# 2019 NOMINATION GUIDELINES

## The Victorian Early Years Awards

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

The Awards are open to early childhood organisations, early childhood services, schools and early childhood teachers that are delivering projects, programs and initiatives that are improving outcomes for young children and their families. Eligible organisations may include early childhood education and care services, Early Years Management organisations, schools, local government services (e.g. supported playgroups, maternal and child health services), playgroups, early childhood intervention services, Best Start partnerships, parenting services, Aboriginal health organisations or cooperatives, community service organisations and community health organisations[[1]](#footnote-2).

This year there are seven award categories that 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 nomination guidelines

These guidelines outline the categories, criteria, nomination and judging processes of the 2019 Victorian Early Years Awards. The information within these guidelines should inform your nomination. Please read these prior to commencing your online nomination.

## Key stages and dates

| **The nomination period**  **(April to May)** | Nominations open at **9am** on **Monday 8 April 2019**. |
| --- | --- |
| Nominations must be submitted online before nominations close at **midnight** on **Friday** **24 May 2019**. |
| **The assessment process**  **(May to July)** | The judging panel assesses nominations against the selection criteria. |
| **Announcement of finalists**  **(August – September)** | Applicants are advised if they are a finalist by phone and email. |
| **Announcement of winners**  **(October)** | Winners are announced at the awards ceremony. |
| **Payment of prizes**  **(November to December)** | Prize money is distributed, in line with the requirements detailed in these guidelines. |

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# Award categories

There are seven award categories in the 2019 Victorian Early Years Awards. Only one category may be selected in your nomination.

1. **Improving access and participation in early learning**

Nominations in this category will demonstrate how an initiative promotes access, ongoing participation and engagement in early learning, particularly for families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage.

Initiatives may involve:

* supporting families to engage with early learning services
* improving access to high quality early learning services for children
* promoting early engagement in learning for children
* supporting early intervention approaches that support better learning outcomes for children
* supporting transitions to kindergarten and school 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).

**Who can apply?** One or more organisations or services that deliver an initiative that improves the learning and development outcomes for young children (birth-eight years).

1. **Supporting parents through evidence-based practice**

Nominations in this category are aimed at organisations who are delivering evidence-based practice to support families to develop their skills and confidence to promote their child’s wellbeing and development.

Applications will demonstrate how evidence-based practice has been used to underpin service delivery, how fidelity is supported and how data is collected and analysed to assess impact and support a culture of continuous quality improvement in the organisation.

**Who can apply?** One or more organisations delivering evidence-based practice to support parents and improve outcomes for young children (birth-eight years).

1. **Creating collaborative community partnerships**

Nominations in this category are to be submitted by partnerships and will demonstrate how the partnership uses and promotes collaborative practice to support and demonstrate positive outcomes for children and families.

Initiatives may involve:

* improving the integration and connections between early years and family services
* supporting the collaboration between universal, secondary and tertiary services to ensure children have access to the services they need, particularly those experiencing vulnerability
* providing collaborative wrap-around services for children and families, particularly those experiencing vulnerability
* using local planning processes and information sharing to foster collaboration
* using research to develop partnerships that demonstrate outcomes for children.

**Who can apply?** Nominations in this category must be submitted by a collaborative partnership. This will be two or more separate services or organisations that work together to deliver the initiative improving outcomes for young children (birth-eight years).

1. **Promoting children’s health and wellbeing**

Nominations in this category will demonstrate how an initiative supports children’s health and wellbeing.

Initiatives may involve:

* increasing access and engagement in health and wellbeing opportunities, particularly for those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage
* aligning with current public health policy and practice
* creating environments that support health and wellbeing (physical, social and emotional)
* demonstrating innovative practice that is flexible and responsive to the 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.

**Who can apply?** One or more organisations or services that deliver an initiative that improves health and wellbeing outcomes for young children (birth-eight years).

1. **Continuity of early learning**

Nominations in this category will be jointly submitted by two or more early childhood services, schools and/or other organisations and will demonstrate how continuity of early learning is achieved by a focus on successful transitions.

Initiatives may involve:

* transition to school practices that are flexible and responsive to children and families in their local communities
* 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
* a range of professionals and 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
* innovative models aligned with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework that provide continuity of learning for all and children and support families, particularly for those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

**Who can apply?** One or more early childhood services, schools and/or organisations that deliver an initiative that achieves continuity of early learning to improve outcomes for young children (birth-eight years).

1. **Early childhood teacher of the year**

Nominations in this category will demonstrate how an early childhood teacher has demonstrated innovation and exemplary practice in early childhood education and care, and 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.

**Who can apply?** Early childhood teachers who are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and currently employed in an early childhood service 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.

The nominated early childhood teacher must complete the body of their nomination written in first person and another person must complete the nominating statement.

**Category 7. The Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler Excellence in Educational Leadership Award**

Nominations in this category will demonstrate how an early childhood service or an approved service provider has led their educators and teachers to significantly improve the quality of their learning and teaching practices over the last 18 months. In particular, the early childhood service or approved service provider will demonstrate how they have supported their educators and teachers to use intentional teaching practices to achieve improved outcomes for Victorian children and their families.

**Who can apply?** 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.

# Completing your nomination for categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

This section applies to categories 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 only.

If you are nominating in category 6, please refer to section 3 of these guidelines.

If you are nominating in category 7, please refer to section 4 of these guidelines.

The Victorian Early Years Awards have an online nomination process and all nominations must be submitted via the online platform. After reading these guidelines and deciding that they are eligible, applicants should visit [earlyyears.awardsplatform.com](http://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com) to set up an account. This simply requires the applicant’s name, email address and chosen password.

Nominations in categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 must be completed by a representative of an organisation involved in the early childhood initiative being nominated. Nominations completed by someone external to the organisation and incomplete nominations will be considered ineligible.

## The nomination form

Applicants will need to provide the following on the online nomination form:

* **Contact and organisation details, local government area and Department region**

*The primary contact identified in the contact details section will be used by the Department as the key contact for all enquiries about the nomination. The primary contact will be:*

* *advised of the nomination’s outcome*
* *contacted by the Department in relation to all aspects of the award ceremony should the nomination be shortlisted as a finalist*
* *requested to secure a time, venue and program participants for a location photography shoot should the nomination be shortlisted as a finalist.*
* **Title of initiative** – up to 60 characters

*Make sure this is spelt correctly and appropriately describes your initiative, as this title will be used in communication materials if your nomination is shortlisted as a finalist.*

* **Brief project overview** – up to 100 words

*This will be used to describe the initiative if the nomination is shortlisted as a finalist, so ensure that this includes all key components.*

* **Full project description** – up to 400 words

*Make sure this includes all the details of what your initiative aims to do, what it will involve and who it will be targeted to.*

* **Award criteria** (see [page 5](#_Award_criteria) for more information about these criterion)
  + **How does the initiative address the requirements of the relevant award category?** – up to 250 words
  + **How does the initiative improve outcomes for children and families?** – up to 250 words
  + **How does the initiative promote evidence-based practice?** – up to 250 words
  + **How does the initiative promote innovative practice?** – up to 250 words
  + **How is the initiative sustainable and transferable?** – up to 250 words
* **Outline the funding sources** – up to 50 words

*This will not be scored.*

* **References and endorsement of nominations**

*See* [page 5](#_Award_criteria) *for more information.*

## Award criteria

Nominations in categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 will be assessed against the following five selection criteria.

| **Criteria** | **Questions to consider as you complete your nomination** | **Weighting** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Award category requirements** | * How does the initiative meet the requirements of your selected category? See award categories on pages [2 and 3](#_Award_categories) for category requirements. | 3 |
| **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, organisations and/or professionals to support positive outcomes for children? | 5 |
| **Evidence-based practice** | * What is the evidence base for the initiative? * What data, theories, practice principles and/or research is the initiative based on? * How was data collected, analysed and used to ensure ongoing quality improvement? | 4 |
| **Innovative practice** | * How is the initiative different to expected every day practice? * How is the initiative different to other similar initiatives? * How is the initiative demonstrating innovation in your local area? | 4 |
| **Sustainability and transferability** | * How is the initiative embedded into every day practice? * Does funding impact sustainability of the initiative? * What future planning is required to make this initiative ongoing? * What key factors should be considered for another organisation to roll out a similar initiative in their local area? | 3 |

## References and endorsement of nominations

Details of two referees must be included on the online nomination form. At least one referee should be external to the organisation/s being nominated. The other referee should be your Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent).

## Submitting your nomination

* Nominations must be submitted online via the following link: [earlyyears.awardsplatform.com](http://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com).
* Faxed or mailed nominations will not be accepted. Late nominations will not be considered.
* **Nominations close at midnight on 24 May 2019**.
* An email acknowledging receipt of a nomination will be sent to the applicant immediately upon submitting the online nomination form.

## Prizes

Award winners in categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 will receive $15,000 to support the further development of the initiative and a trophy.

Prize money will be transferred to the winning organisation upon receipt of a letter from the winning organisation outlining how the funds will be utilised and which account the funds are to be paid to. The statement must be submitted to the Department within six weeks of the award ceremony.

Please note the conditions of this payment are as follows:

* funds must be expended within 12 months of payment
* funds must be used to support the purpose outlined above.

The Department requests that the winning organisation/individual report on the expenditure of the funds within 12 months of the award ceremony.

# Completing your nomination for category 6 – Early childhood teacher of the year

This section applies to category 6 only.

If you are nominating in categories 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, please refer to section 2 of these guidelines.

If you are nominating in category 7, please refer to section 4 of these guidelines.

The Victorian Early Years Awards have an online nomination process and all nominations must be submitted via the online platform. After reading these guidelines and deciding that they are eligible, applicants should visit [earlyyears.awardsplatform.com](http://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com) to set up an account. This simply requires the applicant’s name, email address and chosen password.

The nominated early childhood teacher must complete the body of their nomination written in first person and another person must complete the nominating statement. Incomplete nominations and nominations written by others will be determined ineligible.

## The nomination form

Applicants will need to provide the following on the online nomination form:

* **Contact and organisation details, local government area and Department region**

*The teacher’s contact details identified in the contact details section will be used by the Department for all enquiries about the nomination. The primary contact will be:*

* *advised of the nomination’s outcome*
* *contacted by the Department in relation to all aspects of the award ceremony should the nomination be shortlisted as a finalist*
* *requested to secure a time, venue and program participants for a location photography shoot should the nomination be shortlisted as a finalist.*
* **Name of the nominated early childhood teacher** – up to 60 characters

*Please use the name you would like to be referred by if you were shortlisted as a finalist.*

* **Nominating statement** – up to 250 words

*This must be completed by someone other than the teacher being nominated (e.g. service coordinator/director, service provider, early years manager, a member of the committee of management, senior colleague, mentor or a member of the community).*

*This section will not be scored however it will be used to describe the early childhood teacher’s achievements if the nomination is shortlisted as a finalist, so ensure that this includes all the key components.*

* **Professional statement** – 1,200-1,500 words

*This must be completed by the teacher and be written in first person (nominations completed by others will be deemed ineligible). See* [*page 7*](#_Award_criteria_1) *for more information about these criterion.*

* Professional knowledge and practice (approximately 1200 words)
* Professional engagement and commitment (approximately 250 words)
* **Professional learning proposal** – up to 300 words

*This must be completed by the teacher and be written in first person (nominations completed by others will be deemed ineligible).*

*This responds to the criterion ‘Professional learning proposal’ see page 8 for more information. This should detail what professional learning the teacher plans to undertake if they win the $10,000 prize money.*

* **References and endorsement of nominations**

*To be completed by applicants and their service coordinator/director, service provider, early years manager, a member of the committee of management or equivalent.*

In preparing their nomination, applicants should consider the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*, *Australian Professional Standards* for Teachers and the *National Quality Framework*.

## Award criteria

Nominations in category 6 will be assessed against the following three selection criteria.

| **Criteria** | **Questions to consider as you complete your nomination** | **Weighting** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Award category requirements** | * How do you meet the requirements of the selected category? * Are you provisionally or fully registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching? | 3 |
| **Professional knowledge and practice** | * How is your practice informed by theories of teaching, learning and development, practice and principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework? * How do you demonstrate implementation of your theoretical knowledge? * How do you demonstrate exemplary teaching practice to support children’s learning? | 5 |
| **Professional learning proposal** | This section should detail the professional learning that you plan to undertake if you win the award ($10,000).   * Have you provided a detailed proposal that outlines the area of professional development you wish to undertake? * How does your professional learning proposal link with your nominating statement? * Have you made links between your knowledge and practice, and your professional learning proposal? * How does your proposal for professional learning align with best practice in the early childhood education and care sector? * How will the further research or project work, investigation or professional learning enhance your professional practice and outcomes for children? | 4 |
| **Professional engagement and commitment** | * How do you demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional learning? * How do you provide educational leadership within your service(s), network or community? * How will you share your learnings? | 3 |

## References and endorsement of nominations

In support of the nomination, details of two professional referees must be included on the online nomination form. One of these referees may be the person who nominated the applicant. The other referee can be your service coordinator/director, service provider, early years manager, a member of the committee of management, senior colleague, mentor or a member of the community.

## Submitting your nomination

* Nominations must be submitted online via the following link: [earlyyears.awardsplatform.com](http://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com).
* Faxed or mailed nominations will not be accepted. Late nominations will not be considered.
* **Nominations close at midnight on 24 May 2019.**
* An email acknowledging receipt of a nomination will be sent to the applicant immediately upon submitting the online nomination form.

## Prizes

Award winners in category 6 will receive

* the opportunity to undertake professional development that focuses on and extends an area of their teaching
* $10,000 to be used to cover course costs, travel, accommodation and staff replacement to participate in the professional learning activity
* a trophy.

Where possible, payments associated with the award will be made to the employer of the award recipient. The employer will be required to enter into an agreement with the Department to distribute funds for professional development as outlined in the recipient’s nomination.

Where it is not possible to make the award payment to an employer and the funds are paid to the individual, the award payment is likely to be characterised as taxable income, and the Department has an obligation under the Tax Administration Act to withhold tax on the payment.

Prize money will be transferred upon receipt of a letter from the winning individual confirming how the funds will be utilised. The statement must be submitted to the Department within six weeks of the award ceremony.

Please note the conditions of this payment are as follows:

* funds must be expended within 12 months of payment
* funds must be used to support the purpose outlined above.

The Department requests that the winning organisation/individual report on the expenditure of the funds within 12 months of the award ceremony.

# 4. Completing your nomination for category 7 – The Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler Excellence in Educational Leadership Award

This section applies to category 7 only.

If you are nominating in categories 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 please refer to section 2 of these guidelines.

If you are nominating in category 6, please refer to section 3 of these guidelines.

The Victorian Early Years Awards have an online nomination process and all nominations must be submitted via the online platform. After reading these guidelines and deciding that they are eligible, applicants should visit [earlyyears.awardsplatform.com](http://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com) to set up an account. This simply requires the applicant’s name, email address and chosen password.

Nominations in category 7 must be completed by a representative of the nominating service or service provider.

## The nomination form

Applicants will need to provide the following on the online nomination form:

* **Contact details, local government area and Department region**

*The primary contact identified in the contact details section will be used by the Department as the key contact for all enquiries about the nomination. The primary contact will be:*

* *advised of the nomination’s outcome*
* *contacted by the Department in relation to all aspects of the award ceremony should the nomination be shortlisted as a finalist*
* *requested to secure a time, venue and program participants for a location photography shoot should the nomination be shortlisted as a finalist.*
* **Name of the nominated service or approved service provider** – up to 80 characters

*Please use the name you would like to be referred by if you were shortlisted as a finalist.*

* **Award criteria** (see [page 11](#_Award_criteria_2) for more information about these criterion)
* **How does the service or approved service provider demonstrate commitment to leadership and improving professional knowledge and practice?** – up to 1000 words
* **Demonstrated commitment to leadership and improving professional knowledge and practice** - up to 500 words
* **Reflective practice and ongoing professional learning** - up to 350 words
* **What is the service or approved service provider approach to the inclusion of intentional teaching practices?** – up to 500 words
* **Professional learning proposal** – up to 300 words
* **References and endorsement of nominations**

*See* [page 10](#_References_and_endorsement) for more information.

## Award criteria

Nominations in category 7 will be assessed against the following three selection criteria.

| **Criteria** | **Questions to consider as you complete your nomination** | **Weighting** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Demonstrated commitment to leadership and improving professional knowledge and practice** | * What is your approach to educational leadership? * How have you demonstrated commitment to ongoing quality improvement? * How is the teaching practice of your service or services informed by theories of teaching, learning and development and the practice principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and how do you implement this theoretical knowledge? * How have you strived to achieve exemplary teaching practice to support children’s learning? | 5 |
| **Reflective practice and ongoing professional learning** | * How have you supported the ongoing professional learning of your educators and teachers? * How have you shared and embedded learnings with all educators and teachers at your service or services? | 4 |
| **Service approach to inclusion of intentional teaching practices** | * How does your service or services philosophy reflect a commitment to intentional teaching practices? * How have you implemented and measured the impact of intentional teaching practices? | 5 |
| **Professional learning proposal** | This section should detail the professional learning that your service or services plan to undertake if you win the award ($15,000).   * Provide a detailed proposal that outlines the area of professional learning and development your service or services wish to undertake * Make links between your current service or services knowledge and practice and your professional learning proposal * How does this proposal align with best practice in the early childhood education and care sector? * How will the professional learning enhance your service or services professional practice and outcomes for children? | 3 |

## References and endorsement of nominations

In support of the nomination, details of two professional referees must be included on the online nomination form. The two referees should be your service coordinator/director, service provider, early years manager, a member of the committee of management, senior colleague, mentor or a member of the community.

## Submitting your nomination

* Nominations must be submitted online via the following link: [earlyyears.awardsplatform.com](http://earlyyears.awardsplatform.com).
* Faxed or mailed nominations will not be accepted. Late nominations will not be considered.
* **Nominations close at midnight on 24 May 2019.**
* An email acknowledging receipt of a nomination will be sent to the applicant immediately upon submitting the online nomination form.

## Prizes

Award winners in category 7 will receive:

* the opportunity to undertake professional development that focuses on and extends their improvement as a service or services
* $15,000 to be used to cover course costs, travel, accommodation and staff replacement to participate professional learning activities
* a trophy.

Prize money will be transferred to the winning organisation upon receipt of a letter from the winning organisation outlining how the funds will be utilised and which account the funds are to be paid to. The statement must be submitted to the Department within six weeks of the award ceremony.

Please note the conditions of this payment are as follows:

* funds must be expended within 12 months of payment
* funds must be used to support the purpose outlined above.

The Department requests that the winning service or approved service provider report on the expenditure of the funds within 12 months of the award ceremony.

# Judging and the award ceremony

## Judging of the awards

The Victorian Early Years Awards Judging Panel will consider the information provided on the nomination form against the published selection criteria. To assist the Panel, please provide sufficient description or examples in the nomination to clearly demonstrate the key strengths of the initiative.

The Panel must be able to assess respective nominations in terms of the selection criteria outlined in this document. The Panel may request supporting documentation or additional information to assist in decision-making. If the Panel decides there are no nominations in an award category that sufficiently fit the selection criteria, no award will be presented in that category.

The decision of the Panel is final and no review process will be undertaken. All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their nomination.

All finalists will be published on the Department’s website.

## The award ceremony

All applicants to the awards will be invited to an awards presentation ceremony to be held during Children’s Week, 19 - 22 October 2019.

# Use of information

## Privacy Statement

Consistent with Victorian Government policy and legislation, the Department practises fair information handling practices. Private and personal information supplied will be used by the Selection Panel only to assist its decision-making.

Information will not be disclosed or used for any other purpose without the express consent of the person to whom the information relates, unless otherwise required by law. The Department’s Privacy Policy can be viewed at https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacypolicy.aspx

## Victorian Early Years Awards nominations as case studies

Nominations become the property of the Department and may be used to promote the awards.

Victorian Early Years Awards nominations including finalists may be used as case studies or examples of good practice, and published subsequent to the completion of the Victorian Early Years Awards.

The Victorian Early Years Awards presentation ceremony and promotions will feature photographs of finalists which will be commissioned by and remain the property of the Department. Photography may also be subsequently used in other Departmental publications and promotions.

## Sharing good practice

Finalists and winners of the Victorian Early Years Awards are encouraged to share their good practice with other services and organisations in Victoria. Finalists and winners may be invited to present at the following year’s Victorian Early Years Awards ceremony.

# Contact details

If you have any queries in regards to the 2019 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) or phone: (03) 5215 5299.

For information on previous award winners, please visit www.education.vic.gov.au/veya.

1. Please note these are examples and that this list is not exclusive. Please contact the Department if you are unsure if your proposed nomination fits within the guidelines. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)