



Kindergarten

Information for families

Three year old Kindergarten

Your initial questions answered

What is three year old kindergarten?

Three year old programs are an opportunity for children to learn in a flexible, play based environment where educators use a combination of child-led and intentional teaching to support each child's individual learning.

Is my child ready?

To be eligible for a place in a three-year-old kindergarten, your child must have turned three years of age by 30 April. If your child has not turned three by this date, you will be placed on a waiting list and contacted when your child turns three to discuss availabilities. .

- If your child's birthday falls into the first few months of the year, you are encouraged to discuss their readiness with an educator or other early childhood professional who knows your child.

Families are encouraged to consider the best time for their child to access a three-year-old program, and how this may impact on their one year of funded four-year-old kindergarten and their school starting age.

Go to www.education.vic.gov.au for more information.

What will my child learn?

Kindergartens implement a play-based curriculum for children, taking into account their current knowledge, culture, abilities, ideas, interests and individual needs. The Victorian Early Learning Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia guide the program's development. Key early learning and development outcomes include:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners, and
5. Children are effective communicators.

For more information about how your chosen kindergarten implements the approved learning frameworks, please discuss with your child's educators.

How many hours/days each week will my child be able to attend?

Children attend a three-year-old kindergarten for between three and six hours each week. Sessions may be offered over one or two days depending on each kinder timetable. These are structured to make best use of the space available and to reflect community needs.

How much does it cost?

Three-year-old kindergarten is fully funded by family fees. The fees reflect the cost of employing staff and operating the service. Council sets in advance fees, which are charged on a term-by-term basis. Contact Council for individual service fees.

Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children where programs are offered by a qualified teacher. Some services will be able to offer your child a place in a program for four year olds or a mixed age group.

Is my child eligible?

Your child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten if they are aged three by 30 April in the year they will be attending a kindergarten program, and:

- your child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred to Child FIRST).

For more information please email

centralapplication@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or go to www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/kindergarten-programs.aspx

How can I be involved?

Kindergartens encourage active family participation and value links with their communities. You can be involved by the parent advisory group. Please discuss with on the staff.

What if my child has additional needs?

If an early childhood educator or family has any concerns about a child's development, these need to be raised as soon as possible so that options for referral to other services and development strategies can be put into place. Early childhood educators work with families to support children with additional needs and provide advice about their needs.

How will I know how my child is going?

Early childhood educators maintain documentation about each child's development and learning. These are available at each service. Opportunities for family/educator meetings will be provided and families are always welcome to ask early childhood educators about their child's progress.

Four year old Kindergarten

Your initial questions answered

What is four-year-old kindergarten?

Four-year-old kindergarten is an important step for your child. It helps them learn skills that they will build on throughout their life. Go to www.education.vic.gov.au to learn more about how kindergarten can benefit your child.

Is my child ready?

All Victorian children are eligible for a state-funded year of kindergarten in the year before they are due to start school. To be eligible, your child must have turned four years of age by 30 April in the year attending kindergarten. Please note that a child cannot attend more than one Victorian Government-funded kindergarten program at the same time.

Each child develops at their own pace and it is important for the child's self-confidence and success that their kindergarten experience is positive and happy. Families are encouraged to consider the best time for their child to access their one year of funded four-year-old kindergarten and how this impacts on their school starting age.

What will my child learn?

Early childhood educators develop and implement a play-based curriculum for children, taking into account their current knowledge, culture, abilities, ideas, interests and individual needs. The Victorian Early Learning Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia guides the program's development. Key early learning and development outcomes include:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

For more information about how your chosen kindergarten implements the approved learning frameworks, please discuss with your child's educators.

How many hours/days each week will my child be able to attend?

Children attend kindergarten for 15 hours a week, usually during term time. Sessions, days and times vary, depending on each kindergarten's structure.

How much does it cost?

Four Year Old Kindergarten is funded by state government funding and family fees. Fees are charged on a term-by-term basis in advance.

Families may be eligible for a kindergarten fee subsidy due to various reasons. Refer to the information pertaining to priority access groups at www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/how-much-child-care-costs.aspx

How can I be involved?

Kindergartens encourage active family participation and value links with their local communities. You can be involved by a member of a parent advisory group. You are also welcome to come along and take part in the program, including by sharing your skills and expertise with your child's group. Talk to your child's educators to find out more about how you can be involved.

How will I know how my child is going?

Early childhood educators maintain documentation about each child's development and learning goals. These are available in each room. Opportunities for parent/educator meetings will be provided and parents are always welcome to ask early childhood educators about their child's progress.

Transition Learning and Development Statements are developed for each child in preparation for their primary school orientation in term four. These statements include input from educators and family, and provide an insight into your child's progress over the kindergarten year.

What if my child needs another year of kindergarten or has additional needs?

If your child has been professionally diagnosed with additional needs or you have any concerns these need to be raised with the educators as soon as possible. Options for referral and support strategies can then be put in place. Early childhood educators work with families to support children with additional needs and provide advice about options, including access to a second year of kindergarten.

Applications and allocation of funding for a second year of kindergarten can be made to the Department of Education and Training, with the support of your early childhood educator.

How to apply

Online applications for Kindergarten in 2021 are open from **14 April 2020**.

www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/kinder2020

Families have until 26 June 2020 to submit their form to be considered for first round offers. Applications received after 26 June 2020 will be processed in September 2020 once round one applications have been confirmed.

Kindergarten applicants will be notified and offered session options before the end of Term Three.

Additional information

Need more information?

If the information in this brochure does not answer all your questions, please contact our Kindergarten Programs Team Leader on 5261 0548 or email **centralapplication@surfcoast.vic.gov.au**.

The website **www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au** contains general information, including a copy of the current Central Application Policy.

Prior to making your decision, you are invited to contact the Kindergartens directly to organise a convenient time to visit the service.

About the National Quality Framework and Standards

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority oversee the National Quality Framework and ensure the consistent and effective implementation of the National Quality Standards, learning frameworks, and relevant laws and regulations pertaining to early years learning.

The National Quality Standards set out national benchmarks for the quality of education and care services. They aim to promote:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of children,
- a focus on achieving outcomes for children through high quality educational programs, and
- families' understanding of what distinguishes a quality service.

The standards are divided into seven quality areas:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

National Quality Standards rating and assessment process

Approved services, such as Surf Coast Shire Council's early years learning programs, are assessed and rated against each of the seven quality areas. This process aims to drive continuous quality improvement and to provide families with better information for making choices about their child's education and care.

Privacy Statement: Surf Coast Shire Council considers that the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance, and is strongly committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. Council will comply with the Information Privacy Principles as set out in the **Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014**. The information will not be disclosed to any other party unless Council is required to do so by law.

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