

# Early Years Great Careers

Grow. Lead. Succeed.



## What do kindergarten cluster program managers do?

The early childhood sector offers careers for life, with opportunities for progression into leadership positions. Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM) organisations provide professional leadership and management for community based kindergarten services.

KCMs employ managers with responsibilities including employment and management of staff, improving the quality of services, and financial management.

KCM program managers ensure that kindergarten services are professionally managed and meet government standards and requirements.

KCM program managers:

- Undertake strategic and business planning.
- Liaise with parents, local government and other service organisations.
- Manage risk and finances.
- Provide teaching and learning leadership.
- Manage staff recruitment, performance and professional development.
- Work with educational leaders.
- Understand and apply legal, regulatory and policy requirements including the National Quality Framework, education and care services legislation and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

## Fast facts

- Employment prospects in early childhood generally and management and leadership positions specifically are strong and growing.
- Salaries vary depending on cluster size, sector and responsibilities and can range from \$88,000 – \$105,000 a year.
- Settings may include local government or community sector organisations.

Future employment rating ★★★★★

\*Future employment growth 11% PA or more. Source: DEEWR

## What should I study at school?

Useful subjects include English, maths, business, health and human development, psychology, VET – Certificate II in Community Services Work and selected units of competency from Certificate III in Community Services Work and Certificate III in Education and Care (previously Certificate III in Children's Services).

## What should I study at university or TAFE?

This role requires a combination of early childhood and business administration or management qualifications and/or experience. Relevant Bachelor level along with postgraduate qualifications are listed:

**Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care** (18 months – 2 years)

**Diploma of School Age Education and Care** (one year)

**Diploma of Business Administration**  
**Advanced Diploma of Management**  
**Bachelor of Early Childhood Education** (four years)

**Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood** (four years)

**Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Education** (four years)

**Bachelor Degree** in a related area, followed by a postgraduate qualification in education, specialising in Early Childhood Education.

**Bachelor of Early Childhood – Education and Care** (three years)\*

**Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies** (three years)\*

\* These courses are generally designed for people who have a two year Diploma of Children's Services or equivalent

## What are my other career and leadership options?

Options could include education officer, children's services centre manager or team leader, or careers in local or state government departments. Leadership opportunities include government advocacy or executive roles.

# Early Years Great Careers

Grow. Lead. Succeed.



**Wendy Morris-Smith**  
Kindergarten cluster program manager

## What are your major qualifications?

I have a Diploma of Education (Early Childhood), a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) and a Diploma of Management.

## How long have you worked in early childhood and in your current role?

I began teaching in 1980 and have worked in various settings in Victoria and interstate. I have been in my current role at bestchance Child Family Care, an independent, not-for-profit, community organisation, for a few months and am learning a lot about the organisation, the partnerships, our team and the services we support.

## What is a typical day?

Interactions with the internal and broader team; report writing; partnership development and relationships with committees and educators, local government and other stakeholders; planning and developing strategies for service and systems improvements and meetings, meetings and more meetings!

## What influenced your interest in an early childhood career?

Mum was a kindergarten assistant and I liked helping out. When I was 17 a family member died suddenly leaving a family of four children and I spent a lot of time looking after them. Like Mum, I had a natural ability with young children.

## Describe your career advancement in early childhood.

I have significant experience as a kindergarten teacher. I took on early years project work in local government, became a team leader in kindergarten services, undertook further study and developed my skills. I said yes to every opportunity.

## What do you enjoy most about your career?

Every day is different. I can make lasting and real changes in the lives of children and families and therefore make a difference in the community. Personal growth opportunities have been a positive by-product of my roles. Dedicated and inspirational educators are a joy to work with and learn from.

## What is the best experience you have had as an early childhood professional?

The profound experience of working with a family whose child has the most debilitating medical condition. Our whole kindergarten community experienced real life lessons that I feel sure those children and families still carry with them today. I know I certainly do.

## What would you say to others who might be considering a career in early childhood?

This is the kind of work that looks deceptively easy when it is done well.

People may think that a career in working with young children is simply that but it is much, much more. I feel sure the skills you develop hold you in good stead in life; in part I am the parent and person I am because of my knowledge and skills as an educator.

## Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

I hope I am still working in a community inspired role, part of a motivated and energised team that is making a difference to children and families. I hope to continue to learn and improve my skills and take up opportunities as they present.

## Want to know more?

[education.vic.gov.au/earlyyears-careers](http://education.vic.gov.au/earlyyears-careers)  
[deewr.gov.au](http://deewr.gov.au)  
[myfuture.edu.au](http://myfuture.edu.au)  
[careerthatmatter.com.au](http://careerthatmatter.com.au)  
[joboutlook.gov.au](http://joboutlook.gov.au)



All indicative salaries in the document are gross before tax a year for full time employees. Indicative salary range based on advice from industry employers. Salaries vary depending on employer, role and Award.

Information regarding course and professional pre-requisites is of a general nature. Please consult a career practitioner and/or check with individual institutions to confirm specific course requirements.