# CORONAVIRUS (covid-19) FUNDING FOR not-for-profit SESSIONAL KINDERGARTEN programs – TERm 3

Factsheet for Victorian funded kindergarten service providers

The Victorian Government is providing additional funding in Term 3 to support eligible sessional kindergarten services and their families in response to the ongoing impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This funding is in addition to all existing Victorian Government kindergarten subsidies and payments, which continue in full for all enrolled children.

## Is my kindergarten service eligible for this funding?

The funding is available to not-for-profit kindergarten services delivering sessional programs at services where staff delivering the kindergarten program are not receiving JobKeeper payments from the Commonwealth Government. This includes community-based Early Years Managers, local government and standalone services, and government and non-government schools.

## Can we access both the Commonwealth Government’s JobKeeper funding and this additional funding?

This funding is not available to services where the staff delivering the kindergarten program are in receipt of JobKeeper payments during Term 3. Service providers that are eligible or in receipt of JobKeeper must continue accessing this funding in the first instance. The additional Victorian Government funding will only be available to services that have been unable to access or retain JobKeeper payments.

Providers that are eligible for JobKeeper for some but not all of their services may still access the Victorian Government funding for the services not eligible for JobKeeper payments.

For services where JobKeeper does apply, providers will need to make their own decisions about whether they will use the extra funding flexibility JobKeeper provides to reduce sessional kindergarten fees.

## How much additional funding is available for funded kindergarten programs?

Eligible services will receive additional funding of $460 for each fee-paying enrolment. This is based on the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS) + the KFS Ratio Supplement rates for 10 weeks, and is slightly above average term fees.

KFS, Early Start Kindergarten and Access to Early Learning enrolments will not attract the funding, as these children are already entitled to a free 15-hour program.

Funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten enrolments in eligible services in the six 2020 local government roll-out areas will also receive this funding. Where programs run for less than 15 hours, funding will be prorated (e.g. an enrolment in a 10-hour program would attract $307 for Term 3).

In the event funding is provided for a child that becomes eligible for KFS throughout Term 3, the Department of Education and Training (the Department) will subsequently adjust payments accordingly to avoid any overpayment.

## How do I apply for this funding?

Service providers do not need to apply for this funding. The Department will calculate funding entitlements for each eligible service based on confirmed enrolments.

The Department will email service providers directly to confirm funding amounts and acceptance of conditions, prior to making payments through the Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system.

The Department will also contact services directly in the first few weeks of Term 3 to collect enrolment information on non-fee paying unfunded three-year-old enrolments.

## What am i required to do with this funding?

Services that accept the funding offer of $460 per child must provide a free 15-hour kindergarten program to all children in the funded kindergarten program. If the funding does not cover parent fees, service providers may decide not to accept the funding and continue charging fees.

## What are the conditions of receiving this funding?

To be eligible for the funding, services must:

* not be receiving JobKeeper payments (for staff delivering the program at that service)
* provide a free 15-hour program for all enrolled children
* be open and operating in line with the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer (unless instructed to close by the Department of Health and Human Services)
* maintain pay and conditions for regular staff delivering the funded kindergarten program
* make reasonable efforts to keep engaging with families and support learning from home for children not attending.

## What if my service is directed to close?

Any eligible service that has accepted the funding and is directed to close by either the Department’s Quality, Assessment and Regulatory Division or the Department of Health and Human Services, will retain all funding provided through this initiative.

## Can I still receive this funding if we choose to close?

The Victorian Government funding is only available to eligible services that continue to operate on-site in line with Stage 3 and 4 restrictions as advised by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, unless directed to close by DHHS, the Department’s Quality Assessment and Regulatory Authority, or closed in agreement with the Department.

Any decision to consolidate program delivery with other nearby services due to extenuating circumstances will need to be discussed and agreed with your local Regional Office if you still wish to access this funding.

If you intend to close a physical service and deliver all programs remotely, you are also required to report the closure to the Department’s Quality Assessment and Regulatory Authority on 1300 307 415 and inform your [local regional office](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx).

## What if full fees have already been paid for Term 3?

If full fees have already been paid for Term 3, the full amount should be refunded in a timely way.

Alternatively, services can invite parents/carers who have already paid fees to voluntarily and explicitly agree to these fees being held to apply to Term 4 or, as requested by the parents, that some or all of the $460 is retained as a donation to the service. This should be agreed in writing by parents/carers.

Service providers may also ask parents who have not yet paid Term 3 fees to donate some of the $460 to the service, as long as this is completely voluntary and expressly agreed by parents.

## Will JOBKEEPER TOP-UP FUNDING BE AVAILABLE IN TERM 3?

As was the case in Term 2, requests for ‘top up’ payments will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. A top-up payment may be available where salary cost savings made from JobKeeper do not provide the same level of funding support as the Victorian Government funding in Term 3.

This means that if all staff delivering the kindergarten program are eligible for JobKeeper it is very unlikely you will be eligible for a top-up payment because the amount you save from receiving JobKeeper is highly likely to be less than the Victorian Government ‘top up’ payments .

**Example:**

A kindergarten service has a Victorian Government funding offer of **$10,120** (22 fee paying enrolments x $460).

Two staff members deliver the funded kindergarten program (Tanya and Carmen).  
Tanya is usually paid $1,000 per fortnight.    
Tanya received $1,500 per fortnight in JobKeeper payments.  
The salary offset for Tanya is the **$1,000** per fortnight that the service would usually have paid.  
The Term 2 salary offset for Tanya is **$5,000** ($1,000 x 5 fortnights).

Carmen is usually paid $2,000 per fortnight.  
Carmen received $1,500 per fortnight in JobKeeper payments.  
The salary offset for Carmen is **$1,500**, the amount of the JobKeeper payment.  
The Term 2 salary offset for Carmen is **$7,500** ($1,500 x 5 fortnights).

#### The total coronavirus (COVID-19) funding offer of **$10,120** is **less than** the salary offset of **$12,500**so the service is not eligible for top-up funding.

Services should contact the Department at [kindergarten.funding@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergarten.funding@education.vic.gov.au) if they think they are eligible for top-up funding.

## Is there support availabLe for unfunded three-year-old kindergarten programs?

The Victorian Government will offer funding to eligible unfunded three-year-old kindergarten programs in Term 3. This will provide eligible services with a flat subsidy of $400 for each enrolment where a child is not attending and not paying fees. **If the child is attending, normal fees should be charged.** Where fees have already been paid but parents have requested a refund because their child will not be attending (or has stopped attending) for Term 3, services can claim the subsidy for that child.

To be eligible for the funding, services must:

* not be receiving JobKeeper payments
* be open and operating in line with the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer (unless instructed to close by the Department of Health and Human Services)
* maintain pay and conditions for regular staff delivering the unfunded three-year-old kindergarten program
* only claim for each enrolment for which the child is not attending and fees not being paid in Term 3.

Service providers do not need to apply for this funding. The Department will contact service providers directly early in Term 3 to confirm funding amounts and acceptance of conditions.

## For unfunded THREE-YEAR-OLD kindergarten, Can i charge parents the gap between the $400 and our normal term fee?

You can seek to recoup the gap between the $400 and the term fee for the unfunded three-year-old kindergarten program if the child is not attending and fees are not being paid. This is a matter between you as the service provider and the family. As noted above, if the child is eligible to continue attending as advised by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, normal fees should be charged.

## what is the current advice from the victorian chief health officer?

The current advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer is that early childhood education and care (ECEC) services remain safe places for staff and children.

That means ECEC services, including sessional kindergarten, in regional and rural Victoria under Stage 3 restrictions can continue to operate, with appropriate risk-mitigation measures in place (unless instructed by the Department of Health and Human Services to close).

From Thursday 6 August, ECEC services in metropolitan Melbourne under Stage 4 restrictions should only remain open to provide education and care for those children whose parents or carers are permitted workers and for vulnerable children.

## will i receive funding for children WHO are attending the unfunded three-year-old program?

Funding will only be provided in instances where fees are not being paid because the child is not attending.

## where can i get more information?

For further information, please visit the Department’s dedicated [coronavirus (COVID-19) webpage](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx) or contact the coronavirus (COVID-19) advice line on **1800 338 663**.