

City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration Policy (version 6.0)

1. Authorisation

May 2012 Central Kindergarten Enrolment (CKE) policy adopted

May 2013 CKE policy review endorsed by the Access & Participation Working Group

April 2016 CKE policy review endorsed by the Access & Participation Working Group

October 2017 CKR policy review endorsed by Access & Participation Working Group

December 2018 CKR policy review endorsed by Early Years Partnership Group (name change from Access and Participation Working Group)

December 2019 (version 6.0) CKR policy review endorsed by Early Years Partnership Group

2. Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed October 2020.

3. Scope

This policy applies to Approved Providers [Early Years Managers (EYM) and Independent Kindergartens], EYM staff, kindergarten staff, council officers and parents/guardians who wish to have their children registered at kindergartens participating in the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration (CKR) scheme.

4. Background

Some kindergarten services manage their own system of allocating kindergarten places. Others participate in the City of Ballarat CKR Scheme, which requires that they comply with the registration criteria of this scheme. All member services are signatories to the CKR Scheme and are required to sign an individualised MOU. This MOU was developed through a collaborative process involving all current EYM's and private provider representative and was endorsed by the EYP in June 2019.

5. Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012
- The Equal Opportunity Act (Victoria) 1995
- The Sex Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1975
- The Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1992
- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (Commonwealth) 1986
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015

Definitions

Access to Early Learning ('AEL'): Targeted early intervention program that enables three year old children from families with complex needs to fully participate in quality universal early education and care.

Application for Registration form: An online or hard copy form used to apply for a place at a funded kindergarten program.

City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration (CKR) scheme: A centralised system administered by the City of Ballarat to allocate kindergarten places on behalf of participating kindergarten services.

Confirmation of Acceptance form: A form to confirm acceptance of an offer of a place in a kindergarten program.

DET: Department of Education and Training

Delayed kindergarten entry/deferrals: Parents may decide to delay their child's entry to kindergarten to the following year – particularly if their child is born between January to April in the year they are eligible to attend kindergarten. When a child commences kindergarten, it is generally expected that they will attend for a full year. Occasionally there may be some circumstances in which families, in consultation with their child's teacher, and in line with funding eligibility, may decide that it is the best option for the child to defer enrolment in kindergarten to the following year.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): Free or low-cost kindergarten that enables eligible three-year-old children to access a funded kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, two years prior to commencing school.

Early Years Managers (EYM): An organisation with responsibility for the licensing and management of a group of kindergartens.

Funded kindergarten place: In accordance with the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education and Care, DET provides funding for children to access a kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year prior to school.

Kindergarten Registration form: A form which collects details about the child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the kindergarten program and accepted by the applicant and is lodged at the kindergarten the child will attend.

Kindergarten fees: A payment for a place within a funded (four-year-old) and three-year-old kindergarten program payable to the kindergarten. These may include a deposit to reserve a place, term fees, etc.

'No Jab, No Play': The Public Health Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 means that early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided documentation that shows 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

‘No Jab, No Play’ grace period provision: Under the ‘No Jab, No Play’ law, a vulnerable or disadvantaged family can enrol a child in a kindergarten program under a grace period of 16 weeks, without having provided proof of up-to-date immunisation. The grace period provisions allow a family to continue to access early childhood education and care services while receiving information and assistance to get their child’s immunisations up-to-date and to obtain the required immunisation documentation that needs to be provided to the service.

Second year of funded kindergarten: Children enrolled in a funded kindergarten program may be eligible to access a second year of funded kindergarten if the early childhood teacher has assessed:

- The child has confirmed delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development, and
- that there is evidence the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

Selection criteria: The criteria that determines acceptance of Application for Registration forms on the CKR Scheme; and the Priority of Access criteria for determining how places are allocated at individual kindergartens. The Priority of Access Guidelines are set out in the Department of Education Kindergarten Funding Guide.

Siblings: Sisters and brothers.

Three-year-old kindergarten program: Some kindergartens offer three-year-old programs for children; children must have turned three to be eligible to attend. Sessions are typically for 2-3 hours per week. These are charged at the full fee and are not eligible for the Kindergarten fee subsidy.

Vacancy: A place in a program that becomes free because of a child leaving the service or is available because all places are not filled.

Vacant Funded Place: A government-funded place at the service from which a child has withdrawn.

Policy Statement

Values

The City of Ballarat CKR Scheme is committed to:

- Equal access for all children, based on the selection criteria set out in this policy
- Compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

- Compliance with the DET funding requirements (as detailed in The Kindergarten Guide) relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the details on registration forms
- Meeting the needs of the kindergarten service providers
- Meeting the needs of the local community

Purpose

This policy will outline:

- The criteria for registration at kindergartens participating in the City of Ballarat CKR Scheme
- The process to be followed when registering a child and the basis on which places within the program are allocated.

General Central Kindergarten Registration Procedures

1. Application for a kindergarten place

Application for Registration forms for children 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 or two years prior to attending four-year-old kindergarten.

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
application for registration	three-year-old kinder	four-year-old kinder		
	application for registration	three-year-old kinder	four-year-old kinder	
		application for registration	three-year-old kinder	four-year-old kinder

Application for Registration forms are available from individual kindergartens, EYMs, Maternal Child Health Centres, The Phoenix Building (25 Armstrong Street South), Parent Place (corner Sturt and Albert Street), City of Ballarat Libraries or via the City of Ballarat Website ballarat.vic.gov.au

A separate Application for Registration form must be completed for each child.

Receipt of the Application will be acknowledged by the CKR Scheme via a letter in the April of the year prior to your child registering for kindergarten. If an email address has been provided, this letter may be emailed.

Completed Application for Registration forms are to be forwarded to the CKR Officer at:
Central Kindergarten Registration
Family & Children's Services
City of Ballarat
PO Box 655, Ballarat 3353
Email: kindergarten@ballarat.vic.gov.au Fax: 5320 5833

2. Allocation of places

Kindergarten places will be allocated to eligible children on the registration list in accordance with preferences indicated on the Application for Registration form and the selection criteria of this policy.

Lower preferences will only be considered where vacancies exist. That is, after all first preference applicants have been placed at that kindergarten.

3. Offer of kindergarten placement

Kindergarten place offers will be allocated to eligible children who are on the registration list in accordance with the eligibility and selection criteria of this policy.

Applicants will receive written notification of a kindergarten place offer from the CKR Officer, City of Ballarat. In the instance of late enrolments, applicants may be offered a place over the phone.

On receipt of an offer of a kindergarten place, parents/guardians are requested to complete the Kindergarten Placement Offer form to accept/not accept the place offered and return this form to the CKR Officer, City of Ballarat. Offers may also be accepted via phone and email.

If the Kindergarten Placement Offer form is not returned to the City of Ballarat by the due date, the place may be relinquished. Late correspondence will not be accepted, and the position may be offered to another child.

Applicants who have not received a kindergarten placement in the first round will be notified in writing and placed on a waiting list.

Timelines:

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

NOTE: Children in priority categories (as per the selection criteria in this policy) will receive written confirmation of a kindergarten place according to their preference. In such instances, parents/guardians are not required to complete and return a Kindergarten Placement Offer form.

4. Procedure for late Application for Registration forms

Application for Registration forms received after offers have been made will be allocated places, if available, in accordance with the date of receipt of the application (earliest date first).

5. The final step to enrolling in kindergarten

While completing a Kindergarten Placement Offer form confirms the allocation of a kindergarten place made via the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration (CKR) Scheme, this does not mean a child has been enrolled in a specific kindergarten program.

A final step in the process is for parents/guardians to complete the necessary enrolment paperwork provided by the service where the child/ren will attend kindergarten.

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation (effective January 2016), as part of this process, the kindergarten/early childhood service must obtain evidence, in the form of an Immunisation Statement, that the child is:

- Fully immunised for their age OR
- On a vaccination catch-up program OR
- Unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons

If a child's immunisation record is not up to date, enrolment cannot be confirmed and the child cannot attend kindergarten.

An immunisation history statement can be obtained from ACIR by calling 1800 653 809, emailing acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au or by accessing online www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online

NOTE: For vulnerable or 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 (see Definitions).

Enrolment in four-year-old kindergarten programs

The following children are eligible for attendance in a four-year-old kindergarten program:

- Children who have turned four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- Children who have received funding for a second year of four-year old kindergarten
- Children who were eligible to attend kindergarten in the previous year but delayed commencement before the end of Term 1
- Children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten

The selection criteria to be used, if there are more applications than places available, is detailed below. This is not necessarily intended as an ordered list (from the DET Kindergarten Funding Guide).

Priority of Access is given to:

- Children who are funded for a second year of four-year-old kindergarten (or ESK enrolments)
- 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 hold 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
- After first priority places have been allocated, all other applications will be allocated offers based on the date of receipt of Application for Registration form

Enrolment in three-year-old kindergarten programs

The following children are eligible for attendance in a three-year-old kindergarten program:

- Children who have turned three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- Children who were eligible to attend three-year-old kindergarten in the previous year but delayed commencement
- Service providers reserve the right to enrol children who turn three after April 30, if it is agreed by the educators and is in the best interest of the child, or program
- Children eligible for ESK whose parents have chosen to attend three-year-old sessions in preference to four-year-old kindergarten. This is only possible if the three-year-old session is taught by a qualified early childhood teacher

NOTE: Attendance at three-year-old kindergarten is not a guarantee that the child will attend the same kindergarten for four-year-old kindergarten.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria to be used, if there are more applications than places available, are:

- First priority is given to children eligible for ESK, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- Second priority is given to children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred
- Third priority is based on date of receipt of Application for Registration form

Delaying/deferring from a funded kindergarten program

Families need to make an informed choice about which year they would like their child to commence school and therefore which year their child will attend a funded kindergarten program.

Services should advise families with children born between 1 January and 30 April to choose carefully, as children are expected to complete a full year of kindergarten in the year they enrol and begin attending kindergarten, as they are only funded for one year of four-year-old kindergarten.

However, there may be some circumstances where a child has commenced kindergarten and, following consultation between the child's family and teacher, and in line with funding eligibility, the decision is made to defer enrolment to the following year.

NOTE: This must occur during the early stages of Term 1 to be eligible for DET funding in the following year.

Completing a second year of Funded Kindergarten

The DET Kindergarten Funding Guide identifies the following eligibility criteria for receiving a second year of Funded Kindergarten:

The early childhood teacher can declare that 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 that 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.

Key Responsibilities and Authorities

The City of Ballarat is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy
- Approving any changes to this policy
- Dealing with any questions/concerns that arise in relation to any aspect of the policy

- Working collaboratively with the Approved Providers of licensed kindergarten services participating in the CKR Scheme, and providing regular reports to the Approved Providers regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered

The CKR Officer (or the delegated person) is responsible for the day to day implementation of this policy, which includes:

- Providing Application for Registration forms
- Securing storage of the completed Application for Registration forms
- Maintaining the confidential status of Application for Registration forms and the information contained within the forms
- Collating registrations
- Notifying applicants of receipt of registration
- Offering places in accordance with this policy
- Sending letters to applicants who have not received a first-round offer notifying them of their placement on the waiting list
- Providing a monthly report to the Manager Family & Children’s Services regarding the status of registrations and any difficulties encountered
- Providing regular reports of current registrations to service providers
- Collecting relevant information to pass on to service providers

Timeline of Communication

June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media campaign to encourage parents/guardians who have not yet completed an Application for Registration form to send this into the City of Ballarat. (Multiple forms of communication including My Ballarat, social media campaign, advertising) ○ Maternal Child Health Nurses and Family and Children’s Service providers encouraged to work with vulnerable and disadvantaged parents/guardians to ensure all eligible children are up to date with immunisation scheduling and allocated a kindergarten place
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First-round offer process
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Second-round offer process
October - November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media campaign aimed at encouraging eligible families who have not yet completed an Application for Registration form to contact the CKR Officer

Evaluation

To assess the policy has achieved the agreed values and purposes determined in this document, the Manager Family & Children's Services will:

- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues relating to registration procedures
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy, or incorporate relevant questions in the general parent/guardian survey
- Consider feedback on the policy from the CKR Officer, designated person and/or staff
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the enrolment of children
- Seek regular feedback from Approved Providers regarding the effectiveness of the policy
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- Keep the policy up-to-date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of a policy review cycle, or as required
- This policy is updated annually, in accordance with the Department of Education Funding Guide and the Municipal Association of Victoria Guidelines