

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme – Funding Requirements

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) is a best practice model for local councils and other organisations to support families and carers to secure a kindergarten place for their child.

The Department of Education (the department) offers funding to eligible Victorian local councils to contribute to the operating costs of running a CRES.

The department is introducing CRES Funding Requirements from 2024 that reflect existing CRES practices which equitably support children to access quality funded kindergarten programsⁱ through a registration and enrolment process that is simple, inclusive, adaptable, consistent, transparent and collaborative. These principles underpin the CRES best practice model and guide consistently high-quality CRES across all contexts.

There will be a transition period until the beginning of 2025 for the CRES Funding Requirements to be fully met. They will be reviewed periodically, with councils informed of any changes.

The table below outlines the requirements for all local councils receiving a funding contribution from the department for the operating costs of running a CRES. The requirements are set out according to the five stages of a CRES process, as articulated in the [CRES Practice Guide](#).

Table 1: CRES – Funding Requirements

Stage 1: Proactive engagement and awareness

- CRES providers register (and enrol as applicable) children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) and include information to families about the availability of ESK as part of council's CRES policy and CRES communications.
- CRES providers accept registrations at any time throughout the year. This includes children that meet the Pre-Purchased Places (PPP) eligibility criteria being supported to register (and enrol as applicable) at a service that has been allocated PPPs in the current kindergarten year.
- CRES providers ensure children are registered (and enrolled as applicable) in line with Best Start, Best Life policies and ensure sufficient information is collected to do so.
- CRES providers communicate with families and carers using their preferred contact method.
- CRES providers promote the benefits of kindergarten and the registration process to families and carers to support kindergarten enrolment.
- CRES providers make families aware of all kindergarten services operating in the local government area by including a link to the [Find a Kinder](#) website in council and CRES communications.
- CRES providers communicate latest information to CRES partners each year to ensure they are well-equipped to support families and carers to register (and enrol as applicable) via the CRES.

Table 1: CRES – Funding Requirements

Stage 2: Registration with CRES

- Councils publish a CRES policy document that is accessible for families and articulates and guides the scheme's delivery.

Stage 3: Allocation

- CRES providers apply the department's [Priority of Access](#) (PoA) criteria transparently and with integrity and collect an appropriate level of information to do so. This includes applying PoA to all registrations before applying locally agreed criteria.
- CRES providers communicate with kindergarten services that the department's PoA criteria must be applied by all funded kindergarten providers when allocating enrolments

Stage 4: Confirmation and communication

- CRES providers advise the department via the local Early Childhood Improvement Branch (ECIB) in the event there are more children than available kindergarten places (e.g., as indicated by waitlist across the LGA).
- Where practical, CRES providers follow up if an offer of a kindergarten place to a child experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage is not accepted.
- CRES providers ensure second and subsequent rounds of allocations, including for late registrations, are conducted using the same process as the first round.
- CRES providers ensure consistent and transparent communication to families about the CRES process and their child's allocation of a place.

Stage 5: CRES planning, maintenance and development in partnership with ECIB

- Councils provide the department (via the local ECIB) with CRES data to support the monitoring and evaluation of the policy, and supply and demand for local kindergarten places using agreed ECIB CRES council processes.
- CRES providers encourage non-CRES services in the area to participate in the CRES to support equitable access to kindergarten places.
- Councils ensure the inclusion of CRES as part of their corporate quality improvement process.
- Councils set up appropriate contract management arrangements, where they have chosen to include a third party in the CRES operating structure.

CRES delivery expectations

It is acknowledged that the provider coordinating a CRES may be the local council, or a contracted third party funded by the local council. The department provides a CRES funding contribution to local councils with the expectation that the local council will ensure CRES delivery in all contexts is aligned to these Funding Requirements.

The department's expectations for CRES providers and councils beyond the Funding Requirements (Table 1) include:

- relationships with local partners such as MCH nurses, family day care services and kindergarten service providers, including Early Years Management (EYM) organisations, private providers, long-day care services and standalone providers
- a structured approach to engaging CRES partners including providing the right information at the right time
- proactive engagement of families, carers and communities experiencing vulnerability in the local area and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- collaboration with Maternal and Child Health and other family support services to identify children and families experiencing vulnerability and actively reach out to ensure they are aware of and engaged in the CRES process
- that the scheme has a clear governance structure to balance accountability, responsibility and responsiveness.
- using the [CRES Self-Assessment Tool](#) to reflect on strengths and opportunities for improvement.

More information on CRES is available at [Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#) or via the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) at centralenrolment@mav.asn.au.

Further information on the CRES Funding Requirements can be sought from the MAV or the Department of Education at central.registration@education.vic.gov.au.

ⁱ Funded Kindergarten Programs refer to Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep (where appropriate).