

Comprehensive Kindergarten Guide

Greater Dandenong | Casey | Cardinia

Date: November 2025

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Kindergarten in Greater Dandenong

What is Kindergarten?

Kindergarten (also called state-funded kindergarten or preschool) provides two years of early education for children before primary school. It offers play-based learning, social development, and prepares children for school. Programs are delivered by qualified educators under National and Victorian frameworks and regulations.

Eligibility - Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

Child must turn 3 on or before 30 April of the year they start. Programs: Sessional (15 hrs/week) or Integrated (15 hrs/week + childcare).

Eligibility - Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

Child must turn 4 on or before 30 April of the year they start. Programs: Sessional (15 hrs/week) or Integrated (15 hrs/week + childcare).

Free Kinder

Available for all 3- and 4-year-olds at participating services. Savings up to \$2,500 per child per year. No eligibility requirements.

Early Start Kindergarten

Free 15 hrs/week for eligible 3-year-olds who are Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, from refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds, or have had contact with child protection.

Enrolment Process

1. Locate a Kindergarten 2. Check Timetable & Vacancies 3. Complete Online Enrolment 4. Allocation Process. Email: ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au

Priority of Access

1. Children at risk, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, refugee/asylum seeker, additional needs. 2. Residents of Greater Dandenong. 3. Non-residents with childcare/work links. 4. Other non-residents.

Support Services

Preschool Field Officers assist children with developmental needs. CALD Outreach Officer supports culturally and linguistically diverse families.

No Jab, No Play

Children must meet immunisation requirements. More info:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/news/archive/Pages/njnp2017.aspx>

Birth Date Ranges

Program	Birth Date Range	Start Year
Three-Year-Old	01/05/2021 – 30/04/2022	2025
Three-Year-Old	01/05/2022 – 30/04/2023	2026
Four-Year-Old	01/05/2020 – 30/04/2021	2025
Four-Year-Old	01/05/2021 – 30/04/2022	2026

Kindergartens in the City of Casey

What is Kindergarten?

Kindergarten is for children aged 3 and 4 years and provides play-based programs that help children build curiosity, creativity, confidence, and essential skills such as communication, problem-solving, movement, and emotional wellbeing.

Benefits of Kindergarten

Play-based learning supports physical, dramatic, sensory, nature, creative play, and social-emotional learning.

Best Start, Best Life Reforms

The Victorian Government is investing \$14 billion to improve early learning: Free Kindergarten for all eligible 3- and 4-year-olds, Three-Year-Old Kindergarten hours increasing to 15/week by 2029, Pre-Prep hours increasing to 30/week by 2034, new Early Learning Centres, and more investment in teachers.

Pre-Prep (from 2026)

Priority children can access 16–25 hours/week of 4-year-old kindergarten if they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds, or have had contact with Child Protection.

When Can My Child Start?

Families can register the year before their child turns 3. Use the Casey website to check start dates.

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES)

CRES is a single system for registering interest in sessional kindergarten. Steps: 1. Expression of Interest 2. Registration 3. Allocation & Offer 4. Enrolment.

Priority of Access

Children at risk, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, refugee/asylum seeker, additional needs; residents of Casey; others based on demand.

Free Kindergarten

All eligible 3- and 4-year-olds receive 15 hours/week at no cost.

Support Services

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) supports inclusion and referrals. Email: psfo@noahsarkinc.org.au. Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) and second year of 4-year-old kindergarten available if developmental delays are identified.

Find a Kindergarten

Use the Casey interactive map or browse by suburb: Berwick, Clyde, Cranbourne, Doveton, Endeavour Hills, Hallam, Hampton Park, Lynbrook, Lyndhurst, Narre Warren, Pearcedale, Tooradin. Future kindergartens opening in 2026: Kulap Primary School Kindergarten (Clyde), Kala Primary School Kindergarten (Cranbourne North), Cranbourne Primary School Kindergarten (Cranbourne).

Key Links

Description	Link
Expression of Interest	https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/expression-of-interest-kindergarten
Register for Kindergarten	https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/register-kindergarten
2026 Timetable	https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/2026-timetable
Allocation & Offer Process	https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/allocation-offer-process

Cardinia Shire Kindergartens Guide

Streamlined Information for Families

Date: November 2025

Overview

Cardinia Shire Council manages registration and placement for community kindergartens. Families can register for 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten via the online portal:
<https://kindergarten.cardinia.vic.gov.au/Public/Login.aspx>.

Key Registration Dates for 2026

19 May: Reminder email to check details. 30 June: Final date for first-round eligibility. 14 July: First-round offers sent. 28 August: Second-round eligibility closes. 1 September: Second-round offers sent. 9 October: Third-round eligibility closes. 13 October: Third-round offers sent. Mid-November onwards: Late registrations processed.

Non-Residents

Welcome to register, but places are not guaranteed. Registrations processed from mid-November. First-round offers reserved for Cardinia Shire residents.

Early Start Kindergarten

Eligible children receive up to 15 hours/week free kindergarten for 2 years before school if they are Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, from refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds, or have had contact with Child Protection. Contact: 1300 787 624 or kindergartens@cardinia.vic.gov.au.

Fees

Registration is free for both 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten.

Using the Kindergarten Portal

You can register your child, accept offers, update preferences, change attendance year, or withdraw registration. Status shows 'Waitlisted' until an offer is made.

Required Documents

Proof of birth (birth certificate, passport, immunisation statement), proof of residency (rates notice, utility bill, rental agreement, driver's licence), and if applicable, Health Care Card or Pension Card.

Priority of Access

Priority given to children attending a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander children, refugee/asylum seeker families, children with additional needs, and families with concession cards.

Immunisation Requirements

Parents must provide an up-to-date immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/how-get-immunisation-history-statement>.

Benefits of Central Registration

Simplifies process for families, ensures fairness and equity, and supports planning for early years services.

Contact

Phone: 1300 787 624 | Email: kindergartens@cardinia.vic.gov.au | Website:
<https://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/kindergarten>

Kindergarten Locations

Cardinia Shire has kindergartens in Avonsleigh, Bayles, Beaconsfield, Beaconsfield Upper, Bunyip, Cockatoo, Emerald, Garfield, Gembrook, Koo Wee Rup, Lang Lang, Nar Nar Goon, Officer, Pakenham.

Additional Support Programs

Access to Early Learning (AEL) & Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

Access to Early Learning (AEL)

AEL is a free service aimed at improving participation of vulnerable three-year-old children in high-quality early childhood education in Greater Dandenong and Casey.

Eligibility: Must have two or more of these characteristics:

- Known to Child Protection
- Parent or child with disability
- Family violence, mental health concerns, sexual assault, substance misuse

What AEL Provides:

- Funding for 3-year-old kindergarten (15 hrs/week)
- Home visits for play-based learning support
- Assistance with transition to 4-year-old kindergarten

Referral: Completed by case managers/support professionals

Contact: 03 8792 8999 | aelsouth@vt.uniting.org | vt.uniting.org

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

Eligibility:

- Known to Child Protection
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Refugee/Asylum Seeker visa holders

What ESK Provides:

- Funding for 3-year-old kindergarten (15 hrs/week)
- Available across all LGAs

Referral Pathways:

- Standalone services: Contact local council central enrolment team
- Long day care: Contact individual centre directors

Important: AEL and ESK cannot be accessed at the same time.



Access to Early Learning

Kindergarten support for your three-year-old child

The Access to Early Learning program is a free service aimed at improving the participation of vulnerable three-year-old children in high quality, early childhood education centres in the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey.

We can support your three-year-old child to attend a kindergarten run by qualified teachers for up to 15 hours per week.

This can be in a stand-alone kindergarten, or in kindergarten programs delivered in long day care centres.

Our skilled staff will:

- Link you and your child to local kindergarten programs
- Support you so your child can attend kindergarten throughout the year
- Visit you at home to help create an environment of learning through play
- Assist with your child's transition to four-year-old kindergarten
- Support you in developing your own parenting skills

How do you apply?

Referrals for this program are completed by case managers or support professionals. If you are interested in applying for the program, speak with your support worker.

Get in touch

03 8792 8999

vt.uniting.org

aelsouth@vt.uniting.org