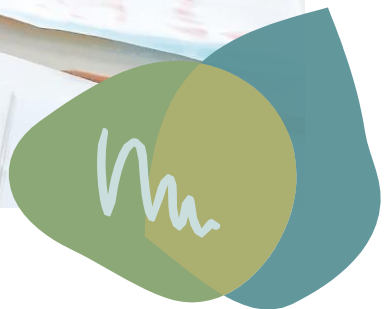




Kindergarten Information 2024



Next Steps
Early Learning Centre



About Us

Next Steps Early Learning Centre provides both long day care for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years with an integrated 3-year-old and 4-year-old funded kindergarten programs.

Following a play-based pedagogy we understand that children develop, grow, and learn best through play and their own interests. Next Steps believe that children are capable and competent learners, and we encourage children to take risks in a controlled environment.

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Benefits of Kindergarten

Kindergarten is an important step for young children. We strongly recommend all children go to kindergarten.

Research has shown that:

- Early education helps set children up for a bright future. Attending 2 years of quality kindergarten has even greater benefits.
- At kindergarten children learn skills that they'll take with them throughout their life.
- Kindergarten improves children's health and wellbeing, helps them to develop strong social 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 move to primary school.



What your child learns

Our Kindergarten programs are delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. They're designed to improve your child's development in:

- social skills, like how to play with other children in a calm, sharing and rewarding way.
- self-awareness and respect for others.
- emotional skills, for example understanding their feelings.
- language, literacy and numeracy skills, such as reading stories and counting objects.
- joy of learning and group activities, such as talking, drawing and making things together with other children their own age.
- ability to make new friends.
- exposure to new ideas and concepts.

Kindergarten also gives families:

- opportunities to meet other families and make community connections.
- access to support for children with special needs.
- access to other community services.



Is My Child Eligible for Kindergarten this year?

- Children who turn 3 years old on or before April 30th in the year they will be attending 3-year-old Kindergarten.
- Children who turn 4 years old on or before April 30th in the year they will be attending 4-year-old Kindergarten.
- Children who have received funding for a second year of 4-year-old Kindergarten.
- Children who were eligible to attend the 4-year-old Kindergarten program in the previous year, but deferred or withdrew from the 4-year-old program on or before the last day of Term 1.
- Children who are turning 6 years of age in their year of kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional DET office.
- Please note children do not need to be toilet trained to attend Kindergarten.



**Kindergarten
will help
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life.**



Free Kinder Initiative 2023/2024

Free Kinder will be available for both 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs in 2024.

A critical part of the Best Start, Best Life reform is Free Kinder, which will support access to two years of high-quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children by making this free.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by

- providing a free 15-hour program to four-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service.
- providing a free 5-to-15-hour program to three-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for three and four-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Our Curriculum

Our three-year-old and four-year-old government funded kindergarten programs have been carefully fashioned to prepare our young people for school. Our qualified Kinder Teachers focus on a wide variety of age-appropriate issues, including helping children understand and cope with their big emotions, equipping children with the confidence to initiate and navigate friendships, and nurturing self-confidence and community awareness.



We know that social and emotional readiness is vital to a successful and smooth transition into school, as it frees up our children to be effective learners. Literacy and numeracy are introduced naturally through play and everyday experiences, and all activities are thoughtfully designed to be flexible and are focused on the learning experience, rather than the academic outcome. Throughout the year our kinder children will be a part of field trip style excursions and will participate in many incursions throughout the year, aimed at expanding their knowledge in areas they are interested in.

Our kinder children can enjoy their own outdoor yard where they can investigate and explore their environment, taking part in climbing, building, creating, digging, riding, and balancing. Throughout the year our Kinder Teachers and educators incorporate your child's interests into our program, helping create a fun, comfortable and exciting space for your child to learn, grow and develop.



Choosing between LDC & Sessional Kinder Programs

Long Day Care Program

- Longer hours Monday to Friday.
- Open on school holidays.
- Funded program run by a Bachelor trained Teacher.
- Children have flexible arrival and departure times.
- Play-Based curriculum.
- Community walks.
- Excursions.
- Incursions.

Sessional Kinder Program

- Short sessions.
- Total of 15 hrs a week.
- Closed over school holidays.
- Funded program run by a Bachelor trained Teacher.
- Incursions.

Regulatory frameworks

The practice principles for learning and development identified in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework underpin service delivery provided by early childhood professionals including kindergarten and Early Childhood Intervention Services professionals. The principles guide early childhood professionals to work together with children and families to achieve best outcomes for every child. The practice principles are:

1. Family centered practice
2. Partnerships with professional
3. High expectations for every child
4. Equity and diversity
5. Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
6. Integrated teaching and learning approaches
7. Assessment for learning and development
8. Reflective practice

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework provides the following definition. "Inclusion involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision making process. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued, and that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference".



Communication

We work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage communication with your child's educators about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our Service. Everybody has a preferred time and method of communication. Sometimes, mornings and afternoons can be a little rushed, and not the best time to discuss your child's progress. You are encouraged to talk to your child's educators to arrange to meet your child's educator at a mutually convenient time.



We have many types of communication we use for families, including:

- Newsletters
- Phone Calls
- Face to Face
- Weekly Reflections
- Formal Meetings
- Open Nights
- Parent/Teacher Interviews

What to bring to Kindergarten

Clothes: 'Kindergarten clothes' usually consist of something comfortable and something that is not new and able to be washed and worn with ease such as tracksuits, leggings, jeans, t-shirts, and jumpers. Avoid sending your child in any clothing that is special as children will participate in a variety of painting, craft, and messy play activities.

Shoes need to be well fitting to avoid tripping. Some families prefer to send gumboots for messy play.

Drink bottle: We provide drink bottles to ensure that children have access to clean drinking water throughout the day

Hat/sunscreen: In Summer our Centre has a SunSmart Policy that requires all children and educators to wear appropriate sun protection including a wide brimmed hat and sunscreen.

Bag: Children enjoy being able to carry their own bag or backpack to 'school'. This helps them to develop their independence and learn to pack and look after their own belongings during the day at kindergarten.

Food: You do not need to send any meals or snacks for your child to kindergarten as we Mark our chef that provides a nutritious morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on a daily basis.

Should you have any questions regarding our Kindergarten program, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Next Steps
Early Learning Centre

Contact details

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