

INTRODUCING EARLY YEARS MANAGEMENT

Early Years Management (EYM) is the new name for Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM).

The new EYM Policy Framework will continue to strengthen the management and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs, and provide expertise in employing and supporting the development of professional staff to deliver high quality early childhood education and care services.

The change from KCM to EYM will reflect the broader role of KCM organisations to deliver integrated early years services such as occasional care, long day care and maternal and child health services.

The EYM Policy Framework and supporting EYM Kindergarten Operating Guidelines have been introduced to replace the 2009 Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework.

What are the benefits of EYM?

- **Children** benefit from high quality, inclusive services provided by professionals who are well supported to adopt contemporary, evidence-based practices.
- **Parents** can focus their involvement on supporting their children's learning free of the compliance, industrial, financial and operational obligations that are required of approved early childhood service providers.
- **Staff** benefit from organisational structures and processes that support them in their day to day work, as well as creating career pathways and professional development opportunities that align with their aspirations.

Will all kindergartens be required to join EYM arrangements?

No, all kindergarten services delivering a funded kindergarten program continue to have the choice to enter EYM arrangements.

The parent Committee of Management representing the incorporated association will make this decision in consultation with parents and the local community.

What's changed from the 2009 policy?

The new policy sets out the expectations for the EYM system. Although there will be changes for some EYM organisations and services, most will only need to make minimal changes to align with the policy.

Following feedback from the sector we have added more detail in the new EYM policy and guidelines. By clearly articulating the roles and responsibilities of each partner in EYM, the policy and guidelines will be a valuable resource for:

- kindergarten committees of management considering joining EYM
- parent advisory groups of services already part of an EYM organisation
- EYM organisations
- local government
- community organisations considering becoming an EYM organisation.

When will the EYM Policy Framework be implemented?

The EYM Policy Framework will be implemented over the next 18 months. The Department will work closely with the sector to ensure EYM organisations and parent committees have time to plan for and progressively implement the new policy requirements across their services.

The policy states that:

- EYMs and local government need to consult on planning kindergarten services in the municipality
- EYMs are the approved provider and funded organisation for all their kindergarten services. As such they must have control over regulatory matters, Department funding and parent fees.
- A key strength of EYM is community consultation which produces better quality and tailored services. EYMs need to have structures in place, such as parent advisory groups, to provide advice on matters such as the kindergarten program and community need.
- There are new EYM outcomes which will guide EYM organisations in their work. To support the outcomes, a new performance monitoring framework will be refined in consultation with the sector. The framework will provide objective measures of performance for use by families accessing the service, EYM organisations and the Department.
- Organisations need to have three community based kindergarten services to become an EYM organisation. These services may be in a local area, or may represent a particular community, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Who has been involved in the development of EYM?

The KCM sector has heavily been involved in developing and shaping the EYM Policy Framework. A KCM Reference Group was established to facilitate sector consultation throughout the EYM policy development process. The group consists of a cross section of representatives from Early Learning Association Australia, Municipal Association of Victoria, community-based and local government KCMs, and central and regional Department staff.

The Department also sought the views of parent committees who recently joined a KCM and committees of management for stand-alone kindergarten services.

The Department will continue to work with the KCM Reference Group to support the implementation of the EYM Policy Framework.

What's the difference between the policy and the guidelines?

The policy sets out the overall parameters of EYM in Victoria, which is a four-way partnership between families, EYM organisations, local government and the Department. It's useful to understand the vision and expected outcomes for children that will be achieved through EYM.

In the policy you will find information about:

- The strategic context for EYM
- The achievements of Kindergarten Cluster Management so far and the benefits of EYM
- The vision for EYM and expected outcomes for children
- The role of each EYM partner in delivering improved outcomes for children.

The guidelines contain more detailed information about how the system works and is more like an operating manual for EYM

In the guidelines you will find information about:

- The steps that need to be taken by existing EYM organisations, committees of management, and prospective EYM organisations when setting up new EYM arrangements.
- The draft Performance Framework, which will provide objective measures of performance for use by families accessing the service, EYM organisations and the Department to assess how organisations are tracking in working towards the EYM vision and delivering the EYM outcomes for children.

Where can I go for further information?

For further information please visit the Department of Education and Training website at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/provide/rs/edcare/Pages/eym.aspx>

