# School Readiness Funding - Application for inclusion on the 2023 Menu of evidence-informed programs and supports

School Readiness Funding is a Victorian Government needs-based funding initiative which aims to reduce the impact of educational disadvantage on children’s learning and development outcomes.

Services delivering a kindergarten program are allocated funding for the purchase of high-quality items from a Menu of evidence-informed programs and supports (the Menu). The Menu supports kindergarten services to spend their School Readiness Funding to effectively enhance outcomes for children and is available on the Department of Education and Training’s (the Department) website.

All items on the Menu must:

* be consistent with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
* build the capacity of educators and/or families
* be appropriate for implementation in Victorian early childhood settings
* support children’s learning and development in at least one of the three School Readiness Funding priority areas:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Communication (language development) | Wellbeing (social and emotional) | Access and Inclusion |
| * vocabulary and sentence development * listening to and following instructions * engagement in book-sharing and early literacy * communication in play and social interaction | * self-regulation, focus and attention * positive relationships, friendships, and attachments * emotional resilience and positive mental health * social responsibility and helping skills | * support families to ensure children are enrolled in kindergarten programs and are attending on a regular basis * outreach to increase participation of children * community engagement, and cultural and social inclusion |

School Readiness Funding aims to address educational disadvantage by adopting a capacity building approach. Menu items should build on existing skills and knowledge of educators and families to support children’s development within the School Readiness Funding priority areas.

These three priority areas were chosen through analysis of the areas that are most important for children’s success on starting school and where measures of child development in Victoria indicated significant vulnerability. A capacity building approach is recognised as best practice to achieve a sustained improvement in the quality of early childhood education and reduce the impact of educational disadvantage.

## Applications for new Menu items

The Department requires providers to use this application form to submit programs and supports for inclusion on the Menu. A separate application is required for each individual program/support submitted for consideration. Information about the Menu and a list of the current programs and supports is available at [https://education.edugate-cms.eduweb.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/SRFmenu.aspx](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/SRFmenu.aspx)

**All applicants must:**

1. Complete all fields in the template below as instructed. Note that this is an electronic document and should be completed and submitted electronically. Only Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF files will be accepted.
2. Complete the program logic using the template provided (Appendix 1)
3. Attend a one-hour prospective Menu provider video conference briefing to have their application considered.
4. Lodge application, ensuring all fields are complete and supporting documentation attached, **by 5pm on 20 May 2022** via [MenuOfEvidence@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:MenuOfEvidence@edumail.vic.gov.au)

**Requirement for all applicants to attend a Prospective Menu Provider Briefing**

From 2022, it is now a requirement that all applicants **attend** a one-hour prospective Menu provider video conference briefing to have their application considered.

## Out of Scope

Please note that the following types of programs and supports are not eligible for inclusion on the Menu:

* incursion programs or supports that do not include a significant capacity building element for educators/ families
* supports that target individual children
* supports that target individual children with disabilities and developmental delays
* curriculum documents, for example curriculum content units and lesson plans
* individual coaching organisations - the Menu contains a ‘Coaching’ item allowing kindergarten services to purchase coaching services from organisations of their choosing. The Department does not promote or endorse individual coaches
* generalised allied health or social work support - the Menu contains allied health and social work items that allow kindergartens to purchase these services from organisations of their choosing
* standalone equipment and resources

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment process involves a panel consensus approach. Panel members will assess the application against the assessment criteria individually and then meet to reach a consensus on the outcome. Applications must meet all application criteria to be assessed as eligible for inclusion on the Menu. A moderation process is then undergone to ensure a clear and consistent approach is applied across all applications received.

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Demonstrated understanding of and alignment with the VEYLDF:**

* The application clearly demonstrates how the program/support is underpinned by the VEYLDF and how it aligns with *one* *or more* of the eight [VEYLDF Practice Principles](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf) and is *not inconsistent* with any of the Practice Principles.

1. **Clear and direct alignment to at least one of the three School Readiness Funding priority outcome areas:**

* The application clearly demonstrates how the program/support builds the capacity of educators and families to directly support outcomes for children in *at least one* of the three School Readiness Funding priority areas. The application must provide a clear description of how the program/support improves outcomes within the priority area or areas identified.
* The application should include a description of the program/support’s evidence base. Where there is no clear evidence base, please complete the program logic template in Appendix 1.

1. **Appropriate for implementation in Victorian early childhood settings:**

* The application must clearly demonstrate how the program/support is appropriate for implementation in Victorian early childhood settings. Applications should demonstrate that the program or support is:
* age appropriate for a play-based kindergarten setting and suitable for children aged two to six years and their families
* available to funded kindergarten services across Victoria. If the program or support cannot initially be accessed across Victoria, the application must demonstrate how over time it will be expanded to ensure it will be accessible to all funded kindergarten services
* able to be scaled up to meet increases in demand for the program
* inclusive and recognises all children’s and families’ experiences and capabilities to foster a sense of belonging to their family, community, and kindergarten settings.

The 2023 version of the Menu will be launched online in September 2022. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of applications prior to publication of the updated Menu.

Kindergarten services will select the Menu items they plan to access in 2023 between September and November 2022, and all providers of the programs/supports listed on the Menu should be available to respond to enquiries during this time.

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## Application conditions

1. **Application Materials**

All Application Materials will, upon submission, be retained by the Department. The Department will not return any Application Materials. All materials provided will be treated confidentially, with the exception that should the application be successful, the information provided in the application will be used to draft the menu item description included on the Departmental website.

***Application Materials*** means any material which you have submitted for the purposes of, or in connection with, the assessment of the application.

1. **Licence to the Department**

By submitting an application, the Applicant hereby irrevocably and unconditionally grants to the Department a perpetual, non-exclusive, royalty free, worldwide, irrevocable licence (including the right to sub-licence) to use, reproduce, publish, distribute, communicate and exercise all Intellectual Property Rights in:

1. the Application Materials; and
2. any of the Pre-Existing IP incorporated in or otherwise required to use the Application Materials

in the absolute discretion of the Department.

***Intellectual Property Rights*** means all intellectual property rights at any time recognised by law.

***Pre-Existing IP*** means all materials owned by or licenced to a party which are made available, provided, or used by a party in the application.

1. **Reservation**

The Department reserves the right, in its absolute discretion to:

1. refuse to consider or accept any application;
2. decline to include on the Menu any submitted program/support;
3. decline to include on the Menu any information provided by the Applicant;
4. remove from the Menu any program/support; or
5. remove from the Menu any information provided by the Applicant without giving any reason for the refusal, rejection or removal.
6. **Recommended Program/supports**

Inclusion on the Menu does not give rise to a contract (express or implied) between the Applicant and the Department for the supply of the program/support.

No legal relationship will exist between the Department and the Applicant until such time as a binding contract is executed by both parties.

1. **Program Delivery**

The Applicant agrees to respond to levels of demand for any program/support of kindergarten services and increase delivery, within reason.

1. **Acceptance of Conditions**

By submitting an application using this application form, you hereby agree to the Application Conditions.

# Application Details

**Prospective Menu Provider Briefing**

**It is a condition of the application process that applicants have attended a one-hour prospective Menu provider video conference briefing to have their application considered.**

*Please advise which briefing date you attended and the name and email address you registered under:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Briefing date:** |  |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Email address:** |  |

**Applicant contact details**

*Please provide details of a contact person for all correspondence regarding your application*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant name:** |  |
| **Organisation:** |  |
| **Contact phone number:** |  |
| **Contact email:** |  |
| **Qualifications:** |  |
| **Registration details:**  If you are a registered professional (e.g. teacher, speech pathologist, psychologist, occupational therapist), please provide registration number |  |

**Involvement with SRF**

*Please advise if you have an existing involvement with SRF (for example, already have programs/supports on the Menu, involved in delivering allied health supports funded under School Readiness Funding, are an approved provider of early childhood education and care etc.)*

***(Note: This will not exclude you from the application process)***

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Is this application for a:**

**New Menu item**

**Substantial update to existing Menu item**

**Program/ Support details**

*Please complete all the below fields:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of program/support:** |  |
| **Website:** |  |
| **Did you develop this program/ support?** | Yes  No |
| **If you did not develop the program/support, do you have permission to deliver it? (please include evidence)** | Yes  No |
| **Date program was developed:** |  |
| **Name of program developer/ manufacturer/producer:** |  |

## Program/support overview

**Please provide an overview of program/support**

*Note: You may attach an overview of the program/support content to support the panel to understand the program/support. We request that you please limit the number and size of attachments to essential additional information that cannot be included as part of the application form.*

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

**What are the aims and measure/s of success for kindergarten services of the program/support?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aim of program/support | Measure of success for kindergarten services |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Who is the primary audience for the program/support? *(for example, educators, children, parent/carers, families, other Early Childhood Professionals; you may identify more than one if applicable)***

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

**Outline the following specific characteristics of the program/support:**

* program/support type *(for example training course, training program, incursion, online resource, professional service)*
* delivery mode *(for example face-to-face, group training, professional development, online, individual coaching and mentoring)*
* time commitment for participants to engage in the program/support
* *access requirements for this program/support (e.g. resources, information technology requirements, pre-requisite knowledge, minimum number of participants, staffing or backfill)*

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

## Program/support costs

**Provide a detailed overview of the costs that would be charged to services that access the program/support including addressing the following information:**

* program/support cost - please specify inclusive or exclusive of GST
* (for example, per person, per group, per program)
* factors that might change this cost
* (for example, additional participants, extra presenters/facilitators, modified or adapted content)
* additional costs to be considered
* (for example, travel costs, resource costs).

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

# Assessment criteria

## Criteria 1: Demonstrated understanding of, and alignment with the VEYLDF

Please refer to the [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf) (VEYLDF) for information about the framework and VELYDF Practice Principles.

1. **Understanding of the VEYLDF**

**Outline your understanding of the VEYLDF and describe how the program/support aligns with the framework when implemented within Early Childhood Education settings in Victoria.**

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 400 words* |

1. **Alignment with the VEYLDF Practice Principles**

The program/support must be underpinned by and aligned with *one* *or more* of the eight [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf) Practice Principles and *not be* *inconsistent* with any of the Practice Principles.

**Please identify the VEYLDF Practice Principles with which the program/support aligns**

Reflective Practice

Partnerships with Families

High Expectations for Every Child

Respectful Relationships and Responsive Engagement

Equity and Diversity

Assessment for Learning and Development

Integrated teaching and Learning Approaches

Partnerships with Professionals

**Describe how the program/support aligns to the relevant VEYLDF Practice Principle/s selected above and how it is implemented using the identified Practice Principles in day-to-day kindergarten programs.**

*Please note detailed responses are only required for Practice Principles relevant to the program/support. Applications are not disadvantaged in describing alignment to fewer practice principles, so long as alignment is demonstrated with* at least one of the eight *Practice Principles, and the program/support is not inconsistent with any of the Practice Principles.*

*It is recommended that you provide a reference to where these Practice Principles are demonstrated in any supporting documentation (e.g. program resources) attached to this application.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Practice Principle | Demonstrated alignment |
|  | *Word limit: 200 words* |
|  | *Word limit: 200 words* |
|  | *Word limit: 200 words* |
|  | *Word limit: 200 words* |
|  | *Word limit: 200 words* |

*\*Additional rows can be added to the table if necessary*

**Criteria 2: Alignment to one or more of the School Readiness Funding priority outcome areas**

The application clearly demonstrates how the program/support builds the capacity of educators and families to directly support outcomes for children in *at least one* of the three School Readiness Funding priority areas. The application must provide a clear description of how the program/ support aligns with the priority area(s) identified.

Please consider which outcome area your program/ support aligns with most strongly, noting it does not need to align to all three.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Communication (language development) | Wellbeing (social and emotional) | Access and Inclusion |
| * vocabulary and sentence development * listening to and following instructions * engagement in book-sharing and early literacy * communication in play and social interaction | * self-regulation, focus and attention * positive relationships, friendships, and attachments * emotional resilience and positive mental health * social responsibility and helping skills | * support families to ensure children are enrolled in kindergarten programs and are attending on a regular basis * outreach to increase participation of children * community engagement, and cultural and social inclusion |

**Which priority area(s) does the program/ support align with?**

Communication (language development)

Wellbeing (social and emotional)

Access and Inclusion

**Outline how the program/support directly aligns to at least one of the School Readiness Funding priority areas, as identified above, with reference to the program/support’s evidence base**

We are interested in the evidence you can provide that explains how program outcomes within the priority areas are achieved. In your response, please outline how the program/support is:

* supported by a scientific study, evaluation, or research evidence; and/or
* supported by a program logic (see Appendix 1); and/or
* based on a theoretical underpinning.

*Where there is no clear evidence base (scientific study, evaluation or research evidence to support the program/support), please complete the program logic template in Appendix 1.*

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 400 words* |

**Explain how the program/support builds on the existing skills and knowledge of educators and/or families to develop their capacity to support outcomes for children in the priority areas?**

Capacity building refers to how the program/support builds on existing skills and knowledge of educators/families. Applications must demonstrate how, through engagement with the program/support, educators and/or families will gain new or enhanced skills and strategies for supporting children’s learning and development. Programs/supports should support and empower educators/families to make positive changes to the way they interact with children within a kindergarten program or family context.

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

## Criteria 3: Appropriate for implementation in Victorian early childhood settings

The program/support must be appropriate for implementation in Victorian early childhood settings. The application must clearly demonstrate how the program/support is:

* age appropriate for a play-based kindergarten setting and suitable for children aged two to six years and their families
* available to funded kindergarten services across Victoria. If the program or support cannot initially be accessed across Victoria, the application must demonstrate how over time it will be expanded to ensure it will be accessible to all funded kindergarten services.
* able to be scaled up to meet increases in demand for the program
* inclusive and recognises all children’s and families’ experiences and capabilities to foster a sense of belonging to their family, community, and early years settings.

**Outline how the program/support is age appropriate for a play-based kindergarten setting and suitable for children aged two to six years and their families.**

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

**Outline your capacity to provide the program/support to services across the state of Victoria.**

* Is the program/support available in both metropolitan and regional and rural areas?
* If the program is not available across Victoria, outline your plan to ensure the program/support will be accessible in the longer term.

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

**Outline how the program/support could be scaled up to meet increased demand for the program/support.**

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

**Demonstrate how the program is inclusive and recognises all children’s and families’ experiences and capabilities to foster a sense of belonging to their family, community, and early years settings.**

|  |
| --- |
| *Word limit: 200 words* |

## Supporting Documents

Please attach any **additional information** that you feel is important to be considered in the assessment process. This may include:

* program outline (if applicable)
* an example of program materialsthat may assist the assessment process for example, presentations.

*Note: Please limit the number and size of attachments provided to information that will provide an overview of the program/support and how it aligns with the assessment criteria.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attachment | Name and brief description |
| Attachment One |  |
| Attachment Two |  |
| Attachment Three |  |
| Attachment Four |  |

# Appendix 1: Program logic template

**Guidance to complete the main elements of the School Readiness Funding Menu of evidence informed programs and supports program logic template.**

This document provides a template and guidance for producing a program logic to capture evidence at the logic-informed level for programs, training and resources on the School Readiness Funding menu that address the three priority areas for School Readiness Funding:

* 1. Communication (i.e., language development)
  2. Wellbeing (i.e. social, and emotional regulation)
  3. Access and inclusion (i.e. enhanced participation in services regardless of background, programs targeting children from diverse and/or vulnerable and/or indigenous backgrounds).

## DET Program Logic

**Program/support title:** *Name of the program, training, or resource*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| THEORY OF CHANGE |  | | | | |
| **TARGET POPULATION** | **INPUTS** | **EVIDENCE** | **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTCOMES**  **(outcome measures)** | |
| **Family/educator outcomes** | **Child outcomes** |
|  |  | *(please include references)* |  |  |  |

**Assumptions:**

*List and describe the assumptions associated with the theory of change.*

* <List assumptions here>

**Program Logic Example 1**

**Program, training, or resource title:** *A-Z Supporting Child Outcomes*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **THEORY OF CHANGE** | Caregivers of young children up to six years of age who improve their responsive caregiving skills will improve child emotional and pro-social behaviours. | | | | |
| **TARGET POPULATION** | **INPUTS** | **EVIDENCE** | **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTCOMES**  **(outcome measures)** | |
| **Family/educator outcomes** | **Child outcomes** |
| Caregivers who have children up to six years of age that are in the process of making the transition to school | **Team:**   * Program Manager * 5 Early Childhood Educators   **Training:**  All staff attend the 2-day training in the practice.  **Supervision:**  Each team member is required to attend   * fortnightly coaching with a practice expert for 3 months * Monthly individual supervision with team leader | * \*Evidence from one randomized controlled trial indicates that motivational interviewing techniques may support health professionals to engage and motivate clients towards behaviour change when signs of ambivalence arise * \*Evidence from systematic reviews indicate that responsive caregiver strategies for children up to six years of age, that take place during play and everyday activities: can improve:   + child executive function and pro-social behaviour   + child learning including their spoken language skills, their expressive vocabulary, and their early reading skills   *(please include references)*  *\*This evidence is only an example it should not be copied into a program logic because it may not be the most up-to-date literature.* | **Program activity 1**: Staff use motivational Interviewing to encourage parent’s engagement in the workshop practices and enhance their motivation to use the new parenting skills.  **Program activity 2**:  Staff role model respectful relationships and responsive engagement strategies below during play activities (e.g. reading, storytelling).   * warm and nurturing interactions (e.g. making eye contact while speaking a calm voice) * following the child’s lead by responding to the interests and signals of the child (i.e., expanding on the child's speech, responding to the child's questions or requests) * providing guidance to promote learning by listening and talking with the child (i.e., pointing and naming objects in a book, posing questions to the child) during play activities * giving verbal reinforcement (or praise) to build children’s confidence in learning   Then, Early Childhood Educators (ECE) encourage and support caregivers to interact with their children during play activities using the new skills. | *The program will improve the following outcomes for families and/or educators*   * ***Caregivers demonstrate more responsive engagement with their children, (as indicated by increased in nurturing interactions, responding to child signals, listening and talking with the child etc.)*** | *The program will improve the following outcomes for families and/or children*   * ***Improved child emotional and prosocial behaviour***   ***Measure:***  The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) |

**Assumptions:**

*List and describe the assumptions associated with the ‘theory of change.’*

* educators should consider this practice as part of the broader range of transition to school practices to support their children to effectively transition to school.

**Table 3: program logic elements**

This tables provides guidance on how to populate the program logic template on page 2.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key program logic element | Description |
| **Target population** | Describe the characteristics of the population who will receive the program, training, or resource from the facilitator (e.g. educators or families of children up to six years of age; children aged six to eight years). This is also the person who will participate in the activities. Activities are described below.  *Note: the target population is usually the group that receives the program (in the example below it is the parent). Usually other people will also experience changes from the program (in our example logic, children change when responsive caregiving is taught to parents) but the child in that case will not be the target population because the parents are the participants who receive the program and then use the strategies with children. It is important to list the child’s age range because the activities will change based on the age range of the child. For example, parents of children who are under six years of age will use different strategies compared to parents of infants or teenagers 13 to 16 years of age.* |
| **Inputs** | List all the resources (e.g. staff time, finances, equipment and/or facilities) that are required to implement the program, training or resource. |
| **Evidence** | Summarise the available research evidence that demonstrates how the program, training or resource will achieve the outcome/s (related to communication, wellbeing, access, and participation) with the target population. This includes available evidence on this specific program, training or resource or other programs and practices that have the same approach, outcome, and target population. Please include references.  (e.g. Evidence from systematic reviews indicate that responsive caregiver strategies for children up to six years of age, that take place during play and everyday activities can improve child executive function and pro-social behaviour.) |
| **Activities**  **(see example table below for level of detail required)** | Based on your identified outcomes (related to communication, wellbeing, access and participation) and target population, and what the evidence suggests as the most effective way to achieve the outcomes, describe what your program, training or resource will look like or result in in terms of activities that children and/or families will participate in.  For example, an activity might include the following information:  Staff role model the respectful relationships and responsive engagement strategies below during play activities (e.g. reading, storytelling).   * Warm and nurturing interactions (e.g. making eye contact, using a calm voice). * Following the child’s lead by responding to the interests and signals of the child (e.g. expanding on the child's speech, responding to the child's questions or requests). * Providing guidance to promote learning by listening and talking with the child (e.g. pointing and naming objects in a book, posing questions to the child) during play activities. * Giving verbal reinforcement (or praise) to build children’s confidence in learning. |
| **Outcomes**  **(educator/family/child)** | List the educator, family and/or child outcomes that will change as a result of the program, training or resource when the participants have finished the program (e.g. improved parental stress, improved language development, improved emotional regulation, improved participation in services reduced parenting stress)  At this stage we would like you to focus only on whether your program addresses any of the following outcomes:   * Communication (e.g. language development) * Wellbeing (e.g. social, and emotional regulation) * Access and Participation (e.g. enhanced participation in services regardless of background, programs targeting children from diverse and/or vulnerable and/or indigenous backgrounds)   We would encourage you to demonstrate how other educator/family outcomes that do not fit into the categories above (e.g. parenting skills, parenting stress) relate to longer term child outcomes within the identified priority areas.  Please include the name of the outcome measure used to monitor the outcome (e.g. Depression Stress and Anxiety Scale, Child Behaviour Checklist) |
| **THEORY OF CHANGE** | Describe how the program, training or resource will achieve the intended outcomes via the activities (that you listed above).  A theory of change is a detailed set of beliefs or hypotheses about how your program, training or resource will lead to the specific observable changes (child and/or family outcomes) that you expect from your program or practice, based well-known theories from literature, research and practical experience.  (e.g. Caregivers of young children up to six years of age who improve their responsive caregiving skills will improve child emotional behaviours and pro-social behaviours.) |
| **ASSUMPTIONS** | List and describe the assumptions associated with the theory of change and inputs e.g. the training will be followed by a series of 6 supervision sessions that all trainees participate in; participants (families or child) attend the full program. |