



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS | FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Give your child the best start.

The Victorian Government is investing in kindergarten programs for all three-year-olds giving our children an extra year of learning, playing and making friends.

Kindergarten programs for three-year-olds are being rolled out across Victoria in stages. The Victorian Government is subsidising up to 15 hours of kindergarten per week, for every child in the two years before school. The programs will be delivered by local providers across the state.

Learning through play. Evidence-based programs. Qualified teachers. The best start.

Why is kindergarten for three-year-olds important?

At its heart, introducing kindergarten programs for three-year-olds is about giving children every possible opportunity to succeed. Currently, the Victorian Government subsidises 15 hours per week of kindergarten in the year before school. This is known as 'four-year-old kindergarten'.

Research consistently shows that two years of kindergarten are better than one. That's why the Victorian Government is funding an extra year of kindergarten—ensuring our kids are ready for school, and set for life.

What will my child experience?

Your child can now start kindergarten one year earlier. This means another year of learning, playing and making friends.

In a kindergarten program, children enjoy play-based learning. Teachers support children

to develop curiosity, concentration, resilience and creativity. Through play they learn language skills, basic maths concepts, and how to regulate their behaviour and get along with others.

Just as with four-year-old kindergarten, kindergarten programs for three-year-olds will be tailored to meet the needs of their communities.

All kindergarten programs in Victoria are delivered in line with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. This ensures the activities are age-appropriate.

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When is the program being delivered?

By 2029, the Victorian Government will subsidise 15 hours of kindergarten a week for every three-year-old child. From 2020, the progressive roll-out will begin in six local government areas, with up to 15 hours each week available to families.

From 2021, families in an additional 15 local government areas will also have access to up to 15 hours a week of kindergarten programs for three-year-olds.

From 2022, families across the rest of the state will have access to five hours a week of kindergarten programs for three-year-olds. This will increase up to 15 hours a week by 2029.

The first roll-out regions cover areas that already have the ability to meet demand.

For more information about the roll-out, refer to the map on the back of this document.



What is the difference between a kindergarten program in a long day care (childcare) and a sessional (standalone) kindergarten?

Kindergarten programs will be available at both long day care centres, and in sessional (standalone) kindergartens—this may be a place where children already attend four-year-old kindergarten.

Teachers and highly trained educators deliver kindergarten programs regardless of where your child attends.

At a long day care centre (or childcare), the kindergarten program, delivered by a teacher, is usually integrated with other education and care provided by educators.

At a sessional kindergarten, there are specific days and times that the kindergarten program operates. These days and hours are set by the kindergarten service.

Deciding where to send your child will be based on a variety of factors, including services available in your community, and what works best for your family and your child.

Am I eligible to pay no or very low fees?

Government subsidies cover approximately two thirds of the cost of delivering kindergarten programs. Fees paid by families cover the remaining cost and are set by your service provider. Families can access a kindergarten program in a sessional kindergarten at low or no cost if their child:

- is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- is a triplet or quadruplet
- is covered by a Health Care Card
- holds an eligible concession card or refugee, humanitarian or asylum seeker visa, or their parent or guardian does.



How do I enrol my child?

Talk to your local kindergarten provider to understand their enrolment process, and visit their centre and staff.

Some councils have a central enrolment process you can use, and your childcare provider may also run a kindergarten program.

You can look at service quality ratings here: startingblocks.gov.au

Every provider is different, and finding the one that best suits your family's needs is important.

When do I enrol my child?

You should think about enrolling your child in a three-year-old kindergarten program when they turn two-years-old. Most services have an enrolment process that opens the year before your child starts a kindergarten program. This usually runs between February and April (this may be later in initial roll-out areas).

Some families may want to think about kindergarten even earlier, when they are considering where to send their child to long day care.

You might want to ask if your preferred long day care centre provides a four-year-old kindergarten program, and if it is planning to provide a three-year-old kindergarten program.

What if my child hasn't turned three by the start of the first term?

In line with the school starting age, families with children born between January and April will have a choice about which year they start at a three-year-old kindergarten program. Families might choose for their children to attend the following year. Other children will be two years old when their three-year-old kindergarten year starts.

Kindergartens are required to have a different ratio of staff to children, depending on their ages. Some services may not have the number of staff needed to accommodate two-year-olds. In those instances, your child must be three to attend a three-year-old kindergarten program, and they must have had their third birthday by 30 April.

In these cases, you should enrol your child at the same time as everyone else. Services will hold your child's place until they're old enough, and only charge you fees for the weeks your child attends.

Services may ask for a deposit to hold your child's place, but these will be required to go towards fees once your child starts.

It's best to speak to your local kindergarten about how they'll support children joining the program once they turn three.



Where do I go for more information about three-year-old kindergarten?

Visit education.vic.gov.au/3yokinder

Who will teach kindergarten?

Kindergarten programs are led by a teacher. Teachers have attended university and have a bachelor's degree.

The teachers work with highly trained educators, who hold a Certificate III or Diploma qualification.

Will there be kindergarten places available for three-year-olds?

We are working with sessional kindergartens and long day care services across the state to support them to provide three-year-old kindergarten programs, or to expand the programs they already offer to this age group.

The Victorian Government is investing almost \$5 billion over 10 years to deliver the reform, including the additional facilities, teachers and educators needed to increase three-year-old kindergarten programs across the state.

When can my child access two years of subsidised kindergarten?

Subsidised kindergarten for four-year-olds is available now.

Kindergarten programs for three-year-olds are rolling out across Victoria in stages from 2020.

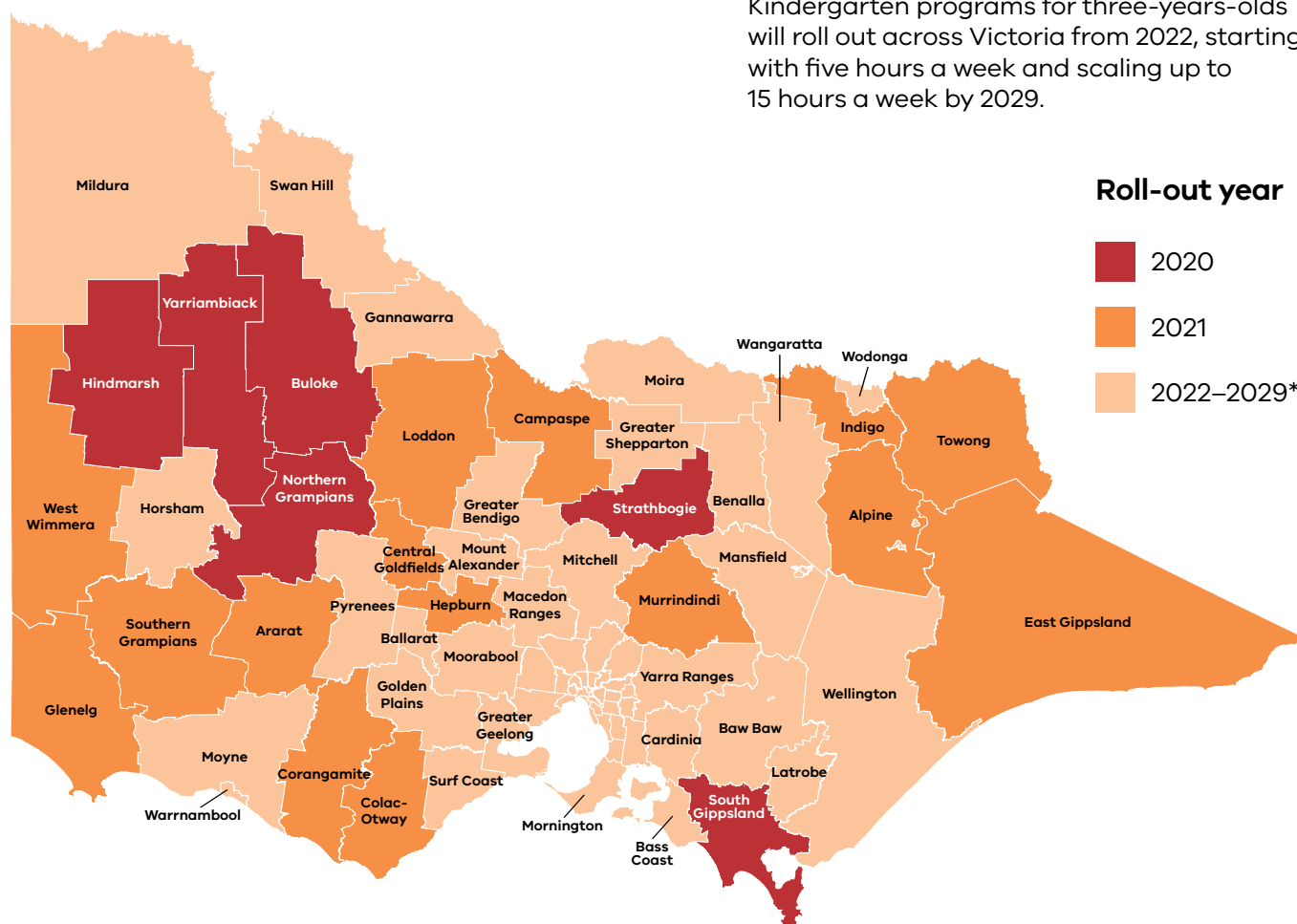
Enrolments will begin in six local government areas in regional Victoria:

- Buloke
- Hindmarsh
- Northern Grampians
- South Gippsland
- Strathbogie
- Yarriambiack.

Parents in these communities can access up to 15 hours a week of kindergarten programs for three-year-olds from 2020.

From 2021, families in an additional 15 local government areas will also have access to up to 15 hours a week of kindergarten programs for three-year-olds.

Kindergarten programs for three-year-olds will roll out across Victoria from 2022, starting with five hours a week and scaling up to 15 hours a week by 2029.



*Gradually scaled up from 5hrs to 15hrs per week.

Find out more at:
education.vic.gov.au/3yokinder