until resolution
- reporting to Victoria Police for investigation.



### Community Service Organisation Education Program insurance

Community Service Organisation (CSO) Education Program insurance may be available to community service organisations that receive direct funding from the Department.

The CSO is managed by the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) and provides insurance coverage for:

- public and products liability
- professional indemnity
- directors' and officers' liability
- entity fidelity
- volunteers' personal accident (injury).

Insured service providers may also be covered for other community service activities provided by the service provider, such as kindergarten or activity groups for three-year-old children or occasional care.

In relation to kindergarten services that are part of an Early Years Management organisation:

- Parent advisory committees that are part of a funded Early Years Management organisation are eligible for CSO Education Program insurance where they are incorporated entities in their own right and support the operation of kindergarten. In these cases, the incorporated parent advisory committee will receive insurance documentation from the VMIA in their name.
- Where a parent advisory committee is not incorporated, they are insured and noted under the Early Years Management organisations CSO Education Program insurance policy.

The following service providers are not covered by the CSO Education Program and are required to make their own insurance arrangements:

- schools
- local government authorities
- church organisations
- tertiary education institutions
- private for-profit organisations
- hospitals
- organisations with head offices in a state other than Victoria
- unfunded organisations that may share premises with funded service providers.

However, in cases where funding is transacted through a service agreement with a local government authority, church organisation or tertiary education institution and the funded kindergarten program is delivered by an incorporated association, the incorporated association is covered by the CSO Education Program.

Search *CSO Education Program* at [www.vmia.vic.gov.au](http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au) for more information.

Community based organisations delivering a funded kindergarten program on a school site should contact their Departmental regional office for further information if required.

### Emergency management

All services are required to:

- have an emergency management plan in place
- develop plans in consultation with the appropriate Departmental regional office, local community and emergency services, and other relevant stakeholders
- regularly review plans and update them to reflect the local needs of the community.

Services listed on the Department's Bushfire At-Risk Register must submit an emergency management plan to their Departmental regional office annually (search *bushfires and grassfires* on the Department's website).

### Service closure in response to an emergency

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for a service to close for safety purposes. In this event, the service provider must report to the appropriate Departmental regional office:

- how many children have been affected
- how long the service may be closed
- any damage that has been sustained
- when the service resumes after closure.

The service provider should have a closure policy which should be clearly communicated to parents at the beginning of the kindergarten year. The closure policy should contain:

- identification of risks that might lead to closure, including local environment risks e.g. floods, bushfires or heatwaves
- the regulatory obligations of the service provider
- a communication plan and strategies for disseminating information about closure due to imminent risk.

#### Mandatory closure

Some kindergarten services have been identified as being at high fire risk and must close on days declared a Code Red Fire Danger Rating Day. Services have been advised of their inclusion on the Bushfire At-Risk Register.

Service providers in receipt of funding will experience no financial disadvantage regarding kindergarten funding for mandatory closures. Where services sustain repeated closures, they should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss their individual financial circumstances and any related viability issues.

#### Voluntary closures

It is recommended that service providers develop policies about voluntary closures.

The voluntary closure policy should be based on local research and discussion with the appropriate Departmental regional office (and council where the service is operated from a council owned building), and include the following points:

- criteria for voluntary closure – what the local triggers are and how the decision will be made
- impact of closure on the capacity to deliver the required hours of service (for example, make-up days)
- financial implications (fees, funding and Child Care Benefit).

Generally such closures will not impact on kindergarten funding from the Department.

Services approved for Commonwealth Child Care Benefit funding may contact the Commonwealth Government to enquire about emergency Child Care Benefit.

### 4. Managing teachers

#### Early childhood teacher professional standards

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) apply to early childhood teachers. All service providers in receipt of kindergarten funding are required to incorporate the use of the APST into the teacher's performance and development process (search *standards* at [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)).

The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics should also guide teachers practice.

#### Professional development

The Department provides a range of support for the Victorian early childhood workforce including:

- free mentor training for experienced early childhood teachers to become mentors with the skills and knowledge to support new beginning early childhood teachers
- free online eLearning module *Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations for the Early Childhood Sector*
- free online Autism Spectrum Disorder Learning Modules that supports early childhood professionals to develop a greater understanding of young children on the autism spectrum in their setting and to plan inclusive programs that support their learning and development
- free online professional learning in the use of Early ABLES, an online assessment for learning tool to help educators create and provide a more tailored learning experience for children aged two to five years with disabilities or developmental delay
- scholarship fund for early childhood staff to upgrade early childhood qualifications
- scholarship fund supporting Aboriginal people to undertake an early childhood qualification
- an incentive fund to assist service providers to attract and retain qualified early childhood teachers in hard-to-staff positions.

More information about these initiatives to support the workforce can be found on the Department's website.

The following organisations also offer opportunities to build the capacity of early childhood professionals to provide quality educational experiences, including:

- Gowrie Victoria offer training, resources and advice, with information available at: [www.gowrievictoria.org.au](http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au)
- Bastow Institute offer courses designed to build capacity of leaders in early childhood settings, with information available at: [www.bastow.vic.edu.au](http://www.bastow.vic.edu.au).

### Early childhood teacher validation process

The salary structure and salary progression requirements for early childhood teachers are specified in the Victorian early childhood education enterprise agreements. This includes a process, where applicable, for salary progression involving an independent assessment to 'validate' or endorse reclassification to a higher salary level.

All service providers in receipt of kindergarten funding are required to provide teachers with access to the early childhood teacher validation process.

The Vocational Education and Training assessment service (VETASSESS) manage and administer the service, and is available free of charge to early childhood teachers delivering a funded kindergarten program. VETASSESS employs validators to independently assess applications for reclassification.

For further information about the validation process for early childhood teachers refer to the relevant Victorian enterprise agreement or go to [www.vetassess.com.au](http://www.vetassess.com.au).

### Teacher absence

#### Emergency or relief teachers

At certain times, service providers may find it necessary to employ an emergency or relief teacher to deliver the kindergarten program (for example, when the teacher is ill).

If, on a program delivery day, the service provider is unable to find an early childhood teacher or a primary teacher to relieve on that day, it must:

- notify the local Departmental regional office as to whether it has cancelled the session or engaged a diploma qualified educator to take the session
- if a diploma qualified educator is engaged, post a sign to indicate that a teacher will not be running the session and it will not operate as a kindergarten program for that day
- consider any relevant regulatory requirements, particularly when primary teachers are engaged, and should contact the Department's Quality and Assessment Regulation Division to ensure continued compliance with the National Law and National Regulations.

#### Replacing an early childhood teacher on leave

If an early childhood teacher is absent from the service because of short-term illness or leave (for a period of up to, but not exceeding, 12 weeks), the service provider can continue to receive kindergarten funding if the teacher is replaced by:

- a primary teacher, or
- an educator who holds an early childhood diploma and has completed 50 per cent of studies towards a qualification included on the ACECQA list of approved early childhood qualifications.

In these instances, the service must notify the regional Department office immediately to inform them of the arrangements. Additionally, service providers should contact the Department's Quality and Assessment Regulation Division to ensure continued compliance with the National Law and National Regulations.

For absence exceeding 12 weeks the teacher must be replaced by another qualified early childhood teacher, unless exceptional circumstances apply.





## Change of teacher

### Temporarily replacing an early childhood teacher who has left a service

Service providers wishing to replace an early childhood teacher who has left the service with an educator who is not a registered early childhood teacher may not be eligible to receive kindergarten funding. The appropriate Departmental regional office should be contacted before proceeding with employment.

### Notifying the Department of a change in teacher

When there is a change in the early childhood teacher delivering the funded kindergarten program, the service provider must:

- confirm that the new teacher is VIT registered
- remove the previous teacher from the KIM system and add the new teacher's details
- for teacher absences other than emergency, the service provider must also submit updated teacher details using the KIM system.

### Funding arrangements

If a qualified teacher permanently leaves a service and is not immediately replaced, service providers may be able to receive continued funding where:

- the service provider is actively working to recruit a new qualified early childhood teacher, and
- the kindergarten program will be planned and delivered by:
  - a primary teacher, or
  - an educator with an early childhood diploma who is actively working towards an early childhood teaching qualification on the list published by ACECQA and has completed at least 50 per cent of their studies towards the qualification.

Service providers must:

- contact the appropriate Departmental regional office as soon as possible to seek approval for continued funding
- remain compliant with regulatory requirements during the time the kindergarten program is not being delivered by a qualified early childhood. Where a service is unable to remain compliant they should contact the Department's Quality and Assessment Regulation Division.

## 5. Maintaining engagement of children and families

### Create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment

In accordance with the [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](#), service providers should create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment, and ensure that:

- the service is a welcoming and culturally safe environment for families approaching for the first time
- families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development experiences
- interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood, valued and respected.

### Maintaining access for all children

- A funded kindergarten service should not temporarily or permanently exclude a child because of challenging behaviour. If such a situation does arise, services should always seek support from the Department for managing the situation.

### Support families and children experiencing vulnerability to establish consistent attendance

Service providers should work to:

- ensure engagement with families, particularly on their first visit
- ensure educators are equipped to deliver a program that is inclusive of the individual abilities of all children
- ensure every child experiences success in their learning and development.

### Improve access for children experiencing vulnerability

Service providers may find it challenging to engage families experiencing vulnerability. Australian research confirms that the families most in need are those least likely to access programs, with the very factors that make them vulnerable often acting as barriers to their seeking and obtaining help and support.

The Centre for Community Child Health Policy Brief 'Engaging Marginalised and Vulnerable Families' provides the following advice for services engaging with vulnerable families:

*"The way in which services engage and work with families is critical: professionals need to respond to family priorities, build on family strengths, and establish partnerships that involve shared decision making, thereby giving families greater control over their lives."*

*Every service needs to build its capacity to reach and engage vulnerable families as it is highly unlikely a service will have no vulnerable children and parents among its potential clients. This includes helping staff to build their capacity to engage families as well as minimising the practical or structural barriers to parents that prevent them from easily accessing services.”<sup>2</sup>*

Service providers should support teachers to make use of training opportunities and available resources to increase their understanding of the needs of vulnerable children.

#### Support for children with additional needs

Service providers should be aware of the Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care; a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education and Training, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Early Learning Association Australia.

The Agreement includes a role for a local government contact to assist case workers to find suitable early childhood education and care services in the LGA. Secure information sharing to locate children can be provided to the local government contact on a case by case basis.

Service providers need to adhere to the Agreement and in particular:

- set out clear roles and responsibilities in relation to children in out-of-home care that may be attending their service
- adopt flexible approaches to enable engagement
- work collaboratively with carers and other services to support children’s ongoing participation
- outline a process for implementation of the Agreement and for monitoring outcomes.

#### Support for Aboriginal children

It is a priority of the Victorian Government to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people, and a priority of the Department to increase Aboriginal inclusion and participation in kindergarten programs. The Department provides Early Start Kindergarten funding and the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy to directly support Aboriginal children to access and participate in a kindergarten program (see funding quick guide page 15).

Further resources to support engagement include:

- **Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs)** KESOs seek to increase the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children in kindergarten programs. Services providers can contact KESOs through the Department’s regional offices for advice on how to include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait culture in the learning experience. KESOs can also provide information and support to the families of Aboriginal children, communities, kindergarten staff and management.
- **Koorie Preschool Assistants (KPSAs)** KPSAs are employed by community-based organisations, with funding provided by the Department. KPSAs work with service providers that deliver kindergarten programs to provide support, increase participation of Aboriginal children, encourage involvement of Aboriginal families and communities, and promote the delivery of culturally inclusive programs.
- **Commonwealth Support for Aboriginal children** The Commonwealth Government introduced the Indigenous Advancement Strategy in June 2014, replacing a number of Commonwealth funded Indigenous programs. Through this new strategy, early childhood services and schools are able to apply for grants that support the outcomes of the strategy through a competitive open grant process.

#### Support for children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background

##### FKA Children’s Services

The Department funds FKA Children’s Services to provide:

- advice and information on improving access to kindergarten programs for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability
- casual bilingual workers to assist with the participation of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in kindergarten programs
- training on inclusive practice for early childhood staff working with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in kindergarten programs
- language assessments for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds attending kindergarten programs
- access to resource sheets.

Visit [www.fka.com.au](http://www.fka.com.au) for more information about their services.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Community Child Health, 2010, Policy Brief No 18 2010: Engaging Marginalised and Vulnerable Families, page 4.

### Victorian Interpreting and Translating service (VITS)

The Department funds VITS to provide interpreter services. This is particularly valuable when discussing an individual child's learning and development progress with parents and to support the transition to school process.

VITS provides two types of language services:

- telephone interpreting
- on-site interpreting, both spoken and in sign languages.

Visit the VITS website to book an interpreter, or phone (03) 9281 1955 to access telephone interpreting services to talk about kindergarten programs and a child's progress in a variety of languages.

VITS is not funded to provide translation of documents.

### 6. Displaying information and communicating effectively

#### Offer pre-kindergarten advice

Service providers should provide families with information to help them determine the best time for their child to start kindergarten, including:

- every child's eligibility to receive one year of kindergarten before commencing school (unless they are eligible for an Early Start Kindergarten grant or for a second year of funded kindergarten)
- the choice that parents with children born between January and April have regarding whether their child attends kindergarten the year they turn 4 or 5 years of age (see page 43)
- information about the resources and professional advice available to assist families with decision making including early childhood and prep teachers, school principals and maternal and child health nurses.

#### Communication with families

At the beginning of the kindergarten year, service providers must provide all families with each of the following when a child enrolls and attends a funded kindergarten program:

- written confirmation that they are receiving a funded kindergarten program
- a fees policy, with an explanation of what it means and what families are required to pay (see fees policy page 45)
- a list of the days and times the service will operate, including planned closures for activities such as staff development and training
- long day care services providing an integrated kindergarten program must provide families with details of out of pocket expenses relating to the non-funded part of the program they are accessing
- information about additional support available to enhance the learning and development needs of all children including fee subsidies and grants
- information about why personal information is collected from families and how it is stored (for more information see page 53)
- information about the service's emergency management plan (see page 47)
- information about how families can be involved and contribute to the kindergarten program
- encourage parents to begin the process of enrolling in school in a timely manner (primary schools may begin accepting enrolments as early as May of the year before a child is due to start school).

For information relating the school enrolments, transition support and information sharing, please see Appendix B.

#### Transition Learning and Development Statements

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

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

In fourth term, service providers must provide each family with a completed Transition Statement for their child (with the early childhood educator section completed). With parental permission, the service should then pass the statement on to the nominated school and if appropriate the Out of School Hours Program.

Service providers are required to report on the completion of Transition Statements from the previous year through the annual kindergarten data collection.



The Department provides resources and guidance to assist service providers to meet this requirement, including the *Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit*, and information about starting school for families of future prep children. Search *Transition Learning and Development Statement* on the Department's website.

## 7. Providing reports and data

### Accurate and current information

The Department uses data entered into KIM to determine eligibility for funding, calculate funding entitlements, provide data to State and Commonwealth governments and for planning purposes. Service providers are accountable for the information they provide and must ensure data entered on KIM is current and accurate. Service providers are required to provide the following information:

- early childhood teachers – professional development hours, contact hours and number of children taught must be updated each year and qualifications updated when required
- other educators – professional development hours must be updated each year and qualifications updated when required
- program details – hours and/or groups
- details of the children enrolled in the funded kindergarten program in the year prior to school including eligibility for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, Early Start Kindergarten or a second year of funded kindergarten
- other information as requested by the Department.

Once teachers, other educators and program details have been entered in KIM, they will remain in KIM each year until they are removed.

For training and support on KIM see Appendix B.

### Comply with reporting requirements

Service providers must:

1. Comply with the Information Privacy Act 2000 and the Health Records Act 2001, and be guided by the *Department's Information Privacy Policy*.

When requesting personal information, providers should:

- collect only the information that is needed for the specified purpose
- ensure the person knows why the information is being collected and how it will be used
- use and disclose information only for the purpose for which it is collected, unless otherwise required by law
- store information securely, protecting it from unauthorised access
- retain information for the required period
- provide the person with access to their own information and the right to seek its correction.

2. Provide data to the Department

Data should be provided about the funded kindergarten program during the annual confirmation of kindergarten data and the August kindergarten census data collections. Additional child level data may be requested regarding Early Start Kindergarten enrolments at certain periods during the year.



### 3. Update kindergarten program data in the KIM system

Update KIM when there has been a change at a service that may affect funding, including:

- change in teacher delivering the program or
- change in the teacher’s qualification
- change in enrolment numbers
- change in numbers of children eligible for subsidies
- change in the program hours.

### 4. Store data securely

Children’s enrolment records, including second year documentation and Transition, Learning and Development statements, should be stored in a secure location that is not accessible to individuals other than authorised staff of the service provider and the Department. The child’s parents and representatives of the Department are entitled to access this information at any time, upon request.

### 5. Request and document parental consent to the sharing of information between teachers and other professionals working with their children

Services must be sensitive regarding the collection and sharing of information from families so that privacy concerns do not act as a barrier to their participation in a kindergarten program.

### Comply with service agreement on data collection

Service providers are required to:

- undertake two mandatory online data collections each year (see below) within the required timeframes. Funding may be withheld or ceased if information is not submitted.
- contact the Departmental regional office prior to the closing date if difficulties are encountered when submitting data
- ensure up-to-date information is provided on KIM that may affect funding entitlements or eligibility.

### Annual confirmation data collection

By 30 April each year service providers must complete the annual confirmation process using KIM, and submit:

- ‘child level’ data relating to children enrolled in a kindergarten program in the year before school
- data concerning the service provider, service and teachers
- the number of 3 year old children enrolled and the hours per week the 3 year old program is available (if the service offers a 3 year old program or a combined 3 and 4 year old program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher)
- the number of Transition Statements completed and forwarded to schools for children enrolled in the previous year
- where payment of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy resulted in a surplus greater than \$5,000, how surplus funds were spent
- total number of staff with early childhood teaching qualifications and their qualification level
- other information as requested by the Department.

### Required information for annual confirmation

Service providers are required to collect information from parents at the time of enrolment, which should be kept with the child's enrolment record and used when completing the annual confirmation data collection process.

Service providers are required to:

- record the accurate name, address and date of birth of each child. This must be verified through viewing satisfactory evidence of the child's identity through the Child Care Management System or provided by the child's family during enrolment. This can include:
  - birth certificate
  - passport
  - travel document for non-Australian born children.
- enrol the child using the name stated on the identification document. This should not be changed without the consent of both parents or by direction of a court order.
- record information about the child, including whether the child:
  - is living at home with parents and family or is living in Out-of-Home care (foster care, permanent care or kinship care)
  - has been identified by a parent, guardian or carer as Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
  - the child's immunisation status
  - has a diagnosed disability or developmental delay
  - is receiving a second year of funded kindergarten
  - is eligible to receive the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy or Early Start Kindergarten, (include date and source of advice of eligibility)
  - received an Early Start Kindergarten grant or participated in an Access to Early Learning program in the year prior and is eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten extension grant
  - applied for, or is going to be, early or late entry to school.
- For children eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten grant, service providers should further provide information about:
  - if the child is known to Child Protection or Child FIRST
  - if the child's parents have given permission to share information from and with Maternal and Child Health Service
  - if the child is living at home with parents and family or is living in out-of-home care (foster care, permanent care or kinship care)
  - the child's immunisation status.
- record information about the teacher who will plan and deliver the program, including:
  - the teacher's name, gender and date of birth
  - the teacher's VIT number
  - the teacher's qualification details including the university, course and year awarded (a copy of the qualifications and if applicable, a letter of equivalency must also be provided)
  - the teacher's hours of employment and the number of children taught by the teacher in the funded kindergarten program
  - the award or industrial agreement under which the teacher is employed and the level at which they are classified and paid
  - the total number of hours of professional development that were undertaken by the teacher in the previous year.



This page has been intentionally left blank





## 5 Early Years Management (formerly Kindergarten Cluster Management)



Early Years Management organisations (formerly Kindergarten Cluster Managers) are the funded and approved provider of all services in their organisation. The Early Years Management policy framework and Early Years Management kindergarten guidelines are available on the Departments website.

Early Years Management:

- provides kindergarten staff with professional employment arrangements, including professional development and networking opportunities
- increases the sustainability and coordination of early years services, particularly in regional and rural areas
- facilitates the provision of targeted support to vulnerable children and families to improve access and participation in kindergarten programs.

### Joining an Early Years Management organisation

Committees of management of services interested in joining an Early Years Management organisation should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to find out about local Early Years Management organisations operating in their area.

### Operational requirements

Service providers in receipt of Early Years Management funding will be monitored using the Early Years Management outcomes and performance framework. Monitoring and review will take place on a quarterly basis in conjunction with the Department regional office.

Search [Early Years Management kindergarten guidelines](#) on the Departments website.



## Funding for Early Years Management

Early Years Management funding is prioritised for community-based, parent run services to improve their sustainability and the quality of service provision. Early Years Management funding is additional to the per capita grants that service providers receive for each eligible child attending funded kindergarten programs at their services.

Funding is subject to the Early Years Management organisation meeting operational requirements, including the requirement to work towards the Early Years Management outcomes and performance framework, with actions agreed quarterly with the appropriate Departmental regional office.

Grant type	Purpose	Funding
<b>Annual Early Years Management grant</b>	For each kindergarten location managed by an Early Years Management organisation that offers a funded kindergarten program, for the management and coordination of the service.	<p>Annual payment subject to price indexation.</p> <p>When a service provider is approved as an Early Years Management organisation, Early Years Management grant payments are made for each approved location that the organisation has added as part of base funding, paid on a monthly basis in accordance with the service agreement.</p> <p>Search <a href="#">kindergarten funding</a> on the Departments website for current funding amount.</p>
<b>Establishment grant</b>	For newly established and approved Early Years Management organisations to support the establishment of strong internal governance practices.	<p>Paid as one-off lump sum payment on commencement of funding.</p> <p>Search <a href="#">kindergarten funding</a> on the Departments website for current funding amount.</p>
<b>Start-up grant</b>	For any new kindergarten location added to an Early Years Management organisation, to assist service providers with the cost of integrating the new service into the Early Years Management organisation.	<p>Paid as one-off lump sum payment on commencement of funding.</p> <p>Search <a href="#">kindergarten funding</a> on the Departments website for current funding amount.</p>
<b>Transition grant</b>	In some cases, complex issues related to financial and industrial matters are not clearly understood or declared at the time of a service transferring to an Early Years Management organisation. This grant is available to support the considerable effort and cost for an Early Years Management organisation to resolve these issues.	<p>One-off payment.</p> <p>Early Years Management organisations may apply for the grant up to six months after the service has been approved to transition into their organisation.</p> <p>Early Years Management organisations should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss eligibility and to obtain a copy of the <i>Application for a transition grant to support the transfer of a service with complex issues into an Early Years Management arrangement</i>.</p> <p>Processing applications for the transition grant can take 4–6 weeks.</p> <p>Search <a href="#">kindergarten funding</a> on the Departments website for current funding amount.</p>



## Adding an existing kindergarten service to an Early Years Management organisation

An Early Years Management organisation can apply to the Department to take on additional eligible kindergarten services at any time. Eligible services must meet the following criteria:

### Criteria for adding a service to an approved Early Years Management organisation

- The service is a community-based service.
- The Early Years Management organisation has discussed becoming the approved provider for the service:
  - with the appropriate Departmental regional office, and
  - with the local government, particularly where the service operates from a council-owned building.
- The Early Years Management organisation already operates services within the local government area (LGA), or
- The Early Years Management organisation has discussed and has approval from the local council of their intention to operate services within the LGA and how they can be included in the local Municipal Early Years Plan.

## Adding a new service

If an Early Years Management organisation wishes to add a new service, the Early Years Management organisation should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss their intention to add a service.

If the Departmental regional office is supportive of the application and the Early Years Management organisation wishes to receive the Early Years Management annual grant for the service, the Early Years Management organisation must add the new service in KIM. Processing applications to add a service can take 4-6 weeks.

Visit the Department's website or the KIM home page to download KIM quick reference guide: *How to apply for cluster management funding (for an approved Kindergarten Cluster Manager)*.

See the [Early Years Management kindergarten operational guidelines](#) for further information.

Application for service approval is a regulatory requirement that must be carried out separately from applying for kindergarten funding and applying for Early Years Management funding.

Kindergarten funding and Early Years Management funding will not be granted until service approval has been confirmed by the Victorian Regulatory Authority.

## How funding works

Funding is backdated to the first day of the month after a complete application (that is an application containing all information required to enable a funding decision) is received, or at the Department's discretion. Applications received from October onwards will only be funded from the start of the next calendar year.

Payments generally commence the month after funding is approved. In the case of a transfer that has been carried out within the required timelines, the transferring Early Years Management organisation will receive pro rata, Early Years Management grant payments calculated up to the date on which it no longer operated the service.

Funding will be processed in line with the monthly payment cycle to the Early Years Management organisation and the service agreement will be updated with details of the additional service.

## Inactive services in Early Years Management

If a service ceases to offer a funded kindergarten program, the Early Years Management organisation should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office prior to formally requesting cessation of funding using the KIM system. Early notification is important to avoid overpayments that may need to be recouped. Early Years Management organisations must also notify the local council, particularly if the service is operated from a council-owned facility.

In the event of cessation of funding, the Kindergarten Program Certificate should be returned to the appropriate Departmental regional office. The organisation may continue to receive Early Years Management payments for that location, following negotiation and approval of arrangements with the appropriate Departmental regional office. Early Years Management funding may continue provided:

- the Early Years Management organisation continues to be the approved provider of the service
- continued funding is in the best interest of the local community
- There is a business plan available that outlines the approach to supporting the service to become operational in the next year. Grants may be withdrawn if the service does not recommence within one year.



This page has been intentionally left blank





## 6 How to...



### How to become a funded service provider

A high level summary of how to become a funded service provider is set out in Figure 2.

Service providers that have never received kindergarten funding from the Department, or those that have received kindergarten funding in the past but are not currently in receipt of kindergarten funding should contact:

- the appropriate Departmental regional office to discuss their intention to apply for funding
- the relevant local council(s) to discuss their service(s) in the context of the Municipal Early Years Plan and local demand for kindergarten.

Once the service provider has contacted the Departmental regional office and the local council and has been advised to proceed, the service provider must complete an expression of interest for kindergarten funding and submit it to the regional office.

Expressions of interest should be submitted by 30 September to receive pro rata funding for the current year.

After the expression of interest has been endorsed by the Departmental regional office, service providers are required to enter into a service agreement with the Department and register to access the Department's online KIM system (see below). Funding will only commence after the service provider has added its service(s) in KIM and completed the annual confirmation data collection.

Service providers wishing to become an Early Years Management organisation see page 57.

Figure 2: High level process for becoming a funded service provider



## How to apply for funding for a service

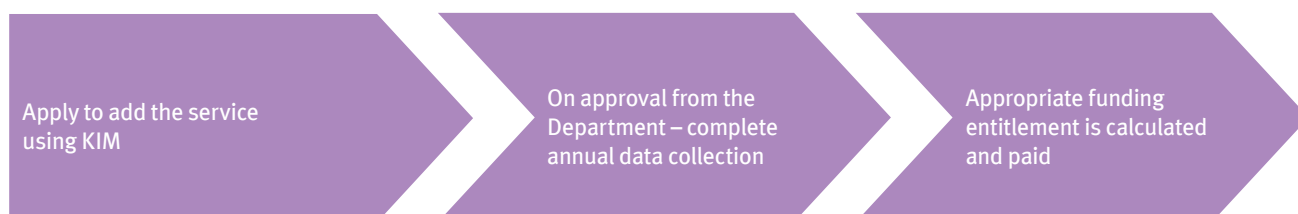
To make an application, service providers must satisfy the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2 and must have:

- a service agreement in place with the Department and
- access to the KIM system.

## How to add a service for funding

Providers with service agreements in place who do not currently operate a funded kindergarten program, or wish to apply for funding for a new service, must apply to add the service on the KIM system. This is summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3: How to add a service for funding



New funding is backdated to the first day of the month after a completed application (that is an application containing all information required to enable a funding decision) is received, or at the Department's discretion.

- Payments generally commence the month after funding is approved
- Applications for funding for new services must be received prior to 30 October each year; after this time service providers must wait until 1 January to add the service in KIM and will only be funded from the start of the following calendar year.

Kindergarten funding will not be paid until service approval has been confirmed by the Victorian Regulatory Authority and the service has completed the annual confirmation data collection in KIM.

Service providers wishing to add a service offering a funded kindergarten program that is currently being operated by another service provider should refer to *How to transfer funding for a service* below.

Figure 4: Transferring funding



## How to transfer funding for a service

Transfer of funding can only occur between existing service providers who currently receive kindergarten funding from the Department.

When a service that is currently offering a funded kindergarten program is being transferred from one service provider to another, both service providers must:

- contact the appropriate Departmental regional office at least two months in advance of the transfer
- obtain advice on how to carry out the transfer of funding without interruption.

This process must occur before the Notification of transfer of service approval is submitted to the Regulatory Authority.

In addition, where the service is operating from a council-owned building the service must contact the council to discuss any lease/licencing agreements in place or any other agreement that may be affected e.g. maintenance contracts.

Service providers should be aware that transfer of service approval is a regulatory requirement that must be carried out separately from applying to transfer kindergarten funding. Funding will not be transferred until the transfer of service approval has been approved by the Victorian Regulatory Authority.



In accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the transferring service provider and the receiving service provider must jointly notify the Victorian Regulatory Authority of the transfer at least 42 days before the transfer is intended to take effect. In order to transfer funding, the transferring service provider and receiving service providers are both required to provide information about the transfer using KIM.

Prior to entering the transfer information in KIM, the transferring service provider must first ensure that they have completed the annual confirmation data collection for the service.

Services are advised to complete the transfer application process in November.

The transferring service provider must also notify families that details of the children attending the service will be transferred to the receiving service provider.

The transferring and receiving service providers are responsible for informing the Department and local council of the agreed transfer date. The transfer date is the agreed date that the transferring service provider stops operating the service and the receiving service provider begins operating the service. Note that this date must not be prior to the regulatory authority's approved transfer of service approval date.

The funding transfer application will only be approved by the Department after the transfer of service approval has been approved by the Victorian Regulatory Authority.

The date from which funding will be transferred to the receiving service provider (funding transfer date) is on the first of the month after the agreed transfer date that has been communicated to the Department. It is an expectation that in the normal transfer of business operations, the transferring service provider remits any funding received after the agreed transfer date to the receiving service provider.

In transferring a business, services must comply with all relevant Victorian and Australian legislation.

## How recurrent funding is calculated

New services will be funded once the annual confirmation of kindergarten data is completed in KIM. Information about the qualified early childhood teacher(s) and other educators delivering the funded kindergarten program, the kindergarten program and children enrolled in the funded kindergarten program in the year before school must be submitted in KIM to determine the service's funding amount for the year.

For existing funded services, kindergarten per capita grants, the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Years Management annual grants are rolled-over on an annual basis subject to the service provider and service continuing to meet the funding eligibility requirements. This allows the service provider to continue to receive funding from January the following year.

The rolled-over funding is based on the service's enrolment numbers in the KIM system at the end of the previous calendar year. From the end January (start of term 1) to 30 April, service providers can enter in KIM the details of the children who are enrolled and attending the funded kindergarten program and update information about the qualified early childhood teacher(s) and other educators delivering the program and the program details. When all of the required information is entered in KIM, the service provider must complete the annual confirmation process by 30 April to recalculate and set the service's funding amount for the new year.

## How to cease funding for a kindergarten program

When a service can no longer offer a kindergarten program (if, for example, a suitably qualified teacher cannot be engaged to deliver the kindergarten program or the service is no longer financially viable), the service provider should contact the appropriate Departmental regional office prior to formally requesting cessation of funding using the KIM system. Early notification is important to avoid overpayments that may need to be recouped. Where the service operates from a council-owned building, council must also be advised of intention to cease the service.

In the event of cessation of funding, the Kindergarten Program Certificate should be returned to the appropriate Departmental regional office.





## How to apply for funding in exceptional circumstances

In circumstances where it is not possible to fully comply with the funding guidelines, a request may be made to the appropriate Departmental regional office for funding to be continued throughout a period of non-compliance until the service provider returns to compliance. This provision is not available to service providers applying for kindergarten funding for the first time or for service providers already in receipt of funding who are adding a new service.

In exceptional circumstances, service providers may apply to:

- have a person who is not a VIT registered early childhood teacher deliver a funded kindergarten program
- operate a program in a service which has been rated against the National Quality Standard as ‘Significant Improvement Required’
- receive Early Start Kindergarten funding where the program is delivered by an educator who has a primary teaching qualification or who is an early childhood diploma qualified educator enrolled and actively working towards an approved EC teaching qualification and has completed at least 50 per cent of studies.

Services regulated under the National Quality Framework are required to meet the National Regulations and should check with the Victorian Regulatory Authority (the Department’s Quality and Assessment Regulation Division) if a waiver is required. Funding in exceptional circumstances will not be authorised until any applicable waivers have been approved.

Contact your regional office to discuss funding in exceptional circumstances.

### How to seek an exemption to operate a kindergarten program with an early childhood teacher who is not VIT registered

Some services currently employ teachers to deliver a funded kindergarten program that are not able to register as an early childhood teacher with VIT. These teachers include:

- teachers who completed their early childhood qualification a number of years ago and their qualification is no longer recognised as a teaching qualification under the current Regulations
- qualified primary school teachers who are in the process of undertaking further study to gain an early childhood teaching qualification.

In circumstances where the teacher employed to deliver the funded kindergarten program is unable to register as an early childhood teacher with VIT, the service must contact the relevant regional Department office to discuss funding in exceptional circumstances and complete the *Application for temporary approval to work in place of an early childhood teacher*. The *Application for temporary approval* includes the submission of a national criminal history check and may require a fee for processing.

### How to seek approval for an educator other than an early childhood teacher to plan and deliver a funded kindergarten program

In exceptional circumstances, the Department has provisions for service providers to apply for an *Exemption from funding requirements for services* for up to 12 months where a registered early childhood teacher will not be delivering the funded kindergarten program. Services that intend to employ or engage a teacher who is not a registered early childhood teacher must contact their regional office to seek approval to receive kindergarten funding, noting there may be two approval processes involved:

1. Exemption from the funding requirements for services
2. Temporary approval for a person to work in place of an early childhood teacher.

#### Exemption from funding requirements for early childhood services

The Department may grant a funding exemption for up to 12 months where the service is required to employ or engage a registered early to deliver the funded kindergarten program and either

- the service either holds a waiver or children’s services exemption from a requirement to have a qualified early childhood teacher or
- the Department is satisfied the early childhood service has made reasonable attempts to employ or engage a registered early childhood teacher, but has been unable to do so.

In order to be considered for continued funding if a registered early childhood teacher cannot be recruited, the service provider must provide evidence of extensive and genuine endeavours to employ a registered early childhood teacher:

- local and state-wide advertisements via print or electronic media
- contact with employment service providers
- contact with locally employed early childhood teachers
- contact with tertiary institutions
- exploration of alternatives such as job sharing, requesting staff to work additional hours, reorganising hours of operation

- investigation into workforce initiatives that support the recruitment of early childhood teaching staff, and submission of an application if eligible.

Visit the Department's website for more information about employment incentives for early childhood teachers.

#### Temporary approval to be employed or engaged in place of a registered early childhood teacher

There are some limited exceptions to the requirement for registration:

A. You are not required to be registered if you are currently actively working towards an approved early childhood teaching qualification and have provided the early childhood service with documentary evidence that you either

- have completed a least 50 per cent of the approved early childhood teaching qualification, or
- hold an approved diploma level education and care qualification.

If you fall within this exemption, you do not need to apply for a temporary approval.

B. If you:

- Do not have an approved early childhood teaching qualification and are not a person taken under the Regulations to hold an approved early childhood teaching qualification, and
- propose to work for an early childhood services that has been granted an exemption from the kindergarten funding requirements.

You are required to apply for 'temporary approval' to work at a specified 'exempted service' in place of an early childhood teacher.

The application for temporary approval includes the submission of a national criminal history check and may require a fee for processing.

A temporary approval will be granted for up to 12 months only. However, there are some circumstances where temporary approvals may be granted in subsequent years to ensure a kindergarten program remains available to the community (e.g. small rural kindergartens that have great difficulty attracting and retaining teachers and have tried unsuccessfully to recruit a qualified Early Childhood Teacher).

Situation	Contact regional office to	Submit a Temporary approval to work in place of an early childhood teacher form	Comments
Temporary appointment of a primary teacher or Diploma qualified educator to replace an early childhood teacher who is absent from the service because of a short-term illness or leave (for a period up to, but not exceeding 12 weeks).	Inform the Department of the Interim/temporary arrangements for up to 12 weeks.	Not required	An exemption from funding is not required.
A Recruitment or engagement for more than 12 weeks of a primary teacher who is not a VIT registered early childhood teacher and who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not actively working towards an Early Childhood Teaching qualification</li> <li>• working toward an Early Childhood Teaching qualification, but less than 50% completed</li> <li>• working toward an Early Childhood Teaching qualification, but more than 50% completed</li> <li>• studying for an early childhood Diploma.</li> </ul>	Apply for an <i>Exemption from the funding requirements</i> for services. Seek advice from the Victorian Regulatory Authority to determine if a waiver is also required to meet the National Law requirements for an Early Childhood Teacher.	Yes	Exemptions and approvals will be granted for up to 12 months only. Approval will only be given to work to work in place of an early childhood teacher in a service that has been granted an exemption from the requirement to have a registered early childhood teacher.
Recruitment or engagement of a Diploma qualified educator who does not hold a teaching qualification.	Apply for an Exemption from the funding requirements for services.	Not required	The educator must be enrolled and actively working towards an approved EC teaching qualification, have completed at least 50 per cent of their studies and ideally be appointed in a team teaching arrangement with an early childhood teacher. Exemptions and approvals will be granted for up to 12 months only.

### How to operate a program in a service which has been rated against the National Quality Standard as 'Significant Improvement Required'

The risk of services closing due to poor quality ratings will impact on the availability of kindergarten places for children. For this reason, provision has been made for continued funding for service providers operating funded kindergarten programs in services that have been assessed by the Victorian Regulatory Authority against the National Quality Standard and have received a rating of 'Significant Improvement Required' in any quality area.

In cases where a service is temporarily unable to meet minimum standards, the service provider may apply for continued funding for a period to give them the opportunity to develop a Quality Improvement Plan and seek reassessment of the service's quality rating.







# Appendix A: Glossary

Terms commonly used throughout these guidelines are listed alphabetically and described in the table below.

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin and who is accepted as such by the community with which the person associates.
ACECQA	The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the <i>National Quality Framework</i> .
Annual confirmation data collection	The process by which the Department collects information from service providers about services they operate. This information is used to determine the service provider's funding entitlement and assists in government planning for kindergarten programs.
Approved education and care service	An education and care service operated by an approved provider, for which a service approval exists (refer to Education and Care Service below).
Certified payroll service	A payroll service that provides services to the service provider equivalent to those provided by the contractor ADP, which is funded by the Department to provide kindergarten payroll service to community-based not-for-profit service providers.
Child Care Benefit (approved)	Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a means-tested payment from the Commonwealth Government that helps families with the cost of child care. CCB is granted to families who are eligible, meet the income test, and use CCB approved child care. CCB approved child care services can receive CCB from the Government on the family's behalf, which is passed on to the families in lower out-of-pocket child care fees.
Child FIRST	Child and family services information, referral and support teams (Child FIRST).
Child Protection	The Victorian Child Protection Service (Child Protection) is part of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and provides child-centered, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm resulting from abuse or neglect within the family and aims to ensure that children and young people receive services to deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development.
Community-based organisation	An organisation that is a 'not-for-profit' organisation. Also known as a community service organisation (CSO).
Data collection	See Annual confirmation data collection.
Department of Education and Training	The Victorian Department of Education and Training is referred to throughout the <i>Kindergarten Guide</i> as the Department.
Early childhood teacher	A registered teacher at or above Level 2.2 of the teacher career structure.
Early Start Kindergarten extension grant	The Early Start Kindergarten extension grant, enables a child to attend a funded kindergarten program free of charge or at minimal cost in the year before school if the child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or has previously accessed an Early Start Kindergarten grant or participated in the Access to Early Learning program in the year two years before school.
Early Start Kindergarten grants	The Early Start Kindergarten grant and Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant enable an eligible child to access a kindergarten program in the year two years before school.
Early Years Learning Framework	An approved learning framework to guide educator practice for education and care services working with children from birth to five, declared in the Education and Care Services National law. The outcomes are identical to the <i>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework</i> .
Early Years Management	Early Years Management (formerly Kindergarten Cluster Management) brings together a group of community-based kindergarten services under the management of a single service provider. It is a key strategy to building a stronger, responsive universal kindergarten system.
Education and Care Service	Family day care, long day care, outside school hours care services and preschools (kindergarten services) that must operate in accordance with the National Quality Framework are referred to as education and care services.
Eligible child	A child that meets the eligibility criteria for kindergarten funding as outlined in this guide.
Eligible service provider	A service provider that meets all relevant criteria to receive kindergarten funding as outlined in this guide.
Employment agreement	Employment agreements outline the terms and conditions of employment for employees. Employment agreements reflect the Enterprise Agreement applying to employees, or in the absence of an Enterprise Agreement, the relevant Award.



Term	Definition
For-profit organisation	An organisation defined as ‘for-profit’ in the Australasian Council of Auditors General Advisory Committee’s Guidance paper on determining whether a government entity is not-for-profit or for-profit (April 2005).
Funded Agency Channel	A web-based application that provides easy access to government and organisation information, communication tools and business processes. Through the Funded Agency Channel, service providers can access their service agreement and payment details, standards and guidelines, and link to government and sector resources. Access the Funded Agency Channel at: <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel</a>
Funded kindergarten program	An early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before school, for which funding is received from the Department. In Victoria, a funded kindergarten program complies with all the applicable requirements set out in this guide and provides a program in accordance with the <i>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework</i> . Funded kindergarten programs may operate in a variety of settings, including long day care centres, standalone services, schools, or community centres, and may be operated by a variety of service providers, including community organisations, local councils, schools, not-for-profit organisations or private operators.
Funded place	A place in a kindergarten program for which a per capita grant is received. The number of funded places may be based on pre-confirmed enrolment numbers or the confirmed number of children enrolled and attending.
Funding cycle	Kindergarten funding is paid in two funding cycles. The first cycle covers the period July to December and the second, January to June.
Inclusion	Involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location).
Indigenous	This term refers to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Integrated long day care program	For the purposes of kindergarten funding, an integrated long day care program is a funded kindergarten program provided as part of a long day care program.
KIM	The Kindergarten Information Management system (KIM), an online web-based system developed by the Department for funding applications, data collection, and reporting. Access KIM at: <a href="https://kim.eduweb.vic.gov.au">https://kim.eduweb.vic.gov.au</a>
Kindergarten	In Victoria, kindergarten is an early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before school. The term preschool is used nationally to refer to this program.
Kindergarten for three-year-old children	Programs provided by education and care services for three-year-old children. Ideally these programs are delivered by an early childhood teacher.
Kindergarten payroll service	A payroll service funded by the Department provided by ADP Australia/New Zealand for community-based not-for-profit service providers receiving kindergarten funding.
Kindergarten Program Certificates	Kindergarten Program Certificates are issued by the Department to service providers receiving kindergarten per capita funding. These are issued at the start of each year or after a new service agreement has been signed.
Long day care service	A centre-based early childhood education and care service providing all day or part-time education and care programs for children. Private operators, local councils, community organisations, employers or not-for-profit organisations provide these services.
National Law and National Regulations	The legislative framework, which is a component of the <i>National Quality Framework</i> , consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i> (the National Law) and</li> <li>the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i> (the National Regulations).</li> </ul>
National Quality Framework	The <i>National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care</i> (the <i>National Quality Framework</i> ) applies to most preschools (kindergartens), long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services, and aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services, with a focus on outcomes for children.
Non-government school	A Catholic or Independent school that is not conducted by or on behalf of the Victorian Government.
Other educator	A staff member who assists the qualified early childhood teacher in the delivery of a funded kindergarten program.
Out of home care	The placement of children away from their parents, due to concern that they are at risk of significant harm. The purpose of out of home care is to provide children who are unable to live at home due to significant risk of harm, with a home placement, which ensures their safety and healthy development and achieves stability. Placements can include foster care, permanent care or kinship care.
Parent	Throughout the <i>Kindergarten Guide</i> the term parent is used to represent parents, guardians and/or primary carers.

Term	Definition
Parental leave reimbursement	Service providers that pay parental leave entitlements to early childhood teachers and assistants in a funded kindergarten program are eligible to apply for up to 14 weeks' reimbursement.
Preschool	An early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before school. In Victoria, preschool is referred to as kindergarten.
Pro rata funding	Funding provided to service providers calculated for the period of time that the child has been enrolled in and attending the funded kindergarten program.
Regional offices	The Department's offices located across the state which manage service agreements with service providers that provide a funded kindergarten program.
Second year funding	Per capita funding provided for children who meet the eligibility criteria for a second year of funded kindergarten.
Service	The approved education and care service (location) from which a kindergarten program is delivered.
Service agreement	An agreement setting out the terms and conditions of funding from the Department of Education and Training to the service provider. It outlines the requirements of services to be delivered and the associated funding that will be paid to a service provider to deliver the services. Schedule 3 of the service agreement includes a service plan outlining the specific services to be provided by the service provider, corresponding funding, performance measures and targets, service standards and guidelines and data collection requirements.
Service provider	<p>A legal entity or organisation that has entered, or is seeking to enter into a service agreement with the Department, receives the kindergarten funding, and has responsibility for the management of funds and delivery of kindergarten programs.</p> <p>A service provider may be responsible for the provision of kindergarten programs in a number of services. In this guide the approved provider of an education and care service from which a kindergarten program is offered is also referred to as a service provider.</p>
Small rural grants initiative	Service providers receiving per capita funding at the small rural rate receive an annual grant of up to \$20,000 to support access to affordable kindergarten programs in small rural communities.
Transition Learning and Development Statement	A document, allowing families and educators to share information about a child's learning and development, which funded kindergarten programs are required to prepare for every enrolled child transitioning into school the following year.
Validation process for early childhood teachers	A process managed and administered by Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services (VETASSESS), by which teachers can progress from one level to another in accordance with applicable employment agreements.
Victorian Children's Service	<p>The following services are referred to as Victorian Children's Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all limited hours and short term licensed services</li> <li>• a small number of other services that currently hold a standard licence including budget-based services not funded for Child Care Benefit</li> <li>• occasional care services</li> <li>• early childhood intervention services</li> <li>• mobile services and</li> <li>• a small number of school holiday care programs that continue to operate under the Victorian: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i></li> <li>– <i>Children's Services Regulations 2009</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework	An approved framework that guides practice for all professionals working in Victoria with children from birth to eight and their families, declared in the Education and Care Services National Law.
Victorian Institute of Teaching	<p>The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is an independent statutory authority for the teaching profession, whose primary function is to regulate members of the teaching profession.</p> <p>It is a legal requirement for all teachers to be registered with the VIT in order to be employed in an early childhood service.</p> <p>Teacher registration and registration renewal are granted where a person is appropriately qualified and is fit to teach in early childhood services.</p>
Vulnerable children	Children and young people are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long term development and wellbeing is limited. <sup>3</sup> Some factors which may contribute to a child being vulnerable include: living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability.

<sup>3</sup> Victorian Government, *Victoria's Vulnerable Children – Our Shared Responsibility Strategy 2013-2022*, May 2013, page 4.

# Appendix B: Training and resources for service providers

	Available training/guidance	Accessible at
Supporting children with additional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Australian Childhood Foundation</b>  Offers training on trauma, child abuse and family violence. </li> <li> <b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>  Provides resources on child development and trauma resources. </li> <li> <b>Commission for Children and Young People</b>  Has developed <i>Calmer Classrooms: A guide to working with traumatised children</i> – to assist teachers in understanding the needs of children affected by trauma. </li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.childhood.org.au">www.childhood.org.au</a>  <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource</a>  <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource</a>
Inclusive practices	<p>The Department of Education and Training has produced a factsheet on inclusive practice in the kindergarten service provision and Kindergarten Inclusion Support program.</p> <p>Produced a <i>Kindergarten Inclusion Tip Sheets</i> to assist parents and teachers to plan a positive kindergarten experience for all children.</p> <p>The tip sheets have been developed by parents for parents, and kindergarten staff may also find them useful.</p> <p>Offers training and information about incorporating inclusive practice as part of everyday operations in its early childhood professional development module “Diversity and Inclusive Practices – Meeting the diverse needs of all children”.</p> <p><b>FKA Children’s Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advice and information on improving access to kindergarten programs for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability</li> <li>casual bilingual workers to assist with the participation of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in kindergarten programs</li> <li>training on inclusive practice for early childhood staff working with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in kindergarten programs</li> <li>language assessments for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds attending kindergarten programs</li> <li>access to resource sheets.</li> </ul> <p><b>Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)</b>  <i>Learning English as an Additional Language in the Early Years (birth to six years)</i> Resource Booklet. Provides comprehensive information to support early childhood professional in the context of implementing the <i>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework</i>.</p> <p>Further consult the website for new resources, of how children and families with English as an Additional Language (EAL), can be supported to make a successful transition to school.</p>	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/pages/kinderinclusion.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/pages/kinderinclusion.aspx</a>  <a href="http://www.acd.org.au">www.acd.org.au</a>  <a href="http://www.rch.org.au/ccch">www.rch.org.au/ccch</a>  <a href="http://www.fka.com.au">www.fka.com.au</a>  <a href="http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/resources/eyeal/welcome.aspx">www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/resources/eyeal/welcome.aspx</a>

	Available training/guidance	Accessible at
Transition to school	For information on the school enrolments process	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/enrol.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/enrol.aspx</a>
	For information on transition to school	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/default.htm">www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/default.htm</a>
	For children with a disability and ongoing high support needs	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/Pages/transitionkinderschool.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/Pages/transitionkinderschool.aspx</a>
	For resources to assist in completing Transition Statements	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/default.htm">www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool/default.htm</a>
	For information regarding networking and reciprocal visiting	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transtoschoolreciprocalvisits.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transtoschoolreciprocalvisits.aspx</a>
	Downloads available from the Department:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit</li> <li>Strength-based approach: A guide to writing Transition Learning and Development Statements</li> <li>Sharing our Journey the transition from kindergarten to school</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/trkall.pdf">www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/trkall.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/strengthbasedapproach.pdf">www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/learning/strengthbasedapproach.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/healthwellbeing/sharingourjourneyprotocol.pdf">www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/healthwellbeing/sharingourjourneyprotocol.pdf</a>
KIM Training	Quick Reference Guides, video tutorials and Frequently Asked Questions	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderim.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderim.aspx</a>
	Introduction to KIM training course Instructor-led training for new KIM users and those who have a role in the administrative and reporting requirements for services.	<a href="http://www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au">www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au</a>
KIM Technical help	For technical help with KIM	Email: <a href="mailto:help.helpdesk@edumail.vic.gov.au">help.helpdesk@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>
Data privacy and handling	For information regarding Parent or Guardian Consent to share information	<a href="http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/parentguardianshareinformation.pdf">www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/parentguardianshareinformation.pdf</a>
Kindergarten IT Program	<p>The Department funds the State Library of Victoria to provide information technology (IT) support to funded kindergarten programs.</p> <p>The State Library provides the following range of supports to eligible service providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>internet connectivity</li> <li>six email addresses per kindergarten</li> <li>kindergarten.vic.gov.au domain name renewal and hosting</li> <li>help desk support for general computer and software enquiries</li> <li>repair of computer hardware where that hardware was provided by the Department through the Kindergarten IT roll-out (where warranty will apply)</li> <li>free community web hosting</li> <li>free IT training including face-to-face KIM system training.</li> </ul> <p>Should there be a change in the provider of this service, service providers will be advised of the change and provided with new contact information.</p>	<p>For further information about support offered and how to join the program</p> <p><a href="http://www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au">www.kindergarten.vic.gov.au</a></p>
Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)	Further information, resources and professional learning on the VEYLDF	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx</a>
Committee of Management	ELAA provides a free comprehensive introduction to the roles and responsibilities of committees of management.	<a href="http://www.elaa.org.au">www.elaa.org.au</a>

# Index

Aboriginal and/or Torres Islander children and educators  
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, 15, 25, 26, 28, 39, 41, 42, 51  
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander educators, 48  
Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant, 15, 26  
Commonwealth Support for Aboriginal children, 51  
Inclusion of Aboriginal children, 39, 51  
Koorie Engagement Support Officers, 51  
Koorie Preschool Assistants, 51

Absence, teacher, 37, 49, 50  
Abuse or neglect, children at risk of, 42  
Access to Early Learning, 28, 42  
Access to Early Learning program, 15, 28, 55  
Access, management of, 37, 50, 51  
Additional needs, children with, 17, 39, 42, 51  
Adjustment, to funding, 23-24, 26, 28  
Commonwealth funding, 19  
ADP Australia/New Zealand, 37, 46  
Age, children outside eligible, 43  
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), 41, 49-50

Bastow Institute, 48  
Budgeting, 37, 45-46

Cease funding, 63  
Central enrolment, 8, 43  
Change in enrolments, 54  
Change in teacher, 37, 50  
Child Care Benefit, 15, 19, 25, 28, 48  
Child Protection, 15, 23, 26-27, 42, 55  
Child Safe Standards, 8, 41  
Children's Services Act 1996, 7  
Closures, 9, 37, 45, 48, 52  
Communicate with families, 9, 39, 43, 48  
Community Service Organisation Education Program, 37, 47  
Criteria for travel allowance, 17, 29  
Culturally and linguistically diverse background, children from a 41, 51

Data collection  
Annual confirmation, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 39, 54, 55  
August census, 39, 53  
Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten, 17, 31, 32, 44  
Declaration of financial or legal status, 8, 9  
Development Statement, see Second year of funded kindergarten

Early childhood teacher  
Inability to recruit a qualified teacher, 64, 65  
Professional Standards, 37  
Teacher absence, 37, 49, 50  
Teacher registration, 8, 37  
Teacher supplement, 29  
Early Learning Association Australia, 37, 45  
Early Start  
Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten grant, 15, 26-27  
Early Start extension grant, 28  
Early Start Kindergarten grants, 26-27  
Early Years Management, 57  
Adding a new service EYM, 59  
Adding an existing service, 59  
Funding 58  
Joining an Early Years Management, 57  
Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), 41, 49, 50  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, 37, 63  
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, 37  
Eligibility, see also Quick guide, kindergarten funding  
Core requirements, 8  
Criteria for a second year of funded kindergarten, 17, 30  
Criteria for early childhood teacher supplement, 17, 29  
Criteria for Early Start Kindergarten extension grants, 15, 28  
Criteria for Early Start Kindergarten grants, 15, 28  
Criteria for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, 15, 25  
Criteria for new service providers or services, 62  
Criteria for parental leave reimbursement, 17, 30  
Criteria for per capita grant, 22  
Criteria for travel allowance, 29  
Emergency  
Emergency Management, 37, 47  
Emergency or relief teachers, 49  
Employment agreement, 47  
Enrolment  
Records, 25, 27, 28, 32, 37, 44, 54, 55  
Processes, 43  
Ethics, Early Childhood Australia Code of, 48  
Fee Subsidy, 15, 19, 25-26, 28, 39, 42  
Fees policy, 37, 45  
Financial accountability reporting, 37  
FKA Children's Services, 51  
Funded Agency Channel, 21, 37  
Funded kindergarten program, 13, 22  
Funding  
Funding in exceptional circumstances, 64  
Types of Kindergarten funding, see Quick guide  
Good governance, 37, 45  
Gowrie Victoria 48

High priority children, 37, 42  
Hours of operation, 53, 54

- Inclusion
  - Inclusion Support Programme, 19
  - Inclusion Support Subsidy, 19
  - Inclusion Tip Sheets, 71
  - Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) packages, 17
- Indigenous children, see Aboriginal and/or Torres Islander children and educators
- Industrial agreements, 55
- Insurance, 37, 47
- Key timing considerations, 24
- Kindergarten Information Management (KIM), 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 39, 44, 45, 50, 53, 54, 59, 61, 62, 63
- Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, 17, 19
  - in long day care services, 25
- Kindergarten funding, see Quick guide
- Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages (KIS), 17, 19
- Kindergarten per capita grants, 13, 22
  - Standard kindergarten per capita grant, 22
  - How to apply, 23
- Kindergarten Program Certificate, 59, 63
- Koorie Children, see Aboriginal and/or Torres Islander children and educators
- Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs), 51
- Koorie Preschool Assistants, 51
- Language services, 52
- Learning frameworks approved, see Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Licensed Children's Services, see Victorian Children's Service
- Local government, role in early childhood education and care 3, 8, 43, 51
- Long service leave, 33, 46
- Misappropriation of funds, 37, 46
- Municipal Association of Victoria, 51
- Municipal Early Years Plan, 8, 59, 61
- National Quality Framework, 7, 13, 21, 37, 45, 64,
- No Jab, No Play, 44
- Non-government school per capita grants, 13, 23
- National Quality Standard, 45, 66
- Operational requirements
  - for service providers funded by the Department, 37-39
- Parental leave, 17
- Payroll service, 46
- Per capita grant, see Kindergarten per capita grants
- Preschool Field Officer, 17
- Prioritising access to kindergarten places, 42
- Privacy, 21, 39, 52, 53
- Professional development, 48
- Provision of 15 hours, 8, 9
- Provisions account, 37, 46
- Qualifications, approved early childhood teaching, 8
- Quick guide, Kindergarten funding, 13
- Ratio Supplement Funding, 15, 24
- Regional office contact details, 4
- Relief teachers, 49
- Rural funding, 22
- School, starting, see Transition to school
- Second year of funded kindergarten, 30
  - Applying, 31
  - Declaration of eligibility, 17, 32, 33
  - Development statement, 31, 32, 52, 54
  - Second Year Discussion, 31
  - Second Year Statement, 31
  - Term three plan for learning and development, 31
  - Timelines and tasks, 32
- Service, 69
- Service Agreement, 69
- Service provider, 6, 69
  - Department support for, 4
- Sick leave, 33
- Small rural grants initiative, 22
- Support for children with additional needs, 17, 39, 42, 51
- Supporting children
  - Support for Aboriginal children, 51
  - Support for children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, 51
- Teacher supplement, 17, 29
- Teacher validation process, 49
- Terminology 6
- Three year old children, 15, 26, 27
- Transition grant, 58
- Transition Learning and Development Statement 32, 52
- Transition to school, 30, 31, 52
- Travel allowance, 29
- VETASSESS, 49
- Victorian Children's Service, 69
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, 8, 17, 31, 32, 41, 50
- Vulnerable children, 15, 43, 45, 50-51, 57
- Waiting lists, 27, 28, 39, 43, 45