

Advice for families: Free Kinder in sessional services

Free Kinder is available for all children enrolled in funded kindergarten or Pre-Prep programs at services participating in Free Kinder. This fact sheet is for families with children enrolled in participating sessional services.

Savings for families

Children enrolled in sessional kindergarten services receive a free program:

- For 3-year-old children, Free Kinder means a free kindergarten program between 5 and 15 hours per week
- For 4-year-old children, Free Kinder means a free kindergarten program of 15 hours per week
- For children eligible for Pre-Prep in 2025, Free Kinder still applies. This means a free kindergarten program of between 16 and 30 hours per week.

Eligibility

Free Kinder is for everyone. You do not need to be an Australian citizen to be eligible to access Free Kinder.

Your child can receive one year of Free Kinder in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program and one year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program. Your child can only receive Free Kinder at one service at a time. Your kindergarten service will ask you to sign a form to confirm that your child is receiving their funded kindergarten program at their service.

Sessional kindergarten services that offer additional hours

Some sessional kindergarten services participating in Free Kinder offer extra kindergarten hours or care hours for a fee.

These extra hours are optional. If you don't want the extra hours, your child can attend up to the maximum free program hours free of charge.

For information on fees or hours provided, please ask your kindergarten service.



Best Start Best Life

Other allowable charges

You may be charged the following:

- a registration fee when you enrol your child for kindergarten. This fee is allowable as it is not related to the delivery of the kindergarten program.
- an enrolment deposit, but this is refunded if your child starts attending the service.
- or one-off incursions (e.g. an external provider attends the service to deliver a one-off activity/presentation).

Children from a refugee background, children known to child protection, Aboriginal children and those holding Commonwealth concession cards will not be charged for excursions or incursions.

Some services may request payment for one-off excursions or incursions at the beginning of the year. In these cases, services must refund any surplus funds that have not been used for the cost recovery of excursions or incursions at the end of the year.

Your service may ask you for a voluntary donation or to participate in fundraising. You can choose if you want to donate or take part in fundraising.

You will not be charged:

- for regular excursions (e.g., Bush Kinder) or regular incursions (e.g., fortnightly music or weekly sports programs) that are a core part of the kindergarten program.
- compulsory out-of-pocket fees or levies, e.g. maintenance fees, membership fees.

If your child changes kindergarten services during the year

If your child moves to a different sessional (standalone) service that is participating in Free Kinder during the kindergarten year, the service that you are moving from will stop receiving the Free Kinder payment and your new sessional service will receive the Free Kinder funding so you can continue to receive a free program.

If your child moves from a sessional kindergarten program to a kindergarten program in a long day care service during their kindergarten year, the service will stop receiving the Free Kinder payment and your new service will receive the Free Kinder funding so they can pass the savings on to you.

More information about Free Kinder in long day care services is available at vic.gov.au/kinder

