

Advice for **families:** Free Kinder in long day care.



Free kindergarten is available for all children enrolled in funded programs at services participating in Free Kinder. This fact sheet is for families with children enrolled in a kinder program at a participating long day care service.

Savings for families.

Families with children enrolled in kinder programs at participating long day care centres will receive an annual Free Kinder fee offset:

- In 2026, for 3-Year-Old Kinder, this means from \$700.33 for 5 hours to \$2,101 for 15 hours.
- For 4-Year-Old Kinder, this means \$2,101 for children enrolled in a 15-hour kinder program
- For children eligible for more hours of 4-Year-Old Kinder (Pre-Prep), Free Kinder still applies. This means a free kinder program of between 16 and 30 hours per week.

The funded program is the time that the qualified early childhood teacher is in the room delivering the kinder program.

Eligibility.

Free Kinder is for everyone. You do not need to be an Australian citizen to receive Free Kinder. You also do not need to be eligible for the Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to receive Free Kinder.

Your child can receive 1 year of Free Kinder in a 3-Year-Old Kinder program and 1 year in a 4-Year-Old Kinder program. Your child can only receive Free Kinder at 1 service at a time. Your kinder service will ask you to sign a form to confirm that your child is receiving their funded kinder program at their service.

How to access Free Kinder savings.

Your long day care service will receive the Victorian Government Free Kinder funding on your behalf.

Your service will pass on the savings as a direct reduction to your out-of-pocket fees after the CCS is applied.



How the savings are applied to your out-of-pocket fees.

The Free Kinder savings will be applied to your fees regularly across the year (e.g. weekly or fortnightly) and you should be able to see the amount clearly labelled on your invoice as 'Victorian Government Free Kinder offset'.

Each kinder service can choose how often they will apply the Free Kinder saving and for the number of weeks across the year. Kinder services will also advise when the Free Kinder offset will commence and end. For information on how the saving will be applied to your fees, please talk directly to your kinder service.

Example:

- A child attends their 4-Year-Old Kinder program 3 days a week.
- The kinder service charges \$360 for the 3 days.
- The family receives a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) of \$252.
- In 2026, the service applies \$2,101 Free Kinder offset weekly over 40 weeks of the year (\$52.53 per week).
- The family pays \$55.48 a week after the CCS and Free Kinder offset has been applied. \$360 weekly charge - \$252 CCS - \$52.53 Free Kinder \$55.48 to pay.

If your child changes kinder services during the year.

If your child moves to a different long day care service during their kinder year, the service that you are moving from will stop receiving the Free Kinder payment and your new long day care service will start to receive the Free Kinder payment so they can continue to pass the savings on to you.

If your child moves to a sessional kinder service that is participating in Free Kinder during the year, your funded kinder program will be free. More information about Free Kinder in sessional services is available at vic.gov.au/kinder

