

Your guide to: Rotational models

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Key points:

- The introduction of Pre-Prep may mean your service introduces a rotational model to accommodate increased hours of Pre-Prep, and up to 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.
- Rotational models are a way of managing enrolments at your service and can be used alongside other approaches to programming, such as multi-age groups. This model can provide flexibility in a structured way.
- Rotational models provide children with opportunities to make new friends and adapt to different groups.
- Many Victorian services are already using rotational models to deliver highly effective programs.

Introduction

A rotational model is where a number of smaller sub-groups are brought together to create a larger group. Each child is allocated with other children to a small group, usually of the same age group. These children always attend together throughout the week on the same days, usually a minimum of 2 days, and will attend with other groups during the week.

The same groups will attend the same regular days, ensuring continuity from week to week.

Where a rotational model includes a combination of 3- and 4-year-olds in each group, it may assist you to accommodate 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, and increased hours of Pre-Prep each week for children at your service.



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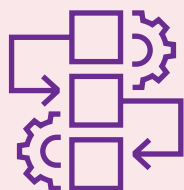
Examples

Benefits to children of rotational models may include more opportunities to:

- make new friends
- adapt to new people and situations
- be exposed to new ideas
- experience different dynamics
- be better prepared for the number of children they will meet at school.

Where rotational groups include both 3- and 4-year-old children, children learn in a context that approximates the diversity of ages found in families. The ability to adapt to different contexts and new groups of people are important skills for lifelong learning.





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To start planning for rotational groups at your service, think about the space you have available and your teaching team. Think about your opening hours for each session or day. This combination of space, time, and staff creates the parameters for how many groups you can accommodate for each session or day during the week, and how many teachers and educators you will need.

Compare the number of approved places at your service with the number of enrolment applications. Next, identify how you will divide the children into sub-groups and 'rotate' their attendance across the week to ensure 3-year-olds can attend for 15 hours, and 4-year-olds can attend for the number of Pre-Prep hours your service is aiming for.

Points to keep in mind in your planning:

- What do you already know about rotational models? For example, have any staff at your service worked with rotational models before, or do you know any teachers or educators outside of your service who have worked in a rotational model? How were these models organised?
- Are there opportunities to group children together or apart from each other? For example, will 3- and 4-year-olds from the same family be able to attend the same sessions?
- Likewise, can you assign children with additional needs who have [Kindergarten Inclusion Support \(KIS\)](#) funding to specific groups so that an additional educator is available when they attend, thereby supporting more children to participate successfully in your program?
- What rules or principles will guide your rotational model? For example, will you allow families to 'swap' attendance days for their child with another child in particular circumstances (e.g., to attend a medical appointment)?

A further consideration is the number of teachers and educators available to work with rotational models. For example, consider whether your existing teaching team can support rotational groups, or if you will need to employ more staff to support your preferred model of rotational grouping. If your rotational grouping results in multi-age groups, you should also consider how to enable your existing team to be able to support 3- and 4-year-olds learning together.



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The introduction of a rotational model can offer an exciting opportunity for your teaching team to learn and develop their practice. The Early Years Planning Cycle in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) provides a robust approach for thinking about the approach you will take.

Advice in the VEYLDF about the relationship between reflection, planning, and effective practice focuses on information gathering, collaboration, inclusion, shared expertise, the use of evidence, and evaluation in partnership with children, families, and other professionals.

Some key questions may include:

- What are the needs of your local community? How might a rotational model create flexibility for families?
- How will children be welcomed into the program and be provided with invitations for learning if they come in and out at different times during the day?
- If 3- and 4-year-old children attend together in a rotational model, how might the 4-year-olds become guides and models for the learning of the 3-year-olds?
- What opportunities to streamline planning are offered by a rotational model? Can you use a rotational model to plan for individuals and small groups within the larger group at each session then repeat these learning activities with a different group? Conversely, can you explore different practices with different groups to develop your team and tailor to different needs?
- How can you support the inclusion and participation of all children with a rotational model, which may also include team teaching and teaching longer days? Think about how the teaching team can use the transitions and routines throughout the day to be inclusive of all children. How can you reduce the amount of ins/outs across the day?
- What will this mean for your teaching teams? How might professionals need to work together in new and different ways in a rotational model?





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Families who are expecting attendance on fixed days and times with the same children every session may be hearing about rotational models for the first time and be curious about how they work. It may be helpful to think about introducing rotational models at your service progressively.

Discuss:

- the concept of rotational grouping – what it is and [how it benefits children](#). Make sure families understand that their child will always attend with the same core group of children and provide reassurance that their child will have consistent teachers and educators and continuity of relationships and learning
- the structure of rotational grouping (e.g., combining smaller groups into larger groups in different configurations across the week)
- the practicalities of what it means for their child and family (e.g., which days will their child attend, who will be in their regular sub-group of children).

Families may also be concerned that your service will repeat planned programs across the week, resulting in their child experiencing less variation in the experiences offered when they attend. Talk to families about how learning builds over time, and the importance of everyday routines. You can also provide families with information about planned daily activities so they can see the rich range of learning experiences offered to their child at your service.

Finally, consider and decide on communication methods you will use to communicate with families – for example, floor books, diaries, wall displays, emails, online platforms and portfolios. This will help ensure continuity for children, families and staff.

More information

- You can find more information about combining 3- and 4-year-old children in [Your Guide To: Multi-aged groups](#).



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Notes - Contact your local [Early Childhood Improvement Branch](#) to get tailored advice to suit your specific circumstances.

These are illustrative examples and not based on an actual service. The examples are intended to provide an illustration of how services could adjust their program models to accommodate increased hours. The examples may not be applicable to or suit all services.

The examples show how services can offer additional hours to children in Pre-Prep priority cohorts from 2026. Children in Pre-Prep priority cohorts will be scheduled to attend sessions with other groups of children, as shown in the examples.

You may need to consider whether changes to staffing arrangements require staff consultation under the relevant industrial instrument (e.g., an enterprise agreement or award covering your service). If relevant, your peak body or industrial representative may be able to provide advice.

Lil' Cubs Kinder is a single-room service that has 32 licensed places.

Max is the manager of Lil' Cubs Kinder, which currently offers a non-rotational separate age group program. After hearing about some of the potential benefits, especially to flexibility, and potentially accommodating more children, Max is open to considering implementing a rotational model with multi-age groups when his service starts to offer Pre-Prep. Max is working with his team and his local Early Childhood Improvement Branch contact, Sarah, to explore some different program models.

For Lil' Cubs Kinder, the Pre-Prep roll-out will initially involve providing up to 25 hours for children from priority cohorts in 2026 and then offering up to 20 hours of Pre-Prep to all 4-year-olds the following year. Max discusses the option to incrementally implement changes to the program model with Sarah, to allow the teaching team and service more time to gradually adapt – such as transitioning to rotational modelling whilst still maintaining separate age groups, before rolling out to a multi-age rotational model.

Max anticipates Lil' Cubs Kinder will have 3 children from priority cohorts who can access up to 25 Pre-Prep hours, and will aim to accommodate a balanced number of children within the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep programs.

Max provides Sarah with information about the service's capacity and current enrolments, including current [Early Start Kindergarten](#) enrolments, and together they prepare some examples.

Max notes that Lil' Cubs Kinder may need to decrease the number of places offered as hours go up further than these examples.

The following examples below are intended to show one approach to how Lil' Cubs Kinder can gradually increase their hours of program delivery over time.

Example 1

This example allows for:

- 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten (3YO)
- 15 hours of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4YO)
- 22.5 hours of Pre-Prep for 3 children from priority cohorts.

This example includes 5 groups:

- 1 x 3YO groups - Dingoes: 28 children (28 children)
- 3 x 4YO groups - Wombats: 9 children, Emus: 9 children, Kangaroos: 10 children (28 children)
- Children from Pre-Prep priority cohorts (3 children).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dingoes (3YO)	Dingoes (3YO)	Wombats (4YO) Emus (4YO) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Wombats (4YO) Kangaroos (4YO) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Emus (4YO) Kangaroos (4YO) Pre-Prep priority cohorts
28 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	28 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	21 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	22 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	22 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)

In this example separate age groups are maintained, as Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is delivered on Mondays and Tuesdays, whereas Four-Year-Old and Pre-Prep are delivered during the rest of the week with rotational modelling.

By implementing rotational modelling during the second half of the week, the service can maintain more control over the group sizes to balance the number of children attending on a given day. There is the additional benefit of providing some opportunities for children to form different friendships across the sub-groups.

There is capacity to enrol more 4-year-old and Pre-Prep children. Sarah discusses how implementing multi-age modelling could give the service even greater control to maintain group sizes across the whole week. Refer to the following examples for multi-age and rotational models.

Example 2

This example allows for:

- 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten (3YO)
- 16 hours of Pre-Prep (PP)
- 21 hours of Pre-Prep for 3 children from priority cohorts.

This example includes 7 groups:

- 4 x 3YO groups - Dingoes: 5 children, Echidnas: 6 children, Quokkas: 6 children, Platypus: 5 children (22 children)
- 2 x PP groups - Wombats: 11 children, Emus: 11 children (22 children)
- Children from Pre-Prep priority cohorts (3 children).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dingoes (3YO) Echidnas (3YO) Quokkas (3YO) Wombats (PP)	Dingoes (3YO) Quokkas (3YO) Platypus (3YO) Wombats (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Dingoes (3YO) Echidnas (3YO) Platypus (3YO) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Quokkas (3YO) Platypus (3YO) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Wombats (PP) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts
28 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	30 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	30 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	31 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	25 children 9am-3pm (6 hours)

This multi-age and rotational model provides opportunities for children to form friendships across different sub-groups. It may also allow flexibility and capacity when scheduling in response to factors such as parents having availability or preferences for certain days and staffing availability.

Having shorter days across the week may also create ongoing opportunities for staff to have team non-teaching time at the end of the day and may assist families seeking to align drop off and pick up with school hours.

Children from priority cohorts can attend any 4 days across the week to access their hours.

Friday, in the above example, is scheduled for Pre-Prep groups only. This may need to be discussed further with the teaching team to ensure they are comfortable with a mostly multi-age group model across the week, except for one day.

Example 3

This example allows for:

- 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten (3YO)
- 16 hours of Pre-Prep (PP)
- 20 hours of Pre-Prep for 3 children from priority cohorts.

This example includes 6 groups:

- 3 x 3YO groups - Dingoes: 10 children, Echidnas: 7 children, Quokkas: 5 children (22 children)
- 2 x PP groups - Wombats: 12 children, Emus: 10 children (22 children)
- Children from Pre-Prep priority cohorts (3 children).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dingoes (3YO) Quokkas (3YO) Wombats (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Dingoes (3YO) Quokkas (3YO) Wombats (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Dingoes (3YO) Echidnas (3YO) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Quokkas (3YO) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Wombats (PP) Emus (PP)
30 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	30 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	30 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	25 children 9am-2pm (5 hours)	29 children 3YO: 9am-2pm (5 hours) PP: 9am-3pm (6 hours)

If there is a preference for multi-age groups every day of the week, this is another option, which has different finishing times for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep on Fridays.

Example 4

This example allows for:

- 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten (3YO)
- 20 hours of Pre-Prep (PP)
- 22.5 hours of Pre-Prep for 3 children from priority cohorts.

This example includes 5 groups:

- 2 x 3YO groups - Dingoes: 13 children, Echidnas: 14 children (27 children)
- 2 x PP groups - Wombats: 14 children, Emus: 13 children (27 children)
- Children from Pre-Prep priority cohorts (3 children).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dingoes (3YO) Wombats (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Dingoes (3YO) Wombats (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Emus (PP)	Wombats (PP) Emus (PP)
30 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	30 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	30 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	27 children 8:30am-4pm (7.5 hours)	27 children 8:30am-1:30pm (5 hours)

This program model increases Pre-Prep hours to 20 hours, using longer days alongside rotational models and multi-age groups.

Max notes the impact of offering longer days has on increasing the capacity of his service to deliver funded kindergarten hours. Compared to previous models, this example has both increased the number of hours offered for Pre-Prep children and is able to accommodate more enrolments.

Friday afternoons can be used for planning and assessment.

Children from priority cohorts can attend 3 days each week and families may be given the option for which days suit best.

Example 5

This example allows for:

- 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten (3YO)
- 20 hours of Pre-Prep (PP)
- 25 hours of Pre-Prep for 3 children from priority cohorts.

This example includes 5 groups:

- 2 x 3YO groups - Dingoes: 9 children, Echidnas: 9 children (18 children)
- 2 x PP groups - Wombats: 9 children, Emus: 9 children (18 children)
- Children from Pre-Prep priority cohorts (3 children).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dingoes (3YO) Echidnas (3YO) Wombats (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Dingoes (3YO) Wombats (PP) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Dingoes (3YO) Wombats (PP) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Wombats (PP) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts	Echidnas (3YO) Emus (PP) Pre-Prep priority cohorts
30 children	30 children	30 children	30 children	21 children
9am-2pm (5 hours)	9am-2pm (5 hours)	9am-2pm (5 hours)	9am-2pm (5 hours)	9am-2pm (5 hours)

Max is also interested in a program model that can accommodate the maximum hours each cohort is eligible for.

There are opportunities for the teaching team to have time for planning and assessment in the afternoons. Because this model has a higher number of one age group attending on various days, this is something that will need to be discussed and planned for.

Children from Pre-Prep priority cohorts can access 20 or 25 hours in this example.

If this approach works well, the service can extend some of the days to 7.5-hour days in subsequent years when Pre-Prep hours are increased further. See 'Your Guide To: Longer days'.

For further information on making changes at your service, refer to the Change Management Toolkit and contact your local [Early Childhood Improvement Branch](#).