



La Trobe University Community Children's Centre





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Centre Mission and Philosophy

Our Mission

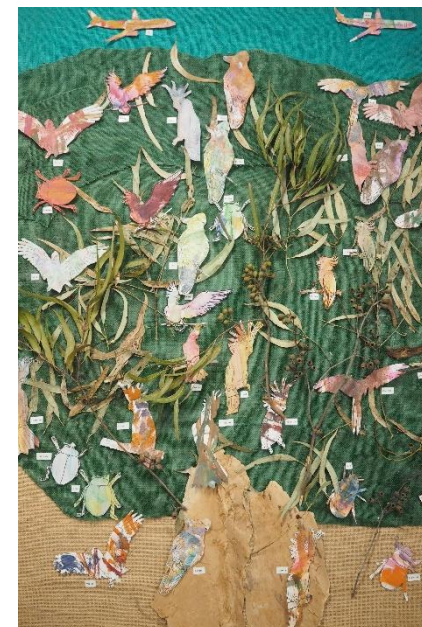
To provide exemplary care and learning in an inclusive early childhood service that nurtures each child's potential, values the diversity of the families they belong to and the staff who work with them, and promotes learning within our community.

Our Vision

To inspire children and families to become lifelong passionate learners.

Our Values

- We strive for **operational excellence** in all areas of our service delivery
- We **respect** each other, and the diversity and rights of children and families
- We provide **child-focused care** that is responsive and sensitive to the individual child
- We **teach** through play, daily routines and facilitating peer experiences that are developmentally appropriate
- We **engage with nature** through our beautiful and abundant natural environment and ongoing improvements to sustainable practices
- We bring **teamwork and passion** in everything that we do for our children, families and colleagues
- We form and sustain ongoing **partnerships** with families, other services, and community actors both local and abroad



Our Educational Philosophy

We view children as active participants in their own learning, celebrating their unique capabilities and contexts.

Our approach to education prioritises well-being, intentionality, and independence, demonstrating sensitivity and responsiveness to each child.

Operational Matters

Hours of Operation

To ensure that we meet the needs of LTU staff and students and community, the Centre's opening hours/days align with the LTU calendar

- Centre hours; 7.30 am – 6.15 pm
- The Centre is closed for approximately 2 weeks over Dec.-Jan.
- The Centre is closed on the following holidays: Australia Day, Labour Day, Anzac Day, Easter – incl Easter Tuesday, Kings Birthday, Grand Final Eve, Melbourne Cup Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day.
- No fees are charged when the Centre is closed.

Our Programs

We offer the below programs in our Centre: All-day care, integrated long-day kindergarten, Sessional Free Kindergarten, 5-hour childcare day and Early autism supports.

All Day Care

Our All-Day Care program provides education and care in a long day care setting for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years. Children are grouped by approximate ages across 9 rooms:

- 3 x Nursery rooms (6 weeks to 2 years approximately),
- 2 x 2-3-year-old (approximately) rooms
- 1 x 2- 4-year-old (approximately)room

3 x Kindergarten rooms (Sessional Free Kindergarten may be offered within this structure): mixed 3- and 4-year-old kinder room, 3- year-old kinder room, and a 4-year-old kinder room. Our Kinder rooms are state-funded and lead by experienced Kindergarten teachers.

5-hour childcare

5-hour childcare may be available for children aged between 2 and 5 years in a mixed age group room. Most families using 5-hour childcare are LTU students;

however, LTU staff or families within the community are also welcome to access this which runs from 10.45am – 3.45pm Monday to Friday.

Early Autism Supports

Our Early Autism Supports optimise learning opportunities in children's everyday routines within early education classrooms: for example, indoor and outdoor play, cooperative and independent experiences, sensory exploration, mealtimes, toileting, and dressing routines. Our teaching strategies strive to be neurodiversity-affirming and build on a child's strengths, preferences and interests. Our work combines a developmental approach (with an emphasis on child motivation, choice, autonomy, and preferences) with behavioural 'science of learning' practices.

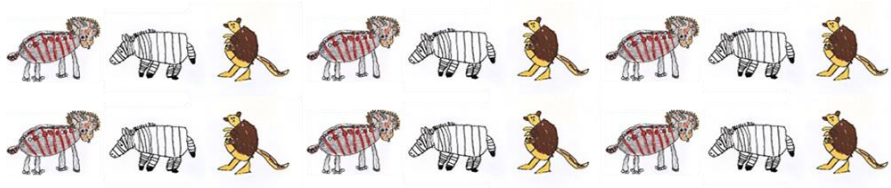
Specialist Supports

We offer specialist supports for young children aged 1-6 years of age and their families, either funded through a child's NDIS plan or direct payment. Our team includes specialist early childhood educators, speech and language pathology, psychology and occupational therapy. Services can be provided at La Trobe University Community Children's Centre or an early education setting or family's home within 30 minutes' drive of the Centre.

Policies and Procedures

Our Centre is committed to high quality early education and care, and consequently have policies and procedures that guide our team in our work with children and families. Our policies and procedures are informed by relevant legislation, governing bodies and key stakeholders and are regularly reviewed. When our Centre updates an existing policy, we circulate it to staff and families for feedback.

Our Policy Folder is available in the Centre foyers. In addition, if you would like a copy of an individual policy, please ask at the office or email: children@latrobe.edu.au



Enrolment and Fees

A variety of policies governs enrolment into the Centre. This part of the Centre Handbook includes some key pieces of information from the policies relating to enrolment and fees.

If you have any queries about the enrolment process, including Child Care Subsidy (CCS), immunisation requirements or fees, please do not hesitate to talk with our helpful Administration team.

Eligibility and Priority of Access

As the demand for places can exceed the number of places available, a waiting list is compiled according to our Centre's Priority of Access guidelines. More information about the Priority of Access guidelines can be found in our Enrolment Policy. In addition, our Centre values continuity of care and enrolment is offered each year to current families before new enrolments are considered.

Immunisation

Under State and Government legislation, confirmation of enrolment at the Centre is dependent upon the provision of a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Families are also required to provide updated copies of the child/ren's AIR certificate throughout the year. This can be done via your SmartCentral account or supplied to the Administration Team.

Re-enrolment

Re-enrolment forms are issued to current families in September - October each year. This process allows families to notify the Centre of their preferences for the following year and ensures that enrolment information is up to date. The Centre will make every effort to meet families' preferences and will defer to the Priority of Access guidelines if the demand for places exceeds the number of places available.

Variation or Cessation of Enrolment

Families are required to give two weeks' notice to vary or cease enrolment. The

Administration Team can support with this process and forms can be found on our website.

What do I do if my contact details change?

**JUST LET THE ADMINISTRATION TEAM
KNOW AND UPDATE YOUR DETAILS ON
YOUR SMARTCENTRAL ACCOUNT.**

Absences

If you are aware that your child/ren will be absent on a day that they would normally attend the Centre, please notify the Administration team as soon as possible via text **0400 991 219** or phone (03 9479 2122). For more information on absences and the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), please see Appendix 1.

General Fee Information

Fees are charged for days booked, irrespective of whether a child is absent, and are not charged for days that the Centre is closed.

Summer Period

During the Summer Period families can have a different booking arrangement to suit their leave/holiday plans, without impacting their permanent booking. Families can vary their booking arrangement as often as needed with a minimum of two weeks' notice and will pay for all absences during the Summer Period. The Summer Period is between first week of December and last week of February and applies to all families.

Payment of Fees

On enrolment, families will be asked to **pay one-week in advance to support families with ensuring accounts are always in advance**. Statements are provided to families on a weekly basis. All accounts must be paid in advance, and a nil balance

Our Centre is committed to supporting family and child health, wellbeing and safety

OUR SERVICE IS MANDATED BY LAW TO REPORT ALL SERIOUS INCIDENTS AND CONCERNS FOR CHILD/FAMILY SAFETY TO THE APPROPRIATE REGULATORY BODIES, FOR EXAMPLE CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND THE NDIS QUALITY AND SAFEGUARDS COMMISSION.

Payment can be made utilising a range of options. Please see *Appendix 1* for more information.

Short Term Absences and Compassionate Circumstances

Our Centre understands that there are times when a family may experience unexpected hardship or be obliged by work commitments to La Trobe to take leave, work or study off-campus. Should a family experience these circumstances, our Centre can support the family to maintain their child/ren's place at the Centre at the Manager's discretion. For more information on this, please see Appendix 1.

Late Fines

The Centre is licensed and staffed to have children on the premises between 7.30 am – 6.15 pm. Families who leave the Centre after 6.15pm, who collect children after the 3.45pm Cockatoo Room session finishes will receive a late fee. The late fee is \$50.00 for the first 10 minutes per child and \$50.00 per 10 minutes per child thereafter. Please see Appendix 1 for more information.

Privacy

The Centre appreciates that the information provided by families as part of the enrolment process is private and confidential.

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Our Learning Program

Our learning program and practices are inspired by a strong emphasis on child wellbeing, inclusive practice, and child centred practice. We view educators and children as co-constructors of learning: collaborating meaningfully and intentionally and recognising children as active citizens of the community and of their own learning. We recognise that children learn, explore and express through a variety of ways, for example art, music, play, connecting with nature, dancing, creating, constructing, imagining and many more!

Making learning visible

The education teams will share the children's learning with families through a variety of information, including:

- *Learning programs*: The curriculum and learning program is evaluated and developed weekly. The learning program document is displayed in the room or just outside of the room for families to read.
- *Documentation of learning*: The teams will use a variety of methods to record how the children are engaging, exploring, and learning in the

Centre. This will include photos and written observations, learning board displays in hallways or rooms, displays of children's work, etc. Observations and analysis of children's learning/development will guide educators in the development of the fortnightly plan, and in formulating individualised teaching and supports for your child.

- *Family-Educator meetings*: Our Centre recognises families as the experts on their child and aims to work in close partnership with you to support meaningful learning opportunities for your child. Our education team will work with you to understand your priorities for your child's learning and development and create specific learning goals for your child. We aim to meet with families three times across the year with your child's lead educator. Please let us know if you would like to book in a meeting:
 - o In Jan-Feb; to discuss how your child is settling in their room and discuss your priorities for the year.
 - o June-July; to discuss your child's development and your priorities for your child for the second half of the year.
 - o Dec; summative assessment will be sent to families with transition strategies.
- *Family contributions* to the program: We invite families to share information about your child and family throughout the year, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions about our learning programs. Some ways that you might like to share information, or contribute to the learning programs might include:
 - o Bringing in something interesting from a family event (e.g., photos from a special event, some natural materials found on a walk, a souvenir from a holiday, an item of cultural significance, something you grew in your garden, etc.)
 - o Discussions with staff about child interests, change in routines, developmental needs, a life event, or day to day updates.

- Practical participation, such as visiting the centre to help facilitate a learning experience, joining us for family events, sharing resources for learning, or sharing a special skill with us.
- Completing forms or information sheets provided by the education team in your child's room.

- Email correspondence.

A brief word on photos: Photos can be a lovely way to share information about what has happened during the day and a valuable tool for documenting learning. We appreciate that families often love to see pictures of what the children have been up to. However, it is our aim to focus on children's learning, and so some days you may see fewer (or no) photos - this is because our educators will be with your children maximising learning, instead of running for the camera.

Daily routines

Routines make up a large part of the day for young children, and we view them as an important learning opportunity for children. Routines provide excellent opportunities for children to further develop a range of skills, including social skills and self-help skills. The schedule of each room is designed to reflect the developmental needs of each age group, while also respecting and incorporating the individual culture of the child and their family. While we endeavour to work in accordance with families' requests and values, there may be times where we need to be guided by the requirements of industry recommendations and legislation. It is also important to note that on occasion a child's daily routines may differ in the Centre environment compared to what they usually do at home.

Celebrations

Celebrations can help to create a feeling of belonging and to develop a sense of community amongst families, educators, and children, while developing understanding and respect for diverse practices, values, and beliefs.

While we acknowledge that there are many ways to mark celebrations, the sharing of food is very common. If you would like to bring food into the Centre to celebrate, please note that our rooms and children's spaces are **EGG-FREE and NUT-FREE**. Any food provided to the Centre must include a full list of ingredients so that we can ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Please talk with your child's educators about celebrations you would like us to share with your child and family in the Centre.



Orientation

We understand that beginning care in our Centre is an important time for families. Before beginning, we recommend that you visit the Centre with your child and see the rooms, meet the staff, and familiarise your child with our environment and their new educators.

If this is your child's first experience in care, more orientation visits prior to commencing care and/or shorter days at the beginning of their enrolment can support the transition process. This approach also gives you an opportunity to see how our rooms work, establish a relationship with the education team in your child's room (and other families) and enable you to ask any questions that you might have about the Centre. Please talk directly with the Lead educator in your child's room to plan your orientation visits.

Our Centre recognises that the individual needs of families and children vary during the orientation period according to a range of factors and are happy to tailor the orientation process to suit you and your child.

Transitions through the Centre

At times when a child, or group of children, need to transition to a new room in the Centre, educators will work with families and one another to ensure a gradual and supported transition process. Often this involves familiar staff taking children on multiple visits to their new rooms and facilitating rapport building with the new education team. Please talk with your child's educators about the process and we can work together to ensure that both you and your child feel supported through the process. Please feel welcome to visit your child's new room with them before care and/or after pick up time. This will further support your child with their transition to their new room.

What to Bring each Day

Our Centre will provide all meals and nappies throughout the day for your child. Please include in your child's bag each day:

- A drink bottle (please take home to wash each night). **(please clearly label with your child's name)**
- A few changes of clothes for mishaps with spills, messy play etc. We also value nature play, and so there may be times that your child gets a bit muddy, mucky, or wet. **(please label clearly with your child's name)**
- Sunscreen (from September to May) which can be left at the Centre (SPF 50+ as the recommendation by cancer council). **(please clearly label with your child's name)**
- Sun hat (broad rimmed or legionnaires. No peaked caps, please) which can be left at the Centre. **(please clearly label with your child's name)**
- Nappy rash cream (if required) which can be left at the Centre. **(please clearly label with your child's name)**

- Any special comforters required for sleep or emotional wellbeing. **(please clearly label with your child's name)**

Please ensure that all products (e.g. nappy-rash creams, sunscreens etc) are **NUT-FREE and EGG-FREE and CLEARLY NAMED**

Communication – Who Do I Talk to About This?

Feedback

Our Centre values feedback from families in order to improve our service delivery and to ensure that we continue to meet your needs. Feedback may take the form of compliments, suggestions, enquiries, concerns, or complaints about:

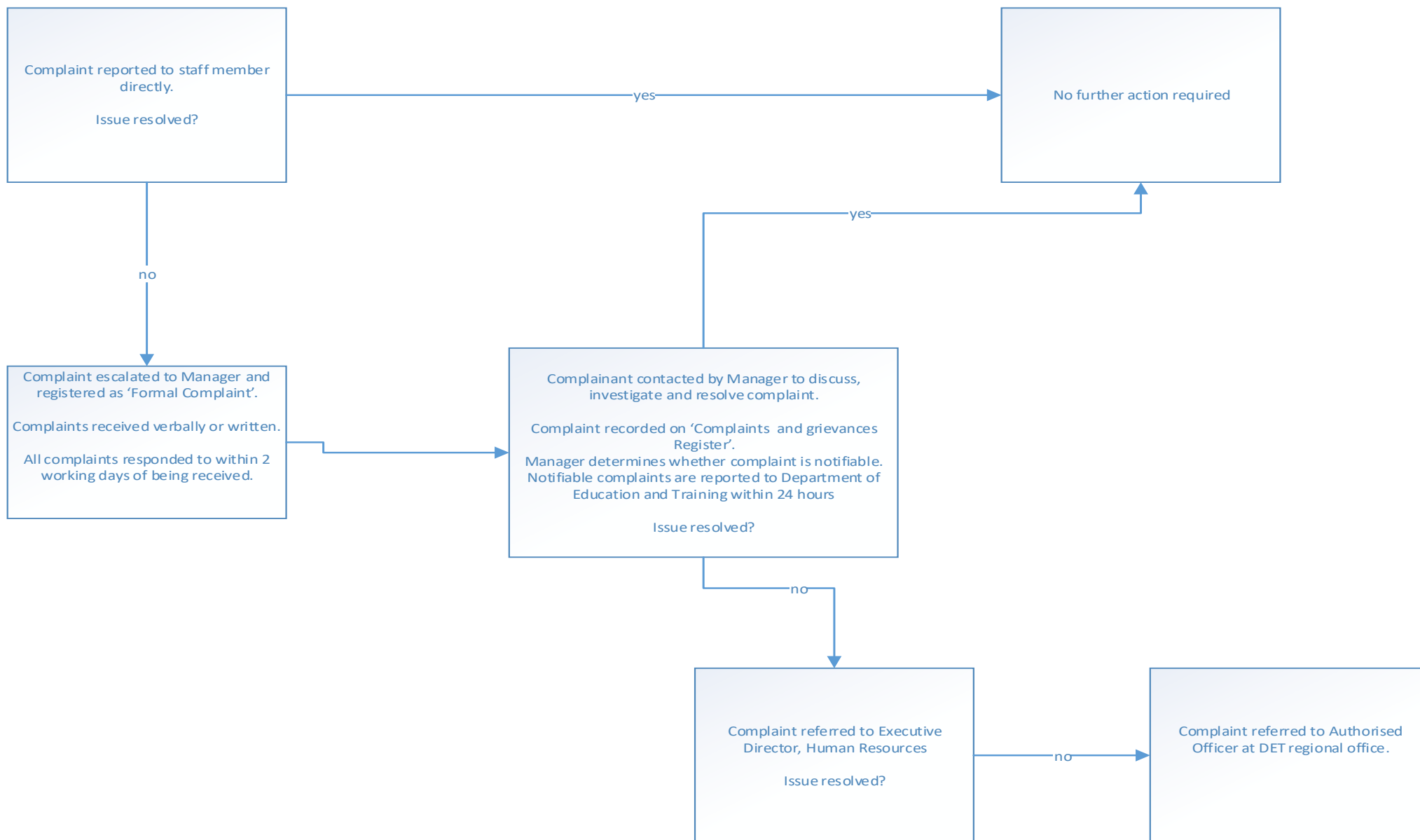
- The quality of the service
- The environment and resources
- Interactions between staff/families/children
- Policies, procedures, or practices at the Centre
- Decisions that are made and/or how they have been communicated



Our Complaints and Grievances policy is available in the Centre and a copy of the complaints process is displayed in the Centre foyer. Our complaints process is a sequential process, that focuses on resolution of the complaint at the earliest point and escalation of the complaint if it is not appropriately resolved. For more understanding of the complaints process, please see the procedure below.

Our team adhere to the La Trobe Code of Conduct and our Centre is dedicated to creating, and role-modelling, a positive, respectful culture for children, families, and all staff. We ask you to support us with this, by adhering to the Family and Visitors Code of Conduct (please see Appendix 2).





Who Do I Talk to About This?

Our team have different roles and responsibilities, and it is helpful for families to address their queries to the most appropriate team member.

Administration Team

Enrolments and attendance (including ceasing or swapping days), payment and invoices, queries about Child Care Subsidy (CCS) etc.

Education/Room Team

My child's transition into the Centre, my child's day and routine, celebrations (including my child's birthday), documentation and observations on my child, my child's educational program (including excursions and so on), any queries/concerns that I have regarding my child's development/my child's individual needs, any additional support required for my child, for example Medication, Allergies, individual Menu Plan etc.

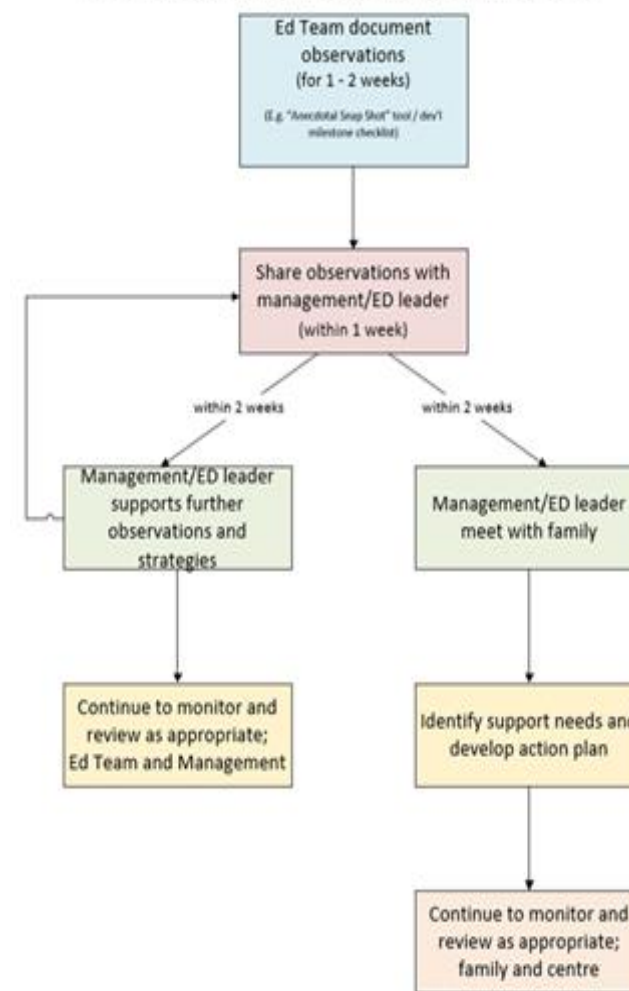
Management

Feedback on policies, procedures and practices and service provision, court orders/parenting plan/order, fee schedule, staffing/arrangements, strategic direction of Centre, Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), Code of Conduct and any concerns or feedback regarding any aspect of the Centre/service delivery.

Educational Leader

Any concerns about a child's development or individual needs, can be followed up and discussed with our Educational Leader. If a child requires an individual plan/resources to support learning, the Educational Leader can source and support this including linking families into resources and networks available in the community. Our Educational Leader utilises a procedure (pictured) to support education teams to monitor any concerns that families or educators have about a child's development.

Procedure for monitoring developmental/behavioural needs



Arrangements for Collecting Your Child

Sign In/Out

On arrival and departure from the Centre, children **must** be signed in and out on the electronic attendance sign in/out by a parent/guardian or an authorised person. The Centre assigns parents/guardians an individual PIN to sign their child/ren into and out of the Centre.

Authorising Child Collection

The Centre has a responsibility to ensure your child's safety when in our care. Consequently, children are only permitted to leave the Centre with a person authorised to collect the child.

Court Orders and Collection of Children from the Centre

It is important that Centre Managers receive a copy (in its entirety) of any Family Court Order, Federal Magistrates Court Order, Children's Court Order, District Court Order, Local Court Order, Parenting Order, Parenting Plan or Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) as soon as these are issued. Parenting Plans, including any changes to Parenting Plans, are to be signed and dated by both parents/guardians.

Our Centre understands and respects that at times there may be a breakdown in communication between families and are happy to support in any way that we can during these times. However, we are unable to respond to requests for information from parents/guardians regarding the other parent/guardian and their time/communication/pick up/drop off arrangements etc at the Centre,

If a parent/guardian would like their child to be collected from the Centre by someone for whom they have not given authority in the enrolment form, they must;

- Email and call the Centre to give authorisation for the person to collect their child/ren, including providing information on the full name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting the child/ren (Staff will request proof of identity, to confirm the identity of the person/s)
- Give verbal authorisation to one room educator and one Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor or PIDTDC, including providing information on the full name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting the child/ren (Staff will request proof of identity, to confirm the identity of the person/s)

unless there is a specific provision in a Parenting Order or Parenting Plan. In addition, our Centre is unable to communicate on behalf of parents/guardians.

In the case of separation, unless stipulated by a Court Order or Parenting Plan, our Centre assumes that the parent/guardian who has responsibility for the care of a child upon a particular day, has the right to nominate a responsible person to collect the child from the Centre.

What happens if I forget to inform the Centre that a person who is not known to the Centre will be collecting my child?

WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CONTACT BOTH PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO CLARIFY THIS. IF STAFF ARE UNABLE TO CONTACT YOU, WE WILL NOT RELEASE YOUR CHILD TO THIS PERSON.

e person in lieu of themselves to collect the child on that day. Any changes made to an authority to collect your child must be communicated in writing to

Health and Well Being

Our Centre strives to promote your child's health, wellbeing and safety through our environment, curriculum, policies, procedures, and practices. **To support us with this, we ask that you follow our Centre policies and procedures and give us**

What happens if my child becomes unwell while they are at the Centre?

THE EDUCATION TEAM IN YOUR CHILD'S ROOM WILL CALL YOU AND DETERMINE THE MOST APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION. IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN INFECTIOUS ILLNESS, WE WILL ASK YOU TO COLLECT YOUR CHILD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO PROMOTE THE WELL BEING OF ALL CHILDREN, STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES.

up-to-date information about your child/ren's health/requirements. A summary of some of our key health and safety policies is given below. For more information on specific policies and procedures, please email children@latrobe.edu.au. **Medication**

If your child requires any medication, including a cream, to be administered for treatment of a specific illness or injury while they are attending the Centre, a medication form must be filled in and handed to a staff member in your child's room, except in the case of nappy rash cream. Staff will help with the policies and procedures for medication.

the Centre, prior to collection of your child.

Children with Asthma, Allergies, Epilepsy or Anaphylaxis require specific documentation to protect their health, including Medical Management Plans and Risk Minimisation Plans. Our Nominated Supervisor will work with you to ensure we have all the right information. Please ensure that you inform us if your child/ren has one of these health conditions and/or an updated Medical Management Plan.

Infectious Diseases

To protect the health and wellbeing of children, families and staff, the Centre cannot provide care for children who have an 'infectious disease' (please see table on following page) or who are generally unwell. If your child has a specified infectious disease, your child **must not attend the Centre during the period of illness and may only return to the Centre when the illness ends, and your child is no longer infectious.** The Centre may ask you to provide a medical certificate to confirm that your child is well enough to return and may refuse to let your child attend the Centre if you do not provide an appropriate medical certificate. The Centre follows the recommendations outlined in Staying Healthy - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (5th Edition) and the Victoria Public Health and Wellbeing regulations. Please see the exclusion table on the following page, also found at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>.

from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts (*Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*),
 a certificate means a certificate from a registered medical practitioner.

[2] Exclusion of cases		[3] Exclusion of Contacts
Measles	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
	Exclude until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the rash appears in unimmunised children, but may be less in previously immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded
	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased	Not excluded
	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Scarlet fever	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later	Exclude family/household contacts until cleared to return by the Secretary
	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
	Exclude until at least 4 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed	Not excluded
	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness	Not excluded
	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Epidemic typhus	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible	Not excluded
	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
	Exclude until well	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary
Dysentery	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary	Not excluded
	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash	Immunised contacts not excluded. Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hours of their first contact with the first case, or received NHIG within 144 hours of exposure, they may return to the facility
	Exclude until well	Not excluded
	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed	Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy
	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
Pertussis	Exclude the child for 21 days after the onset of cough or until they have completed 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment	Contacts aged less than 7 years in the same room as the case who have not received three effective doses of pertussis vaccine should be excluded for 14 days after the last exposure to the infectious case, or until they have taken 5 days of a course of effective antibiotic treatment
	Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery	Not excluded
	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced	Not excluded
	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash	Not excluded
	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Scarlet fever	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary
	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well	Not excluded
	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious	Not excluded
	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary
	Exclude if required by the Secretary and only for the period specified by the Secretary	Not excluded
Typhoid fever	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded

Primary school or children's services centre must not allow a child to attend the primary school or children's services centre for the period or in the circumstances set out in table in Schedule 7 if the person in charge has been informed that the child is infected with an infectious disease listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7; or table in Schedule 7 if the person in charge has been informed that the child has been in contact with a person who is infected with an infectious disease listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7.

Primary school or children's services centre, when directed to do so by the Secretary, must ensure that a child enrolled at the primary school or children's services centre is a vaccine preventable disease (VPD) specified by the Secretary in that direction, does not attend the school or centre until the Secretary directs that such attendance is marked in **bold** with an asterisk (*) require the department to be informed immediately. Contact the department on 1300 651 160 for further advice about exclusion

Exclusion

Exclusions mentioned in this document, please contact the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Section on 1300 651 160

First Aid

If a child becomes unwell or sustains an injury while at the Centre, our Centre will notify the parent/guardian and will undertake First Aid treatment and procedures, as outlined in our 'Incident, Illness and Injury' policy.

Child Protection

All educators in the Centre are trained in the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Child Protection policies and procedures and are mandated by law to report concerns about child safety to Department of Education and Training and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. **In addition, as part of our Child Safe policies and procedures, families are unable to take photos in their child's room without specific approval and supervision from management or Lead Educator.**

Healthy Eating

Our Centre provides freshly cooked, healthy meals to children. We encourage children to try a range of food and support children to engage in independent behaviour in mealtimes, including feeding themselves and packing away their bowls etc. We understand that some children require an individualised meal plan, and this can be discussed with the Lead educator in your child's room.

Egg-free Recipes

<https://www.kidspot.com.au/kitchen/recipes/collection/egg-free-treats-for-kids>



<https://www.thespruceeats.com/dairy-free-birthday-cakes-1001335>

Relaxation and Sleep

Infants (in Koala and Joey rooms) will sleep in cots, suited to each child's individual routine. Staff will work with families to develop mutually agreed settling procedures for each child. Our 'Relaxation and Sleep' policy is informed by 'SIDS and Kids' recommendations.

Children aged between approximately 1 - 4 years are encouraged to rest on a mattress after lunch; educators in these rooms work with families to determine their child's individual sleep requirements. In addition, educators may encourage children to have a rest if they show signs of being tired. *It is important to note* that while educators will engage a range of strategies to facilitate children's rest, we will not 'pat' children for extended periods of time to

support them to sleep. Families can access information on their child's sleeping habits on the

sign in/out bench in each room.

Sun Protection Policy

Under our 'Sun Protection Policy' families are asked to apply an SPF 50+ broad spectrum sunscreen to their child prior to/on arrival at the Centre and to ensure that their child has sun-smart clothing: name labelled broad brimmed,

What do I need to bring?

OUR CENTRE PROVIDES ALL MEALS AND BEDDING.

FAMILIES ARE ASKED TO PROVIDE;

- **SUNSCREEN (LABELLED)**
- **HATS (LABELLED)**
- **DRINK BOTTLE (LABELLED)**
- **A WET BAG (TO SEND HOME SOILED CLOTHING)**

bucket or legionnaire style hats and clothing with sleeves that covers the shoulders. Throughout the day, our staff will reapply sunscreen to children.

Resources

Family Information

- Early Childhood Australia has developed a variety of resources for parents. These cover everything from children's health and nutrition to sleep.
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Early Learning Association Australia provides information and resources that support parents as vital partners in high-quality early years education and care programs.
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Learning Potential has lots of useful tips and ideas to help busy parents support their child's learning.
www.learningpotential.gov.au
- Mychild is Australia's online childcare portal containing information for families, carers and providers.
my.gov.au/en/services/raising-kids/toddlers-and-preschoolers/child-care
- Starting Blocks provides parents with information about early childhood education and care to help them make the best choice for their child and family.
www.startingblocks.gov.au
- Parenting Research Centre is an independent, non-profit research and development organisation focused on supporting parents through the development of resources, programs and policies based on scientific evidence.
www.parentingrc.org.au
- The Raising Children Network website has reliable and scientifically validated information and resources to support you with queries you may have.
raisingchildren.net.au

Support Organisations

- Carer Gateway is the Australian Government program for carers, providing free support and services, such as peer support groups, counselling services, and emergency respite connections

www.carergateway.gov.au/

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides support for Australians with disability and their families.
www.ndis.gov.au
- Good Beginnings builds better outcomes for children in vulnerable communities through effective early support programs.
www.savethechildren.org.au/our-stories/good-beginnings-and-save-the-children-join-forces
- Be You is an Australian mental health and wellbeing initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services.
beyou.edu.au/about
- MyTime – a parent group for parents/guardians of children with additional needs.
www.mytime.net.au
- ASDetect- an app that families can download and use for free and which, through a series of videos and questions, supports families to identify whether their child may be showing indicators of autism.
asdetect.org

Early Learning Curriculum

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)- ACECQA is the national body that guides and reports on the NQF, while regulatory authorities in each state and territory are responsible for its implementation.
- Department of Education and Training (DET)- The Department supports and provides a range of learning and development opportunities for Victorian children, young people and adults.

ATTACHMENTS

REVIEW DATE: REVIEWED JUNE 2023, August 2024, March 2025, June 2025

Attachment 1: Fee and Enrolment Information**1. Fee Schedule**

- 1.1 Approved Provider will provide a minimum of 28 days' notice before making any changes to fee schedule.
- 1.2 Fee schedule changes are made on an annual basis and will have a start date from January.

2. Enrolment

- 2.1 On acceptance of an enrolment, families will be offered a regular pattern of use (Complying Written Agreement -CWA). In All Day Care and Kindergarten (including Early Autism Supports), attendance patterns may be between one and five days and an early start (7.30 am) or 8.15 am start, or shorter day of 7.30am to 5.30pm. Sessional Care attendance patterns may be between one and five days 10.45am to 3.45pm. The Sessional Free Kindergarten attendance pattern must be for at least 2 days 8.30am to 4.00pm as agreed with the Centre.
- 2.2 It is the family's responsibility to determine if they are eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and apply online. Full fees are payable until CCS is received by the Centre. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-claim>
- 2.3 Request to change an enrolment by increasing or swapping days is subject to the two-week notice period and can only be accommodated where a vacancy exists, and licensing requirements can be maintained. Families will be asked to give notice via writing or completion of the appropriate form. If the request is unable to be fulfilled, the request will be recorded on the internal waiting list and the request will be offered if it is available in the future.
- 2.4 Request to cease enrolment is subject to the two-week notice period. Families will be asked to give notice via writing or completion of the appropriate form.
- 2.5 The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) cannot be claimed after the child's last day of actual attendance. For example: if a family provides the Centre with 2 weeks' notice ceasing their child's place (as required) and consequently do not use this childcare, they will be charged full fee.
- 2.6 Casual/Additional days can be booked providing a vacancy exists and licensing requirements can be maintained. Additional days will be charged as per the current fee schedule.

3. Payment of fees

- 3.1 Fees are to be paid at least one week in advance.
- 3.2 Statements are forwarded to parents/guardians weekly. All accounts must be paid in advance regularly and a nil balance achieved
- 3.3 Payment is made utilising the preferred method of the family. Parents can choose from multiple methods, including: EFT &

credit card at Centre, Online payments using LTU ePayments , LTU Salary sacrificing or After Tax deductions, or Centrepay
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/centrepay/how-use-it/set-deductions>

3.4 Families may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to support with payment of fees. For more information on CCS, please see
<https://my.gov.au>

4. Absences

4.1 CCS defines an absence as “when a child is absent on a day on which care would otherwise have been provided if the child was not absent and the family was charged for that care” <http://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/1/a/05>

4.2 Through the CCS, each child is allowed an initial 42 absence days from care across all approved childcare services each financial year, which can be used for any reason and without the need to produce supporting documentation. CCS is payable for any absence days up to 42 days regardless of the reason for the absence

4.3 CCS cannot be utilised for the following:

fees are charged to reserve a place for a child who has not yet commenced care, fees are charged for a period after a child has already ceased attending care, or

the child has already attended their maximum number of CCS eligible hours in previous sessions in the same week. For further information on CCS and absences:

<http://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/1/a/05>

5. Short Term Absence procedure

5.1 The Short-Term Absence procedure can be utilised by LTU staff and students to secure their child/ren’s place at the Centre during a short-term absence (up to 26 weeks), related to their LTU work or study experience.

5.2 For LTU staff or students who are anticipating that they will be absent as part of their work or study experience and who choose to access this procedure, fees are charged for the first 4 weeks of care (based on their regular booking) to reserve child/ren’s place until their return to the Centre. Families must give notice in writing 4 weeks prior.

5.3 This procedure is subject to the Manager’s discretion, and availability of places across the Centre.

6. Compassionate Circumstances

6.1 If a family experiences substantive difficulty, for example illness or injury, the Centre may waive fees after the initial 4-week period and/or only charge for days that the family utilised the Centre. This arrangement is made at the discretion of the Manager and Senior Management Team.

7. General Fee Information

7.1 Childcare fees are charged for days booked, irrespective of whether the child attends the Centre

7.2 Fees are not charged for days that the Centre is closed

7.3 **Summer Period bookings:**

7.3.1 The Summer Period is between first week of December and the last week of February.

7.3.2 During this period families can have a different booking arrangement to suit their leave/holiday plans, without impacting their permanent booking.

7.3.3 Families can vary their booking arrangement as often as needed with a minimum of **2 weeks' Notice in writing.**

7.3.4 Families will pay for all absences during this period.

8. Outstanding Debts

8.1 Non-payment of fees may result in the University taking further action to recover the debts.

8.2 LTU students may have sanctions placed on their student enrolment at La Trobe University until the debt is recovered.

8.3 If overdue fees are not paid within the agreed timeframe, or the family doesn't keep up with an agreed payment plan, the child's enrolment may be cancelled.

9. Late Fines

9.1 Parents/guardians in All Day Care and/or Kindergarten who are still in the Centre after 6.15 pm will incur a late fee of \$50.00 for the first 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child and \$50.00 per 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child thereafter. CCS is not claimable for this.

9.2 Parents/guardians in Sessional Care Beetle Room who collect their child after 3.45pm will incur a late fee of \$50.00 for the first 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child and \$50.00 per 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child thereafter. CCS is not claimable for this.

9.3 Parents/guardians in Possum Room Sessional Free Kindergarten who collect their child after 4.00pm will incur a late fee of \$50.00 for the first 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child and \$50.00 per 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child thereafter.

Attachment 2:

“Integrated Free Kindergarten” in All Day Care

Free Kinder is available for Three- and Four-Year-Old children at this service.

Families with children enrolled in integrated kindergarten programs will receive an annual fee offset of up to \$2,101. (\$51.24 per week during school terms)

The 2025 Free Kinder funding rates for integrated programs in long day care services can be found on the [kindergarten funding rates](#) page.

- We deduct the Free Kinder payment from the fees of parents with children in the funded kindergarten program. The cost of kindergarten hours does not need to be calculated separately for integrated programs.
- We apply this fee offset weekly and make it clear on parent invoices (labelled as "Victorian Government Free Kinder offset")
- We use any surplus funding to improve the funded kindergarten program. This may include improving quality and supporting family engagement. This is for situations where parents pay less than the Free Kinder payment in out-of-pocket fees throughout the kindergarten year.

Interactions with Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy

In Victoria, Free Kinder is an allowable third-party payment under Commonwealth funding rules. This means that Free Kinder does not impact a family's CCS entitlement. It also means long day care service providers must apply the Free Kinder offset to each families' fees after CCS has been applied.

Confirming a child's funded kindergarten program

Services must tell families that a child can only go to one funded kindergarten program at one service at a time. Services must make sure that all families have a signed form that confirms where their child will go for their funded program and keep a copy on record at the service.

All services must use our 'one funded place' form. This form can be included in an enrolment pack, either on paper or online and needs a parent or carer signature.

Long day care services must reconfirm a child's participation in their funded kindergarten program prior to Annual Confirmation to make sure funding is paid to the right service.

Services should also wait until [Term 1](#) begins (in line with school terms) before applying the offset, in case families decide to access a funded program at a sessional service.

If a child is enrolled at more than one service and funding is paid to a service where the family does not wish to claim their funded place, we will recoup the funding.

Communicating with parents

Long day care services must provide families with the following information:

- how the Free Kinder offset will be applied to families' fees (including regularity, which must be no less frequent than monthly)
- when payments will begin
- how the offset will be detailed on invoices (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset)
- that where families attend more than one service they must choose where the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program (and therefore receive the Free Kinder funding)
- that children eligible for ESK are enrolled and funded under the ESK program.

This information should be included in the service's kindergarten fee policy.

Free Kinder must be well-promoted and explained through the service's communication channels, including websites. You can find a [communications resources pack](#) on our website, including a factsheet and letter for families, as well as website and social media content.

Services should also consider if translated materials and/or a translator would be of benefit to families.

Confirmation of participation in Free Kinder

Service providers will be required to confirm their participation in Free Kinder for 2024.

If a service is new or starts offering funded kindergarten during the year, they'll confirm their participation after applying for funding.

Monitoring and compliance with funding requirements

We will actively monitor compliance with the Free Kinder funding requirements. We, or an organisation engaged to monitor compliance on our behalf, may seek additional information and documents from service providers as part of an assurance process. This is to ensure the full benefits are being passed on to parents and that all Free Kinder funding is being used correctly and according to requirements.

Free Kinder payment to services

Free Kinder funding rates for 2024 are available on the [kindergarten funding rates](#) page.

Free Kinder funding is paid on top of other kindergarten funding streams available to long day care services (excluding Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)).

The Free Kinder payment will replace ESK Extension and is included in the ESK rate.

Funding for hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

We fund Three-Year-Old Kindergarten enrolments based on the number of hours a child spends in a funded program, which can range from 5 to 15 hours.

If a child is enrolled in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program for the full 15 hours per week, the service will be paid the full funding amount for that child.

If a child is enrolled for fewer than 15 hours, the funding will be adjusted proportionally. For example, if a 3-year-old child is enrolled in a kindergarten program for 7.5 hours per week, they'll receive half of the full 15-hour Free Kinder rate.

Payment of funding

Free Kinder payments will be made monthly via the Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS). Free Kinder funding is prorated from a service's funding start date.

Services should ensure their enrolment data in KIMS is up to date to ensure accurate payments each month.

Offsetting Free Kinder

Long day care services must apply the Free Kinder offset weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The offset should not be applied termly as this increases the risk of passing on the incorrect offset to families that move between services.

The [Free Kinder calculator](#) is available to support services to determine the correct amount to offset from fees.

Families with surplus Free Kinder funding

In circumstances where the fee offset is greater than the families' gap payment, services should set aside any fee offset not used throughout the year, in case the family's situation changes.

This may mean these families get a larger part of their fee offset later in the year if their CCS level decreases. By the end of the kindergarten year, if possible, each family should receive their full Free Kinder entitlement.

At the end of the calendar year, any remaining fee offset may be used to improve the funded kindergarten program, like improving quality and engaging families in kindergarten for the following year.

Frequently asked questions

What happens if a child moves from one service to another in the kindergarten year?

Some children move from one service to another during the kindergarten year. In these cases, the Free Kinder funding will cease at the first service and payments will be paid to the new service (if that service is participating in Free Kinder).

Do I need to enrol children eligible for ESK?

It's important that you continue to enrol eligible children in Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) at your service. This helps service providers receive their full funding entitlement and ensures these children have access to 15 funded hours of kindergarten across Victoria.

ESK enrolment numbers play a role in calculating School Readiness Funding (SRF) for service providers. Enrolling children in ESK also allows the department to continue to monitor efforts to engage the most vulnerable children in kindergarten across Victoria and provide extra targeted support where needed through SRF or Early Childhood LOOKOUT.

Why are the Free Kinder subsidies different in sessional and long day cares?

Free Kinder funding works differently in the 2 settings. For integrated long day care programs, the service must pass the full Free Kinder savings on as a fee offset to families. This is because fees are charged for all hours of education and care, not just the kindergarten program hours, and fees can vary based on factors like the family's Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy entitlement.

Free Kinder in sessional programs functions as a fee replacement for the service. The sessional rate has been set higher to enable sessional services to offer a free 15-hour program without changing their current fee structure.

Can service providers opt in at a program level? (i.e., opt-in for the Four-Year-old Kindergarten program only and not the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program)?

Services that are participating in Free Kinder must offer a free program for all children enrolled in kindergarten at their service. Services cannot only offer Free Kinder to some groups of children (e.g., cannot offer Free Kinder for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten and not Three-Year-Old Kindergarten).

[Funding requirements for Free Kinder in 2024 - long day care services \(DOCX, 91 KB\)](#)

[Education](#)

Attachment 3

“Sessional Free Kindergarten”

Sessional Free Kindergarten – Possum Room only - offered from 01.06.25

Days: Mon to Thurs

Booking time 8.30am to 4.00pm ONLY- no fees

Choose 2 days for this booking and the 2 x 7.5 hours days will be FREE during term times.

You will need to provide lunch, snacks and nappies for your child on these days.

Q & A -Sessional Free Kindergarten in Possum Room

- Can I book 2 days Sessional Free Kindergarten of 7.5 hours (8.30am to 4.00pm)? Yes, ONLY in POSSUM Room. You will not pay childcare fees for these 2 days at all, but you must ensure your child is only in care from 8.30am until 4pm on these days.
- Can I change the hours of care? No, the timing of the days is not flexible - we are only allowed to offer 7.5 hours per day for 2 days Free Kindergarten.
- Can I choose which days of Kindergarten I want? Yes. You can decide which 2 days (M T W TH) to book and only use those days, or:
- Can I use 2 days of Sessional Free Kindergarten and book childcare days for other days? Yes, you can have Sessional Free Kindergarten or a longer kinder day with fees including CCS - but not both.
- What about school holidays? During school holidays the Sessional Free Kindergarten does not apply. If you need childcare during school holidays your booking would have to change for those weeks to a childcare arrangement.
- What else is different? If you have your child booked for Sessional Free Kindergarten you will need to supply food and nappies/pullups if required. We will explain in detail about sending snacks and lunch items.

Updated 15 July 2024, March 2025

Families and Visitors

- Adhere to Centre policies and procedures
- Collaborate with staff to discuss, develop and implement plans to address behaviours of concern
- Communicate positively, respectfully and professionally with all staff in the Centre at all times
- Communicate positively and respectfully with all other families, children and visitors
- Follow the complaints procedure when expressing concerns or complaints
- Behave in a manner that supports the University and Centre Values and Mission statement

