Best Start Best Life

Communications resource kit to promote 2026 enrolment

For services in Pre-Prep 2025 and 2026 geographic roll-out local government areas











Introduction

All Victorian children can now experience the benefits of 2 years of quality play-based learning. For some families, this includes Pre-Prep. It is important that families are supported to understand what their children can access and how they can register and enrol.

2026 snapshot

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection have statewide access to Pre-Prep.
- Any child who was supported by Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning in their Three-Year-Old Kindergarten year is also eligible for Pre-Prep from 2026.
- A further 12 local government areas (LGAs) will start to deliver **Pre-Prep**, following a successful launch in 6 LGAs this year.
- Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will move another year closer to full implementation.
- Free Kinder continues.

How to use this communications resource kit

This communications resource kit is for funded services in Ararat Rural City, Gannawarra Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Northern Grampians Shire, Yarriambiack Shire, Benalla Rural City, Buloke Shire, Corangamite Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Horsham Rural City, Loddon Shire, Mansfield Shire, Mitchell Shire, Pyrenees Shire, Strathbogie Shire, Wangaratta Rural City and Wodonga Rural City (2025 and 2026 Pre-Prep geographic roll-out).

- The resource kit can be used by service directors and managers, teachers, and educators in funded standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care services.
- Use it to support your communications with families as you promote and encourage 2026 enrolments for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep. Tailor the messaging to suit your service and the hours you are offering.
- You can share the kit with anyone at your service who communicates with families, including committee members or parent representatives who may share information through chat groups.

What this resource kit includes

Newsletter/website/



app article

- pg. 5-9

 Edit and personalise these articles and include them in your newsletter, website or online communication app



Social media content

- pg. 10-14

 Adapt to suit your service and share posts on your social media channels, e.g. Facebook, Instagram



Key points

- pg. 15-23

- Share this information with families, either online or in conversations
 - Share with staff at your service

Further resources - pg. 24-26

Download digital materials and email to families or print copies to have

available at your serviceOrder free printedmaterials to be delivered

to your service

- Template articles:
- for services in LGAs offering Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep (who started in 2025)
- for services in LGAs offering
 Three-Year-Old Kindergarten
 and Pre-Prep (starting in 2026)
- Infographics about the benefits of 2 years of kinder and more hours
- Videos about kinder

- Sample posts and tiles
- Enrol now for 2026
- Kinder starts at 3
- Free Kinder!
- Proud to offer Pre-Prep in 2026

- Key messages
- Free Kinder
- Three-Year-Old Kindergarten
- Pre-Prep
- Pre-Prep priority cohort rollout
- Early Start Kindergarten
- Registration and enrolment

- Digital and printed materials, including translated materials
- Websites

Newsletter/website/app article

You can share the following article to promote 2026 registrations and enrolments.

Edit and personalise the article template with details about your service, noting the LGAs listed in headings indicate which article you should use.

The <u>'Key points'</u> section of this pack has further messaging you can use in articles.

Template article - For services in LGAs offering Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep (which started in 2025)

For use by services in: Ararat Rural City, Gannawarra Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Northern Grampians Shire and Yarriambiack Shire

Enrol your child in Three-Year-Old Kinder and Pre-Prep

It is time to enrol your children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep programs for 2026.

<Insert service name> will be delivering <insert hours, between 5-15> hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and <insert hours, between 16 and 30> hours of Pre-Prep each week.

Next year will be the second year that Pre-Prep has been available in **<insert council name>**, after a successful transition from Four-Year-Old Kindergarten at the start of 2025. Pre-Prep gives children even greater access to the many benefits of early childhood education.

[For sessional kindergartens] Free Kinder will continue to be available at our service next year, which means there is no charge for your child to access our programs.

[For long day care centres] Free Kinder will continue to be available at our service next year, which means you will receive an annual fee offset.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background and children who have had contact with Child Protection are prioritised for access to Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep programs. If you are a parent or carer of a child who meets this eligibility criteria, you are encouraged to contact us for more information.

Contact us or go to <u>vic.gov.au/sending-child-kinder</u> for more information about kindergarten programs, including starting age. Registration for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten occurs the year before, often when your child is 2.

Template article - For services in LGAs offering Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep (starting in 2026)

For use by services in: Benalla Rural City, Buloke Shire, Corangamite Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Horsham Rural City, Loddon Shire, Mansfield Shire, Mitchell Shire, Pyrenees Shire, Strathbogie Shire, Wangaratta Rural City and Wodonga Rural City

Pre-Prep available here in 2026 – enrol now

It is time to enrol your children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep programs for 2026.

Next year is the first year Pre-Prep will be available in **<insert council name>**, after a successful launch at the start of this year in 6 local government areas. Pre-Prep gives children even greater access to the many benefits of early childhood education.

<Insert service name> will be delivering <insert hours, between 5-15> hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and <insert hours, between 16 and 20> hours of Pre-Prep each week.

[For sessional kindergartens] Free Kinder will continue to be available at our service next year, which means there is no charge for your child to access our programs.

[For long day care centres] Free Kinder will continue to be available at our service next year, which means you will receive an annual fee offset.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background and children who have had contact with Child Protection are prioritised for access to Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep programs. Any child who was supported by Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning in their Three-Year-Old Kindergarten year is also eligible for Pre-Prep from 2026. Pre-Prep hours will range from 16 to 25 hours each week for children who meets this eligibility criteria.

Contact us or go to <u>vic.gov.au/sending-child-kinder</u> for more information about kindergarten programs, including starting age. Registration for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten occurs the year before, often when your child is 2 years old.



Infographics you can use with articles

More hours of play-based learning in Pre-Prep can lead to:



In children's early years, play is the best way for them to learn and grow



Physical play

builds confidence, patience, and perseverance



Dramatic play

develops social skills and expressive language



Sensory play

encourages children to experiment as they learn about weight, volume and gravity



Nature/ outdoor play

helps children feel safe, strong and connected to the world



Creative play

allows children to express themselves and develop their imagination

Victorian early childhood programs are designed so children:



Children who attend for 2 years have better development in:



Language

Early number

concepts



Pre-reading



ng Social skills



Independence



Self regulation



Videos you can link to in articles

Pre-Prep roll-out - 2025 3YO Kinder and 2026

Celebration video

Make everyday a new adventure – experience a day in kinder

Beach Kinder









https://vimeo.com/951361965

https://vimeo.com/962917021

https://www.youtube.com/wat ch?v=X-VUErkm2wM

https://vimeo.com/1018173672

You can share the following social media tiles and posts on your social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Instagram etc) to promote 2026 enrolments.



Enrol now for 2026

It's time to enrol in our kindergarten programs for next year. Contact us if you have any questions or see our website for details on our timetable.

There is also a Starting Age calculator available at <u>vic.gov.au/sending-child-kinder</u>.

#kindervic #beststartbestlife #freekinder #kindertick



Kinder starts at 3

Does your child turn 3 by 30 April next year? It's time to enrol them in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program for 2026! Taking part in a quality kinder program can boost your child's development, wellbeing, and learning.

Talk to us today about how to enrol in our 2026 kindergarten programs or visit vic.gov.au/kinder.

#kindervic #beststartbestlife #freekinder #kindertick



Free Kinder is back for 2026

<Insert service name> is proud to offer Free Kinder again in 2026. Free Kinder helps all Victorian children access 2 years of quality kindergarten before starting school.

Free Kinder is for everyone – you don't need to be a permanent resident or Australian citizen to access it.

Talk to us today about how to enrol in our 2026 kindergarten programs or visit <u>vic.gov.au/kinder</u>

#kindervic #FreeKinder #beststartbestlife #freekinder #kindertick



Proud to offer Pre-Prep in 2026

We are one of the first services in Victoria to offer Pre-Prep to all 4-year-olds.

Four-Year-old Kindergarten is gradually transitioning from 15 to 30 hours each week across Victoria. Programs will continue to be play-based and led by a qualified teacher.

Having a longer program in the year before school gives all children more time to learn and grow.

Find out more at <u>vic.gov.au/preprep</u> or talk to us today about what our program and hours look like for next year.

#kindervic #beststartbestlife #freekinder #kindertick

Key points

You can use the information on the following pages in your online communications and to assist your conversations with families and your community. Share with teachers, educators and any staff at your service who interact with families, to ensure consistent information is being provided.

Free interpreting services

Remember, your service can access <u>free on-site telephone and video</u> interpreters for conversations with families. If your service participates in a council Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), the CRES team also has access to free interpreting services and may have additional staff, such as <u>CALD Outreach Workers</u>, to help families to understand what their child can access and how they can register and enrol.

Additional resources for families listed in Kindergarten Sector Guide

If parents and carers are seeking more information or want to know about support available for their child to access and participate in programs, you can also provide them with information from the *Kindergarten Sector Guide*. This guide has key information about the Best Start, Best Life reforms and the support available for children to access and participate in kindergarten programs.

Free Kinder

- Free Kinder is available (if your service is participating) for Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten programs, and Pre-Prep in 2026.
- Free Kinder is for everyone you don't need to be a permanent resident or Australian citizen to access a free kindergarten program.
- Free Kinder can only be accessed at one service at a time.

Sessional kindergartens

- Free Kinder provides families with a free program. Our service is offering Free Kinder for all our kindergarten programs in 2026.
- For Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Free Kinder will mean a free program between 5 and 15 hours per week. Our service will offer [insert number] hours each week in 2026.
- For Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, Free Kinder will mean a free program of 15 hours each week (600 hours a year) in 2026 OR For Pre-Prep, Free Kinder will mean a free program for [insert number] hours each week at our service in 2026.



Free Kinder continued ...

Long day care services

- Families with children enrolled in long day care kindergarten programs at participating long day care services will receive an annual fee offset.
- For children enrolled in a 15-hour kindergarten program in 2025 at our service, this is saving families up to \$2,101.
- Children enrolled in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program of less than 15 hours are receiving a pro-rata amount.
- Similarly, children enrolled in a Pre-Prep program of 16-30 hours will receive a pro-rata amount.
- If children access more than the set hours (e.g. 15 hours for Three- and Four-Year Old kindergarten), any additional hours are not covered by the offset.
- If families are eligible for the <u>Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy (CCS)</u>, this will be applied first and then the Free Kinder offset. This means families only need to pay the remaining amount after CCS and the Free Kinder offset have been applied.



Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

- Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program hours will vary from service to service, providing families with between 5 and 15 hours each week. Our service will offer [insert number] hours each week in 2026.
- Starting a quality kindergarten program at an earlier age leads to positive effects on child development. Kindergarten is a safe place for children to build skills, become more independent, and make friends.
- Use the <u>Starting Age Calculator</u> on the Department of Education's website to enter your child's birth date to find out what year they can start Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Pre-Prep

- Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is becoming Pre-Prep, with programs increasing from 15 to 30 hours each week by full roll-out.
- Pre-Prep will be available at our service in 2026 the Pre-Prep program will be for [insert number] hours each week.
- Pre-Prep offers a longer program in the year before school, which means there will be more time for children to deepen their learning and development.
- Pre-Prep is a play-based learning program led by qualified teachers. Like Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, Pre-Prep will follow the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.
- For more information about Pre-Prep, go to vic.gov.au/pre-prep.

Pre-Prep – 2026 priority cohort roll-out

- From 2026, between 16 and 25 hours of Pre-Prep will be available statewide to:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
 - children from a refugee or asylum seeker background
 - children who have had contact with Child Protection services
 - children supported by Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning in their Three-Year-Old Kindergarten year.
- The Pre-Prep program for children from a priority cohort group will be for [insert number]
 hours each week at our service.
- If you think your child meets one of the eligibility criteria for Pre-Prep, talk to us about what the program may look like for your child in 2026.
- If your child is currently accessing Early Start Kindergarten at our service in 2025, they are eligible for Pre-Prep from 2026.

Early Start Kindergarten

- Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) continues to be available for eligible 3-year-old children, providing 15 hours of kindergarten each week.
- To be eligible for ESK, children must be aged 3 by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten, and either:
 - identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
 - be from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
 - be from a family that has had contact with Child Protection.
- ESK eligible children can access a 3-year-old group, 4-year-old group, a mixed-age group, or a combination of groups to achieve 15 hours per week.
- It is important that our service enrols eligible children in ESK, even if Free Kinder or funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available. This ensures eligible children have priority of access, and services can receive additional funding and support.
- Children who are eligible or have access to ESK in 2025 will be able to access Pre-Prep in 2026.



Koorie Kids Shine

- <u>Koorie Kids Shine</u> celebrates culture and promotes the benefits of kindergarten for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 3 and 4 can access 15 hours of free kindergarten each week through Early Start Kindergarten.
- Kindergartens work hard to create culturally safe places for Koorie children and families and include Aboriginal perspectives in the learning curriculum and environment.
- At kinder, Koorie kids will learn the skills they need that will help them do well in future years at school, including:
 - build their sense of identity
 - explore how they fit into the world around them
 - learn how to communicate with others
 - strengthen their physical, social and emotional wellbeing
 - feel confident in learning and trying new things.



Registration and enrolment

 Many councils offer a <u>Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES)</u> that enables families to register for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area. If your service doesn't use CRES, it may be helpful to explain to families how to enrol in your programs and what steps are involved.

<For services who use CRES>

- Our service is part of the Central Registration and Enrolment System (CRES), which is managed by the [insert local council]. This system makes registering and enrolling your child easy and fair. You can use one form to register your interest in several kindergarten programs.
- You can contact [insert your local council information] for support with the registration and enrolment process. You will need to prepare documents such as child's birth certificate, immunisation statement, healthcare card, proof of residence (e.g., utilities bill).
- Register for a first-round offer by [insert date]. You can still register after that but registering in the first round gives you the best chance of getting a place in your preferred kinder program.
- [Insert council] will send you updates by email or text message when your child is offered a kindergarten place. They will also advise how many weeks you have to respond to your offer. If you are unhappy with your offer, you can reject it and ask for another offer in the next round.
- Once you accept your place, if it is at our service, we will help you enrol your child and prepare you for day one.
 If you are enrolling in our program, we will contact you for additional information about your child, such as [include relevant details, such as dietary requirements, medical conditions etc].



Further resources - digital and printed materials

There is a Marketing Toolkit for services to promote 2026 enrolments that includes brochures, posters, postcards, factsheets and social media tiles you can download and distribute.

You can also access digital materials, including posters and postcards, social media tiles, infographics and email signatures at vic.gov.au/communicating-about-kinder-to-your community. See examples below of a postcard and email signatures. There are communication packs on this webpage with information and sample text to promote Free Kinder. There is a specific pack for both sessional services and long day care services.













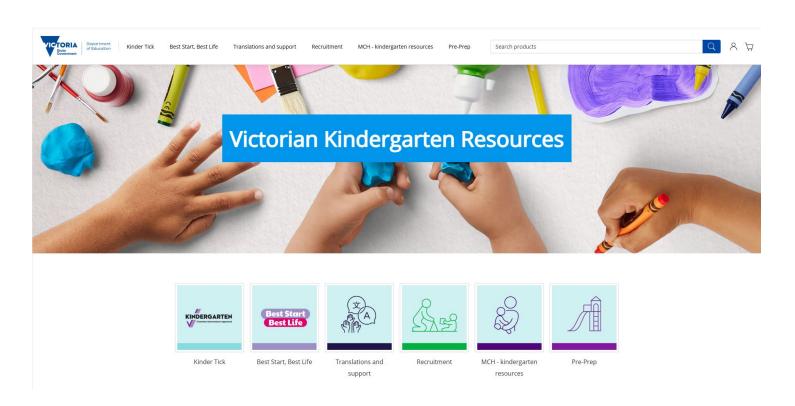


We're proud to offer Pre-Prep!



Further resources - digital and printed materials

Order printed information from the <u>Victorian Kindergarten Resources Portal</u> – you can order materials related to the Best Start, Best Life reforms, Pre-Prep, Early Start Kindergarten, Koorie Kids Shine, Kinder Tick (including signage), and translated resources to help you promote your kindergarten program. These materials are paid for by the department and printed and delivered to your service.





Further resources - websites

- vic.gov.au/sending-child-kinder for information about Free Kinder, the benefits of kinder, and how to find and enrol in a kinder program. The 'Quick guide for parents' and 'Starting age' calculator are also available from this webpage.
- <u>vic.gov.au/preprep</u> for information about Pre-Prep, and the full roll-out schedule for priority groups and geographic locations. There is also a Pre-Prep calculator so you can see when your child can access programs.
- vic.gov.au/kinder/translations for information about kindergarten in 30 languages.
- vic.gov.au/evidence-behind-2-years-kindergarten for information about the evidence behind 2 years of kindergarten. The 'Two years of early childhood education – what the evidence says fact sheet is available from this webpage.
- <u>vic.gov.au/best-start-best-life-reforms</u> for information about what's changing in early childhood education and when.
- vic.gov.au/supporting-cald-families-engage-kindergarten for resources to support communication with culturally and linguistically diverse families about kindergarten. Information about the CALD Outreach Initiative is available from this webpage.
- <u>vic.gov.au/use-interpreter-early-childhood-education-services</u> for information about Early Childhood Language Services. All funded kindergarten services can access free telephone, video and on-site interpreters, and free written documentation translation.

If you have further questions, or you wish to provide feedback on this communications kit, please contact <u>bsbl.change.management@education.vic.gov.au</u>