

Does my child need a second year of kindergarten?



The Department of Human Services provides funding to support children to attend kindergarten 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.

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.

There are specific guidelines for teachers and parents to follow to help them identify the child's needs and establish suitable goals for the child. This situation requires the parent and the teacher to work closely together and communicate openly. With the parent's consent and in consultation with the parent, the teacher first completes an assessment and, if needed may seek the support of other early childhood development professionals (for example, Preschool Field Officers) and then sends a declaration of eligibility to the Department of Human Services.

More information is provided in the second year information kit available on the website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood

Remember

- Think carefully about when your child is likely to be ready to start school, and therefore when is the best time for the child to have a kindergarten experience. If you're unsure, talk to others who know your child and whose judgement you trust.
- Attend a kindergarten, or an information session and ask about the kindergarten program.
- Before and after your child begins in a kindergarten program, share your concerns, thoughts and ideas about your child openly with the teacher.
- If you need clarification or further information about when is the best time for your child to attend kindergarten, speak to your child's teacher, child care coordinator or maternal and child health nurse.

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