

Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten - Allocation Procedure

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2 Purpose

The City of Kingston Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten (CRS) administers the allocation of funded sessional kindergarten places on behalf of participating sessional kindergarten services. This includes funded three and four-year-old sessional kindergarten places.

The purpose of the CRS Procedure is to provide guidance regarding how funded kindergarten places are allocated.

3 Scope

This Procedure applies to all sessional kindergarten service providers who participate in the CRS, including services operated by:

- City of Kingston;
- Committees of Management; and
- Early Years Managers.

Participating kindergartens should be aware of their legal obligations and responsibilities to comply with the CRS policy.

This Procedure also applies to all parents/guardians who wish to register their child/ren for allocation to a funded sessional kindergarten program participating in the CRS.

4. Procedure

4.1 Eligibility and Age Restrictions

4.1.1 In accordance with the Victorian Kindergarten Funding Guide, children are eligible for **two** years of funded kindergarten before they start school.

4.1.2 All children must be three years of age by 30 April in the year they commence kindergarten.

4.1.2.1 Eligible children are entitled to two years of funded Kindergarten, unless the child qualifies for an additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten.

4.2 Priority Allocation and Registration Classification

4.2.1 All registrations will be subject to a registration classification process. Classifications are based on selection criteria categorised between levels 0 - 6.

4.2.2 Resident children who meet one or more of the following criteria will be offered a place at their first preference kindergarten in line with State Government Policy (Level 0).

4.2.2.1 Resident children with additional needs, those known to Child Protection, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding, are at risk of abuse or neglect, are in out of home care, are seeking asylum or are a refugee or are eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy;

4.2.2.2 Resident children who are eligible for an additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten; or

4.2.2.3 Resident children who have deferred commencing at kindergarten.

4.2.3 Non-resident children who meet one or more of the following criteria will be offered an available place after the first allocation round in line with the allocation process.

4.2.3.1 Non-resident children with additional needs, those known to Child Protection, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding, are at risk of abuse or neglect, are in out of home care, are seeking asylum or are a refugee or are eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy;

4.2.3.2 Non-resident children who are eligible for an additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten; or

4.2.3.3 Non-resident children who have deferred commencing kindergarten.

4.2.4 Supporting documentation must be provided upon request.

4.2.5 An Allocation Criteria will apply to all other registrations. Allocation Criteria is as follows:

- Level 1.** Residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first preference **and** have a prior connection to the service.
- Level 2.** Residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service **or** have a prior connection to the service.
- Level 3.** Residents of the City of Kingston.
- Level 4.** Non-residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first preference and have a prior connection to the service or to the City of Kingston.
- Level 5.** Non-residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first preference **or** have a prior connection to the service or to the City of Kingston.
- Level 6.** Non-residents of the City of Kingston.

4.2.6 Multiple Births and Siblings

- 4.2.6.1 Children who indicate on their Registration Form that they have a sibling who will be commencing funded sessional kindergarten in the same year, and want to attend the same service, will be considered jointly unless otherwise specified by the parent/guardian.
- 4.2.6.2 A separate Registration Form must be submitted for each individual child.
- 4.2.6.3 All efforts will be made to ensure siblings are placed at the same service.

4.3 Registration Procedure

4.3.1 Registration process

- 4.3.1.1 To register for a place at a participating kindergarten, children must be eligible for kindergarten funding and the Registration Form must be completed and received by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer either online or in person at a City of Kingston Customer Service Centre.
- 4.3.1.2 Registration Forms for participating funded kindergartens will be accepted from 1 May the year prior to the child being eligible for funded kindergarten. For example, children eligible for funded kindergarten in 2022 will be able to register from 1 May 2021.
- 4.3.1.3 To be included in the first allocation round Registration Forms must be received by 30 June in the year prior to commencing funded kindergarten.
- 4.3.1.4 Registration Forms will only be processed when all required documentation has been provided.

- 4.3.1.5 It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep the City of Kingston informed of any changes to their child's Registration Form. For example, change of address, contact details or kindergarten preference.
- 4.3.1.6 Children are able to access funding at one service. Their parent/guardian must declare if their child is accessing a funded kindergarten program at another service. This includes but is not limited to funded programs offered in Long Day Care services.

4.3.2 Registration Submission

- 4.3.2.1 Registration Forms are available online or by requesting a print copy from the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer.
- 4.3.2.2 Registration forms are available online at www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration
- 4.3.2.3 Registration information is available from the City of Kingston Customer Service Centre, Kindergartens and Maternal and Child Health Centres. This information can be mailed or emailed to families by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer on request, or viewed and downloaded online at www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration
- 4.3.2.4 Support from the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer is available to help people complete the Registration Form if required.
- 4.3.2.5 Parents and guardians must provide the following documentation when submitting a Registration Form to demonstrate:
- Proof of the child's date of birth (E.g. copy of birth certificate, birth extract, or a copy of the Child's Health Record accompanied by a Statutory Declaration verifying your child's date of birth to be true and correct);
 - Current proof of child's residential address (E.g. copy of parent/guardian's license, rates notice or amenities bill [issued within the last three months] that includes the parent/guardian's name and address).

And where required or requested provide the following documentation:

- Proof of registered child or sibling's prior connection to the service (E.g. acceptance or confirmation letter from the kindergarten, receipt for fees paid or a graduation certificate, statutory declaration);
 - Copy of a valid concession card (E.g. Health Care Card or Pension) or visa; and
 - Current proof of working, studying or using childcare in the City of Kingston (pay slip, enrolment notice or childcare payment advice).
- 4.3.2.6 In the instance where incorrect information is supplied by the parent/guardians on the Registration Form, registrations may be re-classified against the criteria and or offers may be retracted prior to child commencing kindergarten.
- 4.3.2.7 Parent/guardians are encouraged to nominate three kindergarten preferences on the Registration Form. It is advantageous to nominate three preferences, but only if a family is willing to accept the choices nominated.
- 4.3.2.8 Parent/guardians are required to complete a declaration on the Registration Form to confirm all information provided is true and correct.

- 4.3.2.9 The Kindergarten Central Registration Officer will confirm receipt of the registration and registration details by letter or email.
- 4.3.2.10 One Registration Form is required to be submitted for both years of funded kindergarten for each individual child. There is no requirement to submit a Registration Form for each funded kindergarten year.

4.3.3 Procedure for Registrations received after each allocation round

- 4.3.3.1 Registrations that are received after the administrative cut off for each allocation round will be entered into the data system before subsequent round offers are made.
- 4.3.3.2 Registrations that are received after the allocation process has commenced will not be placed at a disadvantage to existing registrations regardless of submission date.

4.3.4 Registration Fee

- 4.3.4.1 All registrations, except for those who are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, require payment of a non-refundable registration fee that must accompany the Registration Form when submitted.
- 4.3.4.2 Refunds for over payments can be requested by contacting the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer.
- 4.3.4.3 Payment is made to Kingston City Council.
- 4.3.4.4 Fees will be reviewed annually through Council's budget process.

4.4 Allocation and Offer of Kindergarten Places

- 4.4.1 Kindergarten allocations commence in mid-July of each year. Council will send out letters of offer to the families via email. To accept an offer, parent/guardians must respond by the date stated in their letter of offer to secure a place. Failure to do so will result in the allocated space being deemed as available for reallocation.
- 4.4.2 Allocations for three and four-year-old kindergarten will be conducted in separate processes. Every effort will be made to place children at the same service for three and four-year-old kindergarten. Unfortunately, we are unable to guarantee this due to the State Government regulatory space and ratio requirements for kindergartens.
- 4.4.2 List of first preference offers will be forwarded to all kindergartens followed by updated lists on a regular basis and/or as requested.
- 4.4.3 Kindergarten allocation dates for three and four-year-old funded kindergarten programs will be provided to services in March. All services will be sent a reminder of these dates in June.
- 4.4.4 Round 1: Offers will be made to Kingston residents only; that is registrations that are classified Level 0 – 3 inclusive and will include first preference only. Council will generate a list of offers based on allocation criteria and send a letter of offer to successful families.
- 4.4.5 Round 2: Offers will be made to both Kingston residents and non-residents and will include first preferences only. Round 2 allocations will commence within 10 business days after the response date of the first allocation round. All

registrations received since the previous allocation round will be processed before the second allocation round.

- 4.4.6 Round 3: Includes all three preferences, Council will generate a third list of offers for each kindergarten that has vacancies. This round will include families who have indicated the kindergarten to be either their first, second or third preference. Round 3 allocations will commence within 10 business days after the response date of the second allocation round.
- 4.4.7 Applicants who do not receive a kindergarten offer after the 3rd allocation round will be contacted directly by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer to discuss the options and seek advice from the family about how they wish to proceed.
- 4.4.8 Where a child does not gain access to their first preference kindergarten, offers will proceed as follows:
- 4.4.8.1 Where a second and third preference have been indicated on the Registration Form, every effort will be made to place children in a preferred kindergarten, however if there are no vacancies at the second or third preference kindergarten, alternatives may be discussed;
- 4.4.8.2 Where no second or third preference has been indicated on the Registration Form, children will remain on the Central Registration Waitlist until a vacancy arises at the Kindergarten of their first and only preference. Families will be contacted by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer to discuss their options and seek advice on how the family wishes to proceed.
- 4.4.9 To decline an offer the parent/guardian must respond to the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer in the time allocated in the letter of offer.
- 4.4.10 To delay commencement of funded kindergarten the parent/guardian must respond to the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer in the time allocated in the letter of offer.
- 4.4.10.1 The place will be transferred to the following year's allocations and be ranked as a Level 0.
- 4.4.11 To allow the processing of allocations, administrative cut off dates will apply for each allocation round.
- 4.4.12 All correspondence to families will be sent through Australia Post, email or SMS.
- 4.4.13 Only children who are eligible for kindergarten funding will be offered a kindergarten place.
- 4.4.14 Within pre-arranged dates kindergartens will provide the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer with information that includes, but is not limited to the following:
- 4.4.14.1 Number of places being offered in three and four-year-old kindergarten;
- 4.4.14.2 Number of children who are eligible for another year of funded four-year-old kindergarten; and
- 4.4.14.3 Confirmation of children on the waiting list with a prior connection to the kindergarten or service.

4.5 Ballot System

4.5.1 Where the total number of registrations for a nominated kindergarten is greater than the number of available places, registrations will be selected through an automated random numerical selection referred to as the Ballot System.

4.5.1.1 Each ballot round must include all unplaced registrations of equal classification, regardless of submission date.

4.6 Waiting List

4.6.1 At the completion of the three allocation rounds, children who have not secured a place at a kindergarten, will be placed on the Central Registration Waiting List.

4.6.2 The Central Registration Waiting List:

4.6.2.1 Council will maintain a Central Registration Waiting List each year for any family unable to secure a kindergarten place.

4.6.2.2 Registrations on the Central Registration Waiting List will be contacted by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer to inform them of their status.

4.6.2.3 Registrations shall remain on the Central Waiting List until a place is available at the preferred kindergarten in line with the allocation procedure.

4.6.2.4 If a vacancy occurs at a kindergarten during the course of the year, the kindergarten will notify the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer who will make an offer to the next eligible registration in line with the allocation procedure.

4.6.2.5 Allocations from the Central Waiting List will be made utilising this allocation procedure.

4.6.3 Alternate Waiting List

4.6.3.1 Where a family accepts an offer at a kindergarten not listed as their first preference, parents/guardians are offered the option of remaining on an Alternate Waiting List until a place becomes available at their preferred kindergarten.

4.6.3.2 This list is maintained in accordance with the allocation procedure and is only available until the end of second term.

4.6.3.3 Children on the Alternative Waiting List will not be disadvantaged.

4.7 Alteration of Registration Information

4.7.1 An Alteration of Registration Form will be available on request and on Council's website www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration for parents/guardians who wish to alter their information in relation to:

4.7.1.1 Change of address or contact details;

4.7.1.2 Change of kindergarten preference;

4.7.1.3 Deferring kindergarten year; and

4.7.1.4 Cancellation of registration.

4.8 Communication and Promotion

- 4.8.1 Council will provide kindergartens with key dates for allocation rounds and due dates for information collection in March of each year.
- 4.8.2 Council provides regular networking and development opportunities for participating committees of management and early years managers to come together and share information.
- 4.8.3 Kindergartens can request a Waiting List Report at any time by contacting the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer.
- 4.8.2 Council will advertise the opening date for Registrations in April of each year and information regarding the registration and allocation process will be available on its web site.
- 4.8.3 Council provides an online community directory to assist community groups, including kindergartens, to advertise their service and events at www.mycommunitylife.com.au

4.9 Grievance and dispute resolution

- 4.9.1 In the first instance parents/guardians and participating kindergartens can discuss any concerns regarding the CRS with the Kindergarten Central Registration officer who will work to facilitate a satisfactory outcome.
- 4.9.2 If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved, the matter will be referred to the Team Leader Children's Services Partnerships to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.
- 4.9.3 If the matter remains unresolved the complainant may wish to refer the complaint to an appropriate external agency such as the Office of the Ombudsman or the Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

5 Responsibility

The areas or positions responsible for defined tasks in implementing, maintaining and approving these procedures:

Position/Team	Responsibility
Children's Services Partnerships	Administration of the Kindergarten Central Registration Scheme

6 Related Documents and Resources

The National Legislative Framework, which is established through an applied laws system and consists of:

- National Quality Framework;
- Education and Care Services National Law;
- Education and Care Services National Regulations;
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care;

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia; and
- National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.

Commonwealth legislation and related documents:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004;
- Disability and Discrimination Act 1992;
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975; and
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

State legislation and related documents

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010;
- Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014;
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006;
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005;
- Local Government Act 2020;
- The Victorian Kindergarten Funding Guide 2016;
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework;
- Early Childhood Reform Plan 2017
- Department of Education and Training – Municipal Association of Victoria Partnership Agreement 2018-2023; and
- COAG Partnership Agreement.

City of Kingston documents

- Family and Children’s Services Strategy incorporating Municipal Early Years Plan (2020-2024); and
- Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy.

7 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.
Allocation Criteria	The criteria for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergartens within the Central Registration Scheme.

Allocation Priority	Allocation criteria assigned to applicants for whom protective concerns have been identified and substantiated e.g. children and/or families who are experiencing vulnerabilities and/or additional needs.
Allocation Process	The process for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergarten programs within the Central Registration Scheme.
Alteration	The adjustment of information provided to the Central Registration Scheme in the original Registration Form.
Ballot	A system in which applicants of equal ranking are selected using a random numerical selection process.
Children with Additional Needs	Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the kindergarten setting • As defined by medical assessment • As defined by DET assessment (as per Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) (Additional Needs Policy)
Committee of Management	A volunteer committee of parents/guardians responsible for the day-to-day management of a kindergarten service.
Connection to the Service	An allocation criteria that allows consideration for a child who has previously attended the service, and/or a sibling attended the service within the previous three years.
Connection to the City of Kingston	An allocation criterion that allows consideration to a child, whose parent/guardian works, volunteers, studies or is using childcare in the City of Kingston.
CRS	The Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten.
Deferral	Is where a parent/guardian chooses to delay an eligible child's start to funded kindergarten. Once the child commences the kindergarten year, this is considered their funded year of kindergarten.
DET	Department of Education and Training. The Victorian regulatory authority primarily responsible for the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services in Victoria.
Early Start Kindergarten	A DET program that provides free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible three-year-old children to access 15 hours of funded kindergarten where programs are delivered by a qualified teacher.
Early Years Manager	Early years management brings individual kindergarten services together under a single employer. The major responsibility of early years managers are management and employment of staff, being the Approved Provider and ensuring compliance with licensing requirements, responsibility for the quality of the program through the management and support of the kindergarten staff and financial management for services.
Eligible Child	A child who is eligible for State Government kindergarten funding and can apply for a place in a participating kindergarten.
EYLF	The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia; Belonging, Being & Becoming – a framework to assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning
Funded Kindergarten	Also known as three and four year old kindergarten.
Health Care Card	A concession card that entitles the person to cheaper medicines and concessions.

Kindergarten (also known as Preschool)	The term kindergarten refers to both kindergarten and preschool. Kindergarten is a universal early childhood program funded by the Victorian Government for children in the two years prior to commencing primary school.
Kindergarten Central Registration Officer	The Kingston City Council employee responsible for administering the CRS.
National Quality Framework	Derived from the National Legislative Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, the National Quality Framework lists the National Standards and sets the national benchmark for the assessment of quality in education and care services.
Protective Services	A government agency that responds to reports of child abuse or neglect.
Proximity to the kindergarten	Based on residential address this criterion refers to children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose residential address is within a two kilometre radius of the kindergarten service; or • Whose residential address is outside the borders of the City of Kingston municipality, yet the address falls within a two kilometre radius of the kindergarten service.
Registration fee	Payment to contribute to the administration of the kindergarten registration and allocation process.
Registration form	The registration form for parents/guardians who wish to register their child/ren in a funded kindergarten participating in CRS.
Resident	A person living in the City of Kingston
Non-resident	A person who does not live in the City of Kingston
Second Year	A child is eligible for a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten if the family and teacher assess the child as having delay in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the VEYLDF and he or she will benefit from a second year of kindergarten.
Service	Includes the participating kindergarten or collocated care and education program.
Sessional Kindergarten	A funded kindergarten program provides short days of education and care that are typically 5-7.5 hours in length.
2 Kilometre Radius	Residential priority area for allocation purposes. This does not act as a zone.
VEYLDF	Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Curriculum framework to guide the development of the educational program for children.