

Wellington Shire **KINDERGARTEN** Central Registration Service



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
The Heart of Gippsland

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QUESTIONS

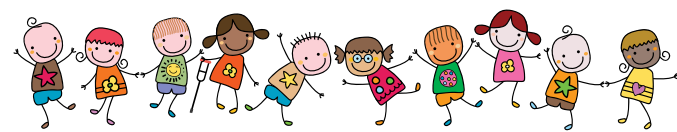


Wurruk Primary School
Wurruk Primary School



Kath Foley
Since 1986 | Children's Centre
and Kindergarten

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Acknowledgement of Country

Wellington Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, the Gunaikurnai people, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge, respect, and uphold their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to this land and water on which we rely. Council acknowledges the history of dispossession and movement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Gippsland and the impact this has had to the cultural lore, health and wellbeing of the Traditional Owners.

Wellington Shire Council commits to genuine partnership and meaningful engagement with the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities. We commit to contributing to the care for Country and the broader aspirations of Gunaikurnai people to stand proud and strong, to be self-sufficient and highly respected.

What is kindergarten?

Kindergarten is a program for young children delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the two years before children start school. Kindergarten is not compulsory, but is an important step for young children and is strongly recommended for all children. Research shows that attending a kindergarten program improves a child's health and wellbeing, helps them to develop strong social skills such as building relationships, developing confidence, developing listening and sharing skills, and encourages a love of learning. Children who go to kindergarten are more independent and confident and are more likely to make a smooth transition to primary school.

From 2023, 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten will be fully funded by the Department of Education up to 15 hours per week. For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/kinder.

What is 'funded' kindergarten?

A funded kindergarten program is funded fully or partly by the Government and can access resources through the Department of Education, such as School Readiness Funding. To be funded, a kindergarten program must fulfill certain conditions, such as be delivered by a suitably qualified teacher. For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide.



What are the types of kindergarten programs?

Sessional kindergarten

Sessional kindergarten usually refers to a kindergarten program that operates for specific days and hours each week. In most instances, the same children attend on the same days. For example, four-year-old kindergarten may be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00am - 2:00pm each week during school terms.

Sessional kindergarten within a long day care service

Sessional kindergarten within a long day care centre usually means the hours of kindergarten are the same each day but families can choose the days they would like to attend. Before and after kindergarten care is also available for those who require this option on one or more days (at an additional cost). For example, kindergarten may operate from 9:00am - 2:00pm each day with children attending three days. For each family the days may be different meaning your child could be with different children on different days. The before and after kindergarten care means that you are able to drop off and pick up after the designated kindergarten times.

Integrated kindergarten and long day care

Integrated kindergarten usually refers to kindergarten within a long day care centre. The hours are generally longer and charged by the day with a government childcare subsidy instead of term fees. For example, kindergarten hours may be 8:30am - 4:00pm with a qualified educator, before and aftercare is included, and you will be charged the daily rate of the centre and be able to claim any applicable childcare subsidy.

Rotational programs

A rotational program is generally where the children are in smaller groups which attend on different days. This means that your child remains with their core group every session, but may be with different children in other groups on different days. For example, groups A and B attend on Mondays, groups B and C on Tuesdays, groups A and C on Wednesday etc.

Mixed programs

Mixed usually refers to a mixed age group, including both 3-year-old and 4-year-old children.

Nature kindergarten

Nature kindergarten (sometimes called bush kindergarten) is usually part of a wider kindergarten program eg a program might include regular weekly or fortnightly sessions where the children are taken to a local park or reserve to enjoy the mental and physical benefits of playing in natural settings.



How old should my child be when they start kindergarten?

In Victoria, children are eligible for 3-year-old kindergarten if they turn 3 years of age by 30 April in the year they are to attend kindergarten. Children are eligible for one year only of funded three-year-old kindergarten.

In Victoria, children are eligible for 4-year-old kindergarten if they turn 4 years of age by 30 April in the year they are to attend kindergarten. Children are generally eligible for one year of funded four-year-old kindergarten. Children may be eligible for a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten if they have delays in learning and development outcome areas. Your child's kindergarten teacher will be able to provide advice and assistance if needed.

What if my child is born between January and April?

If your child is born between 1 January and 30 April, you have a choice about which year your child commences kindergarten. This means for 3-year-old kindergarten, your child may attend as a younger child (2 turning 3 years old), or as an older child (3 turning 4 years old). This then follows on to 4-year-old kindergarten and primary school.

When are the kindergarten open days?

Kindergarten providers in Wellington Shire generally hold their open days in May. Some providers have virtual tours of their facilities available on their websites. Please contact your preferred providers for details of their open days, or to request an interview or tour.

How do I know if my child is ready for kindergarten?

Each child develops at their own rate, and although a child may be eligible to start kindergarten due to their age, other factors may impact on their readiness for kindergarten.

If you have concerns about whether your child is ready for kindergarten, please contact your Maternal and Child Health nurse, an early childhood educator/teacher at your preferred service, the principal or a teacher at the primary school your child is likely to attend, and/or other professionals your child sees (eg speech therapist, physiotherapist, paediatrician) for advice.



What if my child needs a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten?

If you think your child may need a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten, please discuss this as early as possible with your child's kindergarten teacher, as there are limited conditions under which a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten are available.

For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/second-year-funded-four-year-old-kindergarten

What if my child has additional needs?

There are two programs your kindergarten provider can use to give your child additional support. These are the Kindergarten Inclusion Support program and the Preschool Field Officer program.

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support program helps kindergarten providers with issues such as:

- training for teachers to work with children with disabilities or complex medical needs
- creating inclusive learning programs
- working with families that need extra support
- extra assistant to help with teaching your child

Kindergarten providers apply for additional resources, rather than families. Please consult with your preferred provider if your child has special needs.

All funded kindergarten programs can use Preschool Field Officers. They help kindergarten teachers improve their skills to meet the needs of children with additional needs. They do not work one-on-one with your child. Their role includes:

- helping the teacher to identify your child's learning needs
- supporting the teacher to provide an inclusive kindergarten program.

For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/help-children-additional-needs-kindergarten

What is Early Start kindergarten?

Early Start Kindergarten provides up to 15 hours per week of free kindergarten to all eligible 3-year-old children in Victoria, where programs are offered by a qualified teacher.

Kindergarten providers may be able to offer your child a place in a program for 4-year-olds, or a mixed age group.

You should speak to your preferred provider about Early Start Kindergarten.

Your child is eligible if they are age 3 by 30 April in the year they will be attending and:

- your family has had contact with Child Protection or
- your child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or
- your child is from a refugee or asylum seeker background.

For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/early-start-kindergarten



What are some resources for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children?

Koorie Kids Shine

Koorie Kids Shine helps promote participation by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can learn about the benefits of kindergarten, including how services create culturally safe places for Koorie children and families, and how to enrol in kindergarten for 3-year-old and 4-year-old children.

For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/koorie-kids-shine or contact the Koorie Education Support Officer Outer Gippsland at sevr.koorie.outer.gippsland@education.vic.gov.au.

Koorie Engagement Support Officers

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) are employed by the Department of Education to support Koorie families in accessing services and supports to ensure the best start in life for Koorie children, from birth to school completion. KESOs provide advice and practical support to services that provide funded kindergarten programs. They build the capacity of these services to deliver programs that are respectful of the cultural beliefs and practices of Koorie children by, for example:

- increasing and enhancing Koorie children's participation in kindergarten
- promoting the values of kindergarten programs within Koorie families and communities
- promoting cultural awareness and providing access to relevant resources for the delivery of all kindergarten programs.

Koorie Preschool Assistants

Koorie Preschool Assistants (KPSAs) work out of local community-based organisations.

They work with services delivering kindergarten programs to:

- enhance the access and participation of Koorie children in kindergarten programs
- promote and assist in the delivery of kindergarten programs that are inclusive of Koorie children
- support the attendance of Koorie children who are enrolled in kindergarten programs
- encourage the involvement and participation of Koorie parents, families and carers in the development of kindergarten programs.

For more information please visit www.vic.gov.au/childcare-and-kindergarten-aboriginal-children or contact the Koorie Education Support Officer Outer Gippsland at sevr.koorie.outer.gippsland@education.vic.gov.au.



How many hours a week can my child go to kindergarten?

Funded 3-year-old kindergarten programs are offered for at least 5, and up to 15 hours per week. Funded 3-year-old kindergarten will be 15 hours per week for every child by 2029.

Funded 4-year-old kindergarten programs are offered for 15 hours per week. Some services may offer more hours for 4-year-old kindergarten, in which case the service may charge a fee for the additional hours in excess of 15.

For more information about the Free Kinder reforms, please visit www.vic.gov.au/kinder

Does my child need to be immunised to attend kindergarten?

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before enrolling a child, early childhood education and care services must obtain evidence that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive, or for which they have a medical exemption if applicable. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is required for this purpose. For more information, please visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play

You do not need to provide an Immunisation History Statement for your child when submitting a Registration Form under the Wellington Central Registration Service, however you will have to provide it when enrolling at your preferred service.



What are the fees?

Kindergarten is funded by Government and user fees.

In 2022, the Victorian State Government introduced the Best Start, Best Life reforms which include the Free Kinder program. Up to 15 hours per week of 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten will be funded from 2023. Kindergarten providers must opt-in to the program. Most but not all kindergarten providers in Wellington Shire have opted-in to the Free Kinder program. All kindergarten providers involved in the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service have opted in. For more information, please visit www.vic.gov.au/kinder

If a service offers more than 15 hours of 4-year-old kindergarten per week, there may be fees for the additional hours. Please consult your preferred service.

Integrated kindergarten or sessional kindergarten in a long day care service may have fees associated with the wrap-around childcare. Childcare fees at each service may differ due to different running costs and variety of programs offered. Fee enquires should be directed to the kindergarten provider.

When does kindergarten start?

Kindergarten generally coincides with the four terms of government schools. Contact your service for specific dates. Please refer to www.vic.gov.au/school-term-dates-and-holidays-victoria for a general guide.



WELLINGTON KINDERGARTEN

Central Registration Service



What is the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service for funded kindergarten?

Wellington Shire Council manages the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service to support all eligible children to access a kindergarten place by providing a process to register children in funded kindergarten that is easy, free and convenient, and managing a fair and transparent process for the allocation of kindergarten places.

The Kindergarten Central Registration Service provides a single point where families can lodge an Expression of Interest for their child for a future year of kindergarten (to ensure they are notified when registrations open for their child's kindergarten year), or submit a Registration Form for kindergarten. The registration process and allocation of kindergarten places is streamlined and transparent.

Kindergarten places are allocated in accordance with criteria agreed by participating kindergarten providers, and families are advised of their allocation of a place. If a place is accepted, families then enrol their child at the relevant kindergarten service.

Wellington Shire Council administers the Kindergarten Central Registration Service for participating kindergartens in the Shire.



Kindergarten providers which are currently partners in the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service are:

- **Uniting VicTAs** unitingvictas.org.au is Early Years Manager for the following kindergarten centres:
Briagolong Uniting Early Learning Centre
East Sale Uniting Kindergarten
Glassford Street Uniting Kindergarten, Maffra
Gormandale Uniting Kindergarten
Heyfield Uniting Kindergarten
Little Saints Early Learning Centre, Maffra <https://littlesaintselc.com.au/>
Longford Uniting Kindergarten
Rosedale Uniting Early Learning
St Columba's Uniting Kindergarten, Sale
Stratford Uniting Kindergarten
- **Sale Combined Kindergartens Inc.** is Early Years Manager for the following kindergarten centres: www.salekinders.com.au
Gwenfa Hampton Kindergarten
Hyland Community Kindergarten
Sale North Kindergarten
- **Wurruk Kindergarten** ph 5144 2975
- **Gumnuts Early Learning Centre** (limited places) www.gumnutselc.vic.edu.au
- **Kath Foley Children's Centre and Kindergarten** (limited places) www.kathfoley.com.au
- **Yarram Early Learning Centre** (limited places) www.yarramelc.com.au

Long day care providers (Gumnuts Early Learning Centre, Kath Foley Kindergarten and Children's Centre, Little Saints Early Learning Centre, and Yarram Early Learning Centre) may have a limited number of kindergarten places available through the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service. We encourage you to contact these providers individually to discuss registration options. To ensure your child does not miss out on a kindergarten place, we suggest that you register with both the Central Registration Service and your preferred long day care provider.

Early years providers which are not currently partners in the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service are:

- Duke Street Children's Centre, Maffra
- Gippsland Grammar Early Learning Centre, Sale
- One Tree Defence East Sale
- Reeve Street Children's Centre, Sale
- Sale Childcare Centre

How are kindergarten places allocated?

- Allocation of kindergarten places are made using three data inputs:
- The three program preferences you choose in your child’s Registration Form.
 - Your child’s priority of access criteria weighting.
 - The number of kindergarten places available in your preferred programs.

There is no ‘first in, first served’ rule for allocation of kindergarten places, for Registration Forms submitted between 1 May and 30 June. Registration Forms submitted after 30 June will be considered late and will be considered for subsequent round offers.

Where there are more children registering for a kindergarten program than there are places available, ‘priority of access’ criteria is used for the allocation of these places. Some priority of access criteria are mandated by the Department of Education:

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-Of-Home-Care.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.
- Asylum seeker and refugee children.
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
- Children with additional needs eg
 - require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program.
 - require a combination of services which are individually planned.
 - have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.
- Children approved for a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten.

For more information about the mandated priority of access criteria, please visit www.vic.gov.au/priority-access-criteria.

- There are also local priority of access criteria, developed based on feedback from kindergarten providers:
- A connection with the preferred service eg the child or a sibling has attended the preferred service in the last 5 years or, in relation to East Sale Uniting Kindergarten only, at least one of the child’s parents/carers works on RAAF Base East Sale.
 - A connection with Wellington Shire eg the child resides in the Shire or a parent or guardian works or studies in the Shire.
 - You may supply additional relevant information (eg transport challenges, serious illness of parent/carer) which may be taken into consideration after review by a committee made up of three members of the Social Planning and Policy team (including at least one member of the Early Years team) at Council. Not all additional information will be deemed relevant to the allocation of a kindergarten place.

Registrations are allocated points for various priority of access criteria, and kindergarten places are offered in order of highest-scoring registrations to lowest-scoring registrations. When there are several registrations on the same priority level and limited kindergarten places, there is a random ballot selection.

Factor	Relative weighting
DET criteria or Deferred	10 points for any 1 or more
Connection to preferred provider (child or sibling has attended in the last 5 years or, in relation to East Sale Uniting Kindergarten only, at least one of the child’s parents/carers works on RAAF Base East Sale).	8
Connection to the Shire: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• child is resident in the Shire or• is non-resident but parent/carer works or studies in the Shire	6 4
Additional relevant information eg transport challenges, serious illness of parent/carer	1 (If approved by committee)



When and how do I submit an Expression of Interest form?

An Expression of Interest form is a way to record your interest in being notified of when registrations for your child's kindergarten year will open. You may submit an Expression of Interest at any time of year, and any time after your child's birth.

The Expression of Interest form can be filled out here: <https://forms.enrolnow.com.au/222701396019958> or at www.wellington.vic.gov.au/community/early-years.

If you have completed an Expression of Interest form, you will be notified of when registrations open for your child's kindergarten year. You must advise us of any change in contact details to ensure you do not miss out on a notification.

If you need assistance, want to advise of a change of details, or have any questions, please contact our Early Years team on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au.

When and how do I submit a Registration Form?

Registrations for kindergarten through the Kindergarten Central Registration Service will be open from 1 May to 30 June in the year before your child will attend kindergarten.

Registration Forms can be submitted [here](#) or at www.wellington.vic.gov.au/community/early-years. If you need assistance, please contact the Early Years team on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au.

Do I need any documents to submit a Registration Form?

No, you do not need to attach any documents or pay any fee when submitting your Registration Form.

You will need to provide documents (eg birth certificate, Immunisation History Statement, concession cards etc) to your child's kindergarten when you complete your child's enrolment.



Do I need to submit a Registration Form for my child for 4-year-old kindergarten if they are already attending 3-year-old kindergarten?

Yes, you will need to submit a Registration Form for 4-year-old kindergarten and select 3 program preferences.

How do I know if my Registration Form has been received?

After submitting a Registration Form, you should receive an email to confirm receipt. If this is not received, please check your junk email before contacting the Early Years team on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au.

What are the timelines for the Wellington Kindergarten Central Registration Service?

Anytime from birth	
Submit an Expression of Interest form at https://forms.enrolnow.com.au/222701396019958 or at www.wellington.vic.gov.au/community/early-years , keep us informed of any change to your contact details, and be notified when registrations for your child's anticipated kindergarten year open.	Anytime of year
In the year before your child will attend 3-year-old or 4-year-old kindergarten	
Submit a Registration Form for kindergarten here or at www.wellington.vic.gov.au/community/early-years .	1 May – 30 June
Registration Forms received after 30 June will be processed for subsequent round offers.	
First round offers will go out to families	Early August
Acceptance of first round offers due	Late August
Subsequent offers and late registrations	September



Can I change my kindergarten preferences after I have submitted a Registration Form?

Yes, changes to registration preferences can be made before registrations close on 30 June, by submitting a new Registration Form [here](#) or by notifying the Early Years team on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au.

Requests made after 30 June will result in a registration being deemed late.

Can I cancel my Registration?

Yes. Please contact the Early Years team on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au to confirm that you would like to cancel your registration.

What happens if I submit my Registration Form late?

Registrations received after 30 June will be assessed after those received by the due date. Subsequent offer rounds of kindergarten places will occur from September.

When are offers for kindergarten places made?

First round offers of kindergarten places, for Registration Forms submitted between 1 May and 30 June, will be in early August.

Subsequent offers (for example for late registrations) will occur as vacancies arise from September.



I've received an offer for a kindergarten place – now what do I do?

You will be notified when an offer of a kindergarten place is made for your child, and will be advised of the date by which a response is required. While most children will receive an offer for their first program preference, you may be offered a second or third program preference. The following options are available as links in the notification email:

You can accept the offer.

If you have received an offer and choose to accept it, you will be connected with your kindergarten provider to commence enrolment. All further communication will be with your kindergarten provider.

You can accept the offer and remain on a waitlist for another program.

If you have not received an offer for your preferred program, you can accept the offer that is made of a less preferred program, and remain on a waitlist to be advised if a place becomes available at your preferred program. You will be connected with your kindergarten provider to commence enrolment.

You can defer the offer.

If you accept but defer your place, you will be given priority placement in the following year. You will need to complete another Registration Form for the following year to provide updated preferences, as programs may change from one year to the next. We will be in contact with you when registrations open for the following year to request that you provide updated preferences.

You can decline the offer.

If you decline the offer, your registration will be deemed inactive and your place allocated to the next child. You will not receive any further offers.

You can decline the offer and remain on a waitlist for another program.

If you have not received an offer for your preferred program, you can decline the offer that is made of a less preferred program, and remain on a waitlist to be advised if a place becomes available at your preferred program. Note if you chose this option, there is no guarantee that a place will become available.

If you fail to respond.

If you do not respond by the deadline, your offer will be deemed to be declined, and you will not receive any further offers.

Please contact the Early Years team on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au if you have any questions or need assistance.



What about privacy?

By submitting an Expression of Interest Form, or a Registration Form, families are agreeing to have a file created. This file includes details provided in the Expression of Interest and/or Registration Form. The details are used to process and manage kindergarten registrations and allocation of kindergarten places by relevant Council staff, recorded, and provided to nominated kindergarten providers. De-identified data may be used for community planning such as kindergarten programs, infrastructure projects or advocacy.

What if I haven't heard from the Early Years team?

If you are expecting to hear from us, but haven't, please check these two things:

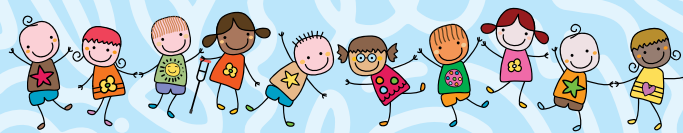
- Please keep us updated of any changes in contact details, to ensure you don't miss out on correspondence.
- Please check your junk mail for any emails.

Wellington Shire Council's Early Years team is here to help.

Please contact us with any questions on 1300 366 244 or earlyyears@wellington.vic.gov.au.



We hope you and your child enjoy your kindergarten experience in Wellington Shire.



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
The Heart of Gippsland