# 2020 VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS AWARDS INFORMATION PACK

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# The Victorian Early Years Awards

## What are the Victorian Early Years Awards and why should I nominate?

The Victorian Early Years Awards (VEYA) celebrates leadership, outstanding achievement, exceptional dedication and innovation in improving outcomes for children aged birth to eight years and their families.

In these challenging times, it is more important than ever to recognise and celebrate the great work happening every day in the early childhood sector.

You can nominate yourself or your colleagues to win grants of up to $15,000 to support your nominated activity or professional development. Winners are recognised as the best in Victoria for their category and have gone on to build on and share their inspiring work with their communities.

The seven award categories focus on improving engagement in learning, supporting parents, building collaborative community partnerships, improving health and wellbeing, exemplary practice in early childhood education, leadership and significant service improvement.

The finalists and winners in each category are also eligible to win the prestigious Minister’s Award, selected by the Minister for Education.

*We recognise that with ongoing bushfire recovery and the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 has presented many challenges for the early childhood sector and that this may have affected your usual program delivery.*

*In the spirit of recognising the early childhood sector’s resilience and determination, we encourage you to consider nominations in any category that acknowledge how you or your organisation have responded to challenges associated with the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic while delivering improved outcomes for Victorian children and their families.*

This Information Pack provides all the information you need to nominate yourself or someone else for the awards.

You can find further information, including the profiles of previous VEYA winners, on the website: [VEYA website](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/awards/Pages/eyawards.aspx)

# Key dates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Nominations open** | Friday 29 May 2020 |
| **Nominations close** | Monday 6 July 2020 |
| **Judging process commences** | Week commencing 22 July 2020 |
| **Shortlisted finalists contacted** | Week commencing 28 August 2020 |
| **Award presentation** | Wednesday 25 November 2020 |

## Eligibility

The awards are open to organisations, services and early childhood educators delivering projects, programs and initiatives that are improving outcomes for young children and their families. Eligible organisations may include (but are not limited to):

* early childhood education and care services and Early Years Management organisations
* primary schools
* local government services (e.g. family services, maternal and child health services)
* playgroups
* Best Start partnerships
* parenting services
* Aboriginal health organisations or cooperatives
* community service organisations and community health organisations.

All applications for the 2020 VEYA need to be made via [the nomination platform](https://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com/).

Please note there are some specific eligibility requirements for some Award categories and these are specified in ‘Selection Criteria’ and in the application form for the chosen Award.

Nominations for the 2020 VEYA will **open Friday 29 May 2020** and **close 11.59pm 6 July 2020**.

No late nominations will be accepted. Please allow adequate time to complete and seek endorsements for applications.

# Award categories

There are seven award categories in the 2020 Victorian Early Years Awards:

*Awards for services and organisations*

* Improving Access and Participation in Early Learning
* Supporting Parents to Build their Capacity and Confidence
* Creating Collaborative Community Partnerships
* Promoting Children’s Health and Wellbeing
* Continuity of Early Learning
* The Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler Excellence in Educational Leadership Award

*Awards for Individuals*

* Early Childhood Teacher of the Year

Finalists of each award category are also eligible for an eighth award, the Minister’s Award, which is selected by the Minister for Education.

## *Awards for services and organisations*

#### ****Improving Access and Participation in Early Learning****

This award recognises one or more organisations and/or services that are taking action to promote access, ongoing participation and engagement in early learning, particularly for families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage.

For example, initiatives may have a focus on:

* supporting families to engage with early learning services, including supporting families to engage in learning from home
* improving access to high quality early learning services for children
* promoting engagement with early learning for children, particularly for those experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage
* supporting early intervention approaches that support better learning outcomes for children
* evidence-based practice change to ensure services are responsive to a diverse range of families (for example, Aboriginal families, culturally and linguistically diverse families, children with developmental delay or disability).

#### ****Supporting Parents to Build Their Capacity and Confidence****

This award recognises one or more organisations and/or services that are taking action to support families, parents and carers to feel confident and capable in their parenting role and recognises their role as the first and most important teachers in supporting their child’s learning and development.

For example, initiatives may have a focus on:

* strengthening the role of families, parents and carers in delivery of the educational program, especially for those experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage
* strengthening the quality of relationships between parents and their children
* supporting the home learning environment through implementing evidence-based parenting programs.

#### Creating Collaborative Community Partnerships

This award recognises a collaborative partnership (two or more services and/or organisations) that is taking action to that promote collaborative practice that supports and demonstrate positive outcomes for children and families.

For example, initiatives may have a focus on:

* improving the integration and connections between early years and family services (for example, Maternal and Child Health, Child FIRST/family services, Child Protection and parenting services)
* providing collaborative wrap-around supports for children and families, particularly those experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage
* using local planning processes and information sharing to foster collaboration
* using research to develop partnerships that demonstrate outcomes for children.

#### Promoting Children’s Health and Wellbeing

This award recognises one or more organisations and services that is taking action to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for young children.

For example, initiatives may have a focus on:

* increasing access and engagement in health and wellbeing opportunities, particularly for those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage
* aligning with current public health policy and practice (for example, the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023 and the Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program)
* creating physical environments that support the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of young children and their families
* demonstrating innovative practice that is flexible and responsive to the health and wellbeing needs of children and families in their local communities
* using child consultation and children’s voices to inform the development of health initiatives
* building partnerships with families, health and wellbeing services, and other relevant community services.

#### Continuity of Early Learning

This award recognises two or more early childhood services, schools and/or other organisations that support continuity of early learning through successful transitions.

For example, initiatives may have a focus on:

* using innovative approaches that are aligned with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework to support successful transitions between kindergarten and school for children
* transition to school practices that are flexible and responsive to individual children and families in their local communities, including those experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage
* strengthening the quality of reciprocal relationships between early childhood services and primary schools
* using child voice and agency and input from family to inform and guide successful transitions to school
* multi-disciplinary teams working together to achieve successful transitions for children (i.e. early childhood teachers, school teachers, early childhood intervention services, maternal and child health services and outside school hours care services).

#### The Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler Excellence in Educational Leadership Award

This award recognises an early childhood service or an approved service provider that has led their educators and teachers to significantly improve the quality of their learning and teaching practices, with a focus on intentional teaching practices to achieve improved outcomes for Victorian children and their families.

## *Individual Awards*

#### Early Childhood Teacher of the Year

This award recognises an early childhood teacher who has demonstrated evidence-based innovation and exemplary practice in early childhood education and care. Their nomination will demonstrate how they have made a significant contribution to the development and delivery of high-quality early childhood education programs and/or achieved significant improvements in children’s learning and development outcomes.

#### *The Minister’s Award*

This is awarded by the Minister for Education from the pool of finalists for an application that demonstrates exemplary practice and exceptional achievement in improving outcomes for young children. Applicants do not need to specifically nominate for this category.

# How to nominate for an award

This year, there have been minor updates to nominating to reduce administrative burden and streamline the process.

There are now two ways to nominate for an award:

* Nominate yourself
* Nominate a colleague or organisation(s)/service(s) for an award.

### Nominate yourself

1. Visit the [VEYA nomination page](https://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com/) (first-time users will need to register their details).
2. Click on ‘Start an application’ to begin. Under ‘category’, select ‘I’d like to nominate someone for’ and then select the relevant award category. Enter your or the service/s name in the ‘Name of nominee or team’ field. Click on ‘Save + next’.
3. Complete the application form.

Include two references to support your nomination. One of your referees should be your service provider/coordinator or Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent). Your nomination will automatically be sent to your service provider/coordinator or Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) for their endorsement. You should ensure that they have approved your application by 11.59pm Monday 6 July 2020 (the closing date for applications).

### Nominate a colleague or organisation(s)/service(s)

1. Visit the VEYA nomination page (first-time users will need to register their details).
2. Click on ‘Start an application’ to begin. Under ‘category’, select ‘I’d like to nominate someone else’ and then select the relevant award category. Enter a nomination name in the ‘Name of nomination’ field - the application form will provide guidance on this.
3. In the ‘Nominator details’ tab, you will be asked to provide your contact details and provide a short statement (non-scored) explaining why you would like them to win an award.
4. In the ‘Nominee’s details’ tab, you will be asked to provide contact details for your chosen nominee.

**Note:** For the Early Childhood Teacher of the Year Award, you will be required to respond to three selection criteria (250 words maximum).

1. After you have reviewed and submitted, an email will be sent to your nominee inviting them to review, complete the section criteria and accept the nomination by 11.59pm Monday 6 July 2020 (the closing date for applications). They will also be asked to include a second referee, of which one needs to be their service/service provider director or Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent).
2. After your nominee has completed step 5, their nomination will be sent automatically to their service/service provider director or Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) for endorsement. Your nominee must ensure that this step is completed, or the nomination will not proceed.
3. You will be contacted as a referee if the nomination progresses as a shortlisted finalist.

# Referees and endorsement

All nominations must be supported by two referees. Please note that one of your referees must be service provider/coordinator or Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent).

If you are nominating yourself, you must include two referees.

If you are nominating someone else, you will be the first referee and the nominee will be asked to submit a second referee.

When including referees in your nomination, you should:

* discuss the nomination with them to make sure they are comfortable with you including their details
* make them aware that they will be contacted if your nomination progresses as a shortlisted finalist.

Once your nomination has been submitted, it will automatically be sent to your service provider/coordinator or Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent). They will need to endorse your nomination before 11.59pm Monday 6 July 2020 for the nomination to be successfully submitted.

# Selection criteria

The following section outlines the award selection criteria. Applications are required to complete a selection criterion response in 250 words or less.

Award applications should be made [online](https://veea.awardsplatform.com/).

## *Awards for services and organisations*

The selection criteria below apply to the following awards:

* Improving access and participation in early learning
* Supporting parents to build their capacity and confidence
* Creating collaborative community partnerships
* Promoting children’s health and wellbeing
* Continuity of early learning.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Selection criteria** | **Questions to consider as you complete your nomination** |
| **Award category requirements** | * How does the initiative meet the requirements of the selected category? See the overview of award categories above for detail. |
| **Outcomes for children and families** | * Has the initiative been evaluated? * How has the initiative improved outcomes for all children and families? * How has the initiative improved outcomes for families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage? * How does the initiative build the capacity of children, families, communities and/or organisations to support positive outcomes for children? |
| **Evidence-based practice** | * What is the evidence base (theories and/or research) for the initiative? * How is the initiative monitored to ensure ongoing quality improvement? |
| **Innovative practice** | * How is the initiative different to expected everyday practice? * How is the initiative demonstrating innovation in your local area? |
| **Sustainability** | * How is the initiative embedded into everyday practice? |

#### The Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler Excellence in Educational Leadership Award

The selection criteria below apply to the Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler Excellence in Educational Leadership Award. Nominations in this category must be submitted by an early childhood service or an approved service provider that receives state government funding to deliver a kindergarten program. Funded kindergarten programs can be delivered in stand-alone kindergartens, long day care centres and schools.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Selection criteria** | **Questions to consider as you complete your nomination** |
| **Demonstrated commitment to leadership and improving professional knowledge and practice** | * What is your service or approved service provider’s approach to educational leadership? * How has your service or approved service provider demonstrated commitment to ongoing quality improvement? * How does your service or approved service provider support the teaching practice of the educators in your service (or services) to be informed by theories of early childhood pedagogy, children’s learning and development and the practice principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework? * How does your service or approved service provider achieve exceptional teaching practice to support children’s learning? |
| **Reflective practice and ongoing professional learning** | * How has your service or approved service provider supported the ongoing professional learning of your educators and teachers? * How has your service or approved service provider shared and embedded learnings with all educators at their service(s)? |
| **Service approach to inclusion of intentional teaching practices** | * How has your service or approved service provider discussed, reviewed, implemented and measured the impact of intentional teaching practices in partnership with the educational team? |

## *Individual Awards*

#### Early Childhood Teacher of the Year

The selection criteria below apply to the Early Childhood Teacher of the Year category:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Selection criteria** | **Questions to consider as you complete your nomination** |
| **Award category requirements** | * How does the teacher you are nominating/you meet the requirements of the selected category? |
| **Professional knowledge and practice** | * How does the teacher you are nominating/you communicate their educational philosophy and express how they support children’s learning? * What do they draw from the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework in how they approach their role? * How does the teacher you are nominating/you demonstrate implementation of early childhood theoretical knowledge? * How does the teacher you are nominating/you demonstrate exemplary teaching practice to support children’s learning? |
| **Professional engagement and commitment** | * How does the teacher you are nominating/you demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional learning? * How does the teacher you are nominating/you contribute to the educational debate within your service(s), network or community? |

# Assessment process

## Shortlisting

Nominations will be shortlisted by program area experts and regional colleagues. This is a preliminary screening only and is used to determine that the nominations:

* are fully completed and meet the eligibility criteria for their category
* present no probity concerns, such as perceived conflicts of interest or ethical concerns
* are not promoting activities that do not align with the VEYLDF and educational practice quality standards.

All applicants that have addressed the required criteria and the above screening process will progress past the shortlisting round to be assessed by the judging panel.

## Judging

Judging panels will be established to independently assess all award applications. Judging panels are chaired by an impartial moderator and comprised of early childhood experts and academics.

Judges use the matrix below to score each award selection criteria as previously defined:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Label** | **Description** |
| 1 | **Unsatisfactory** | * did not meet the selection criterion **and** * lacked evidence to support nomination |
| 2 | **Satisfactory** | * met the selection criterion **and** * provided some evidence to support nomination against criterion |
| 3 | **Good** | * met the selection criterion **and** * provided good evidence to support nomination against some criterion |
| 4 | **Very good** | * met selection criterion **and** * provided good evidence to support nomination against each criterion |
| 5 | **Excellent** | * met all selection criterion **and** * provided strong evidence against each criterion |
| 6 | **Outstanding** | * met all selection criterion **and** * provided outstanding evidence against each criterion |

The judging panels will consider the information provided on the nomination form against the selection criteria.

The Panel may request additional supporting documentation or information from the applicant as part of the judging criteria to assist in their assessment of an application against the specified criteria.

If the Panel decides there are no nominations in an award category that sufficiently meet the selection criteria, no award will be presented in that category.

Please note that while attachments to support your nomination are welcomed, only information included in the nomination will be assessed. Please ensure that all information you wish to be considered is captured within your nomination. To assist the Panel, please provide enough description or examples in the nomination to clearly demonstrate the key strengths of the initiative.

Following the judging process, the endorsers of the application will be contacted to provide a reference check via phone at a suitable time.

The decision of the Panel is final and no review process will be undertaken. All applicants will be notified via email of the outcome of their nomination. All finalists will be published on the Department’s website.

# Further information

If you have any queries in regards to the 2020 Victorian Early Years Awards, including eligibility, categories, process and the online platform, please email: [early.years.awards@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:early.years.awards@edumail.vic.gov.au)

For information on previous award winners, please visit [www.education.vic.gov.au/earlyyearsawards](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlyyearsawards)

# Resources

Please refer to any of the Department’s resources listed below when preparing your application form to support your nomination.

**The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework**

[The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx) supports all professionals who work with children aged 0-8. It includes a range of discipline-specific guidelines and practice resources.

**National Quality Framework**

[The National Quality Framework](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about) is Australia’s system for regulating early learning and school age care and seeks to improve education and care across long day care, family day care, kindergarten services and outside school hours care services.

**Transition to school resource kit**

​​[The transition to school resource kit](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transkit.aspx) includes practical guidance for early childhood professionals working with children and families while they transition to school.

**Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Assessment and Practice Guides**

[The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Assessment and Practice Guides](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/earlyyears/ey-curriculum-resources/Pages/Birth-to-8years.aspx) provide scenarios and learning activities to support engagement with key concepts of the VEYLDF.

**Planning cycle resource**

[The Planning Cycle Resource](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/ey-assessment/Pages/index.aspx) has been designed to demonstrate how the VEYLDF Early Years Planning Cycle can be applied to observe, assess and respond to evidence of children's learning and illustrate and provide a model for the teaching of specific concepts to children aged from birth to eight years within everyday learning environment.

**Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**

[The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards) consist of seven standards, which teachers will meet at differing levels depending on their career stage and level of experience.

**Victorian Curriculum F-10**

[The Victorian Curriculum F–10](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/) sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

**My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia**

[My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-05/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia_0.pdf) is the approved national framework for school age care to be used by school age care educators, including outside school hours care services.

**Belonging, Being and Becoming - The Early Years Framework for Australia**

[Belonging, Being and Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework](https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework-0) is the national framework that describes the principles, practices and outcomes that support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

**Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 - 2026**

[The Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/aboriginal/Marrung_Aboriginal_Education_Plan_2016-2026.pdf)is a strategy to ensure all Koorie Victorians achieve their learning aspirations from early childhood through to school.