



Enrolment Policy – Kindergarten and Early Learning Centres

Purpose

Outline how ECMS supports children to receive equal access to places in our services.

Scope

Applies to all staff, students on placement, volunteers, families, and others attending ECMS services.

Background

Enrolment in ECMS Kindergarten and Early Learning Centres meets requirements of the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment, and the Public Health Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act.

Universal access to high-quality early learning helps children get a good start in life and has positive effects across society, consistent with ECMS's purpose to foster lifelong learning.

General Enrolment

ECMS allocates places to eligible children according to the [Allocation Procedure](#).

Those who receive a place are then sent that Kindergarten or Early Learning Centre's Enrolment Form to submit before they can attend.

Priority of Access

All kindergarten places across ECMS services are allocated according to [Priority of Access criteria](#).

Families are encouraged to tell staff if their child has additional needs to help determine priority access and assist forward planning.

To ensure equity, ECMS applies the above criteria to three and four-year-old programs separately. In mixed-age groups, children are prioritised equally regardless of age.

Free Kinder

All ECMS services are part of the Victorian Government Free Kinder Initiative. Free Kinder is for everyone, and KFS criteria does not apply to access this funding.

Families are not required to show a Health Care Card, Pension Card, or Australian citizenship (or similar) to be eligible to access, however, ECMS will still collect this information in order to monitor participation for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Free Kinder in a long day care setting

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Free Kinder funding will offset out-of-pocket fees for children attending a kindergarten program in a long day care setting. Most families will still pay some fees, depending on the number of days attended and their **CCS** entitlement.

Families can only enroll their child in one Free Kinder program at a time and will nominate which service receives their Free Kinder funding.

Early Start Kindergarten

While all children are now eligible for Free Kinder, ECMS will continue to note children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten as it contributes to how School Readiness Funding is calculated and ensure additional targeted support is provided.

Eligible children must be 3 by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten, and:

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

Kindergarten Enrolment

Families will register their child via a Council, or directly with ECMS through our website.

There is no deadline or closure for enrolments, though all programs have a set number of places for children available.

Those who receive a place are then sent that Kindergarten or Early Learning Centre's Enrolment Form to submit before they can attend.

Three-year-old Kindergarten

The Victorian Department of Education and Training funds free three-year-old kindergarten state-wide, so each child can assess a minimum of five hours, and up to fifteen hours a week led by a Bachelor trained educator.

- All ECMS kindergartens run three-year-old programs.
- Absent a Bachelor trained educator to run the program, three-year-old groups may run as an Activity Group, in this instance families will be notified of the change.
- Activity Groups are aligned under the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards and are also consistent with the ECMS Educational Program Development Policy and Procedure.

Four-year-old Kindergarten

The Victorian Department of Education and Training funds free four-year-old kindergarten state-wide, so each child can assess fifteen hours per week led by a Bachelor trained educator.

Each kindergarten must provide 600 hours through-out the calendar year. Aligned to Victorian Government School terms.

Second Year Enrolments

- Children may be eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten when a child show delays under the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Further information on how to apply for a second year of funded kindergarten can be found on the Victorian Department of Education and Training [website](#)

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- Services will work with families to determine whether a child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school
- Children who turn six during the kindergarten year are required to seek an [exemption from school](#)

Early Learning Centres Enrolment

Families can find detailed information on the application process for individual Early Learning Centres on the [ECMS website](#).

Once families accept the offer they must pay two weeks fees to secure the place, and then continue paying fees two weeks in advance. Further information on fees with Early Learning Centres is in the *ECMS Early Learning and Care Fees Policy*

Families provide two weeks notice if a child no longer needs their place, and the original two week payment covers the last two weeks of fees.

Roles & Responsibilities

Director Early Childhood Education	Accountable for implementing and complying with this policy
Area Managers	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing and complying with this policy • Supporting Nominated Supervisors and Centre Directors to promote priority access and effectively allocate places • Liaising with Local Government • Providing information to the Director Early Childhood Education, and People Business Partners on workforce shortfalls
Centre Directors and Nominated Supervisors	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting completed enrolment forms and supporting documents (e.g. Immunisation History, Health Care Cards, etc) • Ensuring the ECMS Immunisation Policy and Procedure is followed • Supporting educators and families with enrolment, entry age, and second year applications
Employees, Volunteers, Contractors, and Student Placement Workers	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting families to access enrolment and supporting documents • Discussing concerns about enrolment processes or submitted documents with Nominated Supervisors and Centre Directors • Liaising with families about enrolment, entry age, and second year applications
Families	Responsible for:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following enrolment processes and providing relevant documents (e.g. Immunisation History, Health Care Cards, etc) • Informing staff if the child has additional needs
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Sources

Related Policy and Procedure	<p>ECMS allocation of kindergarten places procedure</p> <p>Child Safe Culture Policy</p> <p>Child Safe Policy and Procedure</p> <p>Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>Confidential Information Policy</p> <p>Early Learning Centre Fees Policy</p> <p>Immunisation Policy and Procedure</p> <p>Orientation Policy</p> <p>Privacy Policy</p> <p>Privacy Collection Statement</p>
Relevant Legislation	<p>Child Safe Standards</p> <p>Children, Youth, and Families Act 2055 (VIC)</p> <p>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC)</p> <p>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC)</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): Sections 168, 169, 172, 173 and 175</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (VIC): Regulations 73-76, 84, 155 – 157, and 158 – 162</p> <p>Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC)</p> <p>Working with Children Regulations 2006 (VIC)</p>
Sources and Further Reading	<p>Priority of access criteria for early childhood education</p> <p>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework</p> <p>Kindergarten Funding Guide</p> <p>Free kinder guidelines for services 2023</p> <p>Early Start Kindergarten</p> <p>Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten</p> <p>Going to kindergarten if your child is 6 years old</p>

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