

Kindergarten Cluster Management

Frequently Asked Questions

What is kindergarten cluster management?

Kindergarten cluster management brings together a group of community managed kindergartens under the management of a single organisation. It is a key strategy to building a stronger, more responsive universal kindergarten service system.

What are the responsibilities of the kindergarten cluster manager?

The kindergarten cluster manager is responsible for the overall management of the kindergartens in the cluster. Arrangements between kindergarten cluster managers and kindergarten services can be tailored to meet the local needs of services. These arrangements are then agreed and documented to record the roles and responsibilities of each party.

The primary responsibilities of the kindergarten cluster management organisations are:

- **Employment of staff** and all related activities. For example, salaries, tax, staff appraisals and professional development.
- **Licensing requirements** and all related responsibilities. This includes becoming the licensee of the kindergarten, ensuring regulatory and funding requirements are met, and liaising with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development officers.
- **Financial management** of kindergarten cluster funds including the development of budgets.

How will kindergarten cluster management affect the role of the committee of management?

In addition to relieving the administrative pressures on voluntary committees of management, kindergarten cluster management:

- provides parents with more time and flexibility to participate in the kindergarten program.
- provides more consistent and professional employment conditions for kindergarten staff.
- utilises the experience, skills and knowledge of the kindergarten workforce through providing access to networking opportunities information sharing and support services.
- promotes greater integration of early childhood services at the local level.
- improves the planning and provision of kindergarten services at a local and state wide level including helping kindergarten services to manage change.

What happens to the parent committee?

Under kindergarten cluster management arrangements, the local parent committee or sub-committee plays a role in providing opportunities for parents to contribute to decisions that affect the operation of their kindergarten.

Committees are able to negotiate the level of responsibility that they take on with the kindergarten

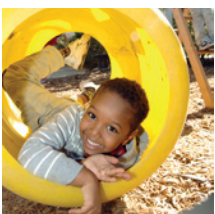
cluster manager. Responsibility and maintenance of the grounds, fundraising, provision and purchase of consumables, purchase and maintenance of equipment and fee collection can be negotiated between committees and kindergarten cluster managers.

What will it mean for our service if the committee ceases to be the licensee of the kindergarten?

- The committee will no longer be responsible for ensuring that the kindergarten complies with regulatory and legislative requirements.
- The new licensee will be responsible for negotiating any future licensing arrangements with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

We are a community based long day care program with a funded kindergarten program. Are we able to join a kindergarten cluster?

All community based, not for profit services operating a funded kindergarten program are eligible to join a kindergarten cluster. This includes long day centres operating a funded kindergarten program.



Every
child,
every
opportunity





Will parents continue to participate in the kindergarten program?

When the management pressures of employing staff and managing the service have been relieved, many parents prefer to be involved in the hands on experience of their child's kindergarten education.

How can cluster management benefit kindergarten staff?

Kindergarten cluster management provides a more consistent and professional employment structure for individual kindergarten staff. Advantages include more coordinated staff training and professional development opportunities, and a wider range of staff experience and support across a kindergarten cluster management arrangement.

How much funding do kindergarten cluster management organisations receive?

From July 1st 2010 kindergarten cluster managers will receive an annual grant of \$7,662 for each location in their cluster. This funding is additional to the per capita grants that all funded kindergarten services receive.

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New kindergarten cluster managers also receive a \$5,000 Governance Establishment Grant to support the establishment of strong governance practices.

To provide further assistance to kindergarten cluster managers, an additional payment of 15 per cent of the annual kindergarten cluster management grant is also provided to support both new kindergarten cluster arrangements and existing kindergarten cluster managers when locations are added to the cluster arrangement.

Are there any resources which we can use to support our decision making process?

DEECD funds Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV) to support parent-led Committees of Management in government funded, community based kindergarten services and to provide a range of advice and support on good governance, service operation and business management.

DEECD and KPV have produced a range of documents and fact sheets to support both kindergartens and potential kindergarten cluster managers to make an informed decision about entering into a kindergarten cluster management arrangement. Go to www.kpv.org.au or www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/brochures.htm.

These materials are available in hard copy through contacting Kindergarten Parents Victoria or your regional DEECD office. Contact details of regional offices are listed below.

Who should I contact to find out more about kindergarten cluster management?

Organisations or individual committees of management wishing to participate in kindergarten cluster management are encouraged to contact the regional offices of DEECD for further information.

Kindergarten Parents Victoria can also offer advice and support to your organisation in making this decision www.kpv.org.au.



Regional Contact Details

Region	Office	Contact number
Eastern Metropolitan Region	Glen Waverley	9265 2400
Northern Metropolitan Region	Fitzroy	9304 0799
Southern Metropolitan Region	Dandenong	9096 9576
Barwon South Western Region	Geelong	5225 1000
Grampians Region	Ballarat	5337 8444
Gippsland Region	Traralgon	5177 2500
Hume Region	Shepparton	5832 1500
Western Metropolitan Region	Footscray	9275 7000
Loddon Mallee Region	Bendigo	5440 3111