

Information kit regarding the process to determine eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

Early Years Program
Office for Children



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1. Introduction

The Department of Human Services provides funding for all eligible children to participate in a kindergarten program in the year before they start school.

It is important that children start school when they are ready to learn in a more formal environment. Therefore it is important for parents to consider when is the best time for their child to start school – as this will determine the best time to attend kindergarten.

With some children, although the parent has made the decision to enrol the child in a kindergarten program, as time passes, evidence starts to suggest that the child may have developmental delays and may benefit from the experience of a second year of kindergarten before starting school.

A child is eligible for a second year of kindergarten, if the teacher assesses the child as having delays in at least two areas of development and that he or she will benefit from a second year of kindergarten. The areas assessed include self-care, the ability to speak and/or understand language, cognitive (intellectual) development, social development, and emotional development. Other factors may also be considered.

This information kit provides information for parents and guidelines to assist teachers in assessing children and declaring eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten.

2. The process

2.1 Eligibility

A child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten if s/he:

- has delayed development identified in two or more areas; and
 - will benefit from a second year of kindergarten
- Note this process is not applicable to children who have withdrawn from kindergarten the previous year and are returning to take up their first year.
- If completing a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS) application it is not necessary to complete the second year assessment form, only the declaration form.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

Guidelines have been developed to assist teachers and parents identify specific developmental needs and to establish specific goals for individual children.

The guidelines, which indicate skills and examples of observable behaviour, should be regarded as examples only. They should not be interpreted as a comprehensive development checklist.

Areas for assessment are as follows:

- Self care
- Receptive and/or expressive language
- Cognitive development
- Social development
- Emotional development
- Other factors.

For eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten, children will, in general, have delayed development identified in **two** or more of the above areas.

If required, further consultation may be undertaken with other early childhood development professionals to complete the assessment.

2.3 The declaration form

If eligible the child's kindergarten teacher, with the consent of, and in consultation with the child's parent/guardians, will complete a declaration form. The declaration form should be returned to the relevant regional office of the Department of Human Services by **last day of term 3 in each year**.

2.4 Late declarations

Late declarations can be made but it is important to note that it may make it difficult for re-enrolment at the funded service. The funded service may have allocated all available places to new enrolments as part of its enrolment policy and timetable.

2.5 Re-enrolment

It is important to check the enrolment policy applicable to the service to ensure that you re-enrol for a second year of kindergarten. The declaration form does not guarantee automatic re-enrolment in a kindergarten program of your choice.

2.6 Children turning six

Children turning six during the second year of funded kindergarten must be exempted from attending school by the Department of Education and Training (DE&T). Parents should fill in the *Exemption from School* form and send it to the Regional Director of the relevant DE&T regional office. From term four, the form will be available for downloading from the DE&T and DHS – Office for Children websites. Hard copies of the form will also be available from the DE&T and/or DHS regional offices.

3. Who will access the information?

The declaration form is sent to the relevant DHS regional office. The assessment form, individual developmental records and proposed developmental and educational outcomes for the following year remain at the funded service. These records are accessible to the child's parents.

Departmental Officers may check developmental records.

A departmental officer will establish a register of children declared eligible and this list may be provided to Preschool Field Officers who support children at the service.

A departmental officer will retain the declaration forms and may use some of the information to collate statistics on the second year process.

A copy of the declaration form may also accompany the parents 'application for school exemption' to Department of Education and Training.

4. Guidelines for assessing children for a second year of funded kindergarten

These guidelines focus on the five areas of development, which are used to determine eligibility for a second year of kindergarten. In the Table below, the column on the left indicates particular skills and the column on the right provides examples of expected observable behaviour. In general, the child must be identified as having delayed development **in at least two of these five areas**, to be eligible for a second year of funding.

There may also be other extenuating circumstances that impact on a child's development that may be taken into consideration, for example; family breakdown, life threatening illness or other issues that may be taken into account in the assessment of the child.

These guidelines are EXAMPLES ONLY – they are not a comprehensive developmental checklist.

Area 1: Self Care

Skill Areas	Observable behaviours
Ability to participate in a range of experiences independently	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Initiates and selects experiences or activities without guidance. – Does not constantly seek or request adult's or other child's presence to undertake an activity.
Level of independence in self care routines	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is able to undertake and complete toileting, eating and dressing without assistance.
Demonstrated level of motor control and coordination	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Manages whole body in relation to particular environments. – Range of fine motor abilities is practised, including perceptual motor skills.

Area 2: Receptive and/or expressive language

Skill areas	Observable behaviours
Ability to communicate needs verbally and/or non-verbally	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expresses needs to other children and adults. – Is understood most of the time by most of the children and adults present.
Ability to understand and respond to verbal requests or instructions	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attends to person speaking to them. – Follows instructions when related to a logical task.

Area 3: Cognitive Development

Skill areas	Observable behaviours
Ability to focus on the task at hand	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintains concentration in self-directed experiences.
Level of skill in planning, processing and completing tasks and experiences	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is able to select an experience/activity, prepare and carry out tasks to task completion.
Expression of ideas in the use of creative, constructive and/or imaginative materials	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses open-ended materials, such as art materials, blocks and/or improvised materials or resources to reflect and express own ideas.
Demonstrated use of imitation, memory and problem-solving skills	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses previous experience of materials or situations to develop own understanding.

Area 4: Social Development

Skill areas	Observable behaviours
Ability to initiate and respond appropriately to interactions with children and adults	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertakes cooperative play in a small group. - Understands the rules of the group. - Engages or reacts to other children when playing in appropriate ways. - Demonstrates behaviour that shows respect for others.
Predominant type of play	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engages in a range of play situations. - Demonstrates ability to take both leading and following roles. - Spends some time playing by self.
Ability to share and take turns in appropriate circumstances	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates respect for others' rights to play. - Is able to communicate own preference when necessary.
Ability to control impulsive or aggressive behaviour	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expresses frustration or anger verbally. - Directs need for intense physical expression to appropriate equipment or materials.

Area 5: Emotional Development

Skill area	Observable behaviours
Positive sense of self	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes a contribution to play in small groups. - Moves comfortably between experiences. - May demonstrate a willingness to help others. - Shows satisfaction in personal achievements.
Process of separation from parent	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separates appropriately from parent. - Moves freely to join daily program.
Ability to form appropriate relationships with others	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates mutuality of relationships with others.
Response to unexpected change	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapts quickly to changed circumstances. - Maintains consistent links to other children or materials.
Response to guidance from adults	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wants to know some reasons for unsolicited guidance.
Response to given situations	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal rituals are predictable. - Demonstrates range of appropriate responses.
Ability to seek appropriate assistance when required	Generally; the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows endeavour and perseverance with self-selected tasks. - Is able to communicate the type of assistance required.

Area 6: Other Factors

Factors	Observable behaviours
Family breakdown	Generally; the child has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable caregiving - Positive role modelling
Community has an impact on the child's wellbeing	Generally; the child has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equitable access to community infrastructure and amenities, including health, educational, recreational and social facilities and services - A safe community environment
Other issues	Generally; the child has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouragement to build a strong sense of personal identity - Boundaries and rules that protect families and individuals and allow conflict to be dealt with effectively

Part 3: Details of person undertaking the assessment

Name of teacher:
Service name:
Funded Organisation:
Phone no. (business hours):

Early Childhood Specialist/s supporting this application (if applicable)

Name:
Role:
Service name:
Phone no. (business hours):

Name:
Role:
Service name:
Phone no. (business hours):

example only

Part 4: Details of identified developmental needs and outcomes for the child

Please attach an extra page if you need additional space to write information

Self Care

Receptive or expressive language

Cognitive development

Social development

example only

Emotional development

Other Factors

Additional Information:

Is there any other information that relates to the assessment of the child's development? If so, outline these here:

Details of identified developmental needs and outcomes for child

Indicate **TWO** or more areas of delayed development for this child (tick appropriate boxes):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Social development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receptive or expressive language | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive development | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Factors _____ |

Part 6

Teacher Certification

The information provided in this assessment is true and correct to the best of my professional knowledge	
<i>Signature</i>	
Teacher:	Date: / /

Parent Certification

I have read the information provided in this assessment and verify that the information is correct to the best of my knowledge	
<i>Signature</i>	
Parent:	Date: / /
<i>Signature</i>	
Parent:	Date: / /

example only

6. About the Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

- The declaration form on the following page can be downloaded from the website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood
- This is the form that confirms a child's eligibility for a second year and which may need to be shown when re-enrolling at a kindergarten program.
- Note this process is not applicable to children who have withdrawn from kindergarten the previous year and are returning to take up their first year.
- If completing a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS) application it is not necessary to complete the second year assessment form, only the declaration form.

About children turning six during their second year of kindergarten

- Children turning six during the second year of funded kindergarten must be exempted from attending school by the Department of Education and Training (DET). Parents should fill in the Exemption from School form and send to regional DET office. Forms will be available on DET & Office for Children website from term four or copies available from DET or DHS regional offices.

Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

Please forward this completed form to the relevant DHS regional office by the end of Term 3. Regional office addresses can be found in the Information kit.

This form must be completed when a child is eligible for and seeks a second year of funded kindergarten. A child who is assessed by the kindergarten teacher as meeting the eligibility criteria for a second year is eligible to attend a kindergarten program the following year. The child will need to re-enrol in accordance with local requirements.

The child's kindergarten teacher, in consultation with and with the consent of the child's parent/guardians, should complete this form. The purpose of this form is to:

- **Provide parents/guardians with written information, that their child is eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program in the following year.** Please provide a copy of the completed form for the child's parents/guardians, and also retain a copy on the child's record.
- **Advise the Department of Human Services regional office that a child is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten.** This information, without identifying personal information, will be used to report on trends in kindergarten participation. Refer to the privacy statement on this form.
- Prior to completing this form the teacher must have assessed the child and completed an **Assessment record to determine eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten (can be found in information kit and downloaded from the website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood)**
- **To support an application for school exemption if the child is turning six during the kindergarten year.**

Child details

Child's name:	
Date of birth: / /	Child's gender: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female
For office use only Statistical linkage key	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>In the first three spaces record the 2nd, 3rd and 5th letters of the child's family name or surname. In the following two spaces record the 2nd and 3rd letters of the child's first given name.</p> <p>If the child's name includes non-alphabetic characters, for example, hyphens, apostrophes or blank spaces, these non-alphabetic characters should be ignored when counting the position of each character.</p> <p>If either the surname or the first given name of the person is not long enough to supply the requested letters, substitute the number "2" in the letters of name to reflect the missing letters. The placement of a number "2" should always correspond to the same space that the missing letter would have within the five-digit field.</p>	
Language(s) spoken in the home:	
Country of Birth:	
Is the child eligible for kindergarten fee subsidy? (tick one box only) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Assessment details and checklist

Teachers' name:	
Children's service name:	Licence ID:
Funded organisation:	
Telephone no. (business hours)	
Are the child's assessment records on the child's file?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have other relevant support services been contacted?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the parent authorised the assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a copy of this declaration form and assessment record been provided to the child's parents/guardians?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Declaration of eligibility

I certify that I have undertaken an assessment of the child named on this form and that the child has delayed development in the following areas and is eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Social development
<input type="checkbox"/> Receptive or expressive language	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional development
<input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive development	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Factors _____
Signature of teacher submitting the form:	Date submitted: / /

Privacy Statement

Please read this notice before you complete the declaration form.

The Department of Human Services (the department) is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information you provide by complying with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*, the *Health Records Act 2001* and other relevant legislation. The department has a policy that the privacy principles contained in Victorian privacy laws constitute minimum standards for the handling of personal information by Department of Human Services staff.

The purpose of collecting this information

The information, without identifying personal information, will be used to report on trends in kindergarten participation. A departmental officer will establish a register of children declared eligible and this list may be provided to Preschool Field Officers who support children at the service.

Disclosure of information

The information is used exclusively to compile aggregate statistical data to monitor the effectiveness of the kindergarten second year process and trends in kindergarten participation. The information will be used only for these purposes or as authorised by you or as permitted by law. It will not be disclosed to any other person or organisation other than staff of the Department of Human Services.

Security and retention of information

The kindergarten teacher lodging the declaration form and the departmental officer compiling the aggregated statistical data will hold copies of the form. Copies retained in DHS regional office will be stored securely to protect unauthorised access and the information will be retained only for the period required by the Public Records Act 1973.

Accessing information

You are able to gain access to the personal information provided to the department and seek to correct the information if necessary. Please contact the Early Years Program on 1300 731 947.

7. Department of Human Services Regional Offices

Barwon South West Region

Barwon Regional Office

Cnr Fenwick & Little Malop Streets

GEELONG 3220

(PO Box 760 GEELONG VIC 3220)

Tel: (03) 5226 4540

Grampians Region

Grampians Regional Office

Cnr Mair & Doveton Street

BALLARAT 3350

(PO BOX 712 BALLARAT 3353)

Tel: (03) 5333 6530

Loddon-Mallee Region

Bendigo Community Services Office

74–78 Queen St

BENDIGO 3550

(PO Box 513 BENDIGO VIC 3550)

Tel: (03) 5434 5555

Hume Region

163 Welsford Street

SHEPPARTON 3632

(PO Box 460 WANGARATTA VIC 3676)

Tel: (03) 5832 1500

Gippsland Region

64 Church Street

TRARALGON 3844

(PO Box 1661 TRARALGON VIC 3844)

Tel: (03) 5177 2500

North & West Metropolitan Region

Footscray Office

71 Moreland Street

FOOTSCRAY 3011

(PO Box 224 FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011)

Tel: (03) 9275 7000

Fitzroy Office

145 Smith Street

FITZROY 3065

(PO Box 1332 COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066)

Tel: (03) 9412 5333

Eastern Metropolitan Region

883 Whitehorse Road

BOX HILL 3128

(Locked Bag 2015 BOX HILL VIC 3128)

Tel: (03) 9843 6000

Southern Metropolitan Region

122 Thomas Street

DANDENONG 3175

(PO Box 692 DANDENONG VIC 3175)

Tel: (03) 9213 2111



Department of
Human Services