



FACT SHEET

Changes to Kindergarten Cluster Management

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF CLUSTER MANAGED SERVICES

INTRODUCING EARLY YEARS MANAGEMENT

Early Years Management (EYM) is the new name for Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM).

The introduction of Early Years Management will continue to strengthen the management and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs, and provide expertise in employing and supporting the development of professional staff.

The change from KCM to EYM will reflect the broader role of KCM organisations to deliver integrated early years services such as occasional care, long day care and maternal and child health services.

The EYM Policy Framework and supporting EYM Kindergarten Operating Guidelines have been introduced to replace the 2009 Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework.

What are the benefits of EYM?

- **Children** benefit from high quality, inclusive services provided by professionals who are well supported to adopt contemporary, evidence-based practices.
- **Parents** can focus their involvement on supporting their children's learning free of the compliance, industrial, financial and operational obligations required of approved early childhood service providers.
- **Staff** benefit from organisational structures and processes that support them in their day to day work, as well as creating career pathways and professional development opportunities that align with their aspirations.

What's changed from the 2009 policy?

The new policy sets out the expectations for the EYM system. Although there will be changes for some EYM organisations and services, most will only need to make minimal changes to align with the policy.

Following feedback from the sector we have added more detail in the new EYM policy and guidelines. Clearer roles and responsibilities for parent groups and EYM organisations mean that parents will know what they can expect from their EYM organisation and how they can contribute to the educational program at the service.

The policy states that:

- EYMs and local government need to consult on planning kindergarten services in the municipality
- EYMs are the approved provider and funded organisation for all their kindergarten services. As such they must have control over regulatory matters, DET funding and parent fees.
- A key strength of EYM is community consultation which produces better quality and tailored services. EYMs need to have structures in place, such as parent advisory groups, to provide advice on matters such as the kindergarten program and community need.
- New EYM Outcomes will establish a clear set of expectations that will be by used by families accessing the service, EYM organisations and the Department to measure the effectiveness of individual arrangements and overall.

- Organisations need to have three community based kindergarten services to become an EYM organisation. These services may be in a local area, or may represent a particular community, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Volunteer parent committees that still perform a direct management role for aspects of their services, such as collection of parent fees, will change to an advisory role supporting their child's learning and development. The term Parent Advisory Group (PAG) is introduced to denote this change in role. Most KCM Organisations already run in this way.

What has stayed the same from the 2009 Policy?

The basic structure of EYM is the same as KCM. This includes the same:

- Department funding and oversight of the EYM organisation's service delivery
- Strong parent consultation about local service delivery
- Flexibility to retain incorporated association status for committees if required

While the EYM policy framework will mean a change for the role of some existing Committees, this has no bearing on funds currently held in bank accounts. Committees should, of course, work with their EYM organisation as the service provider to determine how existing funds can best be used for the benefit of the kindergarten program.

When will the EYM Policy Framework be implemented?

The EYM Policy Framework will be implemented over the next 18 months.

The Department will work closely with the sector to ensure EYM organisations and parent committees have time to plan for and progressively implement the new policy requirements across their services.

You may hear more about these changes from your EYM in the coming months.

Who has been involved in the development of EYM?

The KCM sector has heavily been involved in developing and shaping the EYM Policy Framework. A KCM Reference Group was established to facilitate sector consultation throughout the EYM policy development process. The group consists of a cross section of representatives from Early Learning Association Australia, Municipal Association of Victoria, community-based and local government KCMs, and central and regional Department staff.

The Department also sought the views of parent committees who recently joined a KCM and committees of management for stand-alone kindergarten services.

Where can I go for further information?

Your EYM will have more information about how the new policy affects your service.

You can also visit the Department of Education and Training website at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/provide/rs/edcare/Pages/eym.aspx>