

# Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten

## Information for families

March 2016

### What is *Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten*?

*Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten* is a campaign to raise awareness of the value of early childhood education, and the support (including government grants) available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to attend kindergarten.



### Should my child go to kindergarten?

Research shows that all children benefit from attending kindergarten.

A quality early childhood education not only helps children transition to school, it has positive impacts throughout their entire education. Long-term studies have shown that children who attend preschool education have improved job prospects and higher wages when they enter the workforce.

An early start means more time at kindergarten, giving your child the best possible start to their education.

Last year in Victoria, 8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four-year-olds attended kindergarten. Only 4 in 10 three-year-olds were enrolled using the Early Start Kindergarten grant.

### What can I expect from kindergarten?

Kindergarten fosters your child's development and supports their connections to people and community. It provides an environment that is welcoming to all cultures.

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) are available to work with kindergartens to help ensure that your child's experience at kindergarten is inclusive and respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

### Does *Koorie Kids Shine* provide funding for kindergarten?

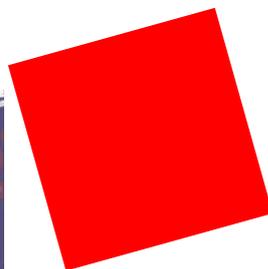
Not directly, but through *Koorie Kids Shine* we're promoting the grants available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children - Early Start Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten extension and the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

These grants provide three and four-year-old children with free kindergarten for up to 15 hours a week. If eligible, your child can access two years of free kindergarten before school.

### Is my child eligible for a grant?

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who turn three by 30 April are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who turn four by 30 April are eligible for either the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy or Early Start Kindergarten extension.



## Is my child eligible for a kindergarten grant if they attend long day care?

Early Start Kindergarten and Early Start Kindergarten extension can be used to cover the cost of the kindergarten program in long day care. These grants can be used together with the Child Care Benefit and Special Child Care Benefit.

Long day care services may charge you for any hours of care they provide additional to the 15 hours of free kindergarten.

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy cannot be used together with Child Care Benefits at long day care.

## How do I apply for a grant?

Your kindergarten provider applies for these grants on your behalf. The funding goes straight to the service.

## How will the kindergarten know that my child is eligible?

Simply speak to your kindergarten and let staff know that your child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) can help to enrol your child into kindergarten. They can, with your permission, advise the service that your child is eligible for a grant.

If your kindergarten is unsure about funding, they can contact their nearest Department of Education and Training Office.

## Where can I find more information and support?

A Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) from your nearest Department of Education and Training office can help you find a kindergarten service or child care centre in your area, and enrol your child. They can also provide you with information about *Koorie Kids Shine*, and available grants.

KESO contact details, and further information, are available from the Department of Education and Training Website:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/aboriginal.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/aboriginal.aspx)

## Get in contact with a KESO at your nearest Regional Office:

Regional Office	Location	Switchboard
North Eastern Victoria	Benalla	03 8392 9500
	Glen Waverley	03 8392 9300
North Western Victoria	Bendigo	03 5440 3111
	Coburg	03 9488 9488
South Eastern Victoria	Dandenong	03 8765 5600
	Moe	03 5127 0400
South Western Victoria	Ballarat	03 5337 8444
	Geelong	03 5225 1000
	Footscray	03 8397 0300

