



City of Ballarat

KINDERGARTEN



Fact Sheet for parents/carers



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 www.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, Council 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 Kinder Provider List at the City of Ballarat website: www.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 by them to Child FIRST).

For more information, visit www.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 Gold Card or White Card, ImmiCard or;
 - Refugee or Asylum Seeker visa (200-204 or 866)

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 www2.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 Enrolment Scheme

What is the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Enrolment Scheme?

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

At what age can a child be enrolled using the CKE Scheme?

Application for enrolment 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	2018	2019	2020	2021
1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014	4-year-old kindergarten			
1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015	3-year-old kinder / ESK	4-year-old kindergarten		
1 May 2015 to 30 April 2016	Application for Enrolment accepted from 1 January	3-year-old kinder / ESK	4-year-old kindergarten	
1 May 2016 to 30 April 2017		Application for Enrolment accepted from 1 January	3-year-old kinder / ESK	4-year-old kindergarten
1 May 2017 to 30 April 2018			Application for Enrolment accepted from 1 January	3-year-old kinder / ESK

How does the CKE process work?

Kindergarten enrolment applications can be completed online or in hardcopy.

- To enrol 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 & 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 enrolment?

Enrolment 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 Enrolment officer at 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 Enrolment 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 in Out of Home Care• Children known to Child Protection or Child First• Children eligible for ESK• Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children• Children who have received funding for a second year of four-year-old kindergarten. <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 offers based on the date of receipt of Application for Enrolment 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 Enrolment officer at 5320 5720.

