

Kindergarten registration



Frequently Asked Question's (FAQ's)

- If you have a question about kindergarten, please refer to the FAQs below, which are sorted into categories.
- If something still isn't clear, please contact our Central Registration Officer on 1300 787 624 or kindergartens@cardinia.vic.gov.au

About registration

How do I register for a place for my child at a community kindergarten?

You can register online for a place at a community kindergarten in Cardinia Shire by using our online kindergarten portal at www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergartenregistration

Where do I find information about key dates for registration, offers and placements?

For information about key dates visit www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergarten

I've been advised my child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten. What do I need to do?

Early Start Kindergarten gives eligible children 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten a week for 2 years. To be eligible for Early Start Kindergarten, your child must be 3 years old by 30 April in the year they will start kindergarten, and:

- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, OR
- be from a family that has had contact with Child Protection, OR
- be a refugee and/or asylum seeker

If you think you might be eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding, please call the Central Registration Officer on 1300 787 624 **before** using the kindergarten portal.

Ages and eligibility for funded programs

How old does my child need to be to start kindergarten?

All children are eligible for 2 years of funded kindergarten.

You can use this [calculator on the Victorian Government website](#) to help you work out when your child can start kindergarten.

To be eligible for 3-year-old kindergarten

Children must be 3 years old by 30 April in the year they will be starting kindergarten.

To be eligible for 4-year-old kindergarten

Children must be 4 years old by 30 April in the year they will be starting kindergarten.

If your child is born between 1 January and 30 April

Parents/ guardians have a choice about whether their child starts school in the year they turn 5, or in the following year.

This means when starting 2 years of kindergarten before school, the child can begin their first year of kindergarten in the year they turn 3 OR the year they turn 4. This decision must be made before a child starts a funded year of kindergarten.

Families are encouraged to consult with relevant early childhood professionals for guidance in making this decision. This might include early childhood teachers, maternal and child health nurses, your family doctor and/or an allied health professional such as a speech therapist or occupational therapist.

How many years of funded kindergarten is my child eligible for?

In Victoria, children are eligible for 2 years of funded kindergarten immediately before starting school – all children are eligible for one year of 3-year-old kindergarten and one year of 4-year-old kindergarten.

Can my child take part in more than one year of 4-year-old kindergarten?

Eligibility for a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten is subject to the child being assessed for learning and development delays in line with the [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework \(VEYLDF\)](#) and when:

- the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program; and
- the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

Where a second year of kindergarten is being considered for a child, the assessment must be carried out by an early childhood teacher, but may also include input from other professionals, such as a preschool field officer, maternal and child health nurse, speech pathologist or occupational therapist.

For more info on this process: [Victorian Government website](#)

My child is currently doing 3-year-old kindergarten this year at childcare. Can they use a council kindergarten next year, and if so, which program?

Yes, a child can do one year of funded kindergarten at a long day care centre and another year at a community kindergarten. If a child has already taken part in a funded 3-year-old kindergarten program, they would attend a 4-year-old program the following year.

My child turns 3 on 1 May. Can they start 3-year-old kindergarten the year they turn 3?

Under the Victorian Government's Kindergarten Funding Guide, children must be 3 years old by 30 April in the year they start.

Can my child participate in more than one kindergarten program if the program I select for my child is less than 15 hours per week?

No, a child can only participate in one funded kindergarten program per year of eligibility. However, a child can participate in funded kindergarten and also attend long day care or family day care.

Can I place my child into more than one group and pay the full fee for the additional group?

Children can only attend one kindergarten at a time. During the rollout of 3-year-old kindergarten, you are not able to have your child attend multiple kindergartens (or sessions at the same kindergarten) in order for them to access the full 15 hours.

Kindergartens across Cardinia Shire offer a range of hours, with some able to offer 15 hours from 2023 for 3-year-old kindergarten. A range of timetable options are available. For info visit www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergarten

Choosing a kindergarten

How many kindergarten preferences can I select?

When selecting kindergarten preferences, you must select a minimum of 3 preferences and a maximum of 5 preferences.

What if my chosen kindergarten does not offer 3 different timetable options?

You must still complete a minimum of 3 preferences. This may mean that your second and/or third preferences are at different kindergartens. If you receive an offer that is not suitable, you will have the option to 'accept and wait' or 'decline'.

Do all my preferences have to be at the same kindergarten?

No. Your timetable preferences can be at any kindergarten. For example, you may choose "Group 1" timetable at Kindergarten A for your first preference, "Group 1" timetable at Kindergarten B as your second preference, and "Group 2" timetable at Kindergarten A for your third preference. Alternatively, if the kindergarten centre is more important to you than the timetable, all your preferences might be for different timetables at the same kindergarten.

Is it possible to tour the kindergarten/s?

We highly recommend you do a 'tour' of your preferred kindergarten/s. Our open Days are a great opportunity for parents and carers to talk to educators and learn about the facilities, programs and activities offered. For info on open days visit www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/opendays

If you cannot attend an open day, please contact the kindergarten directly to arrange a time to visit. For contact information visit www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergartencontacts

Are kindergartens zoned like schools?

Kindergartens are not zoned like primary and secondary schools. When selecting your kindergarten preferences, we recommend you consider where your child will be attending school.

Please note that attendance at a kindergarten does not guarantee a place for your child in a particular school, even if the kindergarten and school are on the same land or adjacent to one another.

To find out which public school your child is zoned to, visit www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au

Do I have to select my closest kindergarten?

No. You can select the kindergarten that best meets the needs of your child and yourself. When selecting your kindergarten preferences, you may wish to consider the range of session days and times available across a number of kindergartens.

What if I don't know which kindergarten I want to go to?

Attending an open day is a great way to find out about individual kindergartens and what they offer.

To view kindergartens locations across Cardinia Shire: www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergartencontacts
For info on open days: www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/opendays

Will my child get to go to 4-year-old kindergarten at the same service they attended 3-year-old?

Council will work with families to support kindergarten continuity, in line with our [Kindergarten Central Registration Policy and Procedures](#). This means that we assess all applications carefully, applying priority of access criteria and weighting points to each application and placing children at the same service for both age programs where it is possible to do so. Cardinia Shire Council will work with families to support kindergarten continuity.

Do all my preferences have to be at the same kindergarten?

No. Your timetable preferences can be at any kindergarten. For example, you may choose "Group 1" timetable at Kindergarten A for your first preference, "Group 1" timetable at Kindergarten B as your second preference, and "Group 2" timetable at Kindergarten A for your third preference. Alternatively, if the kindergarten centre is more important to you than the timetable, all your preferences might be for different timetables at the same kindergarten.

Can I choose sessions from different groups?

No. Each kindergarten group attends on specific days as listed on the timetables provided. Preferences must be based on the group timetables provided.

Where do I find a copy of the kindergarten timetables?

A copy of the DRAFT 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten timetables for 2023 are available on Council's website at www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergarten – please note that these timetables are in draft form only and may change.

Can I defer my child's offer to the following year?

No.

Kindergarten offers are made in August in the year before the child is due to start going to kindergarten. As explained previously, if a child is born between 1 January and 30 April, parents and carers can choose whether the child starts school in the year they turn 5, or in the following year –

and therefore whether they start their two years of kindergarten in the year they turn 3 or the year they turn 4.

Due to the [Victorian Government's Priority of Access Criteria](#), there is no option to defer a kindergarten offer. Please liaise with our team before registration closes on 30 June to ensure your registration accurately reflects the year you want your child to start kindergarten.

How are offers decided?

There will always be enough kindergarten places across all kindergartens in Cardinia Shire. We work with our kindergarten providers and the Victorian Government to make sure there are enough facilities and places to cater for demand.

If there is a high demand for first preference places in a particular group, priority is given as outlined in the [Kindergarten Central Registration Policy and Procedures](#).

Where multiple applicants have equal priority of access, a computer-generated selection process will randomly allocate offers.

Where is my child on the waitlist?

We are unable to tell you where your child is on the waiting list, as the list is constantly changing due to the priority of access guidelines and weighting points.

What if I do not get a first-round offer?

Additional offer rounds for families who choose to 'Accept and Wait' or 'Decline' an offer will continue.

Families will need to respond to the offer online by making one of the following choices:

Accept – If you wish to accept the group session that has been offered.

Accept and wait – If you wish to accept the group session that has been offered and remain on the wait list should a vacancy become available at a higher preference.

Decline – If you wish to decline the offer but remain on the wait list for future vacancies for your preferred group session (please note this option does not guarantee a place).

Withdraw – a kindergarten place is no longer required. Your application will be cancelled or, subject to your child's age eligibility, you can elect to change the year of commencement.

What if I do not get my first preference?

You have the option to Accept, Accept and Wait, Decline or Withdraw your offer. By selecting to either 'Accept and Wait' or 'Decline' you will continue to remain on the wait list should a vacancy become available at a higher preference.

What happens after I accept my offer?

After a place has been allocated, your kindergarten provider will be in contact with you about the enrolment process. You will be provided with enrolment forms and info about fees and parent information sessions. Please note you may not be contacted by your provider for several weeks after you have been allocated a place.

Kindergarten sessions

Why is 3-year-old kindergarten sometimes only 5 hours?

Funded 3-year-old kindergarten started in Cardinia Shire in 2022 at 5 hours per week under the Victorian Government's Early Childhood Reform.

By 2029, children will be able to access 2 years of funded kindergarten, prior to starting school, at 15 hours per week. The gradual rollout of funded 3-year-old kindergarten supports the early childhood sector to ensure that there is sufficient infrastructure and educators.

How many days will my child attend kindergarten?

A range of timetable options are available – you can view these at www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergarten

Why are some kindergartens offering different attendance hours for 3-year-old kindergarten?

During the gradual rollout of 3-year-old funded kindergarten, a range of hours will be available across Cardinia Shire. Some kindergartens may be able to increase their funded hours earlier than other kindergartens.

If your child attends for 5 hours, there is no option to pay for your child to attend for the other 10 hours. A child can only attend one funded kindergarten program.

Is it expected that I stay on the premises with my child when they attend kindergarten?

Starting kindergarten is a very special time for both the child and their family. Each child and family are different, and some children may need additional time to transition into kindergarten.

We recommend families work directly with the kindergarten to support the transition of their child into the kindergarten. Generally speaking, parents/carers do not stay on the premises while children are at kindergarten.

Fees

Where do I find info about the fees?

Each kindergarten is responsible for setting fees and communicating these fees with families. For info about the fees charged, contact the kindergarten directly – for contact details visit www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergartencontacts

If kindergarten is funded, why are there fees to pay?

Both the Victorian and Federal governments contribute financially towards the cost of kindergarten. Despite this, there remains a gap between the cost of providing a quality kindergarten program and the funding received.

Each kindergarten sets their fees per term based on the cost of running the service, and aim for the cost to be as low as possible.

There are a number of initiatives that support children to access free kindergarten. If your child meets one of the below criteria, please discuss this directly with your child's kindergarten during the enrolment process:

- Is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- Holds, or has a parent/guardian who holds a Humanitarian or refugee Visa, or
- Is a multiple birth child (triplets or more), or
- Holds, or has a parent who holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Veteran's Affairs Card.