



CHILDREN'S &
FAMILY SERVICES



Kindergarten

Information Kit for 2024



www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au

Connect to Council



Child Safe Committment

Children's & Family Services are committed to being a child safe organisation and has **zero tolerance for child abuse**. We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe from harm and promoting their best interests. Our commitment is to all children aged up to 18 years:

- The cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and linguistically diverse children, and to the safety of children with a disability.
- Aim to create enriching experiences for children and want them to feel safe, happy and empowered within our services.
- Create environments where all children have a voice, can be heard and listened to, their views are respected and they contribute to how we plan for, design and develop our services and activities.
- Having policies, procedures and training in place to support our staff, volunteers and contractors to achieve our commitments to your child and family.

Kindergarten 2024

Important dates

Registrations open:

Monday 29 May 2023

First round registrations close:

Friday 23 June 2023 (Registrations received after this date will be considered a late registration)

**Families will receive Offers
from August 2023**



Kindergarten

What is Kindergarten?

Kindergarten now starts at 3 years of age. It is a two year education program for young children before they start school. It is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. Kindergarten encourages children to actively join in play and enables the early development of skills such as:

- Building relationships,
- Developing confidence,
- Learning listening skills, sharing and waiting through group activities,
- Extending children's experiences and interests.

Kindergarten encourages children to grow and develop into independent learners through open ended activities, free choice play, providing educational and developmentally appropriate play spaces, all of which are designed to achieve the best outcome for your child.

Kindergarten Timetables

Our kindergarten timetables are available on our website.

Sessional Kindergartens and Fees

Children will attend kindergarten for 15 hours per week for both 3 year old and 4 year old kindergarten (three 5 hour sessions or two 7.5 hour sessions). Sessional Kindergarten in 2024 will be free for all children, this means your child will receive 15 hours of kindergarten per week at no cost in 2024.

Early Learning Centre Kindergartens and Fees

A 15 hour per week kindergarten program is offered (three 5 hour sessions) at the three WCC Early Learning Centres.

Florence Collins Kinder 8.30am – 1.30pm

(Care & education Mon-Fri 7.30am – 6.00pm)

Matron Swinton Kinder 9.00am – 2.00pm

(Care & education Mon-Fri 8.00am – 6.00pm)

Sherwood Park Kinder 9.00am – 2.00pm

(Care & education Mon-Fri 8.00am – 6.00pm)

These services are open Monday to Friday throughout the year (excluding public holidays and Christmas closure) with childcare offered either side of the kindergarten hours and during school holidays.

Kindergarten children may be able to access additional childcare on days they aren't attending for kindergarten. All families are charged for child care during the school holidays. Fees are charged at a daily rate and families using these services may be eligible for child care subsidy. Proposed 2024 full daily fee for WCC Early Learning Kindergarten is \$125.00 per day.

For kindergarten at our Early Learning Centres in 2024 fees will be charged, however you will receive a subsidy of \$2,000 per year. At the beginning of each month \$200.00 will be credited to your account for 10 months to reduce your kindergarten fees.

Please note these services start earlier than the other kindergarten programs, operating a child care program during January.

How old does my child need to be to attend kindergarten?

To be eligible for three year old kindergarten your child needs to be three (3) years old by 30 April in the year they attend the program. Whilst three year old kindergarten commences in February, any children whose birthdays are in February, March or April must celebrate their 3rd birthday before they can attend.

To be eligible to attend four year old Kindergarten your child needs to be four years old by 30 April in the year they attend kindergarten. If your child turns 6 in the year they attend kindergarten, please refer to page 5 for further information.

The Department of Education's calculator on 'When to start Three and Four year old Kindergarten' is accessible via the following link: www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life

Is my child ready for Kindergarten?

Each child develops at his/her own rate, and although your child's age may make him/her eligible to start Kindergarten, other factors may impact on his/her readiness for this experience.

If you are concerned about whether your child is ready, or need more information about when the best time is for your child to go to Kindergarten, you can view a virtual information session "Kinder now starts at Three" at

www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/kindergartens.

Contact WCC on 5559 4800 for further details.

How do I register for Kindergarten?

The registration forms are accessed via the webpage: www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/kindergartens

Please ensure that you place a number against ALL kindergarten preferences on the registration and each preference number is only entered once.

If you have any issues or need assistance with your registration please contact us on 5559 4800 or send an email with your contact details with a brief explanation of your issue to childandfamily@warrnambool.vic.gov.au.



Guardians are asked to:

1. Click on the applicable 3 year old kindergarten link or 4 year old kindergarten link to access the application form for 2024 kindergarten registrations.
2. Complete the application and add supporting documents where requested or applicable.
3. Click on the submit button at the bottom of the form once completed.
4. You will receive a confirmation email once we have received your application.
5. During the registration process you may be contacted by our early years administration staff for further information if required.

6. Medical documentation displaying a professional diagnosis for your child if applicable.
7. Letter from a case manager or support agency verifying how your child meets high priority criteria if applicable.

Supporting documentation can be in virtually any format such as PDF, doc, docX or JPEG but must be fully legible.

Registrations received after the first round offer closing date will be placed in subsequent round/s.

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Supporting documentation you will need includes:

1. Child's birth certificate OR Statutory Declaration in the event that you do not have a birth certificate OR Passport.
2. Proof of residency within the City of Warrnambool in the form of a utility bill i.e. Electricity, Gas, Telephone bill issued in the last 3 months OR Relevant building permit OR Tenancy Agreement if applicable.
3. Court Orders if applicable.
4. Concession Card if applicable.
5. Letter from appropriate professional or support agency verifying your child is assessed as having additional needs, a disability or developmental delay if applicable.

WCC cannot guarantee which service individual staff members will be working at. Staffing is determined at the end of the year... dependent on enrolment numbers and staff availability. All staff are tertiary qualified.

Staffing at Kindergartens



How old must my child be to attend kindergarten?

All children in Victoria are eligible to access a 3 year old funded kindergarten program in the year before they attend 4 year old kindergarten. **To register in a funded 3 year old kindergarten program, your child must be at least three years old by 30 April in the year they will attend the program. Children will not be able to attend kindergarten until they turn 3 years old.**

What if my child turns 3 years or 4 years between January 1 and April 30 whilst attending a kindergarten program?

We encourage families who are considering registering their child to attend kindergarten when they will be turning 3 or 4 years between January 1 and April 30, to seek advice from early childhood professionals to inform their decision. This could include a Preschool Field Officer, a Foundation Teacher from your local school, a Maternal and Child Health Nurse, childcare educator, Early Childhood Intervention Services or the Department of Education (1300 333 232, swvr@education.vic.gov.au). A kindergarten educator should also meet the child in order to provide the family with a professional opinion about whether the child would benefit from late or early entry into a kindergarten program.

Once a child has had a funded year of 3 year old kindergarten they will then go onto 4 year old kindergarten the next year and then onto school the following year, unless they have been recommended for a second year of 4 year old kindergarten by an early childhood professional as the child has at **least two areas of developmental delay**.

We therefore:

- encourage families to carefully consider the best time for their child to start kindergarten, as all children learn and develop in different ways;
- encourage families to consult with relevant early childhood professionals for guidance;
- encourage families to seek advice and reassurance about how the kindergarten program will support their child's learning and development;
- **advise families that once their child commences kindergarten, they are expected to complete a full year of kindergarten and that funding is limited to one year of 3 and 4 year old kindergarten for each child (unless they are eligible for Early Start funding or a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten).**

If your child will turn 6 years whilst attending a kindergarten program.

If your child will turn **6 years of age (compulsory school age)** before or while attending their **first or second** year of funded 4 year old kindergarten you must obtain an exemption from attending school. Parents/guardians are responsible for seeking this exemption by applying to the Department of Education using an 'Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program' form.



First year of funded 4 year old kindergarten

A parent/guardian may apply for an exemption from school for a child turning six before or during their first funded year of kindergarten if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- the family has moved from interstate or overseas where the school entry age criteria are different from those in Victoria;
- the child's early education has been delayed due to chronic illness, disability or development delay;
- the child is a refugee/asylum seeker who has suffered trauma and would benefit significantly from a year of kindergarten before enrolling in school;
- the child has not been able to access kindergarten previously due to transient family circumstances;
- other special considerations.

The parent/guardian is required to obtain written confirmation from a relevant professional (e.g. kindergarten teacher, medical practitioner or an allied health professional) verifying the reason for exemption and why it is in the child's best interest to attend kindergarten rather than commence at school. A copy of this written evidence and any other written advice that supports the child's exemption from school must be attached to the 'Exemption from school due to attendance in a kindergarten program' form.

Second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten

A parent/guardian may apply for an exemption from school for a child turning six before or during their second funded year of

4 year old Kindergarten if a Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten has been submitted by the early childhood teacher in the Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS). This declaration confirms the child is eligible for a second funded year of 4 year old kindergarten because an assessment by an early childhood teacher has identified developmental delays in two or more key areas of development.

Exemption application process

The completed 'Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program' form must be forwarded by the parent/guardian to the Area Executive Director of the relevant Department of Education regional office by 1 November in the year before the child turns six.

The Department will provide written confirmation of the decision to the parent/guardian following consideration of the request.

The parent/guardian must provide a copy of the Department's decision to the child's Kindergarten service and Warrnambool City Council as evidence of eligibility for kindergarten per capita funding.

Please note that the nominated parent/guardian has the option to withdraw the school exemption request if the child is later enrolled to attend school.



How are Kindergarten places allocated?

Warrnambool City Council (WCC) runs a centralised registration process for 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs at 12 kindergartens managed by Council.

The centralised registration process simplifies the process for both the Kindergartens and for families and offers a fair and equitable allocation system.

How many children can go to each Kindergarten group?

The number able to be enrolled per group depends on the size of the kindergarten room and playground facilities available, and is adjusted to ensure all children have equal access to a quality program at all our kindergartens.

What happens if more children apply to attend a particular Kindergarten than there are places?

As there are sometimes more families registering for a kindergarten group than there are places available, Council has "priority of access" criteria for the allocation of these places.

How was the criteria determined?

The criteria was developed based on feedback from the community and are in accordance with Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) guidelines and the Department of Education (DE) Priority of Access.

How does this work?

When applications for registration are received, places are reserved for children eligible for a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten.

The available places are then allocated. If more children are seeking a place in a particular kindergarten group than there are places available, each application will be given a score based on the priority of access criteria below.

Children will be allocated to the places available in each group according to the number of points allocated to their application - with the highest scoring applications placed first and so on.

If there are not enough remaining places for children with an equal number of points, the distance between the kindergarten and the children's homes will be measured. The child/ren living closest to the kindergarten will receive the remaining places.

Why do I have to indicate preferences for every kinder program?

Any children who do not get into their first kindergarten group preference will then be assessed for their second preference and so on, until they are placed. It is therefore essential to make sure you place a number against ALL kindergarten preferences on the registration and each number is only entered once. 1 being your most preferred group, 2 being your next preferred group and so on.

What if parents/carers indicate that their child meets the priority of access criteria just to gain an advantage?

Supporting documents which show that the applicant meets any priority of access criteria must be submitted with the application. Without proof, no points will be attributed to the application.

What happens if I apply late?

You can still apply after the first round registrations have closed. After the allocation of first and subsequent round offers, any remaining and new applications received will be processed.

The priority of access criteria will be used to determine who is placed first in the remaining vacancies.

Priority of access criteria	Points
Children identified as high priority children - please refer to information on page 9	3
For continuity of care, children who have attended one of the following programs at the preferred kindergarten (your first preference): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Start funded placement, WCC Early Learning Centre/s Care and Education, WCC 3 Year Old Kindergarten, WCC 4 Year Old Kindergarten. 	1
Children who are living within the City of Warrnambool	1

Priority of Access Criteria - Definitions & supporting documents

As there are sometimes more families applying for a kindergarten group than there are places available, Council has "priority of access" criteria for the allocation of these places.

This page provides definitions regarding the access criteria and sets out the supporting documents which must be provided as proof of eligibility.

1. What is the 'priority of access' criteria?

If more children are seeking a place in a particular kindergarten group than there are places available, each application will be given a score based on the priority of access criteria below.

2. Definition of High Priority Children, refer to the table on page 9.

3. What documents do I need to provide to support my child's application?

If your child is eligible for any points under the priority of access criteria, the following documents must be provided to ensure points are attributed.

3.1 High Priority Children

Families with children in Out of Home Care, families with children assessed as having additional needs, a disability and/or developmental delay, children in families which include a disabled person, children in families reliant on income support, children in socially and geographically isolated families.

Please:

- Provide a letter from an appropriate support agency or professional verifying your child is assessed as having additional needs, a disability and/or a developmental delay relevant to this criteria (see page 9 for further details),
- Provide a letter from a case manager/supporting organisation verifying how your child meets any other category of this criteria, or

- Contact WCC to discuss this further.
You may be asked to provide relevant additional evidence later on.

3.2 Children who have attended an Early Start funded placement, WCC Early Learning Centre/s Care & Education, WCC 3 Year Old Kindergarten, WCC 4 Year Old Kindergarten at the preferred kindergarten (your 1st preference). Please indicate the program attended in the place provided on the Registration form - this will be checked against Council's records.

3.3 Residents of the City of Warrnambool

For families who live within the City of Warrnambool the Registration application must be submitted with proof to ensure points are applied. Proof of residency within the City of Warrnambool can be provided in the form of:

- a utility bill i.e. Electricity, Gas, Telephone bill issued in the last 3 months, or
- copy of a relevant building permit, or
- copy of a Tenancy Agreement.

4. I'm still not sure about this?

If you are unsure about the criteria please contact Warrnambool City Council on 5559 4800.

Priority of access criteria	Points
Children identified as high priority children.	3
For continuity of care, children who have attended one of the following programs at the preferred kindergarten (your first preference): Early Start funded placement, WCC Early Learning Centre/s Care and Education, WCC 3 Year Old Kindergarten, WCC 4 Year Old Kindergarten.	1
Children who are living within the City of Warrnambool	1

High priority children

Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care

Example

The child is:

- attending a kindergarten with Early Start funding, or is
- referred by:
 - Child Protection,
 - Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker),
 - Maternal and Child Health nurse, or
 - Out-of-Home Care provider.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

- Child identified by parent/carer or legal guardian on application as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Asylum seeker and refugee children

- An appropriate visa identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker.

Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

- A child or parent/guardian holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold or White Card, Refugee, Asylum seeker, Humanitarian or bridging visa,
- Multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets), or
- Child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Children with additional needs, defined as children who:

- **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**

The child:

- is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of 4 year old kindergarten,
- holds a Child Disability Health Care Card,
- has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by:
 - the National Disability Insurance Scheme,
 - Early Childhood Intervention Service,
 - Preschool Field Officer, or
 - Maternal and Child Health nurse.



Immunisation and registering your child in our kindergarten or Early Learning Centre



Immunisation history statement examples

Statement. For example, if the statement is page two of a letter from Medicare, both pages need to be presented to the service to confirm enrolment.

How can parent/carers get an immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)?

Parents/carers can print a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement from their myGov account or:

- call the AIR on phone 1800 653 809,
- Visit a Medicare or Centrelink office.

Families who do not hold a Medicare card must call the AIR to request an Immunisation History Statement. A Translating and Interpreting Service is available by calling 131 450, Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.45pm.

What do parents/carers whose child's vaccinations are not up-to-date need to do to obtain acceptable documentation?

If a child's vaccinations are not up-to-date then parents/carers should consult their GP or local council immunisation service about bringing the child's vaccinations up to date. Once the child is up to date with vaccinations, they can request an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR.

How can parents/carers obtain acceptable documentation if their child was vaccinated overseas?

Children who were vaccinated overseas must have their vaccine records accessed by a GP or immunisation nurse and be offered vaccination as required. Once the child's records have been reviewed and updated by their GP, they can request an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR.

If you have further queries regarding the immunisation History Statement needed to finalise enrolment for your child at an Early Learning Centre, kindergarten, Family Day Care or occasional care, please contact WCC Early Years Administration team on 5559 4800.

No Jab, No Play - Changes to the Victorian law

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before enrolling a child, early childhood education and care services have to first obtain evidence that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive. On 28 February 2018, the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation was amended so that **an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)** is the only form of documentation accepted for the purpose of enrolling in an early childhood education and care service. Previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer accepted.

Under 'No Jab, No Play' what documentation is required as evidence of up-to-date vaccination?

To have an enrolment confirmed for a child at an Early Learning Centre, Kindergarten, Family Day Care or occasional care, parents/carers have to provide the service with:

- A current immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR); and
- The statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

The Immunisation History Statement from the AIR lists the vaccines the child has received and, if applicable, which vaccines are due in the future and when. Medical exemption may also be listed, where applicable.

An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only type of immunisation record accepted by early childhood and care services for the purposes of confirming enrolment. The statement must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service.

The Medicare logo and Australian Government must be present and identifiable to be considered a valid Immunisation History

Has your child had their 2 year old or 3.5 year old Maternal Child Health check?

We can arrange that easily for you:
Please call 5559-4470 to make an appointment.

Or visit www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/maternal-and-child-health



Download the Maternal and Child Health App



Or visit: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mchapp?Redirect=1>
The Maternal and Child Health App is free and
makes it easy to find trusted information.