

CALD Outreach Initiative

Guidelines 2025-2027



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Chapter 1 Overview

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Outreach Initiative (the Initiative) supports the inclusion of children from CALD backgrounds in kindergarten and Pre-Prep through CALD Outreach Worker positions at funded local councils and a partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

Purpose of the Guidelines

These Guidelines are designed to support implementation of the Initiative from January 2025 to June 2027. They are intended for Department of Education (the department) staff, staff at funded local councils (councils) including CALD Outreach Workers, the MAV and other interested parties.

The Guidelines respond to an opportunity identified in the 2023 evaluation of the Initiative to further strengthen its processes and outcomes. They have been developed by the department's Early Learning Operations and Monitoring (ELOM) Division in consultation with Area staff and the MAV. The Guidelines consider the evolution of the Initiative and the current policy and operating context.

These Guidelines will be reviewed and adapted regularly, informed by stakeholder feedback and evaluations.

Overview of the CALD Outreach Initiative

The Initiative supports the inclusion of children from CALD backgrounds in kindergarten and Pre-Prep through CALD Outreach Worker positions at funded councils and a partnership with the MAV.

The Initiative commenced in 2021, and funding was originally provided to 8 councils. It was then expanded over multiple years: in 2022 to include 15 councils, in 2023 to include 22 councils and in 2025 to include 25 councils.

An independent evaluation of the CALD Outreach Initiative was conducted in 2023 by ACIL Allen. The evaluation highlighted the positive impact and continued need for the Initiative. The evaluation found that over 6,000 children from CALD backgrounds were assisted by CALD Outreach Workers between March 2021 and September 2023.

The 2024-25 Victorian State Budget allocated \$9.4 million over three financial years for strengthening participation of children from CALD backgrounds in early childhood education. This includes funding to continue the Initiative from January 2025 to June 2027.

Feedback from CALD Outreach Workers and council managers through the evaluation indicated that Initiative funding provided the capacity to actively engage and assist families.

Objectives

The Initiative ensures children and families from CALD backgrounds, including those experiencing vulnerability, get the benefits of early childhood education and associated student achievement and wellbeing outcomes. The Initiative contributes to ensuring that the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life (BSBL) reforms benefit all Victorian families (see [The Best Start, Best Life reforms](#)).

The objectives of the Initiative are to support the participation of Victorian children and families from CALD backgrounds in kindergarten and Pre-Prep and to:

- support successful registration and enrolment of CALD children in kindergarten and Pre-Prep
- maximise CALD children's attendance in kindergarten and Pre-Prep
- engage CALD children and their families in other early childhood supports in their local area, such as community playgroups and Maternal and Child Health (MCH)
- support CALD children to transition from kindergarten to school.

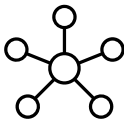
To achieve these objectives, council staff implementing the Initiative work directly with families from CALD backgrounds as well as kindergarten and Pre-Prep services to address engagement barriers and support transitions between education settings and ongoing participation in education.

Intended outcomes

The outcomes intended to be delivered through the Initiative's activities are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: CALD Outreach Initiative intended outcomes

Initiative Activities	Short and medium term outcomes	Long term outcomes / impact
 <p>Children and families</p> <p>Direct supports (e.g. outreach support) for children / families to access and participate in kindergarten and Pre-Prep and facilitate transition to school</p> <p>Activities that build family capacity to engage with kindergarten and Pre-Prep</p>	<p>More children from CALD families are registered, enrolled and engaged in kindergarten and Pre-Prep, with regular attendance</p> <p>Children engage with kindergarten and Pre-Prep over two years</p> <p>Increased awareness / understanding of benefits of two years of quality early learning before school</p> <p>More access to interpreters and translated resources and increase in uptake</p> <p>Greater access to and early engagement with early childhood services</p> <p>Positive transition to school</p>	<p>CALD children and families access the educational, social and economic benefits of the Best Start, Best Life reforms</p> <p>Contributing to better future outcomes for children</p> <p>Established norms regarding sending children to kindergarten and Pre-Prep</p> <p>Parents/carers have access to interpreters and multilingual resources when needed</p> <p>CALD families continue to engage with early childhood services earlier</p>
 <p>Services and workforce</p> <p>Advice and outreach support to staff in kindergarten and Pre-Prep services</p> <p>Activities to build capability of services to provide culturally safe and inclusive programs</p> <p>Promotion of multilingual resources and interpreters</p>	<p>Kindergarten and Pre-Prep services have increased capacity to work with CALD families</p> <p>Early childhood education teachers are effectively and inclusively engaging with CALD children and families</p> <p>Early childhood education teachers have improved knowledge of culturally appropriate and trauma informed engagement</p> <p>More kindergarten and Pre-Prep services are aware of the availability of interpreting and translations services and are confident in making interpreting bookings and requesting written document translations</p> <p>More kindergarten and Pre-Prep services have the skills and</p>	<p>Contributing to kindergarten and Pre-Prep services being culturally competent and linked to networks and referral systems</p> <p>Kindergarten and Pre-Prep services in participating LGAs are registered to use funded interpreters</p>

Initiative Activities	Short and medium term outcomes	Long term outcomes / impact
	confidence to work with interpreters	
 <p>Community and system</p>	<p>Establish or support partnerships involving councils, kindergarten and Pre-Prep services and community organisations to engage CALD families</p> <p>Establish or support referral pathways to kindergarten and Pre-Prep, including CRES</p> <p>Sharing of data and information about CALD families</p>	<p>Local networks and partnerships focus on CALD families</p> <p>Improved local referral pathways including with <u>Central Registration and Enrolment Schemes (CRES)</u></p> <p>Participation barriers, common issues and solutions identified</p> <p>Councils work together to share knowledge and resources</p> <p>Local networks and partnerships have continued focus on CALD families</p> <p>Increased uptake of access and inclusion items on the <u>School Readiness Funding (SRF) Menu of evidence-informed programs and supports</u></p>

Chapter 2 Policy context

49.1% of Victorians were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas

54% of Victorians follow one of more than 130 different faiths

27.6% of Victorians speak a language other than English at home.

Department of Education 2023-27 Cultural Diversity Plan p4

Victoria's rich multicultural diversity is reflected in the children, families and workforces in our early childhood education and care services.

The CALD Outreach Initiative is one of a range of initiatives in place across Victoria's early childhood and education systems that support and promote cultural diversity.

Department of Education 2023-27 Cultural Diversity Plan

The department's 2023-27 Cultural Diversity Plan (Cultural Diversity Plan) outlines its overall strategy to improve education and wellbeing outcomes for Victorian children and young people. The Cultural Diversity Plan sets out a 5-year delivery approach for culturally sensitive services to:

- support all children and young people in early education and school settings to build positive relationships and gain insight and understanding from cultural diversity
- respond to changing patterns of need of CALD and refugee students to help build a culturally safe service system and support students to participate fully in education; and

- build inclusive recruitment, work practices and training to improve career pathways and support the diversification of our workforce and leadership.

The department's Cultural Diversity Plan acknowledges the importance of intersectionality, wellbeing, and safety in achieving learning and wellbeing outcomes and supports the department's commitments to embedding the values of human rights, integrity, and respect across the organisation.

The department's 2023-27 Cultural Diversity Plan is informed and strengthened by its legislative and policy context:

- *The [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#), which sets out principles supporting all Victorians, irrespective of background and life experiences to have access to a high-quality education.*
- *The [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#), which enshrines civil, political, and some cultural rights into Victorian law and ensures that human rights are protected.*
- *The [Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001](#), which prohibits racial and religious vilification and seeks to ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect.*
- *The [Multicultural Victoria Act 2011](#), which recognises the cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity of Victorians and sets out the Victorian Government principles of multiculturalism.*
- *[Victoria's Child Safe Standards](#), which require that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational culture, equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.*
- *[Victoria's anti-racism strategy 2024-2029](#), the Victorian Government's 5-year plan to tackle racism and discrimination and build a safer, fairer and more inclusive state grounded in shared humanity and equal human rights. This strategy supports government-wide efforts to achieve fairness, safety and equity for all Victorians. This includes people of all ages, abilities, genders, sexualities, faiths and cultural backgrounds.*

The Best Start, Best Life reforms

Investment in quality early childhood services is one of the most effective ways to set children up for life. Quality early learning before school helps young children to thrive, supports the development of the whole child and improves children's achievement at school. Increasing access to quality kindergarten programs ensures that all children, including those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, can benefit from early childhood education and get the best start in life.

Support for families from CALD backgrounds to engage in early childhood education is being prioritised through the Victorian Government's \$14 billion [Best Start, Best Life reforms](#). The reforms are transforming early childhood education to provide the best start for all children. The reforms also support families with cost-of-living pressures and help parents get back to work and study. As part of the Best Start, Best Life reforms, all children are provided with access to two years of quality early learning before they start school. Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will start to gradually transition to Pre-Prep from 2025, with children from a refugee or asylum seeker background across the state prioritised for early access from 2026.

The Best Start, Best Life reforms include:

- **Free Kinder:** Free Kinder is now available for Victorian 3- and 4-year-old children at participating services in standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care centres.
- **Pre-Prep:** from 2025, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to become known as Pre-Prep. Services will offer between 16 and 30 hours each week of Pre-Prep, depending on where they

are on the roll-out schedule. By 2036, services across Victoria will offer a 30-hour-a-week program of Pre-Prep.

- **Three-Year-Old Kindergarten:** the continued roll out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, with programs increasing to 15 hours per week across the state by 2029.
- **Early learning and childcare centres:** the establishment of 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres. These centres will be built in areas with the greatest need and will make it easier for families to access early childhood education and childcare. The first centres are on track to open in 2025.

Parliamentary Inquiry into early childhood engagement of CALD communities

The 2020 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into early childhood engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities (the Inquiry) highlighted barriers that prevent some Victorians from CALD backgrounds from participating and benefiting from early childhood education. These include financial barriers, difficulties with enrolment processes, cultural differences, the extent to which children and families feel welcome in early childhood education and care services, and communication barriers.

The Inquiry acknowledged the important contribution of outreach activities to engage CALD families and children, particularly those from newly arrived and refugee backgrounds, to help build trusting relationships and to improve access to health, early learning and social services.

The CALD Outreach Initiative responds to the Inquiry's findings and recommendations and in its design, recognises local governments as important partners in achieving the intended outcomes.

Chapter 3 Delivery of the Initiative: January 2025 to June 2027

In August 2024, all Victorian councils were invited to apply for funding to participate in the CALD Outreach Initiative from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2027. This was a competitive grants process.

For a list of councils participating in the Initiative from January 2025 to June 2027, please visit: [Supporting CALD families to engage in kindergarten | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/supporting-cald-families-to-engage-in-kindergarten).

Funding

Funding is being provided to councils in instalments via a service agreement with the department.

Within 30 days of the end of each financial year, funded councils are required to complete a CALD Outreach Initiative financial acquittal (see [Reporting requirements](#)).

If there is any unexpended funding at the end of the financial year, it must be returned to the department within 90 days of the new financial year or as otherwise agreed.

Unexpended funding may only be retained for delivery of the Initiative specified in these Guidelines. Any retention of funding must be agreed upon, in writing, by the department and council and must be expended by June 30 of the following financial year.

In the event of potential or likely underspend of funding, such as through significant delay in project activities, councils should advise the department as soon as possible. This will enable an agreed plan to be put in place.

Implementation supports

The MAV and the department are working in partnership to promote improved access and participation in early childhood education for CALD children and families.

The department is providing the MAV with funding to support the implementation and coordination of the CALD Outreach Initiative. Through its CALD Kindergarten Participation Project, the MAV will:

- facilitate networks and communities of practice for the councils engaged in the Initiative
- provide proactive advice and support to councils across Victoria to support their work in improving kindergarten and Pre-Prep access, participation, and attendance for CALD children

- share key learnings and insights with councils that are not part of the CALD Outreach Initiative, including through showcase events.

Funded councils are required to participate in these activities.

In the 2025-2027 phase of the Initiative the department will also provide professional learning and group reflective practice opportunities for council staff implementing the CALD Outreach Initiative.

Language and interpreting support

Councils receiving funding to deliver the Initiative are eligible to access free telephone, video and on-site interpreters.

All department funded kindergarten services, councils that receive funding for a CRES and several other support services are also eligible to access these language services.

For more information, please visit: [Use an interpreter in early childhood education services | vic.gov.au](#).

Reporting requirements

Funded councils are required to provide information to the department on progress and final outcomes aligned to the Initiative's objectives.

The department provides a reporting template for completion by funded councils. The reporting template includes the schedule for reporting (i.e. reporting due dates) for councils over the funding period. It can also assist in the establishment of required data collection at the commencement of delivery.

Within 30 days of the end of each financial year, funded councils are also required to complete a financial acquittal. This provides details of actual expenditure of the grant including explanatory information.

The CALD Outreach Initiative **reporting template** and **financial acquittal template** are available:

- To council staff on the [CALD Outreach Worker Connect page](#) administered by MAV. Access to this page is available to councils currently participating in the Initiative. Please contact the MAV to request access.
- To department staff on the [Shared Project site](#). Access to this page is available to the department's Central and Area staff.
- via email request to the department's Early Years Management and Partnerships Unit: early.years.cald.programs@education.vic.gov.au

Funded councils should advise the department as soon as possible in the event of potential or likely underspend of funding (see [Funding](#)).

Funded councils are required to participate in Initiative evaluation activities.

Funded councils and the MAV will receive annual information from the department highlighting the outcomes of the Initiative statewide, as reported by all funded councils and/or by Initiative evaluations.

Roles and responsibilities

The key partners involved in implementation of the Initiative are:

- funded councils who deliver the Initiative at an LGA level, with roles and responsibilities as an organisation and at a staff level (i.e. CALD Outreach Workers and their line managers)
- the department's Area staff in Early Childhood Improvement Branches, who monitor and support local delivery of the Initiative
- the department's Central staff in the Early Years Management and Partnerships Unit, who manage funding and reporting arrangements for the Initiative statewide; and
- the MAV team supporting implementation and coordination of the Initiative statewide.

More detail on the roles and responsibilities of these key partners is included in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Council, department and MAV responsibilities

Partner	Responsibilities
Funded councils	<p>Funded councils accept responsibility for the effective and robust management of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of the Initiative in the LGA and use of funding in accordance with the Initiative's objectives • employment practices including compliance with relevant industrial awards, enterprise agreements and legislation • reporting and accountability practices. <p>Funded councils are also required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide effective line management and professional supervision of staff in outreach positions implementing the Initiative • participate in MAV activities that support Initiative implementation (see <u>Implementation supports</u>) • support employees implementing the Initiative to participate in MAV activities and other professional learning and group reflective practice opportunities • collect data and case studies on activities undertaken and report on implementation to the department using the prescribed template and in line with the reporting schedule (see <u>Reporting requirements</u>) • acquit funding as per department requirements (see <u>Reporting requirements</u>) • advise the department as soon as possible of potential or likely underspend of funding (see <u>Funding</u>) • participate in Initiative evaluation activities • ensure that employees delivering the Initiative understand and are linked to the council's CRES team and CRES system (where applicable and appropriate). <p>Funded councils should consider, manage and minimise risk for staff in outreach positions.</p> <p>Local delivery of the Initiative is determined by each funded council, as appropriate to the local context. During the application process for funding, councils completed initial implementation planning for 2025 to 2027. This included consideration of local needs; identifying strategies to target CALD communities in the LGA with the highest need for support; activity planning; considering delivery partnerships; and planning governance arrangements for local delivery. Funded councils are expected to draw on their existing capability, knowledge and experience to deliver the Initiative. This includes current or previous engagement activities with CALD communities and/or regarding kindergarten registration, enrolment and attendance.</p> <p>It is important that funded councils connect to the department's Area staff for support and expert advice on kindergarten and Pre-Prep funding and policy and application processes for local families. For information on how to connect with the department's Area staff see: Contact an Early Childhood Improvement Branch vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au).</p>

Line managers

Council staff responsible for the effective line management of council staff in outreach positions have a key role in ensuring that the funded council fulfills its responsibilities in relation to the Initiative, as outlined above. This includes fulfilling Initiative reporting requirements.

Line managers should schedule regular time with staff in outreach positions to reflect on local delivery and to provide professional supervision and support. This is part of

Partner	Responsibilities
	<p>the funded council's responsibility to consider, manage and minimise risk for staff in outreach positions.</p> <p>Line managers will also support staff in outreach positions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan and deliver Initiative activities in line with the council's implementation plan establish and maintain connections with the MAV and the department's local Area staff.

CALD Outreach Workers

Council staff in outreach positions implementing the Initiative (i.e. CALD Outreach Workers) work directly with families from CALD backgrounds as well as kindergarten and Pre-Prep services and other local community services to address engagement barriers and support transitions between education settings and ongoing participation in education. Their activity focuses on achieving the Initiative's objectives (see **Objectives**).

CALD Outreach Workers, supported by their line managers will:

- plan and deliver activities in line with the council's implementation plan; and
- establish and maintain connections with the MAV and the department's local Area staff.

Examples of how CALD Outreach Workers identify and support CALD children and families are included in **Table 3 Initiative activities** below.

Outreach support to families can be provided either virtually (e.g. by telephone or teleconference) or in-person at community spaces, such as council facilities, libraries, at kindergarten services and playgroups, as appropriate.

It is not expected that outreach support is provided through home visits.

However funded councils determine local delivery of the Initiative and are responsible for effective line management and professional supervision of staff in outreach positions. In this context, a council may determine that a CALD Outreach Worker should conduct a home visit. This should only occur with line manager approval and in accordance with the council's policies regarding conducting home visits, including appropriate risk assessments and risk minimisation approaches. Home visits are not an expectation of Initiative delivery.

CALD Outreach Workers may assist families to access other required supports through effective referrals. This may include facilitated referrals, as deemed appropriate by the CALD Outreach Worker and their line manager, for example making an appointment on behalf of the family; or contacting a service to check the family's eligibility or service availability; or attending a service with the family to provide background information.

Councils receiving funding to deliver the CALD Outreach Initiative are eligible to access free telephone, video and on-site interpreters (see **Implementation supports**).

Where possible, CALD Outreach Workers should also connect with local place-based initiatives that have similar objectives, e.g. the **Best Start** program, Foundation House's **Early Years Program** Communities of Practice and the Brotherhood of St Laurence **Family Learning Support Program**. The department's Area and Central staff, as well as the MAV and the CALD Outreach Worker's line manager can support these connections.

Partner	Responsibilities
	<p>CALD Outreach Workers are expected to participate in professional learning and group reflective practice opportunities organised by the MAV and the department.</p>
Department of Education	<p>Area staff</p> <p>The department's <u>Early Childhood Improvement Branches</u> (ECIBs) in all 17 Areas across the state, have a key role in monitoring and supporting local delivery of the Initiative. This includes ECIB Managers, Early Childhood Performance and Planning Advisors (ECPAPAs) and Kindergarten Improvement Advisors (KIAs).</p> <p>ECIBs receive copies of councils' quarterly reporting on delivery of the Initiative and discuss delivery of the Initiative with councils at regular monitoring and support meetings. ECIBs will refer to kindergarten participation data in the LGA (for example <u>Early Start Kindergarten</u> (ESK) enrolments for children from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds) to understand the local impact of the Initiative. The frequency and content of meetings between ECIBs and councils about Initiative delivery can be determined locally, however regular meetings are encouraged. This will build an effective partnership and improve the Initiative's implementation and outcomes. It may be beneficial to discuss related council activity funded by the department (e.g. the Best Start program or CRES) at the same time as discussing the CALD Outreach Initiative.</p> <p>ECIBs can provide CALD Outreach Workers with support and expert advice on kindergarten and Pre-Prep funding and policy and application processes for local families. ECIBs can also support connections between the CALD Outreach Initiative and other department initiatives such as <u>School Readiness Funding</u> and ESK.</p> <p>ECIBs use information from the Initiative for local planning and to understand effective CALD Outreach Worker activities and impacts. ECIBs can also use information from CALD Outreach councils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further deepen their understanding of the characteristics, trends and issues of local communities • increase the capacity of services with a funded kindergarten and/or Pre-Prep program to work with CALD families; and • ensure knowledge sharing and strategic alignment of efforts in an LGA or across LGAs to improve kindergarten and Pre-Prep participation and attendance for CALD children. <p>The department's Area staff work in partnership with Central staff and the MAV to develop and implement strategies to support councils participating in the Initiative at a place-based level.</p>
	<p>Central staff</p> <p>Funding and reporting arrangements for the Initiative are managed centrally by the department. This includes oversight and management of reporting requirements and evaluations, administration systems and the Initiative's Guidelines.</p> <p>The Initiative is supported by the Early Years Management and Partnerships (EYMP) Unit in the Early Learning Operations and Monitoring (ELOM) Division, within the department's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Group.</p> <p>The EYMP Unit works in partnership with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council staff and the department's Area staff, to provide advice and guidance on Initiative requirements, and to facilitate information sharing • the MAV, to provide networking, professional development and group reflective practice opportunities to council staff implementing the Initiative

Partner	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other key stakeholders, such as Foundation House, fka Children's Services and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, to facilitate expert advice to CALD Outreach councils, as well as collaboration. <p>The EYMP Unit also supports connections between the Initiative and other department early childhood education activity such as the Best Start program, the Best Start, Best Life reforms (e.g. Free Kinder and Pre-Prep), SRF, <u>Kindergarten Inclusion Support</u> (KIS), ESK and <u>Flexible Support Packages</u> (FSPs).</p> <p>The EYMP Unit is responsible for providing information on the outcomes of the Initiative statewide to a range of stakeholders including funded councils and the MAV.</p>
Municipal Association of Victoria	<p>MAV supports implementation and coordination of the Initiative through the CALD Kindergarten Participation Project. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing council CALD Outreach Workers with tailored support and regular communications to support delivery of Initiative activities facilitating networking and information sharing opportunities including a regular Community of Practice supporting councils involved in the Initiative to meet their funding obligations, e.g. sharing information and advice on reporting requirements, in partnership with the EYMP Unit. <p>Beyond direct support to CALD Outreach councils, the MAV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supports connections between the Initiative and other local government activity in the Early Years including CRES, MCH and Child Information Sharing develops and distributes resources, participates in/organises showcase events and issues communications to promote the good practices of the Initiative to all Victorian councils provides advice to the department on key themes and priority issues that emerge during Initiative implementation and works in partnership with the department's Central and Area staff on strategies to support CALD Outreach councils.

CALD Outreach activities

An overview of the type of activity delivered by CALD Outreach councils is included in Table 3.

Table 3: Initiative activities

Type of activity	Description of activity	Examples
Direct supports to CALD children and families	Direct supports for CALD children/families to register, enrol, attend and participate in kindergarten and Pre-Prep and to facilitate transition to school	<p>Providing outreach support to CALD families to register and enrol in kindergarten and Pre-Prep, including supporting families to complete forms and prepare required documentation</p> <p>Attending community events, playgroups, libraries, community hubs, schools and immunisation sessions to meet CALD families and promote kindergarten and Pre-Prep</p> <p>Promoting ESK for children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds</p>

Type of activity	Description of activity	Examples
		Supporting CALD children to transition from an early learning program to school
		Providing advice to CALD families regarding the Best Start Best Life reforms including the roll-out of Pre-Prep
	Activities that build family capacity to engage with kindergarten and Pre-Prep	Organising information sessions in partnership with council Child and Families' teams and local community organisations to promote kindergarten and Pre-Prep
	Activities to improve attendance for CALD children	Working with families, educators and <u>Preschool Field Officers</u> (PSFOs) to address attendance barriers
		Supporting families to attend kindergarten and Pre-Prep orientation sessions
Building capacity of kindergarten and Pre-Prep services	Advice and outreach support to staff in kindergarten and Pre-Prep services to build the capability of services to provide culturally safe and inclusive programs	<p>Providing advice and outreach support to build the capacity of staff in kindergarten and Pre-Prep services, including educators and teachers, to engage CALD families</p> <p>Promoting the availability of relevant programs funded by the department which are intended to support kindergarten services to build their capacity to deliver culturally inclusive programs e.g. Foundation House <u>Early Years Program</u>, fka Childrens' Services <u>Cultural Inclusion Support</u> and relevant <u>School Readiness Funding (SRF) Menu</u> items</p> <p>Participating actively in other local place-based initiatives with similar objectives e.g. Foundation House's Early Years Program Communities of Practice</p>
	Promotion of interpreting and translation services and multilingual resources	<p>Promoting the <u>interpreting and translation services</u> that are available for all funded kindergarten and Pre-Prep services</p> <p>Promoting multilingual resources that are developed by the department to support families to understand the benefits of kindergarten and Pre-Prep</p>
Partnerships and referrals	Establish or support partnerships involving councils, kindergarten and Pre-Prep services, community	Building partnerships with council Child and Families' teams and community organisations across the LGA to promote kindergarten and Pre-Prep, and work collaboratively to identify and support the enrolment of CALD children eligible for kindergarten

Type of activity	Description of activity	Examples
	organisations to engage CALD families	Building the council's understanding of barriers to early childhood participation for CALD families and promoting the broader adoption of <u>CRES best practice</u> to improve consistency and transparency of kindergarten enrolment locally Working closely with the council's CRES (if available) to identify and support CALD families to register for and enrol in kindergarten
	Establish or support referral pathways to kindergarten and Pre-Prep, including through CRES	As above
	Sharing of data and information about CALD families (as required and appropriate)	As above

Local collaboration

The CALD Outreach Initiative is delivered by funded councils with support from the MAV and the department.

At the local level there is collaboration between councils and a range of local community services to facilitate information-sharing, referral pathways and promotion of kindergarten and Pre-Prep, including with:

- services with a funded kindergarten and/or Pre-Prep program
- services within the council, e.g. CRES team, MCH service and Best Start program facilitators
- Supported and community playgroups
- schools
- community hubs
- migrant and refugee settlement support services
- child protection and family violence support services
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Early Childhood Partners
- Preschool Field Officers (PSFO)
- Koori Engagement Support Officers and wayipungiti (formerly Koori Preschool Assistant)
- Access to Early Learning (AEL) providers
- local early years networks
- other councils
- other local services and networks

These connections assist local services and council staff in CALD Outreach positions to identify and support CALD children and families to access and participate in kindergarten and Pre-Prep, including identifying and addressing barriers.

Appendix 1: Glossary

AEL: Access to Early Learning (see: [Access to Early Learning | vic.gov.au](#))

Asylum Seeker: children or adults who have arrived in Australia and sought protection as a refugee, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been assessed (see: [Supporting students from refugee backgrounds | schools.vic.gov.au](#)).

Best Start: Best Start program, and facilitators (see: [Best Start | vic.gov.au](#))

CALD: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Council: Local council (see: [What councils do | Vic Councils](#) and [Know Your Council | vic.gov.au](#))

CRES: Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (see: [Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment | vic.gov.au](#))

Department: Department of Education (see: [Department of Education | vic.gov.au](#))

ECIB: Early Childhood Improvement Branch (see: [Contact an Early Childhood Improvement Branch | vic.gov.au](#))

ECPAPA: Early Childhood Performance and Planning Advisor

ESK: Early Start Kindergarten (see: [Early Start Kindergarten | vic.gov.au](#))

Free Kinder: Free Kinder is available in Three- and Four-Year-Old kindergarten or Pre-Prep programs at participating services across Victoria. This includes both long day care and standalone (which is also called sessional) kindergarten services (see: [About Free Kinder - English | vic.gov.au](#))

FSP: Flexible Support Package (see: [Flexible Support Packages | vic.gov.au](#))

KIA: Kindergarten Improvement Advisor

KIS: Kindergarten Inclusion Support (see: [Kindergarten Inclusion Support \(KIS\) | vic.gov.au](#))

LGA: Local Government Area

MAV: Municipal Association of Victoria (see: [Who we are | MAV website](#))

MCH: Maternal and Child Health (see: [Maternal and Child Health services](#))

NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme (see: [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#))

Pre-Prep: From 2025, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to become known as Pre-Prep. Services will offer between 16 and 30 hours each week of Pre-Prep, depending on where they are on the roll-out schedule. By 2036, services across Victoria will offer a 30-hour-a-week program of Pre-Prep (see [Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is becoming Pre-Prep | vic.gov.au](#))

PSFO: Preschool Field Officer (see: [Preschool Field Officer program | vic.gov.au](#))

Refugee: The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (known as the [1951 Refugee Convention](#) – to which Australia is a signatory) defines refugees as people who are: ▪ outside their country of nationality, and have a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; ▪ unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.

The definition is legally binding and decision-makers use it to determine if a person is a refugee. The definition includes people in a “refugee-like” situation, which means it can extend to people affected by armed conflict. To be recognised as a refugee involves a formal determination process. People seeking that recognition are known as “asylum seekers”¹.

SRF: School Readiness Funding (see: [School Readiness Funding | vic.gov.au](#))

¹ [Global Forced Displacement - School's in for Refugees](#)

Appendix 2: Case studies

A single mother from a refugee background with three children (aged 3, 7 and 9) was referred to the CALD Outreach Worker by Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Nurse.

The CALD Outreach Worker arranged an in-person interpreter and met with the mother for an initial appointment. The CALD Outreach Worker learnt that the mother had recently moved to the area and that she had previously attempted to enrol her 3-year-old child in kindergarten, but was not confident about the process and available options.

The CALD Outreach Worker outlined the steps to register and enrol the child in kindergarten, assisted the mother to identify her closest kindergarten services, provided information regarding transport/travel and helped the mother to complete the kindergarten registration form, including collecting necessary documentation on immunisation.

Once the child was offered a place at the kindergarten, the CALD Outreach Worker arranged a second appointment with the mother to complete the kindergarten enrolment form. The CALD Outreach Worker then spoke with the educators at the kindergarten to ensure they were aware of the child's background and were able to tailor educational approaches to meet the child's needs.

The CALD Outreach Worker ensured that the kindergarten was aware of the availability of interpreting and translation services, to support ongoing communication with the mother. The CALD Outreach Worker maintained regular contact with the family and the kindergarten educators to monitor the child's progress and address any emerging issues.

The CALD Outreach Worker collaborated with local community organisations and the council's Child and Families' teams to organise in-person and online sessions and a kindergarten open day to promote kindergarten and increase awareness of a new online registration system for CALD families.

During the information sessions the CALD Outreach Worker provided information regarding the new online registration system, documents required, promotion of a kindergarten open day, referrals to key early childhood programs and addressed concerns raised by parents regarding toileting, separation anxiety and settling in at kindergarten.

The feedback from participating families was very positive. The in-person sessions were particularly valued by CALD families as they had the opportunity ask questions and raise concerns directly. The kindergarten open day provided CALD families with the opportunity to strengthen their understanding of play-based learning.

Appendix 3: Key links and resources

Department of Education

[Communicating about kindergarten to your community | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

[Early Start Kindergarten | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

[Find A Kinder Program - Department of Education](#)

[Information about kindergarten in your language | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

[Kinder Quick guide for parents | vic.gov.au](#)

[Supporting CALD families to engage in kindergarten | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

[The Best Start, Best Life reforms | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

- [Best Start, Best Life: Transforming early childhood education together | vic.gov.au](#)
- [The evidence behind 2 years and more time in kindergarten | vic.gov.au](#)
- [Operational policies supporting the Best Start, Best Life reforms | vic.gov.au](#)

<https://www.vic.gov.au/use-interpreter-early-childhood-education-services>

Municipal Association of Victoria

[CALD Outreach Workers - Home](#) *[Access to the CALD Outreach Worker Connect page is available to councils currently participating in the Initiative. Please contact the MAV to request access]*

[Early years - Children 0-8 years | MAV website](#)

Other sources

[Brotherhood of St Laurence Family Learning Support Program](#)

[Connecting with an early childhood partner | NDIS](#)

[Department of Families Fairness and Housing Victoria | Better practice guide for multicultural communications](#)

[Fka Children's Services](#)

[Foundation House Early Year's Program and Resources](#)

[Health Translations | Health Translations](#)

[Inquiry into early childhood engagement of CALD communities \(parliament.vic.gov.au\)](#)

[Mapping languages spoken in Victoria \(dffh.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Appendix 4: Contact details

Department of Education: Early Years Management and Partnerships Unit
(early.years.cald.programs@education.vic.gov.au)

Department of Education Early Childhood Improvement Branches see: [Contact an Early Childhood Improvement Branch | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV): Ghulam Hussain, Policy Advisor (ghussain@mav.asn.au)

For a list of current CALD Outreach councils see: [Supporting CALD families to engage in kindergarten | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)