

Guidelines for educational toys and equipment funding

The Victorian Budget 2023/24 is providing \$5,000 for every funded kindergarten across the state to purchase new toys and equipment to support play-based learning.

The Best Start, Best Life reform will give every Victorian child the best start in life and provide more opportunities for children to develop critical foundational skills for their learning and development before they start school, providing children greater opportunities to embed their learning.

Play-based learning:

- provides opportunities for children to actively and imaginatively engage with people, objects and the environment.
- means kindergarten children will be organising, constructing, manipulating, pretending, exploring, investigating, creating, interacting, imagining, negotiating and making sense of their world when playing.
- promotes the holistic development of a child and depending on how it is utilised may also support a broad range of literacy and numeracy skills.

High-quality Victorian kindergarten programs are underpinned by both the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Framework (NQF). The VEYLDF Practice Principle Integrated Teaching and Learning Approaches highlights that play is essential to stimulating a wide range of children's sensory, physical and cognitive experiences.

This funding will allow funded kindergarten services to upgrade their educational toys and equipment to better support play-based learning in their programming.

Eligibility

All Victorian kindergarten providers with a funded kindergarten service(s) as at July 2023 are eligible to receive this funding.

The department reserves the right to withhold the grant from services that will cease delivering a funded kindergarten program during the remainder of 2023 and/or no longer operate from 2024 onwards.

Conditions of funding

Service providers will be required to expend their funding in accordance with these guidelines.

Funding must be used at the service receiving the grant to purchase educational toys and equipment for use by children enrolled in the service's funded Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten programs.

Funding cannot be used as a reimbursement for the recent purchase of toys and equipment.

Funding that is expended on items that do not meet the conditions of funding will need to be returned to the department.

Funding must be expended by **30 April 2024** and service providers will be required to complete a short acquittal for the funding, which is outlined below.

Toys and equipment

Services must spend the funding on educational toys and equipment that:

- enable children with all abilities to participate in inclusive learning.
- use children's natural motivation to play as a context for learning.
- require children to use their imagination to explore, experiment, discover, collaborate, improvise and create.
- is ethically produced and made of natural and sustainable resources to encourage creativity and imagination in young children

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- are purchased locally in Victoria wherever possible
- align to at least one of the 5 VEYLDF learning and development outcomes.
- non-moveable equipment (e.g. permanently fixed to building)
- single use packaging
- toiletries and other sanitary items such as nappies

Examples of appropriate educational toys and equipment include:

- small world play including animal sets / people / transport / farmyard toys
- indoor and outdoor gross motor skill equipment such as wooden construction blocks / stepping-stones / climbing frames / balancing boards / sand and water table
- sensory equipment and resources (sensory trays and tubs, mirrors, tactile and highly visual support toys such as hand exercise putty /slime, spinning seats, calming shakers)
- puzzles, and board games
- books
- outdoor kitchen equipment
- musical instruments for children
- indoor home corner equipment or outdoor kitchen toys
- finger or hand puppets
- multi-purpose role-play dress ups
- gardening equipment suitable for children to use
- science exploration equipment such as microscopes.
- sleeping equipment such as cots, sleeping mats, blankets
- rugs, curtains and other soft furnishings
- foyer or children's locker areas upgrade or furniture
- horticulture materials such as soft fall, soil, plants
- kitchen equipment such as plates, bowls, and glasses
- shade sails, umbrellas, lunch tables, water dispensers, highchairs
- artwork, posters.
- child documentation supplies such as folios, paper
- other costs incurred by a kindergarten service such as staff salaries and professional development, administration or operational costs, office furniture, maintenance costs, site acquisition and lease costs.

Equipment must also meet Australian child safety standards.

How to apply and when will funding be paid?

Kindergarten services will not need to apply for this funding. Service providers will receive a one-off lump sum of \$5,000 for each of their funded kindergarten service(s). This applies to all services that are delivering a funded kindergarten program as at July 2023.

The department will automatically process funding to service providers as a one-off payment through the Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS).

This funding is a contribution towards the cost of purchasing new toys and equipment. Service providers may wish to contribute additional funding towards the cost of their purchase if they wish.

Acquittal

Service providers must retain evidence of expenditure (e.g. receipts) and may be required to provide this to the department on request.

Service providers will be asked to complete a short acquittal for each kindergarten service that received funding in May 2024, outlining how the funding was spent.

Resources

[VEYLDF Framework](https://www.education.vic.gov.au)
(education.vic.gov.au)

[Babies & kids | Product Safety Australia](#)

Contact

If you require further information about the toys and equipment funding please contact your local [Early Childhood Improvement Branch](#).