



Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Policy

Purpose

Kindergartens provide an environment in which children's development can be stimulated and encouraged by qualified early childhood teachers. This fosters both educational and social development. International and national research shows that the benefits of quality early childhood educational programs apply for school and for life.

Definitions

The terms kindergarten and preschool used interchangeably throughout this document.

ACECQA - Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

Allocation Criteria- The criteria for the allocation of places to participating kindergartens within the CE.

Allocation Priority- Allocation criteria assigned to applicants for whom protective concerns have been identified and substantiated e.g. children and/or families who are experiencing vulnerabilities and/or additional needs.

Allocation Process- The process for the allocation of places to participating kindergarten programs within the CE.

Ballot- A system in which applicants of equal ranking are selected using a random selection process.

CE- The Central Enrolment Scheme for Kindergartens.

Child FIRST/Orange Door- Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Team is a community-based referral point into family service.

Children with Additional Needs- Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support:

- Within the kindergarten

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- As defined by a medical assessment
- As defined by DET assessment (as per Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) Additional Needs Policy)

Committee/Board of Management– A volunteer committee of parents/guardians responsible for the day-to day management of a kindergarten service.

Deferral Is where a parent/guardian chooses to delay an eligible child/ren’s start to funded kindergarten. Once the child commences the kindergarten program, this is considered their funded year of kindergarten.

ELAA- Early Learning Association Australia

EYLF- Early Years Learning Framework – Curriculum framework to guide the development of the educational program for children.

Early Years Management– Brings individual kindergarten services together under a single employer. The major responsibility of early years managers are management and employment of staff, being the Approved Provider and ensuring compliance with licensing requirements, responsibility for the quality of the program through the management and support of the kindergarten staff and financial management for all their services.

Early Start Kindergarten– A DET program that provides free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible three-year-old children where programs are delivered by a qualified teacher.

Eligible Child– A child who is eligible to apply for a place in a participating kindergarten.

Eligible Concession Card- For the purposes of Kindergarten applications within the Baw Baw Shire, the following concession cards are considered eligible for a reduction of application fees:

The child is eligible in any of the following circumstances:

- the child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- the child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more)
- the child individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds one of the following:
 - a Commonwealth Health Care Card
 - a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
 - a Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card or White Card
 - Refugee visa (subclass 200)
 - In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
 - Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)

- Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786)
- Protection visa (subclass 866)
- Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
- Woman at risk visa (subclass 204)
- Bridging visas A-E

Enrolment Form– The form for parents/guardians to complete to enroll their child/ren in a funded kindergarten participating in CE.

DET– Department of Education and Training. The Victorian regulatory authority primarily responsible for the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services in Victoria.

Funded Kindergarten– also known as four-year-old kindergarten.

Health Care Card– A concession card that entitles the person to cheaper medicines and concessions.

Kindergarten (also known as Preschool)– The term kindergarten refers to both kindergarten and preschool. Kindergarten is a universal early childhood program funded by the Victorian Government for children in the year prior to commencing primary school.

National Quality Framework – Derived from the National Legislative Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, the National Quality Framework lists the National Standards and sets the national benchmark for the assessment of quality in education and care services.

No Jab No Play– In an effort to improve childhood immunisation rates the Victorian Government amended the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to early childhood education and care services cannot confirm enrolment of a child unless there is documentation showing the child:

- Is fully vaccinated
- Is on a recognised catch up schedule
- Has a medical reason not to be vaccinated
 - Conscientious objection to vaccination is not an exemption.'

Protective Services- A government agency that responds to reports of child abuse or neglect.

Second Year Enrolment– Second year enrolments are only available in the four-year-old program. A child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten if the family and teacher assess the child as having delay in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the VEYDF and he or she will benefit from a second year of kindergarten. A second year application that meets DET criteria must be submitted by the teacher.

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VEYLDF- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Curriculum framework to guide the development of the educational program for children

Scope

This policy applies to kindergarten service providers, who participate in the Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) in Baw Baw Shire, including:

- Council
- Committee and Early Years Managers

This policy also applies to all parents/guardians who wish to enrol their child/ren in a funded kindergarten program participating in the CRES.

Legislative context

In Victoria, children are eligible for two years of funded kindergarten in the years prior to school entry. Funding by the State Government is through the Department of Education and Training (DET). In special circumstances the State Government may fund an additional year of 4 year old kindergarten. Each application for second year funding is assessed individually. Full details of DET funding regulations are available on the DET [website](#).

This Policy is underpinned by the following legislation and policy documents:

The National Legislative Framework, which is established through an applied laws system and consists of:

- National Quality Framework
- Education and Care Services National Law
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care
- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Commonwealth legislation and relation documents:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability and Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

State legislation and relation documents:

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- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Privacy and Data Collection Act 2006
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Victorian Auditor General Early Childhood Development Services: Access and Quality 2011
- Local Government Act 1989
- The Victorian Kindergarten Guide 2015
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Department of Education Training – Municipal Association of Victoria Partnership Agreement
- No Jab No Play – Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Municipal Early Years Plan

Policy principles

Eligibility

1. All children are eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program in the two years prior to school entry. 15 hours of funded four-year old kindergarten will be offered with up to 5 hours of three-year old kindergarten being offered increasing to 15 hours by 2029.
2. Children are eligible to apply for kindergarten in the two years prior to the child's entry into school. Applications will open from 1st April to 30th June for first round offers. Online applications available at www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/Kinders
3. Children are eligible to apply for a place in one of the participating community kindergartens in the Baw Baw municipality if they live in the Baw Baw Shire, or are cared for in the Baw Baw Shire for a minimum of three days a week and their caregiver is a resident in the municipality (proof required).
4. Non-residents of the Baw Baw municipality will not be eligible for first round allocations. If places are available after first round allocations, non-residents of Baw Baw may be eligible for placement.

Priority of Access Guidelines for Funded Kindergarten Programs

Priority of access will be given to enrolments for a kindergarten program in the community-based kindergartens participating under the following circumstances:

- Children who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten by meeting the criteria set by the State Government in the "[Kindergarten Funding Guide 2016](#)"
- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care.
- Children with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Asylum seeker and refugee children.
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
- Children who have additional needs that require allocation at a particular kindergarten before other children.

Additional priorities will be weighted and reviewed annually by the Kindergarten Registration and Enrolment Scheme Review Panel. For example, priority may be given to deferral age children, residents of Baw Baw, to children living close to a local kindergarten, to children who have had a sibling attend the kindergarten in the previous 2 years. Part of the review process of these factors may include a survey of the community.

* Families with children not yet three at the commencement of Term One (date of birth before 30 April) will be given the following options dependent of the above priority of access criteria of:

- A place will be allocated and held with the agreement the child can begin after they turn three
- A place will be allocated and held with the agreement that a full year's fee have 'will be incurred'.

The following priority factors have been weighted for entry to a funded Kindergarten program. Priority has been based on survey results and other factors to be considered by the Review Panel and reviewed annually.

- Children who have been deferred (for example, were eligible to attend in the previous year).

- A child who has completed 3-year-old kindergarten and have preferenced the same service in their 4-year-old enrolment preferences (this is not a guarantee of securing a place at the same service)
- Priority will be given to Baw Baw residents over non-residents in first round offers
- A child with siblings who have attended a preferred centre within the past two years will have priority over other children at that kindergarten.

Policy detail

Application Process

- Expression of interest for kindergarten programs can be submitted from the time a child turns 18 months old.
- Application forms are available on [Council's website](#) and are submitted online.
- Applications need to be complete including, (if required), payment of the application fee via credit card before they can be submitted.

(The application fee will be waived for holders of current concession cards.)

Allocation Process for Kindergarten Places

- Applications received from residents of Baw Baw Shire by 30 June in the year prior to attendance will be included in first round offers.
- Confirmation of receipt of applications will be sent via email as the preferred method. If confirmation is not received within 1 hour of submission contact should be made to the the Kindergarten Enrolment Officer on 56242540.
- An email will be sent to applicants during August (four-year-old placements) and September (three year old placements) of the year prior to attendance offering first round placements. If the email is not responded to and offer is not accepted within 14 days and efforts to contact the family are unsuccessful, the application will be cancelled.
- After all responses have been processed, the remaining vacancies will be filled by the next eligible applications.
- Emails offering second round placements will be sent during September and October.
- Non-residents are eligible for this round of offers.

- The Council Kindergarten Enrolment Officer will continue to place eligible children until all vacancies are filled.
- A waiting list will be maintained for those not allocated a place or those not allocated a satisfactory place through the allocation process.

Communication between Kindergartens and Council Staff

Nominated kindergarten representatives and the Council Kindergarten Enrolment Officer must notify each other of cancellations, changes in family contact details and changes in group sessions. Early childhood services should ensure that a supply of enrolment information sheets is always available at their centres. Information will be provided by the Baw Baw Shire Council and are available by contacting the Kindergarten Enrolment Officer.

Special Consideration

Applicants may apply for special consideration when circumstances make it impossible for their child to access their allocated kindergarten. Special Consideration forms are available by contacting the Kindergarten Enrolment Officer. Exceptional circumstances do not include transport as the sole criteria.

Appeal Process

Those applicants dissatisfied with the place offered will have 14 days after the closing date for acceptance of offers to lodge an appeal in writing. The appeal process will not displace another eligible child who has already been allocated a kindergarten place.

The following process will apply:

- An Appeal Panel will be constituted in any year that appeals are lodge, and the panel will follow this procedure
- Applications can provide written or verbal material relevant to their appeal either personally or through and advocate in written or verbal form
- Council officers will also provide the panel with relevant written or verbal information regarding the appeal
- On the consideration of the material presented the Appeal Panel may:
 1. Dismiss the appeal

2. Offer a place at a kindergarten other than the placement against which the appeal has been lodged- where such a place is available
 3. Place the child's name on a waiting list at a kindergarten other than the centre offered to the applicant, without the child forfeiting the original placement offered.
- The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final, and the applicant will receive written notification of the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of the panel meeting.

The panel will consist of the Manager of Community Services or delegate to be an ex-officio member of the panel plus two impartial community members involved in preschool / kindergarten programs. Members will be appointed by Council and must demonstrate no bias, prejudice or advantage to be gained by themselves, or any personal or business associates by being a member of the Appeal Panel. This excludes members of Council staff or external workers/contractors or their personal or business associates who receive direct payment or advantage from the Baw Baw Shire Council.

Supporting access and participation

The benefits of a quality kindergarten program on the development of young children have been well documented, and Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to supporting access to kindergarten for all eligible children.

There are a range of strategies used by Council staff to do this, including:

Working closely with the managers and staff of local kindergartens to ensure clear and consistent communication to families about the registration and enrolment process and to identify availability of kindergarten places across the municipality.

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