

Early Years Services – QA6.4 - Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme

TRIM Reference: D23/84589

Due for Review: 1 August 2025

Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

Purpose

This policy outlines the allocation of kindergarten places by Surf Coast Shire Council's Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) to ensure equitable access to kindergarten for all families.

Policy Principles

This policy assists Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to deliver a consistent, transparent and accountable process for allocation of kindergarten placements.

Scope

This policy applies to all families accessing three- and four-year-old kindergarten programs for the following services and includes kindergarten providers and council officers involved in the administration of Council's CRES:

- Anglesea Kindergarten
- Helen M Kininmonth Kindergarten
- Jan Juc Preschool
- Kurrabee Myaring Kindergarten
- Lorne Kindergarten
- Torquay Kindergarten

[Find Education and care services](#)

Policy

Surf Coast Shire Council's CRES works in partnership with kindergarten services and oversees the allocation of places in three- and four-year-old kindergarten programs. The CRES supports the Best Practice recommendations endorsed by the Department of Education (DE) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to provide a fair and transparent process for allocating kindergarten placements within each service. Each service has an individual priority of access to allocate placements.

Priority of Access

Surf Coast Shire Council supports the Victorian State Government policy directions which articulate ~~that~~ children those children with additional needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, asylum seeker and refugee families with an appropriate visa, children known to Child Protection, children applying for a 2nd year of 4-year-old kindergarten and families eligible for a fee subsidy, benefit most from being involved in early childhood programs. Families that provide evidence where possible that they have a child in one of these categories will be allocated as a priority.

Kindergarten Priority Groups – This includes 3-year-old and 4year-old programs

- 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 including Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

- Children with additional needs, defined as children who:
 - Require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the program
 - Require a combination of services which are individually planned
 - Have an identified specific disability or developmental delay
- Children requiring a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten, approved by the Department of Education (DE).
- Children applying for a 4-year-old program who are currently attending a 3-year-old program at a Surf Coast Shire Council kindergarten
- Siblings who are currently attending or have previously attended the same kindergarten
- Surf Coast Shire residents or those employed within the municipality
- Residential proximity

In mixed-age groups, the Priority of Access guidelines equally prioritise 3 and 4-year-old children considered vulnerable under the policy.

Three-year-old kindergarten - Government Funded Program

Children must be three years old to attend Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Children will only be able to access one year of Government Funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Children accessing Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will transition to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten the following year.

Commencing 2026, children may be eligible for a second year of 3-year-old kindergarten, if delayed in at least two key outcomes of learning and development as assessed by your child's kindergarten teacher.

Families with children born between January and April are strongly recommended to consider the best time for their child to access Three-Year-Old kindergarten, as this will impact on their one year of Four-Year-Old kindergarten and their school starting age.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

Early Start Kindergarten gives eligible children 15 hours of free kindergarten a week. To be eligible, your child must be three by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten, and:

- is from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or
- your family has had contact with child protection.

Four-year-old kindergarten - Government Funded Program

Children must be four years old by 30 April in the year they are attending kindergarten to be eligible.

Children will only be able to access one year of Government Funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten and will transition to school the following year, unless assessed as being eligible for a second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (when a child shows delays in at least two key outcomes of learning and development as assessed by your child's kindergarten teacher).

Pre-prep priority of access

From 2026 Pre-prep priority of access gives eligible children between 16-25 hours of free kindergarten per week. To be eligible, your child must be four by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten, and:

- is from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or
- your family has had contact with child protection.

When to start Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

Use the Starting Age Calculator to enter your child's birth date to find out what year they can start Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

[Starting age calculator](#)

Registration

Applications for both Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten open in term 2 each year. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for specific dates and timeline). The online application form is available via the Surf Coast Shire Council website, on the [Kindergarten page](#).

Families will receive a confirmation email upon receipt of application.

For families having difficulties completing the online application form, please contact centralapplication@surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Fees

Surf Coast Shire Council offer 15 hours of free Four-Year-Old kindergarten and between 5-15 hours of free Three-Year-Old kindergarten.

If families attend more than one kindergarten or long day care service, they must choose where their child will take part in in the funded kindergarten program, and get to receive the free kindergarten funding.

Any donations are voluntary and not required for participation in the kindergarten program.

No other fees will be charged, except when additional hours at the kindergarten are provided. These hours will be additional to the 15 hours of free government funded kindergarten.

Accepting full fee-paying children

Surf Coast Shire Council will not accept full fee-paying children in a funded kindergarten program. Only in exceptional circumstances may your request be considered. This request must be in writing.

Allocations

- Session times and hours for all Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten programs will be determined at the end of first round applications. The decision is based on the number of applications received and service capacity.
- Children will be allocated according to the priority of access for each service.
- Families will be emailed regarding their kindergarten placement at the end of round one. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for specific dates and timeline).
- If successful in gaining a kindergarten placement, families will be asked to select their preference of group at their allocated kindergarten.
- If not successful in gaining a place, the application will remain on the waitlist.
- Families will be emailed their group placement. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for specific dates and timeline). If a family chooses not to accept the position allocated, they can opt to be placed on a waiting list for a different session.
- A waiting list will be maintained for families not allocated who didn't receive a placement in the first round, and will be offered any vacancies before round two applications are allocated.
- Round two applications will be processed after round one placements have been confirmed. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for specific dates and timeline).

Enrolments

- Families will be emailed the enrolment form to complete after accepting their group offer. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for specific dates and timeline).
- Families are required to:
 - Complete all documentation required by the service
 - Provide 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
 - Notify the service upon enrolment of any specific health care needs of the child, including any medical conditions and allergies and any medical management plans that need to be followed.
 - Ensure all information about the child and family held by the service is kept up to date, including any parenting plans or court orders.
 - Provide at least two authorised nominees prior to commencing at the service.

- A current Immunisation History Statement must be provided to access all early childhood education and care services in Victoria as per the [‘No Jab, No Play’ law](#).

For families having difficulties completing the online enrolment form, please contact centralapplication@surfcoast.vic.gov.au

[No Jab, No Play](#)

The ‘No Jab, No Play’ legislation aims to reduce the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases through increased immunisation rates in the community.

The legislation requires all children enrolling in early childhood education and care services to be up to date with their vaccinations or to meet the criteria for exemption at the point of enrolment.

Services can obtain an up-to-date immunisation status from families up to two months prior to the first day of attendance at kindergarten in order to confirm kindergarten enrolment.

[Kindergarten Funding Guidelines](#)

Prior to confirming enrolment, service providers must obtain evidence that the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age (via an immunisation status certificate), or
- is immunised in accordance with a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their vaccinations, or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.

Service providers:

- may give eligible children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage a 16 week [grace-support](#) period to produce proof of up-to-date immunisation.
- should provide information and assistance to families about the immunisation process.
- must keep immunisation documentation with the child’s enrolment record in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Attendance for 2-year-olds in the Kindergarten Program

Children under three will not be able to attend a funded kindergarten program until their third birthday due to ratio requirements.

Definitions

Enrolment	An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide education and care to a child.
Grace Support Period	Allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. The 16-week grace-support period starts on the first day of the child’s attendance at the service. During the grace-support period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement and to encourage families to access immunisation services.
Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement	The only form of acceptable evidence of immunisation. The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR. To confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have medical contraindication and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

Related Procedure

Nil

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

D22/217989	Early Years Enrolment and Orientation Policy
D14/ 94981	Early Years Emergency Management and Evacuations Policy
D15/16286	Early Years Access and Inclusion Policy
D14/94973	Early Years Delivery of children to, and collection from, education and care service premises policy
D15/42541	Early Years Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
D15/16337	Early Years Confidentiality, Management and Storage of Records Policy
D15/32925	Early Years Medical Conditions and Medication Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

D16/20238	Kindergarten Central Application Process
D18/92421	Early Years Immunisation – No jab, No play Work Instruction
D17/30062	Early Years Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan (Kinderloop)
Online	Confidential Enrolment & Consent Form - Kindergarten

Other References

Kindergarten Funding Guide
Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Victoria Children Services Regulations 2020
National Quality Standards 2011

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Manager Community Strengthening – 3 July 2023</i>
2	<i>Amended</i>	<i>Manager Community Strengthening – 1 August 2024</i>

APPENDIX A: CENTRAL REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT TIMELINE

Key dates - allocation of 2026 kindergarten places

Date	Action
Monday 7 April 2025	Application process opens
Sunday 22 June 2025	First round applications close
Week beginning 21 July 2025	Program preferences sent to families
Monday 28 July 2025	Program preferences due back
Week beginning 11 August 2025	First round offers sent out
Monday 18 August 2025	First round offers due back
Week beginning 1 September 2025	Second round offers sent to families
Monday 8 September 2025	Second round offers due back
Week beginning 22 September 2025	Enrolment forms sent to families
Monday 29 September 2025	Enrolment forms due back
Applications for 2026 ongoing	
Allocation of 2026 places ongoing	