

Enrolment and orientation

Authorised by:	This policy was adopted by the Ripponlea Kindergarten Committee of Management at a committee meeting
Approved date:	3 June 2024
Review date:	June 2027

Purpose

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

- enrolling a child at Ripponlea Kindergarten
- the orientation of new families and children into Ripponlea Kindergarten
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education [DE] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to DE's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children

Values

Ripponlea Kindergarten is committed to:

- the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:
- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability
- promoting the safety of trans and gender diverse children and their families in ECEC settings
- ensuring that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel included and safe
- being guided by the ethos of our philosophy statement and Service policies.
- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) eligible children into the full 15 hours of the kindergarten program.

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, families, children,

and others attending the programs and activities of Ripponlea Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Background and legislation

Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (*Regulation 168(2) (k)*).

All eligible Victorian children (*refer to Definitions*) will have access to two years of Free Kinder before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to their eligibility and DE's Priority of Access criteria (*refer to Definitions and Attachment 1*) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in DE's Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Sources*), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*).

Legislation and standards

This policy is informed by the following legislation:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation - Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation - Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

Sources and Related policies

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education): www.education.vic.gov.au

Related Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Compliments and Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Disease
- Dealing With Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Fees
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

Procedures

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, and offering at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or • 600 hours per year 	R				
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering between 5 to 15 hours a week or 200 to 600 a year	R				
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Ripponlea Kindergarten, as described in the Department of Education's [DE] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide</i> (refer to Attachment 1)	R	√	√		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April	√	√	√		√
Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding	R	√	√		

stream (for eligible families):					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Start Kindergarten (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) • Early Start Kindergarten extension grants (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) • Access to Early Learning (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) • Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 					
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	√	√	√		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			
Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year	R	√		√	
Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	√	√		
Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available	R	√			
Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent, and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
Ensuring families have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent information handbook</i> • <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i> • <i>Fees Policy</i> • <i>Privacy Statement</i> • <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> • <i>Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations</i> • <i>Dealing With Medical Conditions</i> • <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness</i> 	R	√	√		
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (<i>refer to Attachment 2 and 3</i>)	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		

Where applicable; considering access and inclusion for children experiencing vulnerability/disadvantage in the allocation of places at the service (<i>refer to Attachment 1 and 2</i>)	R	√			
Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√
Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the open days to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program	√	√	√		
Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy, or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy, or relevant medical condition	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that a medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	R	√	√	√	
Providing any required authorisations, such as for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital, or ambulance service and, if required, transportation by an ambulance service				√	
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (<i>refer to Sources</i>) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week grace period (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have confirmed places in the program	R	√	√		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (<i>refer to Attachment 4</i>)	R	√	√		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing all associated enrolment documents and AIR Immunisation History Statement				√	

(refer to Definitions) of their child's immunisation status					
Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) to the service				√	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)	R	√	√		
Ensuring all authorised nominees (refer to Definitions) have been completed on the enrolment record (refer to Definitions) (Regulations 160 and 161) as well as authorisations from parents relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	√		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record (refer to Definitions) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	√	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record (refer to Definitions) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that enrolment records (refer to Definitions) are kept confidential (Regulations 181, 182) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183 (1a) (2d))	R	√	√		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	√	√		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for (Regulation 157), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the National Law: Section 167	R	R	√	√	√
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 5)	√	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the Inclusion and	√	√	√		

Equity Policy)					
Encouraging parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay with their child as long as required during the orientation period make contact with educators at the service, when required 	√	√	√	√	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	√	√	√	√	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	√	√	√	√	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
Developing strategies to assist new families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating 	√	√	√	√	
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	R	R	R		√
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	
Notifying Ripponlea Kindergarten in writing [if possible] if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	

General orientation procedures

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they decide together with teachers during the orientation period

- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
 - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
 - they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time
 - the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
 - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
 - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (*refer to the information and Communication Technology Policy*). -
 - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.
- Refer to *Attachment 2* for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Refer to *Attachment 4* for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Attachment 1 - Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
- Attachment 2: General kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Attachment 3: Sample kindergarten registration form
- Attachment 4: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable Complaints, Serious Incidents, Duty of Care, etc. refer to the Definitions file on our website.

Access to Early Learning (AEL): is an early intervention program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment. It aims to provide intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).

Authorised nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy*) (*refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition*).

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher. ESK is

available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- the family have had contact with child protection.

These children can also access free or low cost year-before-school kindergarten through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Eligible child: as defined by the Victorian DE Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks grace period

Enrolment deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This should not act as a barrier to enrolling for any families. Services must ensure that families understand that the enrolment deposits will only be refunded if the child commences in the service (*Refer to Fees - Free Kinder policy*)

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Kindergarten registration fee: a payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service, if applicable. (*Refer to Free Kindergarten Fees policy*)

Kindergarten registration form: The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the kindergarten service. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten (*refer to Attachment 3*)

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

Local Government Area (LGA): a geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate places using the criteria outlined in the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Attachment 1 and Sources*).

Registration: The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the service provider. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

School Readiness Funding: funding provided by DE for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators, and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten: second year eligibility may be considered when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and development. An assessment is carried out for each child by an early childhood teacher in Term 3 (the year before the child is to attend school) when a second year is being considered.

Attachment 1

ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access (PoA) policy that applies when they enrol their child.

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, services must:

- prioritise children based on the Department of Education (DE) criteria listed in the table below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional DE office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

These criteria must be used by the approved provider when prioritising enrolments. Guidance is available from the Department's regional offices if required.

Service providers should build flexibility into their enrolment processes that consider the circumstances of families from priority groups.

Services must first apply the DE's PoA criteria, and following this may apply locally developed criteria, as per examples below.

All information relating to PoA criteria should be respectfully collected from families upon enrolment, recorded in the child's confidential enrolment record and entered into the Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system, where applicable.

DE's Priority of Access criteria

High priority children	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• eligible for ESK or AEL, and/or• family, carer, or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or• referred by one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection• Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/Orange Door/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker)• Maternal and Child Health nurse• Out-of-home care provider.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIMS
Asylum seeker and refugee children	<p>Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents, carers, or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker and/or</p> <p>Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.</p>
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	<p>A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or</p> <p>The child is identified on their birth certificate as one of a set of triplets,</p>

	quadruplets or more.
<p>Children with additional needs, defined as children who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> require additional assistance in order 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>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program, and/or has been referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the National Disability Insurance Scheme Early Childhood Intervention Services Kindergarten Field Officer Maternal and Child Health nurse, or is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is declared eligible for a second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Examples to consider for second priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten; or children who turn three years of age* by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET children who have a sibling that has previously attended the same kindergarten as their first preference
Examples to consider for third priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers date of application home address falls within the same suburb as the kindergarten family lives, works, studies or attends child care in the same suburb as the kindergarten local community zoning full fee-paying families

Note: DE's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, PoA guideline will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three- and four-year old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

* Early Start Kindergarten and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten
<p>During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when all three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours</p> <p>It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service.</p> <p>The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023 states for ESK funding, service providers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of charge and maximise access to 15 hours of kindergarten (children accessing ESK can be enrolled in a 3-year-old group, a 4-year-old group, a mixed

age group or a combination of groups in order to access the full 15 hours per week)

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- have had contact with Child Protection
- have a refugee or asylum seeker background*

*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and office.

Refer to the Department of Education's website for up-to-date information: www.education.vic.gov.au

Attachment 2

GENERAL KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Stage	Family Role	Kindergarten Role
1. Proactive engagement and awareness	Searches for information about ECEC. Receives information from a service provider, MCH staff or support service they have contact with.	Communicates information about ECEC and Registration to families
2. Registration	Completes a registration form.	Obtains information about children to initiate the process of allocating places. Supports families to complete registration forms if they find it difficult.
3. Allocation	Receives an update on the progress of their registration.	Equitably allocates kindergarten places.
4. Confirmation and communication	Accepts their offer of place or rejects the offer.	Clearly communicates with families and carers to confirm their allocated place. Supports families to understand what an offer means and what they need to do next.

Kindergarten registration dates

If families miss the registration close deadline, they can still register although they will be placed into a pool for second-round (or even later rounds) of allocation and are less likely to get their top preference. After second round offers have been confirmed, the kindergarten will continue to allocate children to places where they are available. More places may become available as children move kindergartens or withdraw.

Date	Activity
2 years prior to year of attendance	Registrations open
Registrations will still be accepted after offers are sent out. Children eligible for Priority of Access will be prioritised regardless of when registration is received.	Registrations close*
2nd week of May	First round offers
1 week after offers sent out	Acceptance of first round offers due
3rd week of May	Second round offers
1 week after offers sent out	Acceptance of second round offers due
Ongoing	Subsequent offers on an individual basis

Registration

The quickest way to complete a registration form is online at <https://www.ripponleakinder.org.au/enrolment-forms/>

To fill out the registration form, families will need to provide information about themselves and their child. At this stage they do not need to attach any supporting documentation. They will need a credit card (to pay the registration fee). This fee is waived for all families and carers eligible for Priority of Access allocation.

The registration form asks families for:

- Basic information about the child including name and date of birth
- Whether the child needs any additional support due to a disability including intellectual, sensory, or physical impairment.
- Contact details for the family or carer of the child.
- Whether the child is identified as fulfilling any of the following criteria:
 - Is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 - Is from a multiple birth (triplet or greater)
 - have had contact with Child Protection
 - Is in Out-Of-Home Care
 - Holds, or has a family member who holds, a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or a Refugee or Asylum Seeker Visa.

Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

To enrol a child, families will need to provide copies of:

- Proof of identity: child's birth certificate, immunisation history statement, or passport
- Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
- Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, at which point they can take advantage of a 16-week 'grace period'. More information is available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.

Enrolment Records

Enrolment records (*refer to Definitions*) form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance. An example enrolment form can be found on the DE website: www.education.vic.gov.au

Cancellations

Families to notify Ripponlea Kindergarten in writing of their intention to leave the service.

Second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

- All children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will be expected to transition to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in the following year. A funded second year of kindergarten will only be available for children in the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program who meet the criteria.
- Families of children who have been determined as eligible for a second year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for a second year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.
- It will be weighted with the relevant points and allocated accordingly.
- A Declaration of Eligibility Form for a second year of kindergarten must be completed and submitted to the relevant funding authority.

Early entry to Four-Year-Old kindergarten

- Early entry to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child i.e. the child will not be 5 years of age before 30 April in the year of school commencement.
- Early entry to school is approved only when exceptional circumstances apply and is subject to an application process and rigorous eligibility criteria. It is important to note that most children who enrol early in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten are not approved for early entry into school because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.
- The decision regarding early entry should be discussed with parents/guardians and consider the following:
 - Children are not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend kindergarten early.
 - To start school early, the child must possess suitable academic ability as evidenced by a formal cognitive assessment and be considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if they don't early entry to school.

School Exemption

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

Withdrawal/Deferral

Some children who have commenced kindergarten may benefit from withdrawing from the program, in order to access kindergarten in the following year.

- A withdrawal can occur without any impact on government funding for that child's place the following year, only if it is implemented **before** the first funding data collection.

Adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide, 2023

Attachment 3

SAMPLE OF KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Eligibility

Age

Only complete below form if you are planning on sending your child to kindergarten in 20XX. Your child will be eligible for kindergarten only if they meet the following age criteria:

- To be eligible for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, your child must turn 3 by April 30 20XX
- To be eligible for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, your child must turn 4 by April 30 20XX

Immunisations

According to the No Jab, No Play law in Victoria, your child must be fully vaccinated to start kindergarten. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is not required for this registration form, but you should ensure that your child's immunisations are up to date and you have a copy of this statement before commencing the enrolment process.

A grace period only applies for families who may find it difficult to provide an up-to-date statement because they are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage.

Further information on immunisation requirements for enrolment in early childhood services is available through the DE website: www.education.vic.gov.au

Priority of access

Ripponlea Kindergarten follows the Department of Education's Priority of Access criteria that prioritises allocation of kindergarten places for children who:

- are at risk of abuse or neglect, including out of home care
- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- are, or have parents or carers who are, asylum seekers or refugees
- have additional developmental needs
- hold or have parents who hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card.

Children that fit one or more of those criteria will be allocated to a place in kindergarten as a high priority. This form will collect all the information required to determine if a child is eligible for Priority of Access.

If you believe you or your child are in exceptional circumstances which require prioritisation and are not covered by any of the above criteria, please contact Ripponlea Kindergarten to discuss.

Fees

Refer to the *Free Kindergarten Fees Policy* for more information about fees.

REGISTRATION FORM EXAMPLE

[Service Name and Logo]

I am registering my child for:

☐ Three-Year-Old Kindergarten to start in 20XX

☐ Four-Year-Old Kindergarten to start in 20XX

Child's Details

Child's first name	
Child's last name	
Gender (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> _____
Date of birth	
What is the main language spoken at home?	
Has this child already attended a kindergarten program?	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-Year-Old <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Year-Old <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are this child's immunisations up to date? Your child must be fully vaccinated by the time they attend kindergarten under the No Jab No Play law.*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If you have answered no, please visit a health professional or Maternal and Child Health nurse to organise your immunisations before the kindergarten year begins. Evidence of up-to-date immunisation must be provided within two months of commencing kindergarten.</i>
Is this child Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the child a triplet or quadruplet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the child meet any of the following criteria?	<input type="checkbox"/> Known to Child Protection <input type="checkbox"/> From refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds <input type="checkbox"/> Is in Out of Home Care <input type="checkbox"/> Been referred by a Maternal and Child Health nurse, Child Protection, Early Childhood Learning Advisor, Child FIRST, Orange Door Integrated Family Services or Services Connect <input type="checkbox"/> A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card
Does the child require any additional support due to a disability including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please provide details

Parent or guardian details

Please complete your contact details below. If you would like to enter details for a second parent /or guardian or if a court order requires another person must be kept informed about the registration and enrolment process, please do so here.

	First parent / guardian (required)	Second parent / guardian (optional)
Name	First name Last name	First name Last name
Relationship to child		
Residential address	Street address Suburb State Post Code	Street address Suburb State Post Code
Contact number*		
Email address*		
Main language spoken (if not English)		
Interpreter required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

* Note that you will be sent communications to this phone number or email.

You may nominate session days and times.

Session days and times

Please indicate your preferred session:

- ☐ 4yo Gawarn group Monday and Tuesday 8.30-4.00
- ☐ 4yo Walert group Wednesday (bush kinder) 12.50-3.50, Thursday 8.30-1.00, Friday 8.30-4.00
- ☐ 3yo Warrin group Wednesday 8.30-1.00, Thursday 1.00-4.00, Friday 8.30-4.00
- ☐ 3yo Kurrborra group Wednesday and Thursday 8.30-4.00

Declaration

- ☐ I give permission for this information to be used by Ripponlea Kindergarten for the purposes of:
 - accessing kindergarten and,
 - if applicable, applications for State funding necessary to provide additional support for my child's participation.
- ☐ I declare that all of the information provided is true and correct.

Parent / guardian name: _____

Before submitting this form, please check the following:

- You have completed all sections of this form.

- You have selected your preference for session times.
- You have signed this form.

Attachment 4

CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Ripponlea Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children (*refer to Definitions*). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

Non-attendance

Term One

- Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

Families Traveling Overseas

- Families are required to notify Ripponlea Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel.

Non-contactable Families

- After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, the early childhood teacher or educator is to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, the educator is to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.