



City of Ballarat

KINDERGARTEN



Fact Sheet for parents/carers updated January 2020



Why is kindergarten important?

Kindergarten is an important step for children, providing a safe and happy environment to learn skills they will build on throughout life. Kindergarten programs are designed to improve children's development in the following key areas: social skills, self-awareness and respect for others, emotional skills, language literacy and numeracy skills, a joy for learning, the ability to make new friends, and exposure to new ideas.

For more information about the benefits of kindergarten, visit education.vic.gov.au

Where can children attend kindergarten in the Ballarat municipality?

Kindergarten programs in the City of Ballarat operate in a variety of management models including Early Years Management Providers, City of Ballarat-managed and private long day care centres as well as some independent schools. For a full list of more than 40 kindergarten programs operating in the municipality, view the Kindergarten Provider List at the City of Ballarat website: ballarat.vic.gov.au

As well as reading this fact sheet, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact one or more kindergartens to make an appointment to visit or attend a Kindergarten Open Day.

At what age do children go to kindergarten?

- Four-year-old kindergarten: In Victoria, kindergarten is the year before school entry. Children are eligible to attend a funded, four-year-old kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week if they turn four by 30 April in the year they will attend.
- Three-year-old kindergarten: Many kindergartens also offer three-year-old programs. A child must be three-years-old to attend a three-year-old kindergarten program.

What is Early Start Kindergarten and who can attend?

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) is free or low cost kindergarten that enables eligible three-year-old children to access a funded kindergarten program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, two years prior to commencing school. A child is eligible for ESK if they are aged three by 30 April in the year they will be attending a kindergarten program, and the child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or the family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred to ChildFIRST).

For more information, visit education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten

Can a family delay or defer a child's start from a funded kindergarten program?

Parents/guardians need to make an informed choice about which year a child will commence school and therefore which year the child will attend a funded kindergarten program. Children are expected to complete a full year of kindergarten in the year they enrol and begin attending kindergarten.



Can a child be eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten?

An early childhood teacher can declare a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded kindergarten if:

- The child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, 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.

What is the cost of kindergarten?

Four-year-old kindergarten is partially funded by the Victorian Government. This funding is paid directly to the kindergarten. Three-year-old kindergarten programs do not receive government funding and the full cost is covered by parent fees.

Kindergarten fees are set by the provider with costs varied across programs. For example, some long day care programs offer sessional kindergarten and others charge long day care fees. For specific costs, contact the provider directly.

Is there assistance to pay kindergarten fees?

The State Government provides a kindergarten fee subsidy to kindergartens towards reducing fees for eligible families. The kindergarten fee subsidy allows children to access four-year-old kindergarten for free or at low cost. A child is eligible in any of the following circumstances:

- if the child identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- if the child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more)
- if the child holds or has a parent or guardian who holds a:
 - Health Care Card
 - Pensioner Concession Card
 - Department of Veterans Affairs Card
 - Refugee or Humanitarian Visa.

What is No Jab, No Play?

Under the new 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before a child can commence kindergarten it is the responsibility of that kindergarten/early childhood service the child will be attending to obtain evidence, in the form of an immunisation statement, that the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations, or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.

For more information, visit 2.health.vic.gov.au

What happens if a child is not fully vaccinated for their age when they are about to commence kindergarten?

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' law, if a child's immunisation record is not up-to-date, enrolment cannot be confirmed and the child cannot attend kindergarten.

NOTE: For vulnerable and disadvantaged families, where a child's immunisation is not up-to-date or the appropriate documentation has not been provided, the child may be able to be enrolled under the 'No Jab, No Play' grace period provisions.



Central Kindergarten Registration Scheme

What is the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration Scheme?

The City of Ballarat's Central Kindergarten Registration (CKR) Scheme is an initiative to ensure the whole community has access to a fair, equitable and timely system for processing kindergarten registrations. Local families may submit a single registration form with preferences to 34 participating kindergartens in Ballarat.

At what age can a child be registered using the CKR Scheme?

Application for registration forms for a child to attend a kindergarten service will be accepted from the beginning of the year prior to which a child will attend three-year-old kindergarten/ESK or two years prior to attending a four-year-old program.

Date of Birth	2020	2021	2022	2023
1 May 2015 to 30 April 2016	4-year-old kindergarten			
1 May 2016 to 30 April 2017	3-year-old kinder / ESK	4-year-old kindergarten		
1 May 2017 to 30 April 2018	Application for Registration accepted from 1 January	3-year-old kinder / ESK	4-year-old kindergarten	
1 May 2018 to 30 April 2019		Application for Registration accepted from 1 January	3-year-old kinder / ESK	4-year-old kindergarten
1 May 2019 to 30 April 2020			Application for Registration accepted from 1 January	3-year-old kinder / ESK

How does the CKR process work?

Kindergarten registration applications can be completed online or in hard copy.

- To register online, visit <https://kinder.ballarat.vic.gov.au>
- Hard copy forms can be downloaded from the City of Ballarat website. Paper forms are also available at member kindergartens, Early Years Management Providers, Maternal and Child Health Centres, the Phoenix Building, 25 Armstrong Street South, Ballarat Library, Doveton Street North, Sebastopol Library, 181 Albert Street, Wendouree Library, Stockland Shopping Centre, and Parent Place, corner Sturt and Albert Streets.



When is the closing date for registrations?

Registration Application forms will be received until June 30 of the year before a child attends kindergarten. Applications will be received and processed after this date, however it is advised a parent/guardian contacts the Central Kindergarten Registration officer on 5320 5720 to discuss further.

How are kindergarten offers made?

Offers are made according to the selection criteria below. Parents/guardians will be notified of first round offers in August the year before a child is due to attend kindergarten.

For further details, refer to the *City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration Policy*.

Selection criteria: four-year-old kindergarten	Selection criteria: three-year-old kindergarten
<p>1. First priority given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out of Home Care• Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children• Asylum seeker and refugee children• Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy; a child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs card, or multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets)• Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program, require a combination of services which are individually planned, have an identified specific disability or developmental delay. <p>2. Other applications will be allocated offers based on the date of receipt of Application for Enrolment form.</p>	<p>1. First priority given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children eligible for ESK• Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children. <p>2. Children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred.</p> <p>3. Other applications will be allocated based on the date of receipt of Application for Registration form.</p>

TIMELINES

First round letter offer	Beginning of August
Acceptance of offer due	Mid-August (two weeks after offer)
Second round letter offer	Beginning of September
Acceptance of offer due	Mid-September (two weeks after offer)
Subsequent offers	As vacancies become available

For further information, contact the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration officer on 5320 5720.

