



# What is Early Start Kindergarten?

## Where can I find more about Early Start Kindergarten?

For more information about Early Start Kindergarten, visit [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx), contact your regional Department of Education & Training office (See below for contact details of regional offices), or see the brochure *Early Start Kindergarten for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children*.

## Regional Office Contacts

Regional Office	Location	Switchboard
North-Eastern Victoria	Benalla	03 8392 9500
	Glen Waverley	03 8392 9300
North-Western Victoria	Bendigo	03 5440 3111
	Coburg	03 9488 9488
South-Eastern Victoria	Dandenong	03 8765 5600
	Moe	03 5127 0400
South-Western Victoria	Ballarat	03 5337 8444
	Geelong	03 5225 1000
	Footscray	03 8397 0300



## Why is kindergarten important?

Kindergarten programs help children with their language, development and self-confidence. Research shows an **early start and more time at kindergarten** prepares children for success at school and has a positive impact later in life.

## What is Early Start Kindergarten?

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible **three year old children** where programs are offered by a **qualified teacher**. Some services will be able to offer your child a place in a program for four year olds or a mixed age group.

Applications for Early Start Kindergarten funding are made by the service on your behalf and the grant is paid directly to the service.

## Is my child eligible?

Your child is eligible if they are aged three by 30 April in the year they will be attending kindergarten, and:

- Your family has had contact with **Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST)**, or
- your child is **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander** (for more information, see the brochure *Early Start Kindergarten for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children*).

## How do I enrol my child?

You can enrol your child by contacting a kindergarten service near you and asking to access Early Start Kindergarten. Alternatively your Child FIRST or Child Protection worker can do this on your behalf, or a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) in your nearest Department of Education & Training office can help you apply.



To find a **kindergarten service or child care centre with a funded program** visit [www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice) or contact your local council. You can find out the phone number for your local council by visiting [www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au](http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au).

## Should my child go to four year old kindergarten as well?

Yes, a kindergarten program in the year before school will build on the strengths your child will develop through Early Start Kindergarten.

Children who have accessed Early Start Kindergarten are also eligible for free or low cost four year old kindergarten. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in sessional or integrated long day care services are eligible for 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten.

Try to enrol your child for **four year old kindergarten** as early as possible to make sure your child gets a place as **places at your preferred kindergarten are not guaranteed**.