

Frequently asked questions:

Stonnington Central Registration Scheme (CRS)

Kindergarten

Why is kindergarten important?

Kindergarten is a strong base for your child's learning and development. It improves language skills and helps your child learn through play. It helps your child get used to new people, places and situations. Kindergarten also helps families and carers to meet each other, build connections in the community and find help.

Two years of kindergarten are even better than one. Starting kindergarten at a younger age boosts learning, development, health and wellbeing - especially for children who are vulnerable or need extra help.

For more information, visit vic.gov.au/when-start-kindergarten

What happens at kindergarten?

Your child will learn lots of things while having fun at the same time. Learning happens in lots of different ways, like solving problems, exploring nature and hearing new ideas.

Your child will:

- » learn to work with others and make friends through group activities and cooperative play
- » express their creativity (for example, through dance, movement and art)
- » build their communication skills by talking with educators and other children
- » develop the skills that they need for reading, writing and mathematics.

What kindergarten services are available in Stonnington?

There are 40 kindergarten providers in Stonnington which offer a range of programs for your child. Each kindergarten offers different kinds of programs (hours, activities and learning styles).

There are two types of kindergarten programs that Early Years Services provide in Stonnington.

Sessional programs:

- » these have a set timetable and run two to five days per week within the school term only, charging fees per term.

Integrated programs:

- » offered as part of a long day care enrolment. These operate at least eight hours per day for 48 weeks per year, charging fees daily.

To see if a kindergarten is right for you and your child, and to learn more about session times and costs of each program, families should contact their preferred service directly to arrange a tour or attend an open day event.

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Kindergarten funding

The Victorian Government covers the cost of one year of funded three-year-old kindergarten and one year of funded four-year-old kindergarten at participating services in both standalone (sessional) and long day care (childcare) settings. These services are readily identified by the purple Kinder Tick: vic.gov.au/kinder-tick

Each child is eligible to attend one funded kindergarten program at a time with families required to sign paperwork to confirm they are only accessing their funded place at a single service.

A child can be enrolled in multiple early childhood care programs however only one of them can be a funded kindergarten position. One of the most common examples of this is when a family enrolls in a funded sessional kindergarten program for a portion of the week and then enrolls in a long day care program for the remaining days. In this example, the family would confirm their funded position with the sessional service and pay full fees at the long day care (subject to any eligible Child Care Subsidy through Centrelink).

Some children can do a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten if they need to for their individual development. There is no option to complete a second year of funded three-year-old kindergarten. For more information, visit: vic.gov.au/sending-child-kinder

Is free kindergarten the same as funded kindergarten?

As part of the State Government's Best Start, Best Life initiative, free kindergarten is available to all funded kindergarten programs. However, individual services currently have the choice to opt-in or out. Furthermore, free kinder funding is applied differently between standalone and long day care settings.

This may mean that some services charge a higher fee as they have opted not to participate in the free kindergarten program offered by the state government. Additionally, they might offer programs with hours in addition to the free program and will charge fees covering the cost of the funded program.

To know if your preferred kindergarten has opted into the Free Kinder initiative, you should contact them directly. For more information, visit: vic.gov.au/kinder

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Kindergarten eligibility

When can my child start kindergarten?

Kindergarten eligibility dates are directly related to when your child is eligible to start primary school. Your child must turn three by 30 April of the year they start a three-year-old kindergarten program. Your child must turn four by 30 April of the year they start a four-year-old kindergarten program.

When your child was born	Year they will commence		
	Three-year-old kindergarten	Four-year-old kindergarten	Primary school
Between 1/5/2021 and 30/4/2022	2025	2026	2027
Between 1/5/2022 and 30/4/2023	2026	2027	2028
Between 1/5/2023 and 30/4/2024	2027	2028	2029

For more information, visit vic.gov.au/when-start-kindergarten

What if my child is born between January to April?

If your child is born between 1 January and 30 April, you may have a choice for the year they start kindergarten as this determines their age when they start school. It is recommended that you look at the age you would like your child to be when they start school and work backwards to determine when to start kindergarten.

It is important to understand that children can only access one year each of funded three- and four-year-old kindergarten programs. This means you will not be able to repeat three-year-old kindergarten if you later decide your child is not yet ready.

Additionally, the National Quality Framework (NQF) has strict educator-to-child ratios that are required to be met for all Early Years Services. For children who turn three-years-old between 1 January to 30 April in the year they commence three-year-old kindergarten, this may affect their starting date or fees associated with attendance.

Does my child have to be immunised to go to kindergarten?

Yes. To go to kindergarten, your child must be up to date with their vaccinations. To enrol your child, you will need to give the kindergarten a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). The statement must show your child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they're up to date with the vaccinations they can have.

The immunisation history statement is the only document accepted for enrolments. Letters from GPs or local councils are not accepted.

Children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage can be enrolled without an Immunisation History Statement for a short time while their immunisations are brought up to date. More information can be found at health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/no-jab-no-play

Stonnington Central Registration Scheme (CRS)

Registering for Kindergarten in Stonnington

What is the Stonnington Central Registration Scheme (CRS)?

The Stonnington Central Registration Scheme (CRS) is a City of Stonnington-led program that aims to simplify access to kindergarten for families and carers. You can use one form to register your interest in several kindergartens, so you don't have to waste time filling out many forms.

The Stonnington CRS applies the Department of Education's priority of access criteria and local allocation criteria to all applications to allocate children to kindergarten places equitably. Once you accept your place, your details are provided to your accepted kindergarten who then help you to enrol your child and get them ready for kindergarten.

For a list of kindergartens participating in the Stonnington CRS visit stonnington.vic.gov.au/kinder

When does registration and enrolment happen?

The below timeline is for applications to providers participating in the Stonnington Central Registration Scheme (CRS) only.

For an updated list of participating providers visit: stonnington.vic.gov.au/kinder

All other providers in Stonnington accept applications directly and have their own registration and enrolment timelines.

CRS cycle	In the year prior to child starting kindergarten
Registrations open	1 April
Registrations close*	31 May
First-round offers	Sent last week of term two
Acceptance of first-round offers due	Two weeks from offer date
Second-round offers	Sent second week of term three
Acceptance of second-round offers due	One week from offer date
Subsequent offers	Weekly or when vacancies become available

* Registrations will still be accepted after 31 May but will only be considered after registrations received before this deadline. Priority applications will be accepted and prioritised at any time.

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Can I contact kindergartens directly?

Yes, you can contact the kindergarten you are interested in to ask questions or organise a visit.

If your preferred kindergarten is participating in Stonnington's CRS, you can then apply via stonnington.vic.gov.au/kinder.

You will need to apply directly with the kindergarten for all other providers.

How are kindergarten places given out?

All kindergarten providers (regardless of whether they participate in the CRS) are required to give first priority to children who meet the Department of Education's (DE) priority of access criteria.

These are children:

- » who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- » from asylum seeker and refugee families with an appropriate visa
- » whose family has had contact with child protection
- » with additional needs
- » who are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. For more information, visit vic.gov.au/costs-kindergarten

These children are given a place first to make sure they do not miss out on early childhood education. For more information on DE's priority of access criteria, visit Priority of access for early childhood education vic.gov.au/priority-access-criteria.

Kindergarten providers may additionally apply their own criteria to allocate places where demand exceeds the places available. For kindergarten providers that do not participate in Stonnington's CRS these are set by the individual service and will differ between providers.

The CRS ensures that all applications are allocated based on the same local criteria to ensure all places are allocated fairly and equitably regardless of preferred service.

Stonnington's agreed local allocation criteria looks at the following:

- » Existing service connection: child currently accessing the service.
- » Proximity to service: families who live within a 2km radius of the service.
- » Residents: families who are residents of the City of Stonnington.
- » Previous service connection: sibling currently or previously accessed the service (within five years).

More information

- > stonnington.vic.gov.au/kinder
- > Visit your Maternal Child Health nurse.
- > If you use any other family or child support services, they can also help you.
- > Contact our Central Registration Officer on **03 8290 1690** or via email at centralregistration@stonnington.vic.gov.au