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DAREBIN KINDERGARTEN GUIDE

Darebin City Council operates a Kindergarten Registration System on behalf of kindergartens offering three and four year old kindergarten programs within the municipality. Council provides the Kindergarten Registration System to:

- simplify the process of registration for kindergarten for Darebin families;
- support community managed kindergarten providers;
- apply equity and fairness processes for families seeking kindergarten places; and
- inform Council's early years services and infrastructure planning.

This document provides the framework for the Kindergarten Registration System and applies Victorian Government allocation and funding criteria that:

- prioritises access for vulnerable children, increasing opportunities for children facing the greatest barriers to early learning;
- promotes local community connection and continuity of learning;
- prioritises families who are Darebin residents or whose child attends formal verified care in Darebin; and
- offers kindergarten places equitably.



Why should I attend?

Going to kindergarten will help your child to learn skills that they will build on throughout their life. At kindergarten your child will grow socially and emotionally. Their fine motor skills and ability to think, use and recognise language will be developed through play, art, dance, music, movement and interacting with others.

Most importantly, your child will be learning to become an effective learner as they develop and extend their communication skills, build their self-confidence, learn to be creative, and develop skills that assist them with reading, writing and mathematics (*Department of Education and Training, About Kindergarten, 2017*).

Eligibility

Children are eligible to attend State Government funded kindergarten if they have turned four years of age by the 30 April in the year of attendance. Children are eligible to attend pre-kindergarten programs if they have turned three years of age by the 30 April in the year of attendance.

Program Delivery

In Victoria, children attend four year old kindergarten the year prior to starting primary school.

Four year old kindergarten programs operate for 15 hours per week and can be spread over two to four sessions per week. Children cannot attend more than one funded kindergarten program.

At the time of enrolment at a kindergarten, families should notify the kindergarten if they are accessing a kindergarten program at a second service (kindergarten or long day care centre).

Three year old kindergarten programs, called pre-kindergarten, do not receive Government funding. The cost of running the three year old program is covered by parent's fees. A child must have turned three years of age before they can attend a pre-kindergarten program.

Program hours and group sizes are set by the individual kindergartens and can vary from year to year.

Each March kindergartens and childcare centres in the City of Darebin open their centres in the evening for families to visit and meet staff. For future Twilight Kindergarten & Child Care Open Evening dates please refer to the website:

www.darebin.vic.gov.au/kindergarten

DAREBIN CENTRALISED KINDERGARTENS

1. **Annie Dennis Children's Centre**
2 Oldis Ave Northcote 3070
Telephone 9486 7638
2. **Merri Community Childcare Centre & Kindergarten Inc**
313 St Georges Rd Thornbury Vic 3071
Telephone 9416 9227
3. **Nara Community Early Learning Centre**
77-79 Rear St Georges Rd Preston 3072
Telephone 9471 9914
4. **Perry Street Childcare Centre & Elizabeth Gorman Memorial Kindergarten**
129 Perry St Fairfield 3078
Telephone 9489 2949
5. **Raleigh Street Child Care Centre**
28 Raleigh St Thornbury 3071
Telephone 9484 2440
6. **Clifton Street Children's Centre**
55 Clifton St Northcote 3070
Telephone 9486 3299
7. **Darebin Childcare & Kindergarten - Preston**
260 Gower St Preston 3072
Telephone 9471 3780
8. **Darebin Childcare & Kindergarten - Reservoir**
6 Kenilworth St Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9471 9780
9. **Oakhill Family Centre**
91 North Rd Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9470 1914
10. **Merrilands Children's Centre & Kindergarten**
23-25 Ryan St Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9460 4674
11. **Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergarten**
34 Separation St Fairfield 3078
Telephone 9489 0262
12. **St Andrew's Uniting Church Kindergarten**
Cnr Duncan & Gillies St Fairfield 3078
Telephone 9481 1819
13. **Thornbury Kindergarten**
8C Newcastle St Thornbury 3071
Telephone 9484 1095
14. **Blake Street Kindergarten**
109 Blake St Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9478 8037
15. **Keon Park Kindergarten Inc**
75 Arundel Ave Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9460 1271
16. **Maryborough Avenue Kindergarten**
14 Maryborough Ave Kingsbury 3083
Telephone 9460 5882
17. **Batman Park Kindergarten**
79 Elm St Northcote 3070
Telephone 9481 0237
18. **Clyde Street Kindergarten**
70 Clyde St Thornbury 3071
Telephone 9484 4140
19. **Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten**
26 Gellibrand Crescent Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9460 5862
20. **Gower St Kindergarten**
146 Gower St Preston 3072
Telephone 9478 5374
21. **J.S. Grey Kindergarten**
524 Gilbert Rd West Preston 3072
Telephone 9470 5836
22. **Keon Park Children's Hub & Kindergarten**
1-7 Dole Ave Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9460 6557
23. **Kookaburra Kindergarten**
34 George St Reservoir 3073
Telephone 9460 5708
24. **Westgarth Kindergarten**
311 Clark Street Northcote 3070
Telephone 9486 4147
25. **Regent Baptist Kindergarten**
734 High St Preston 3072
Telephone 9478 7786
26. **Jika Jika Community Centre**
Cnr Plant & Union St Northcote 3070
Telephone 9482 5100
27. **the Bridge - Preston**
218 High St Preston 3072
Telephone 9484 5806



KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN DAREBIN

Darebin City Council administers the Kindergarten Registration System on behalf of 27 community not-for-profit participating kindergartens located in Darebin.

(See the map on page 4 and 5 for more details and locations.)

There are a further 29 kindergarten programs in Darebin. To see a full list of kindergartens in the municipality go to the Department of Education and Training Website: education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx

If you want to register for a place at a kindergarten not participating in the Kindergarten Registration System you need to contact them directly.

Children wanting to attend a Long Day Care Integrated Kindergarten Program

Families not currently attending a child care centre who nominate an integrated kindergarten program are highly encouraged to contact that service in advance, to gain an understanding of the centre's capacity to take external families.

Kindergarten Fees

Fees are set by the Management Committee or Early Years Manager of each kindergarten and may vary. Most kindergartens will require the payment of a deposit for accepting a place prior to attendance in February. Kindergartens may require fees to be paid a term in advance, and it is usual that kindergartens will not refund part-payments of fees due to absence or late enrolment. Families are advised to discuss the fees policy with their chosen kindergarten.

The State Government subsidises fees for some children so they can attend kindergarten for free or at low cost in the year before they start primary school. Your child is eligible if they:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- are a triplet or quadruplet; or
- hold (or have a parent or guardian who holds) an eligible concession card or refugee, humanitarian or asylum seeker visa.

Early Start Kindergarten & Free Kindergarten for three year olds

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children where programs are offered by a qualified teacher. Some services will be able to offer your child a place in a program for four year olds or a mixed age group.

Your child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten if they are aged three by 30 April in the year they will be attending a kindergarten program and:

- your child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST).



Process

The same registration period for the Kindergarten Registration System will apply to all Darebin families wanting placement of their child in kindergarten in the following year.

Registrations can be made in the year prior to kindergarten attendance between 1 February (on or after the next business working day) and 30 April (on or prior to the previous working day). Within this period the date of your registration will not affect your chances of receiving your first preference. For example, a registration received on 30 April will have an equal chance to one received on 1 February.

To register for a place at a kindergarten not participating in the Kindergarten Registration System you need to contact them directly for application periods and offer process.



How to register

An online portal is available for families registering with the Kindergarten Registration System. We encourage families to use the online portal rather than paper registration forms, as it will allow families to view their child's current registration details, add or withdraw registrations, upload supporting documentation, update their details including nominated service preferences as required, respond to kindergarten offers and make online enquiries. After the registration is submitted via the online portal, you will receive an email confirming the registration. A registration is not complete until a confirmation email is received.

Paper copy registrations forms will still be available from:

- Early Childhood Services and Maternal and Child Health Centres in the City of Darebin;
- Darebin City Council Customer Service Centres; and
- Darebin City Council's website.

All registrations will require:

1. Completion of the Kindergarten Registration form. Eligible children must be registered in the name identified on their birth certificate or equivalent.
2. Documentary evidence:
 - proof of child's age such as a copy of the child's Birth Certificate, Declaration of Proof of Birth or Passport (all registrations);
 - reports from family support services or intervention services confirming circumstances and/or disability (if applicable); and
 - statutory declaration confirming unregistered care arrangement (if applicable).

Incomplete registrations will be returned requesting any missing information or documentation. The original receipt date will not be honoured.

Registration Fees

A non-refundable registration fee is payable to Darebin City Council. This fee is for the administration of the Darebin Kindergarten Registration System and does not contribute to kindergarten fees.

A child who individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds, one of the following can register free of charge:

- A Commonwealth Health Care Card
- A Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- Refugee visa (subclass 200)
- In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
- Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)
- Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786)
- Protection visa (subclass 866)
- Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
- Woman at risk visa (subclass 204)
- Bridging visas A-E

Free registration also applies for a child identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and a child identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).

Late Registration forms

The same registration period for the Kindergarten Registration System will apply to all Darebin families wanting placement of their child in kindergarten in the following year. Registrations can be made in the year prior to kindergarten attendance between 1 February (on or after the next business working day) and 30 April (on or prior to the previous working day).

Registrations received within this period will be given priority. Late registrations will be processed after those which are received during the stated registration period.

Kindergarten Preferences

Up to four kindergarten programs can be selected in number preference order 1-4 and will be applied in order of listing. If a family chooses to nominate one preference only and the nominated kindergarten is full, the child's name will remain on the Kindergarten Registration System (even if there are vacancies at other kindergartens).

Families are encouraged to visit kindergartens during the Twilight Kindergarten & Child Care Open Evenings held in March, prior to registering their child. Nominating a kindergarten does not guarantee an offer.

Confirmation and Changes to Registrations

Registrations received will be sent a letter of confirmation within approximately four weeks of receipt of registration.

Any changes to details concerning registration can be made using the online portal or by email for paper registrations. Requests for changes of kindergarten preference will be accepted up to June 30 in the year prior to the commencement of kindergarten.

Application fees are not reimbursed for cancelled or incorrect applications.



Priority of Access

All registrations are processed in accordance with the priority of access as outlined below and in alignment with the Department of Education and Training Kindergarten Guide.

Allocation preference will be made as follows:

- Allocation of children with additional needs and vulnerable families. This includes where the child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or the family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST).
- Where the child is currently in an Out of Home Care arrangement including kinship care.
- Children approved by Department of Education and Training for a second year of kindergarten.
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy as listed in the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines (see Registration Fees for a list of eligible cards).

Allocation of registrations according to priority weightings and evidence provided to support:

- Families who are Darebin residents or whose child attends unregistered verified care in Darebin. Unregistered care is provided by family members, nannies or other carers who are not registered with the state authorities to provide registered care. This must be verified with a Statutory Declaration and proof of residency of the carer.

- Where the child attended a pre-kindergarten program at the first preference kindergarten. Please note that children attending a pre-kindergarten program are not automatically allocated a kindergarten place and must submit a registration form as per the process for all Darebin families.

- A child or sibling participated in the preferred kindergarten within the last two years of the application being completed.

- Where a kindergarten is the closest to a child's home.

- Where the child is a twin, triplet or quadruplet.

When children on the Kindergarten Registration System have applied within the designated time period and achieve the same points for priority weightings, allocation will be ordered according to random selection. Random selection will be made by computer generated sorting of registrations.



Offer Process

All kindergartens are to notify the Kindergarten Registration System staff office by 1 July of the number of available places for the coming year and children recommended to attend a second year of kindergarten. (Please see second year of funded kindergarten on page 12)

Three rounds of offers are made:

- First round offers are made to families approximately in late July of each year for four year old kindergarten and August of each year for three year old pre-kindergarten;
- Second round offers are made approximately four weeks after the first round offers using available places not accepted in the first round; and
- Third round offers are made approximately four weeks after second round offers using available places not accepted in the second round. This round will continue until all places are filled.

Families/carers who have registered online through the portal will be able to see if their child has been offered a place. If your child has been offered a place, the status shown on the main page will show Offer. If the status is showing Waitlisted, this means that your child has not received an offer during this round of offers.

Where no response to an offer of placement is received by the Registration System within the specified timeframe, a courtesy telephone call or email will be made during the following week prior to the child's place being cancelled.

Families can make one of the following choices:

- Accept the offer. Once the family has accepted a place the child's name cannot remain on the Registration System for allocation to any other kindergarten.
- Decline the offer and request to remain on the Registration System for another kindergarten of preference (no guarantee that a place will be available). A decline will result in the registration date changing to the date of decline.

- If families choose not to accept a second or third preference they will remain on the Registration System for the kindergarten of first preference.

- Cancel their registration. Families wishing to defer their child's registration to the next kindergarten year are required to cancel their registration and register again the following year. Please note that a place at the same service is not guaranteed.

- Families/carers who have registered online through the portal will be able to cancel their application online.

Transfer and place reservation

Once a place has been allocated it is not transferable between kindergartens, unless the requested kindergarten has vacancies and no other children are waiting for a kindergarten program.

If the family decide to defer the child's attendance at kindergarten to the following year, the Registration Team must be notified by the end of Term 1 of the year they are attending (or as per the Victorian Government Kindergarten Guidelines) and a new registration will need to be submitted either online or hard copy. Deferrals are not guaranteed a place at that same service the following year. Deferrals received after the 30 April will be treated as a late registration.



Second year of funded kindergarten

Some children may benefit from a second year of funded four year old kindergarten. Funding for a second year of four year old kindergarten requires collaboration between the kindergarten teacher and parents. The kindergarten teacher will submit an application form to the Department of Education and Training.

Places will be reserved for children granted a second year of funding as per Victoria Government Kindergarten Funding Criteria. Children applying for a second year of funding for the kindergarten program are not required to submit a new registration form, however written permission from the family is required for the child to be allocated a second year of kindergarten.

Only a place at the same kindergarten will be reserved for children granted a second year of funding. If a family choose to attend a different service, they will need to advise the Registration Team in writing. This will relinquish the reserved place and their registration will join the Registration System with all other registrations. A place is therefore not guaranteed at the first preference kindergarten.

If application for a second year of funded four year old kindergarten occurs after June 30, the registration will be treated with priority, however the same service may not be available and/or the family may need to wait until the following offer round.

Families requesting a second year of kindergarten where the child is not eligible for funding, but the parents/carers are willing to pay the full fees stipulated by the individual kindergarten, must check the policy of their preferred kindergarten.

If the centre allows this option, applications must be made directly to the kindergarten. Kindergartens must then advise the Kindergarten Registration System of one less place available at the kindergarten. Kindergartens are not allowed to allocate unfunded places unless vacancies exist and there are no children registered on the Kindergarten Registration System for this kindergarten. Please note that an unfunded child may be requested to vacate the position should a funded child require the place. The kindergarten must advise the family of this requirement when accepting the enrolment.

Information provided to kindergartens

The Registration Team will provide lists to kindergartens with family details following the distribution of third round preferences (four year old kindergarten in September and three year old kindergarten in October). Late registrations will be forwarded to the kindergarten as they are allocated.

The kindergarten will be in contact with the family and distribute their "Welcome Package" containing service specific information regarding orientation process, fees, timetable etc. Parents should note that enquiries regarding selection to particular session times and groups should be directed to the kindergarten.



INCLUSIVE KINDERGARTEN SERVICES



Darebin City Council has a commitment to ensuring that kindergartens are accessible to all children. We recognise that every child has individual needs, abilities and interests. Children with additional needs are:

- children who require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program;
- children who require a combination of services which are individually planned; and/or
- children who have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.

Children with “high” support needs may be eligible for the Victorian Government funded Special Education Program, which provides funding for an additional assistant in the four year old kindergarten program only. Pre-kindergarten is not eligible for this funding.

Pre School Field Officer Program

The Darebin City Council auspices the Pre School Field Officer program as part of its commitment to support the inclusion of children with additional needs into a quality program. Pre School Field Officers are trained professionals with Special Education qualifications.

If you wish to discuss your child’s needs or any of the information above please contact: Pre School Field Officer program at the City of Darebin, psfo.referral@darebin.vic.gov.au or Telephone: **8470 8114**.

Families of children with additional needs follow the standard enrolment process, including timelines. Families complete a registration form and indicate that their child has an additional need. Supporting documentation will be required to add to your registration.

The Pre School Field Officer will contact families of children identified as additional needs to discuss individual needs for kindergarten once they have accepted a kindergarten place. With parent consent, the Pre School Field Officer will contact other services or specialists the child is currently involved with, to ensure all necessary support can be put into place prior to the child attending a four year old kindergarten program. When a child is already attending a kindergarten they have nominated, the Preschool Field Officer will contact the kindergarten to discuss the child’s support needs.

Share your feedback about your experience with our service. Darebin City Council welcomes your feedback whether it's a compliment, suggestion or a complaint. You can contact us in a number of ways;

Visit darebin.vic.gov.au/global/contactus and complete an online form which will be forwarded to an appropriate Council officer for action; or

Visit one of our Customer Service Centres:

Preston Customer Service Centre

Address: 274 Gower Street, Preston
Opening Hours: 8.30am-5.00pm,
Monday to Friday

Northcote Customer Service Centre

Address: 32-38 Separation Street, Northcote
Opening Hours: 8.30am-5.00pm,
Monday to Friday

Reservoir Community and Learning Centre

Address: 23 Edwardes Street, Reservoir
Opening Hours: 10am-5.00pm,
Monday to Friday

CONTACT US

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National Relay Service
If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.
relayservice.gov.au



Speak Your Language
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