

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION Kindergarten

Quality Area 6

Purpose

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at any Hume City Council Early Years Service
- the orientation of new families and children into any Hume City Council Early Years Service
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education [DE] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to DE's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children

Policy Statement

Values

Hume City Council is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are pro-actively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Definitions) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day to day charge, early childhood teachers (ECT), educators, other staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Hume City Council including during offsite excursions and activities.

Background and Legislation

Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2) (k)).

All eligible Victorian children (refer to Definitions) will have access to two years of kindergarten before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to their eligibility and DE's Priority of Access criteria (refer to Definitions and Attachment 1) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in DE's Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Sources), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme are required to comply with the registration and/or enrolment procedures of that scheme.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), co-designed by DE provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. Currently, more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 have legislative responsibilities under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions).

Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2019 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation - Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>
- Commonwealth Legislation - Federal Register of Legislation: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions section of this manual.

Access to Early Learning (AEL): is an early intervention program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment. It aims to provide intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).

Authorised nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy) (refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition).

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES): CRES provides a single point for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

Central Registration System: Provides an equitable and transparent application and allocation process, enabling families to access local kindergarten services within a local government area.

Deferral: When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the annual confirmation in April DE considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for a DE funded kindergarten place in the following year.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher. ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- the family have had contact with child protection.

These children can also access free or low cost year-before-school kindergarten through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants: provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified VIT registered teacher. The ESK extension grants are available to children attending kindergarten in the year-before-school and are:

- not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- known to child protection.
- A child is not required to access ESK in the previous year to access the ESK extension grant.

Eligible child: as defined by the Victorian DE Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks grace period

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Kindergarten registration form: The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the CRES Provider (refer to Definition) or by the kindergarten service. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

Local Government Area (LGA): a geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate places using the criteria outlined in the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1 and Sources).

Registration: The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the service provider/EYM/CRES Provider. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

School Readiness Funding: funding provided by DE for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten: second year eligibility may be considered when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and development. An assessment is carried out for each child by an early childhood teacher in Term 4 (the year before the child is to attend school) when a second year is being considered.

Responsibilities

'R' indicates legislative requirement

	Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control	Nominated Supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early Childhood teacher, educators and other staff	Families	Contractors, Volunteers and Students
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, and offering at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year 	R				
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering between 5 to 15 hours a week or 200 to 600 a year	R				
Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Hume City Council Early Years Services as described in the Department of Educations (DE) Kindergarten Funding Guide (Attachment 1)	R	✓	✓		
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Following the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at any Hume City Council Early Years Service, as described in Department of Education's [DE] The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)	R	✓	✓		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April	✓	✓	✓		

Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Definitions) · Early Start Kindergarten extension grants (refer to Definitions) · Access to Early Learning (refer to Definitions) · Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten (refer to Definitions) 	R	✓	✓		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption (refer to Attachment 2)	✓	✓	✓		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	✓			
Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year	R	✓		✓	
Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access kindergarten	R	✓	✓		
Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available	R	✓			
Complying with the Inclusion and Equity Policy	R	R	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and pro-actively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
Ensuring families have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Family Handbook · Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety · Fees Policy · Privacy Statement and Code of Conduct Policy 	R	✓	✓		
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (refer to Attachment 2)	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	✓	✓	✓		
Where applicable; considering access and inclusion for vulnerable children in the allocation of places at the service (refer to Attachment 1 and 2)	R	✓			
Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes (refer to Attachment 2)	R	✓			
Complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	✓	✓
Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the open days to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program	✓	✓	✓		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and accessing immunisation services	R	✓	✓		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (refer to Sources) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week grace period (refer to Definitions)	R	✓	✓		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements (refer to Definitions) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (refer to Definitions) have confirmed places in the program	R	✓	✓		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	✓	✓		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing all associated enrolment documents and AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) of their child's immunisation status				✓	

Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) to the service				✓	
Ensuring all authorised nominees (refer to Definitions) have been completed on the enrolment record (refer to Definitions) (Regulations 160 and 161)	R	✓		✓	
Ensuring that the enrolment record (refer to Definitions) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	✓	✓		
Ensuring that enrolment record (refer to Definitions) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring that enrolment records (refer to Definitions) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183 (1a) (2d))	R	✓	✓		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	✓	✓		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for (Regulation 157), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the National Law: Section 167	R	R	✓	✓	✓
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 4)	✓	✓	✓		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the Inclusion and Equity Policy)	✓	✓	✓		
Encouraging parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period make contact with educators at the service, when required 	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Developing strategies to assist new families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating 	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reading and complying with this Enrolment and Orientation Policy	R	R	R	✓	✓
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				✓	
Notifying Hume City Council in writing [if possible] if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				✓	

Procedures

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Providing reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation and once the child commences
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
 - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
 - they may call and speak to their child's educator(s) at an agreed time
 - the educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
 - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
 - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (refer to the Information and Communication Technology Policy). Note: For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child
 - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.

Refer to Attachment 2 for the general registration and enrolment procedures.

Refer to Attachment 4 for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

Sources and Related Policies

Sources

Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au

Department of Health and Human Services, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au

Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au

The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education): www.education.vic.gov.au

Related Policies

- ✓ Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- ✓ Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- ✓ Inclusion and Equity
- ✓ Compliments and Complaints
- ✓ Fees
- ✓ Privacy and Confidentiality

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172 (2)).

Attachments

Attachment 1: Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria for 3 and 4 year old funded kindergarten programs

Attachment 2: General Kindergarten Registration and Enrolment Procedures

Attachment 3: Enrolment Form Requirements

Attachment 4: Cancellation of Enrolment and Non-Attendance

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Hume City Council Early Years Services on **31 March 2020**.

Review Date: **31 March 2026**.



ATTACHMENT 1

Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria



FOR A FUNDED THREE OR FOUR YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access (PoA) policy that applies when they enrol their child.

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, services must:

- prioritise children based on the Department of Education (DE) criteria listed in the table below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional DE office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

These criteria must be used by the approved provider when prioritising enrolments. Guidance is available from the Department's regional offices if required.

Service providers should build flexibility into their enrolment processes that consider the circumstances of families from priority groups.

If participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme, the CRES provider will allocate places in accordance with DE's PoA criteria, and other local criteria if applicable.

Services must first apply the DE's PoA criteria, and following this may apply locally developed criteria, as per examples below.

All information relating to PoA criteria should be respectfully collected from families upon enrolment, recorded in the child's confidential enrolment record and entered into the Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system, where applicable.

The Department of Education's Priority of Access Criteria

High Priority Children	Criteria and Processes for Verifying Need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	The child is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eligible for ESK or AEL, and/or • family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or • referred by one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection • Child & family services (family services referral & support team, Child FIRST/ integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) • Maternal and Child Health nurse • out-of-home care provider.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' & record this information in KIMS
Asylum seeker and refugee children	Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents, carers or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker and/or referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or the child is identified on their birth certificate as one of a set of triplets, quadruplets or more.
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program, and/or • has been referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the National Disability Insurance Scheme • Early Childhood Intervention Services • Preschool Field Officer • Maternal and Child Health Nurse, or • is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is declared eligible for a second year of funded four year old kindergarten

Examples to Consider for Second Priority

- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten; or
- children who turn three years of age* by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DE
- children who have a sibling that has previously attended the same kindergarten as their first preference
- home address falls within the same suburb as the kindergarten
- family lives, works, studies or attends child care in Hume City

Examples to Consider for Third Priority

- service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers
- date of application
- local community zoning

Note: DE's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, PoA guideline will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three- and four-year old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

*Early Start Kindergarten and Three Year Old Kindergarten

During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) (refer to Definitions) will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours.

It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service.

The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023 states for ESK funding, service providers should:

- provide up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of charge and maximise access to 15 hours of kindergarten (children accessing ESK can be enrolled in a 3-year-old group, a 4-year-old group, a mixed age group or a combination of groups in order to access the full 15 hours per week)

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- have had contact with Child Protection
- have a refugee or asylum seeker background*

*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and office.

Refer to the Department of Education's website for up-to-date information: www.education.vic.gov.au

ATTACHMENT 2



General Kindergarten Registration and Enrolment Procedures

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION PROCESS

Stage	CRES Role	Family Role	Kindergarten Role
Proactive engagement and awareness	Ensures families are aware of the importance of ECEC, the CRES and available assistance to help them engage with the CRES.	Searches for information about ECEC and CRES. Receives information from a service provider, MCH staff or support service they have contact with.	Communicates information about ECEC and CRES to families
Registration	Obtains information about children to initiate the process of allocating places.	Completes a registration form.	Supports families to complete registration forms if they find it difficult, or refers them directly to the CRES Provider.
Allocation	Equitably allocates kindergarten places and optimise the supply and demand of places.	Receives an update on the progress of their registration.	
Confirmation and Communication	Clearly communicates with families and carers to confirm their allocated place and inform service providers of their enrolment list.	Accepts their offer of place or rejects the offer and goes on a waiting list.	Supports families to understand what an offer means and what they need to do next.
CRES Planning, maintenance and development	Plans for success every year by evaluating and improving the CRES.	Begins to engage with the service provider to start the enrolment process.	Supports families to enrol and begin kindergarten.

* If the kindergarten believes a family will need extra support completing a registration form or are likely to miss the first round registration date, refer them to the Hume City Council who will follow up with this family or carer to offer support in getting their children into kindergarten.

Kindergarten registration dates

If families miss the registration close deadline, they can still register although they will be placed into a pool for second-round (or even later rounds) of allocation and are less likely to get their top preference. After second round offers have been confirmed, Hume City Council will continue to allocate children to kindergarten places where they are available. More places may become available as children move kindergartens or withdraw, or when kindergartens add capacity.

Date	Activity
March 1	Registrations Open
June 30	Registrations Close*
Early August	First Round of Offers
Mid August	Acceptance of First Round Offers Due
Late August	Second Round of Offers
Early September	Acceptance of Second Round of Offers Due
Mid September and Ongoing	Subsequent Offers on an Individual Basis

*Registrations will still be accepted after 30 June, but registrations received prior will be allocated first. Children eligible for Priority of Access will be prioritised regardless of when registration is received.

Registration

The quickest way to complete a registration form is online at <https://forms.enrolnow.com.au/222617435828966>. A separate registration form must be completed for each child.

Families cannot register directly with the kindergarten that are part of the CRES, they must go through the centralised registration process. Kindergarten's can direct families to register through Hume City Council and assist them to complete the registration.

To fill out the registration form, families will need to provide information about themselves and their child. At this stage they do not need to attach any supporting documentation.

The registration form asks families for:

- Basic information about the child including name, date of birth, language spoken at home and immunisation status.
- Details of any additional support the child might require due to a disability including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment.
- Contact details for the family or carer and any additional adults that should be kept informed throughout the process (e.g. another family member, a case worker or other support service staff member the family or carer trusts).
- Whether the child is identified as fulfilling any of the following criteria:
 - Is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 - Is from a multiple birth (triplet or greater)
 - Is known to Child Protection
 - Is in Out-Of-Home Care
 - Holds, or has a family member who holds, a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or a Refugee or Asylum Seeker Visa.
- other local criteria

It is strongly recommended that you do not collect documents proving the child's birth date, address, visa status, concession card status or similar at the registration stage. A statement at the end of the registration form that certifies the information provided is true can suffice as a legal declaration.

This will make accessing kindergarten as easy as possible for families, particularly those who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. Gathering documentation can be a barrier for many families and carers attempting or completing the form and establishing contact with the CRES. Once registered, the CRES Provider, the kindergarten service, MCH or support service staff can assist the family or carer to gather documentation for the enrolment stage.

Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

To enrol a child, families will need to provide copies of:

- Proof of identity: child's birth certificate, birth notice or passport
- Proof of residence: a utilities bill, rental agreement or rates notice with your family name and address (this must be the main residence of your child).
- Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
- Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, at which point they can take advantage of a 16-week 'grace period'. More information is available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>)
- Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.

* Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes:

- statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
- Medicare card
- letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth
- doctor's note attesting to a child's age
- passport
- citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard.

Kindergartens may also require additional documentation. The kindergarten should ensure that information regarding any additional documentation is easily accessible for families, carers and support services

Enrolment Records

Enrolment records (refer to Definitions) form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance. An example enrolment form can be found on the DE website: www.education.vic.gov.au.

Cancellations

Families to notify Hume City Council Early Years Services in writing of their intention to leave the service.

Second Year of Funded Four Year Old Kindergarten

- All children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will be expected to transition to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in the following year. A funded second year of kindergarten will only be available for children in the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program who meet the criteria.
- Families of children who have been determined as eligible for a second year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for a second year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.
- It will be weighted with the relevant points and allocated accordingly.
- A Declaration of Eligibility Form for a second year of kindergarten must be completed and submitted to the relevant funding authority.

Early entry to Four Year Old Kindergarten

- Early entry to Four Year Old Kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child (i.e., the child will not be 5 years of age before 30 April in the year of school commencement)
- Early entry to school is approved only when exceptional circumstances apply and is subject to an application process and rigorous eligibility criteria. It is important to note that most children who enrol early in 4 Year Old Kindergarten are not approved for early entry into school because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.
- The decision regarding early entry should be discussed with parents/guardians and consider the following:
 - Children are not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend kindergarten early
 - To start school early, the child must possess suitable academic ability as evidenced by a formal cognitive assessment, and be considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if early entry to school

Children Older than the Eligible Preschool Age

- Children who will turn six during the kindergarten year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant their local ECIB that their child is seeking an exemption from school by submitting an Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program form to the appropriate departmental regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning 6.
- The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption form from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.
- Children who will turn 6 while attending their second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten can be exempted from school if a Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten has been completed by the child's kindergarten teacher.

Withdrawal

Some children who have commenced Kindergarten may benefit from withdrawing from the program, in order to access Kindergarten in the following year.

- A withdrawal can occur without any impact on government funding for that child's place the following year, only if it is implemented before the first funding data collection that occurs in, or early March each year.

Adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide, 2023

ATTACHMENT 3

Enrolment Form Requirements



The approved provider must ensure that an enrolment record (refer to Definitions) is kept for each child enrolled at all Hume City Council Early Years Services. Regulations 160, 161, 162 outlines the enrolment record requirements for services under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law), the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations).

The approved provider must keep enrolment records available for inspection by an authorised officer (National Law: Section 175). An approved provider must also take reasonable steps to ensure the enrolment records are:

- accurate
- made available to the parents of the child upon request unless otherwise required by a court order (Regulations 177 and 178).

Information that **must** be included in enrolment record:

- Full name, date of birth and address of the child
- The name, address and contact details of:
 - each known parent of the child
 - any emergency contact
 - any authorised nominee
 - any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or administration of medication
 - any person authorised to give permission to the educator to take the child off the premises
- Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans
 - Gender of the child
 - Language used in the child's home
 - Cultural background of the child and their parents
 - Any special considerations for the child, such as cultural, dietary or religious requirements or additional needs
- Authorisations for:
 - the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment and/or ambulance transportation for the child
 - the service to take the child on regular outings
 - for regular transportation of the child
 - any person who is authorised to authorise the education and care service transport the child or arrange transportation of the child
- Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service
- Medicare number (if available)
- Details of any specific healthcare needs of the child, including any medical conditions, allergies, or diagnosis that the child is at risk of anaphylaxis
- Any medical management plan, anaphylaxis medical management plan or risk minimisation plan
- Dietary restrictions
- Immunisation status (In Victoria, AIR Immunisation History Statement, as required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2019)

ATTACHMENT 4

Cancellation of Enrolment and Non-Attendance



FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Hume City Council's Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children (refer to Definitions). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

Non-attendance

Term One

- Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

Families Traveling Overseas

- Families are required to notify Hume City Council prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees are paid if they wish to return to the service.

Non-contactable Families

- After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, early childhood teacher or educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, Educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.