

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

1. Purpose:

At Y Whittlesea, we understand that starting at a new early learning centre or kindergarten is a big step—for both children and their families. Our goal is to make this transition as smooth, supportive, and welcoming as possible.

This policy outlines how we manage enrolments to ensure we meet all legal and regulatory requirements while also recognising the unique needs of each child and family. We take the time to listen, learn, and build trust from the beginning.

We know that the first few days and weeks matter. That's why our orientation process focuses on helping children feel safe, confident, and connected, while ensuring families feel informed, comfortable, and valued. Building strong, respectful relationships from day one helps every child thrive and sets the tone for a positive, long-term partnership between families and our service.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all educators, families, children, board members, and volunteers involved in Y Whittlesea's Early Years Services.

3. Policy:

3.1 Enrolment

All children attending a Y Whittlesea service must be formally enrolled in accordance with the requirements of the *Family Assistance Law*. This applies to all families, whether or not they are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). An approved enrolment establishes a link between the child, the parent or guardian claiming CCS (if applicable), and the service, and ensures we can provide safe, high-quality care while meeting our legal obligations.

3.2 Enrolment Conditions

We accept enrolments for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years, subject to the following conditions:

- A vacancy is available on the requested days
- The service's licensed capacity is not exceeded
- Required educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- Families must complete all relevant documentation and provide any additional information required to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of their child.

3.3 Priority of Access

Y Whittlesea is committed to equity and inclusion. When demand exceeds availability, we follow the *Victorian Priority of Access Guidelines* to ensure places are offered to those who need them most. The following groups are given highest priority:

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including those in Out-of-Home Care
- Children attending a three-year-old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning
- Children referred by:
 - Child Protection
 - Child and Family Services (e.g., Child FIRST, Integrated Family Services, Services Connect)
 - Maternal and Child Health nurse
 - Out-of-Home Care provider
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (As part of the enrolment process, families will be respectfully asked: "Is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?")
- Refugee or asylum seeker children (identified via visa type)
- Children eligible for the *Kindergarten Fee Subsidy*, including those:
 - From families holding a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, or Veterans' Affairs Card
 - From multiple births (e.g. triplets, quadruplets)

Children with additional needs, including:

- Children requiring extra support to fully participate in the program
- Children receiving or referred to services such as:
 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
 - Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)
 - Preschool Field Officers
 - Kindergarten Inclusion Support
 - Maternal and Child Health services
- Children assessed with significant developmental delay or disability
- Children holding a Child Disability Health Care Card
- Children approved for a second funded year of kindergarten due to delays in two or more developmental areas

3.4 Enrolment Process

When a family expresses interest in enrolling their child at Y Whittlesea, the service will arrange an enrolment meeting to share information, begin building relationships, and support a smooth transition.

During the enrolment process:

- Families will receive information about the service, including the program, routines, policies, and what to expect.
- They will be invited to ask questions and seek any additional information they require.
- Vacancies and potential start dates will be discussed.
- Families will be invited to bring their child to the service at a mutually agreed time to begin the orientation process, helping the child become familiar with the environment and educators.
- Sensitive matters—such as medical needs, court orders, or parenting plans—will be discussed privately with a member of the leadership team. Families are required to bring supporting documentation for any relevant legal, custody, or medical matters.
- Families must complete the enrolment form in full.

If English is a second language:

- Families are encouraged to share key words in the language their child speaks at home to support communication.
- Educators may also use visual aids and communication supports to help the child settle and feel understood.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS):

- Families wishing to claim CCS must complete their application through the **myGov** website or app, including completing the CCS Activity Test.
- Information will be provided during the enrolment process about CCS, gap fees, and allowable absences.

Immunisation Requirements:

- Under the **No Jab, No Play** legislation and Family Assistance Law, children must meet immunisation requirements to be enrolled in early childhood services and to be eligible for CCS and Family Tax Benefit.
 - To confirm enrolment, families must provide:
 - A completed enrolment form.
 - Medical management plans (if required), completed and signed by a medical practitioner.
 - A **current Immunisation History Statement** from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows the child is up to date for their age or has a medical exemption.
 - Copies of any court orders, parenting plans, or legal custody documents.
- This documentation must be received before a child can begin attending.

Ongoing Immunisation Requirements:

- Families are reminded mid-year to provide updated immunisation records.
- Families must inform the service if a child is not up to date with immunisations by noting this on the enrolment form and attaching relevant documentation from AIR.
- Families who do not hold a Medicare card must contact AIR on **1800 653 809** to request their child's statement or visit a Centrelink or Medicare office.

Children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage:

- May be eligible for a **16-week grace period** while families provide immunisation documentation.
- Services must offer sensitive, timely support to families to understand and meet immunisation requirements, and work with other professionals where appropriate.
- Immunisation records must be stored with the child's enrolment documents.

Important Notes:

- Being placed on a waiting list or having an application accepted is not a confirmed enrolment.

- Enrolment can only be confirmed no more than two months prior to the child's first day of attendance once the required AIR Immunisation History Statement is provided and shows one of the following:
 - The child is up to date with all immunisations.
 - The child is on a catch-up schedule and no vaccines are currently overdue.
 - The child has a medical exemption.
 - The child is eligible for enrolment under the 16-week grace period.
 - Families must notify the service of any changes to the information provided on the enrolment form, including contact details, custody arrangements, medical needs, or immunisation status.

4. Orientation to the Service

The orientation process is a valuable opportunity to begin building strong, respectful relationships with families and to support each child's smooth and confident transition into care. Orientation is tailored to meet the unique needs of each child and family and is designed to foster a sense of safety, trust, and belonging.

During orientation, families will:

- Receive the enrolment form and guidance on how to complete it, either in person or online.
- Have the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) process explained, including assistance with applications if needed.
- Be provided with an overview of key service policies, including those related to health, safety, behaviour guidance, and inclusion.
- Learn how to sign a child in and out of the service each day.
- Be advised on appropriate clothing for their child, including suitable footwear, hats, and the use of sunscreen.
- Be informed about expectations regarding toys or personal items brought from home.
- Be introduced to their child's educators to begin developing positive and trusting relationships.
- Be supported in developing a goodbye routine that best suits their child's emotional needs and family values.
- Be asked to provide any necessary medical information, including up-to-date medical management plans and documentation.
- Learn how to access daily updates and information about their child's learning and care through the service's online platform or app.
- Be introduced to the room routine and learning program, including how individual learning portfolios, observations, and reflections support each child's development.
- Be informed about the service's methods of communication, such as newsletters, notices, meetings, or digital messages.

Where required, the orientation process will be extended or adapted to support the child's individual needs. Families are welcome to request additional orientation visits to ensure a gradual and positive transition into care.

4.1 Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)

As part of the enrolment and orientation process, a **Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)** must be completed. This is a formal agreement between the Y Whittlesea (the Provider) and the parent/guardian outlining the planned arrangements for the child's care and associated fees. Key requirements include:

- The Provider and the parent must enter into a written agreement confirming the arrangement for care in return for payment of fees.
- The CWA must be recorded, and the parent must confirm the agreement either electronically or in hard copy. A copy must be retained by the service.
- Once the enrolment notice is submitted by the Provider, the parent will be required to confirm the enrolment through their myGov account.

5. Funded Kindergarten

Y Whittlesea offers both 3-year-old and 4-year-old funded kindergarten programs:

- Sessional kindergarten, which runs set hours on specific days, or
- Integrated kindergarten, which is part of our long day care program (Some may offer both).

5.1 Applications:

Applications for sessional kindergarten are managed by the City of Whittlesea.

Applications for integrated kindergarten are managed on site by the Centre Manager.

Important to Know

- All children who meet the age requirements can access Free Kinder, no Health Care Card, Pension Card, or proof of citizenship needed.
- For sessional kindergarten, there are no fees, the government covers the full cost.
- For integrated kindergarten, Free Kinder will reduce out-of-pocket fees. The government pays a set contribution each year, which is passed on to families as a weekly discount.

- Each child can only be enrolled in one Free Kinder program at a time.
- Families must sign a One Funded Place Form to confirm their child is receiving their government-funded kindergarten program at a single service.

5.2 Age requirements:

Families with children born between January and April can choose which year to start Three-Year-Old Kindergarten. These children can start in the same year they turn three, or in the year they turn four years of age. In our Sessional Kindergartens, children must be 3 years of age prior to commencing. Enrolment of a child prior to them turning 3 can be done, if they meet the eligibility to attend in that year.

5.3 Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

- ESK 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
 - Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or
 - the family has had contact with child protection
- A child can only access an ESK grant for 1 year and should be enrolled in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten the following year. If the service and/or family have concerns about the child commencing school after 2 years of kindergarten, the service should complete a second-year assessment to determine if the child is eligible for a second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. ESK grants can only be accessed at 1 service at a time.
- Applications for ESK will be completed with the consent of and on behalf of the family/carer.
- In long day care services ESK grants can be used in combination with the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional CCS. Receiving the ESK grant will not impact these payments. If a child accesses ESK in a long day care service, the family/carer may be required to pay fees for additional child care hours outside the kindergarten program. In such cases, service providers:
 - should use all available additional funding to reduce fees, including CCS or Additional CCS are encouraged, where possible, to waive fees and provide all hours free of charge to children eligible for ESK
 - must inform families that they may be able to access a free 15-hour per week kindergarten program at another service.

Source: [J641-Kindergarten-Funding-Guide-v6.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#)

5.4 Second year of kindergarten funding

During four-year-old kindergarten, the early childhood teacher will assess each child, plan for their move to school and identify any developmental areas that may need particular attention. There may be a small number of children for whom a second year of kindergarten is appropriate. A child may be eligible if:

- the child's teacher has found they have developmental delays in at least 2 key areas of learning and development
- the child will have better outcomes through a second year of kindergarten than going to school.

Further information regarding this assessment can be found [Does my child need a second year of kindergarten? | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

5.5 Exemption from school

If a child turns 6 years old in their first or second year of kindergarten, parents/guardians must get an exemption from school. Children are able to attend kindergarten when they are six years old if they have a school exemption due to a disability, developmental delay or due to special circumstances.

If a child is in their first year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten parents/guardians can apply for an exemption from school if one or more of these circumstances apply:

- family has moved from interstate or overseas where the school entry age is different to Victoria.
- child's early education has been delayed due to chronic illness, disability or developmental delay.
- child is a refugee or asylum seeker who has suffered trauma and would benefit from a year of kindergarten before starting school.
- child has not been able to access kindergarten because of transient family circumstances.
- Other special considerations.

Written confirmation from a professional (such as a kindergarten teacher, doctor or an allied health professional) is required to confirm the circumstance. The professional must also explain why it's best for the child to go to kindergarten instead of starting school.

If a child is in their second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

- An exemption can be applied for from school if a Declaration of Eligibility for a Second Year of funded Four-year-old Kindergarten form has been filled in by the child's early childhood teacher and is provided with the Exemption from School due to Attendance at a Kindergarten Program form.

- Parents/guardians must check with the child's kindergarten service that the Declaration of Eligibility for a Second Year of Funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten form has been submitted.
- Families are responsible for getting an exemption, they must complete an exemption form [2024 Exemption from school due to attendance in a funded kindergarten program.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#) and attach any written evidence with the form.
- The form must be submitted by 1 November in the year before the child turns 6. Address it to the Area Executive Director and provide it to the [Department of Education regional office](#).
- A letter will be sent to confirm once the exemption request has been reviewed.
- A copy of the letter must be given to the Kindergarten to confirm their eligibility for an exemption
- There is an option to withdraw a request at any time.

Source: [Going to kindergarten if your child is 6 years old | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

6. Early Entry to School

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, carers or legal 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 is not approved
- applications for early entry to school are usually not determined until Term 4 in the year prior to the requested year of school enrolment

Children are eligible for only one year of funded kindergarten, so careful consideration should be made as to which year families enrol their child in kindergarten. The department's preferred evidence of suitable academic ability is a report from a psychologist confirming that the child has been assessed as ≥ 130 Full Scale IQ (2 standard deviations, or more above the mean), preferably using the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition, Australian and New Zealand (WPPSI-IV A&NZ), including the 10 sub-tests required to calculate the Full Scale score and Primary Index Scales, conducted after the child has attained the age of 4 years. The department may also consider other evidence of suitable academic ability that:

- is provided by an authoritative independent source(s) – for example, a child psychologist registered with the Psychology Board of Australia, with experience in educational and developmental psychology addressing areas including cognition, fine motor skills, language, numeracy, and so on
- clearly demonstrates that the child has suitable academic ability to attend school. It is the responsibility of the parent, carer or legal guardian to obtain all relevant cognitive assessment/s and/or other reports and evidence to support their child's application, including written advice from a professional confirming the child is at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if early entry to school is not approved.

Should parents, carers or legal guardians decide to request early entry to Four-Year-old Kindergarten for their child, the following requirements must be met:

- the child must be at least 3 years and 6 months on or before 30 April in the year they attend the funded kindergarten program • parents, carers or legal guardians must make a written request for early entry to school to their local Area Executive Director or directly to the principal of a non-government school dependent on whether the child is intending to attend a government or non-government school
- parents, carers or legal guardians must provide the kindergarten service provider with a written response from the department or the nongovernment school acknowledging the family has requested early entry to school
- the kindergarten service provider must keep a copy of the written response from the department or non-government school with the child's kindergarten enrolment records.

Source: excerpt from [J641-Kindergarten-Funding-Guide-v6.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#)

7. Transition into School

- Children must enter school in the year they turn 6, unless they have a school exemption.
- A Transition Learning and Development Statement (Transition Statement) is required for every child transitioning into school in the following year. The Transition Statement is a tool for families and educators to

share information about a child's learning and development. Transition Statements are important for all children and can be particularly crucial for children who have experienced vulnerability or trauma, including children in out-of-home care.

- Transition Statements are designed to assist schools, particularly foundation teachers, to:
 - build relationships with the child and family
 - identify the child's capabilities and interests
 - understand how the child can best be supported as they transition into school
 - plan for individual children's learning in a way that responds to their strengths, abilities and interests.
- Transition Statements are completed online via the Insight Assessment Platform (IAP). In Term 4, services must provide each family with a completed Transition Statement for their child (with the early childhood educator section completed). Unless parents, carers or legal guardians opt out of sharing the Transition Statement, the service should then submit the statement via the IAP to the nominated school.
- **Source:** [J641-Kindergarten-Funding-Guide-v6.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#)

8. Kindergarten Inclusion support

Kindergarten inclusion support (KIS) supports funded kindergartens to enable greater inclusion of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs. The KIS program:

- provides assistance to complement early childhood teacher knowledge and skills, while acknowledging their expertise in supporting children's learning and development
- supports early childhood teachers to build their capacity to develop and implement an inclusive program
- supports early childhood teachers to contribute to positive outcomes for children, as defined in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

responds to the child's abilities and strengths, as well as their needs by supporting the kindergarten to enhance their learning and development.

Further information, including eligibility criteria can be found [Kindergarten Inclusion Support \(KIS\) | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Preschool field officers provide short term coaching and guidance to educators to improve the inclusion of children with additional needs by building the capacity of the service educators. These programs do not deliver direct intervention to a child. Support to educators may include:

- providing information, resources, strategies, and experiences to inform programming
- assessing a child's capabilities to assist educators in identifying additional needs
- supporting educators to respond to a parents' concerns for their child's development
- planning support to complement the educator's expertise in children's learning and development
- building professional partnerships and collaborative relationships with educators
- modelling of specific skills, suggestions, and strategies with educators
- linking families to referral pathways for child and family supports
- assisting educators to embed child-specific teaching and learning opportunities into the kindergarten environment.

For further information can be found [Preschool Field Officer program | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

9. School readiness funding

- School Readiness Funding (SRF) is a permanent part of the kindergarten funding model. The purpose of the funding is to resource kindergartens to address the impacts of educational disadvantage experienced by some children, ensuring all children attending a funded kindergarten program get the best start to their learning.
- The funding will be used to support outcomes for children in the priority areas of communication (language development); wellbeing (social and emotional); and access and inclusion. These priority areas are aligned to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).
- The department has developed a menu of evidence-informed programs and supports (the menu) to help kindergarten services spend the funding on the priority areas. Kindergarten services will be required to spend the majority of their SRF on items selected from the menu. This ensures that the funding is directed towards programs and supports that are known to be effective in improving children's developmental outcomes.
- The school readiness funding may be used to build service capacity but not for therapists to work directly with children.
- For school readiness funding purposes, the service will collect parental education and occupational data. This information will be stored in line with our privacy policy, in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer. This information will be collected during the enrolment process. This information will be uploaded to the kindergarten information management system for school readiness funding purposes.

10. Responsibilities

Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure enrolment forms are completed accurately and in full before the child begins care.
- Confirm all required parent/guardian authorisations are signed and retained on file.
- Sight and retain a copy of each child's current Immunisation History Statement from AIR.
- Ensure enrolment is lodged through the service's online platform (e.g., Xplor).
- Provide to families about Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Complying Written Agreement (CWA) process.
- Ensure enrolment processes do not discriminate against children with disability or additional needs.
- Identify and address barriers to access or participation, making reasonable adjustments where required.
- Ensure no child with a diagnosed medical condition starts at the service without:
 - A current Medical Management Plan
 - Required medication brought to the service each day
- Ensure Risk relevant Plans are completed before the child's first day.
- Give access to the **Medical Conditions Policy** to families of children with identified medical needs.
- Ensure the room leader is informed of the child's enrolment information including medical, interests etc

Educators / Staff / Room Leaders

- Review and familiarise themselves with each new child's enrolment details, medical needs and plans.
- Support the child and family during orientation and transition into the service.
- Use shared information to plan for the child's individual needs and strengths.
- Implement Risk Minimisation Plans and Medical Management Plans as required.
- Ensure any required medication is available and safely stored at the service.
- Use key words or visuals to support communication with children who speak a language other than English.
- Encourage family input into routines and relationship-building strategies, including goodbye routines.
- Maintain accurate records of attendance, health alerts, and any updated information from families.

Families

- Complete all enrolment documentation as required by the service.
- Sign all authorisations, including for emergency contacts, medical treatment, and CCS agreements (CWAs).
- Provide a current Immunisation History Statement and update this as required.
- Inform the service of any specific care needs, medical conditions, allergies, or medication requirements.
- Supply a completed Medical Management Plan (if applicable), signed by a medical practitioner, and ensure medication is brought to the service daily.
- Notify the service of any changes to the child's health, family circumstances, contact details, or custody.
- Provide key words in the child's home language (if applicable) to support communication and comfort.
- Participate in the orientation process and work in partnership with educators to support child's transition.

11. Related policies, procedures and supporting documents:

- Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy and Procedure
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy and Procedure
- Excursion and Regular Outings Policy and Procedure
- Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Procedure
- Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure
- [LanguageLoop](#) is a free service available to families who have English as a second language.
- [Kindergarten for Aboriginal children: Koorie Kids Shine | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)
- Kindergarten [starting age calculator](#).
- [Quick guide for parents | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

12. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link here](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

13. Consequences of breaching this policy: All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

14. Policy owner: The General Manager of Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

15. Document Control: Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
8.0	Review of plain English	M Rowse	13/7/25	July 2025
7.0	Information regarding free kinder, ESK, SRF, second year of kinder, school exemption, starting school early, transition information, updated priority of access to reflect Victorian access guidelines rather than commonwealth. No jab no play information	Belinda Turner	21.05.24	June 2024
6.0	Review, change of template, concepts expanded upon to provide more clarity for families	Belinda Turner	12.01.2024	12.01.2024
5.0	Policy reviewed no changes required	Geny Zambello	12.05.2021	12.01.21
4.0	Procedure reviewed and updated. Policy has been taken out and will standalone.	Geny Zambello	01.03.2019	01.03.2019
3.0	Policy change of template and review	Taryn Nelson	16.12.16	16.12.16
2.0	Policy reviewed, no changes required	Taryn Nelson	27.11.14	27.11.14
1.0	Policy created	Taryn Nelson	29.11.12	29.11.12