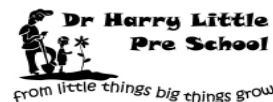




LODDON MALLEE PRESCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Kindergarten Central Enrolments

3 and 4 Year Old Kindergarten Enrolment Application Information Booklet



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CLUSTER
MANAGEMENT



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Application Timeline_____ | 4 |
| Introduction_____ | 5 |
| No Jab No Play_____ | 5 |
| What is Kindergarten_____ | 7 |
| Is My Child Eligible For Kindergarten This Year? _____ | 7 |
| Kindergarten Certificate_____ | 7 |
| Enrolling a Child in a Licensed Children’s Service_____ | 7 |
| Choosing a Quality Children’s Service_____ | 7 |
| Entry Age for Kindergarten Programs_____ | 8 |
| Questions You May Want to Ask Staff_____ | 8 |
| What to Look For When You Visit a Service_____ | 8 |
| Things to Do Before Your Child Starts an Early Childhood Program_____ | 9 |
| Kindergarten Programs_____ | 9 |
| Education and Care Programs – Long Day Care_____ | 10 |
| A Further Year of Kindergarten_____ | 10 |
| Kindergarten Fees_____ | 10 |
| Kindergarten Fee Subsidy_____ | 10 |
| Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)_____ | 11 |
| Early Childhood Education and Care Services_____ | 11 |
| National Quality Framework_____ | 11 |
| Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework_____ | 11 |
| Assistance For Children with Additional Needs_____ | 12 |
| Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages (KIS)_____ | 12 |
| Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)_____ | 12 |
| Preschool Field Officer Program (PSFO)_____ | 13 |
| Koorie Preschool Assistants Program (KPSA)_____ | 13 |
| Key Points to Consider When Enrolling_____ | 14 |

Application Timeline (Dates to refer to throughout the year)

Please note that if you have provided an email address, letters of offer may be sent to you electronically. If you have not provided an email address, please allow time for letters to arrive in the post.

April/May

Applications open

15th June

Applications close for inclusion in first round offers of Four Year Old Four Year Old Kindergarten & Three Year Old Kindergarten places.

(Please note applications that are not received by this date will be included in the second and subsequent round of offers).

Mid July

Four Year Old Kindergarten & Three Year Old Kindergarten first round offer letters sent out to families.

Late July

Four Year Old Kindergarten & Three Year Old Kindergarten offer letters due back.

Late August

Four Year Old Kindergarten & Three Year Old Kindergarten second round offer letters sent out to families.

Mid September

Four Year Old Kindergarten & Three Year Old Kindergarten offer letters due back.

Fortnightly offers will commence.

From October.

Families will receive information from their accepted kindergarten regarding commencement procedures, group allocation and orientation days.

If you require any further information or require assistance please contact:

LMPA – Central Enrolments on 5443 1229 or enrolments@lmpa.org.au

* For a full list of participating service please refer to the lmap website www.lmpa.org.au

Introduction

The LMPA Central Enrolment System supports the access and participation of all children in both 4 Year Old Kindergarten and 3 Year Old Kindergarten programs.

Kindergarten programs are designed to improve your child's development in the following key areas:

- Social skills, such as how to play with other children in a calm, sharing and rewarding way
- Self-awareness and respect for others
- Emotional skills, for example becoming more aware of their feelings
- Language, literacy and numeracy skills, such as reading stories and counting objects
- A joy for learning and group activities, such as talking, drawing and making things together with other children their own age
- Ability to make new friends
- Exposure to new ideas and concepts.

Kindergarten also provides families with access to:

- Support and assistance for children with special needs
- Resources and links to community support services.

Funded Kindergarten Programs operate under the National Quality Framework. These services must meet the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and the Educational and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

No Jab No Play – legislation

Under the new legislation, before your child can be enrolled for Kindergarten, you will need to provide proof that your child is:

Fully immunised for their age, on a vaccine catch-up program, unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons or eligible for the 16 week grace period.

'Conscientious Objection' is not an exemption under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation.

For more information, view the immunisation schedule for vaccines available under the National Immunisation Program and when they should be received.

Scientific evidence supporting vaccination is overwhelming, and the benefits far outweigh the very small risks. All vaccines currently available in Australia must pass stringent safety testing before being approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), Australia's regulatory authority for therapeutic goods. Safety testing is required by law and is usually done over many years during the vaccine's development. Once vaccines are in use, their safety is continually monitored by the TGA and other organisations.

Once legislation is in effect, parents/carers have to provide the kindergarten with an immunisation status certificate. This is a statement showing the vaccines a child has received.

The most common type of immunisation status certificate is an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR). They can be obtained from Medicare.

Some children may be exempt from the requirement to be fully vaccinated on medical grounds. Parents/carers who think their child may require a medical exemption should contact their GP. If a child has a medical reason for not being vaccinated, a GP needs to complete and sign a Medical Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication Form, and send it to the (ACIR).

Examples:

Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication

Immunisation History Statement

ACIR Immunisation History Statement - up to date

The ACIR Immunisation History Statement is issued to parents after their child's 18 month and 3½ - 4 year old milestone vaccinations automatically but can be requested at any time. The statement will show the words 'up to date' next to immunisation status in the top section of the form as highlighted in the example below:

What is Kindergarten?

Kindergarten (also called Preschool) is a program for young children delivered by a qualified Early Childhood Teacher, usually in the year before school.

Please note that children cannot attend more than one year of funded Three Year Old or Four Year Old Kindergarten. For a child to access a second year of funded Four Year Old Kindergarten they need to meet the criteria set by Department of Education and Training (DET).

Kindergarten places managed through the LMPA Central Enrolment Service are for sessional and long day care kindergarten programs. If sessional kindergarten hours don't meet the needs of your family, a funded kindergarten program in a Long Day Care centre may better meet your needs.

Day Care Rates may apply for Kindergarten in a Long Day Care setting.

Is My Child Eligible for 3 Year Old Kindergarten This Year?

As per Department of Education and Training (DET) funding criteria, the following children are eligible to attend kindergarten:

- Children who turn 3 years old on or before the 30 April in the year they will be attending 3 Year Old Kindergarten.
- Children can not attend 2 year of 3 Year Old Kindergarten
- Please note children do not need to be toilet trained to attend kindergarten; however independent toileting skills are encouraged.

For more information visit the DET website www.education.vic.gov.au

Is My Child Eligible for 4 Year Old Kindergarten This Year?

As per Department of Education and Training (DET) funding criteria, the following children are eligible to attend kindergarten:

- Children who turn 4 years old on or before the 30 April in the year they will be attending 4 Year Old Kindergarten.
- Children who have been approved to received a second year of 4 year old kindergarten.
- Children who are turning 6 years of age in their year of kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional Department of Education and Training (DET) office.
- Please note children do not need to be toilet trained to attend kindergarten; however independent toileting skills are encouraged.

For more information visit the DET website www.education.vic.gov.au

Kindergarten Certificate

A kindergarten certificate displayed at a children's service will show that the kindergarten program at the service receives Victorian Government funding and is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. Look for this certificate, at the entrance to the service, when choosing a kindergarten or child care program for your child.



Enrolling a Child in an Approved Children's Service

The person(s) who has lawful authority for a child (parent(s), legal guardian(s) or guardian(s)) can enrol a child at a children's service, complete the enrolment form and sign the relevant authorisations in accordance to regulations 160, 161 and 162.

If there are any court orders in place relating to the powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person(s) in relation to the child or access to the child, the Nominated Supervisor or the Responsible Person in Charge must ensure the details of the court order are recorded in the child's enrolment record pursuant to regulation 160(c) and (d) for licensed children's services.

The Educators should be familiar with any court orders and abide by them as they relate to the provision of care and education of the child at the service.

Choosing a Quality Children's Service

As a parent or guardian, the safety, wellbeing and development of your child is most important to you. Quality children's services are those that provide valuable learning experiences with positive outcomes for children, while at the same time providing for the needs of their families.

These services are well equipped to cater for the individual needs of children and improve outcomes for children. The service must display a Service Approval Certificate at the entrance to the service and include any conditions, waivers, or exemptions that may apply to it.

The Kindergarten Certificate must be displayed if the service is providing a funded kindergarten program (please refer to page 6). Another quality check is to look on the ACECQA website and check what rating the service received for their National Quality Assessment rating. www.acecqa.gov.au

Visiting a service is a good way to check for quality. It gives you the chance to see the service, observe the educators and children and to ask questions. Please call the service for open days, or visiting times.

Entry Age for Kindergarten Programs

To be eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program in the year before school, children must be at least 4 years old by 30 April in their kindergarten year. Each child develops at their own rate and, although your child's age may make them eligible to start kindergarten, other factors may impact on their readiness for such an experience.

Questions You May Want to Ask Educators

- How does the program meet the different needs, interests and experiences of all the children, and how will it be shared with me?
- What qualifications do the educators have?
- If my child is accepted at the service, which room or group will they be in?
- How many children are in that room or group? How old are they? How many educators will work with them?
- Will the same educators consistently care for my child?
- How will my child be settled into the service?
- What happens if my child becomes unwell, upset or unsettled?
- How can parents become involved?
- Am I welcome to visit at any time of the day?
- What are the arrangements for providing food and drink for children?
- What are the sleeping/rest arrangements for children?

- What are the arrangements for administering medication?
- How will any of my concerns about my child's care be addressed?

What to Look for When You Visit a Service

- Do educators interact positively with children, other educators and parents?
- Do educators make you and your child feel welcome?
- Is this a safe environment for my child to play, learn and develop?
- If your child has additional needs, how will the service meet them?
- Are the children well supervised at all times in a way that suits their age and development?
- Are children engaged in the learning experiences?
- Are the children settled?
- Are there opportunities for children to play in groups or alone?
- Is the educational program run inside and outdoors?
- Are there spaces for children to be involved in active, noisy play as well as space for quiet play?
- Is the service clean and well maintained?
- Does the equipment support the children's educational program?
- Is there enough equipment for the children?
- Is important information about the service and its educational programs displayed?

Things to Do before Your Child Starts an Early Childhood Program

- Visit the service and talk with your child's teacher
- Refer to the service's website, if it has one
- Share your concerns, thoughts and ideas about your child openly with the teacher before and after your child begins attending
- Find out what your child will need to bring
- Put your child's name on all belongings and clothing
- Pack a change of clothes for your child
- Talk to your child about what to expect
- Develop a routine, including a goodbye routine
- Provide the teacher with necessary information about your child, especially medical and special needs
- Provide updated information about your child's immunisation status
- Keep the teacher informed of changes in your child's life that might affect the child's experience at their service.

Kindergarten Programs

Attending a kindergarten program is an important step for your child. It will help your child learn skills they will build on throughout life, strengthening their enthusiasm for learning. At kindergarten, your child will grow socially and emotionally. Their ability to think, use and recognise language and to use their motor skills will be developed through play, art, dance, music, movement and interaction with others. Fine motor skills include the ability to handle and pick up small objects, transfer objects from hand to hand, and various hand-eye coordination tasks, such as cutting, drawing, writing or threading beads.

Most importantly, your child will be learning to be an engaged and effective learner as they develop and extend their communication skills; begin to understand their place in their community and knowledge about their world; develop skills that assist with reading, writing and mathematics; learn to be creative; and build self-confidence.

Attending kindergarten also provides families and carers with the opportunity to get to know other families. Through links to other local early childhood services kindergarten educators can help families to access a range of early years support services.

The Victorian Government provides funding to make kindergarten fees affordable so that all children have the opportunity to participate in a kindergarten program in the year before school. This is usually when they are four years old. Kindergarten services charge fees to contribute to the cost of operating the kindergarten program.

Education and Care Programs - Long Day Care

Long day care is the term used for centre-based child care services. Long day care services provide care and education for children on an all-day or part-time basis. Programs are provided mainly for children aged between birth and six years, although some services provide care for limited numbers of primary school-age children before and after school and during school holidays. Long day care services employ qualified staff and many services offer a funded kindergarten program.

A Second Year of Four Year Old Kindergarten

In some cases, a child attending a kindergarten program may be assessed by the teacher to be eligible for a further year of a funded kindergarten program before they go on to school.

The teacher will discuss this assessment with you and this will assist you to make a decision about a further year. When this occurs, the child may turn six years of age (compulsory school age) while attending the second year of funded kindergarten and therefore must be exempt from attending school by the Department of Education and Training. Parents and guardians are responsible for seeking this exemption, however your child's teacher can assist you with this.

Kindergarten Fees

Victorian Government funding contributes to the cost of a service providing Three Year Old and Four Year old Kindergarten programs.

Services usually charge parents a fee on a weekly, term or annual basis.

You will need to contact the services directly to determine the cost of the kindergarten program you are interested in.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

The Victorian Government kindergarten fee subsidy provides eligible families with access to kindergarten a lower or no cost.

Your child is eligible for the subsidy if you or your child has:

- A Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card
- An Asylum Seeker Bridging Visa A-F
- A Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visa 447, 451, 785, or 786
- A Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visa 200-217
- A Resolution of Status (RoS) Visa, Class CD, Subclass 851

Or your child is:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or
- A triplet or quadruplet attending kindergarten in the same year.

The service applies on your behalf to the Department of Education and Training (DET) for the kindergarten fee subsidy, and can do so at any time of the year.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible 3 year old children with access to kindergarten for up to 15 hours per week for free. It is available for 3 year old children identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, refugee and/or asylum seeker and children known to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Child Protection or Child FIRST/Orange Door.

Children must be at least 3 years of age by 30 April in the year they attend.

If your child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten talk directly with the LMPA Central Enrolment Officer. Ask if they have a ESK place available for a 3 year old child. The service will then provide your child with a kindergarten program of up to 15 hours per week free of charge. For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au

Early Childhood Education and Care Services

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for regulating Education and Care Services and Children's Services. All education and care services and children's services in Victoria are required to ensure that children are educated and cared for in an environment that is safe, meets their learning and development needs, and supports their health and wellbeing.

Services are required to employ educators with appropriate qualifications and provide educational programs based on children's abilities, interests and experiences. Most services are required to construct learning environments based on an approved learning framework such as the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au

National Quality Framework

From 1 January 2012, the National Quality Framework applies to kindergartens, long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services across Australia. These services are now required to operate under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and meet the new National Quality Standard.

Education and care services will be assessed and rated, with a focus on seven key quality areas of the National Quality Standard. These ratings will help parents make more informed choices about the education and care of their child.

For more information visit

<http://education.gov.au/national-quality-framework-early-childhood-education-and-care>

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework describes the Principles, Practices and Outcomes essential to advance young children's learning from birth to eight years of age.

The Framework supports and guides Early Childhood Professionals to work together, with children and with families to achieve the best outcomes for children. The Framework identifies five learning outcomes for children from birth to eight years:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

Each learning outcome is targeted to develop the knowledge and skills children need to be confident and happy throughout their life.

Assistance for Children with Additional Needs

The Victorian Government is committed to delivering an inclusive early childhood and school system that ensures that all families and their children have access to quality services and support to meet their needs – no matter what your family's circumstances or background.

This includes families whose children have diagnosed disabilities and developmental delays, or refugee and asylum-seeker families.

The following programs respect your family's individuality and help develop connections with the community that will encourage your child's learning, development and wellbeing in the early years.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages (KIS)

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages provide support that enables children with high support needs and diagnosed disabilities to take part in funded kindergarten programs. The services aim to develop a sense of belonging and inclusion for all families and to respond to children and families' individual needs.

They provide specialist training for kindergarten educators to enable a child with a diagnosed disability to take part in a kindergarten program. The service also provides additional resources and equipment, or an additional staff member within the service, to further support all children, as needed. An Information and Application Kit is available for families and kindergarten programs seeking support. To access the kit visit www.education.vic.gov.au

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)

The Early Years are critical for the long-term health and development of all children, including children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Support and services for children and their families are provided by the Department of Education and Training through its Regional Specialist Children's Services teams and by funded community service organisations.

If you have a child with a disability or developmental delay whose needs cannot be fully met by mainstream services, the Early Childhood Intervention Service is available to support your child from birth to the start of school.

The service providers will work with you to meet your child's individual needs, and support you in taking the lead in making decisions for your child.

Their aim is to give you the knowledge, skills and support to meet your child's needs, to allow you to have a fulfilling and enjoyable family life and for your child to be part of the community.

As well as giving you advice and information, the services cover special education, therapy, counselling, family services coordination, transition-to-kindergarten programs and school, and support in early childhood services (such as playgroup, child care and kindergarten programs).

For more information, visit www.education.vic.gov.au or call your Department of Education and Training regional office and ask for Specialist Children's Services.

Preschool Field Officer Program (PSFO)

The Preschool Field Officer Program supports the access and participation of children with developmental concerns and additional needs in kindergarten programs, who are usually not receiving support from Early Childhood Intervention Services or Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service Packages.

The program is run by Preschool Field Officers, who are highly qualified Early Childhood Professionals specialising in early childhood education and development. They support those services offering funded kindergarten programs by providing consultation, resources and advice to educators and families.

Any family with a child attending a government-funded kindergarten program with additional needs or a teacher working in a government-funded kindergarten program can access this service. A referral can be made by a parent or teacher. Referral forms can be obtained from your local early childhood service.

Koorie Preschool Assistants Program (KPSA)



The KPSA worker will work within kindergartens and Koorie communities to;

- Improve opportunities for Koorie children to take part in kindergartens.
- Support and encourage kindergartens in the delivery of Koorie inclusive programs.
- Provide information and support to Koorie families and communities. E.g. Filling in enrolment forms.
- Support the attendance of Koorie children in kindergarten programs.
- Encourage the involvement and participation of Koorie parents, families and carers in the development of kindergarten programs.
- Assist in the development of kindergarten programs that embrace Koorie culture.

For more information contact and ask for the KPSA at;

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| • Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-Operative | Ph: 5442 4947 |
| • Echuca Berimba Childcare Centre | Ph: 5481 1900 |
| • Swan Hill, Kunawaa Preschool | Ph: 5032 3600 |

Key Points to Consider When Enrolling

| | |
|---|---|
| Preferences | <p>Only nominate the kindergartens/session you are willing to accept. Children not placed at their first preference may be offered a position at another service.</p> <p>All kindergartens have a limited number of places available.</p> <p>Some kindergartens may have a high number of applications due to their location.</p> <p>If you indicate less than five preferred services, you limit placement options.</p> |
| Parent/Legal Guardian Name | <p>All correspondence will be sent to the Parent or Legal Guardian.</p> <p>Please provide a valid email address, as this is our preferred method of communication.</p> |
| Incomplete Applications | <p>No application will be processed without current Immunisation History Statements and application fee OR concession card details.</p> |
| Letter of Offer response times | <p>Families must accept or reject an offer of a kindergarten placement in writing/email to Central Enrolments within 10 days. If a family cannot receive letters of offer at the end of July they should notify LMPA as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to inform LMPA if for any reason you are not available to receive letters of offer.</p> <p>Where a family has been offered a place and not responded through three separate allocations, the application will be withheld from further placement until the family contacts the Central Enrolment Officer.</p> |
| Concession | <p>Attach a photocopy of your <u>current concession card</u>.</p> <p>Please note that you will be required to supply a copy of your concession card to different departments e.g. Enrolments and Finance.</p> |
| Indigenous Support | <p>Additional support can be provided to kindergartens to support children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander culture. If your child is from one of these cultures, please tick the relevant box on the enrolment form.</p> |
| Additional Needs | <p>Children with developmental delays or disabilities can be supported in transition to kindergarten if information about their individual needs is provided. Additional funding may be available to support children with additional needs.</p> |
| Contact Details (Address, phone, email) | <p>Notify Central Enrolments of any changes to your contact details immediately. Failure to do so may result in a loss of placement.</p> <p>(If moving, please provide new address and approximate time of moving e.g. day/month/year if known.)</p> |
| Agreed Process | <p>All Services involved in the Central Enrolment System follow the same agreed placement rules and guidelines.</p> |
| Policy | <p>Full details of the allocation process can be found in the Central Enrolment System Policy, located on the LMPA website. www.lmpa.org.au</p> |
| Submitting your enrolment application | <p><u>Please return the Enrolment Application Form and other documentation:</u></p> <p>By Registered or Express Post: LMPA - Central Enrolments, C/o – Shine Bright EYM, 53 Wills Street, Bendigo VIC 3550</p> <p>By email: enrolments@lmpa.org.au</p> <p>In person: 53 Wills Street, Bendigo</p> |