

Information about Kindergarten Readiness

We thought we would provide you with some information about Kindergarten readiness for you to consider before your child begins in the three-year-old Kindergarten program here at North Brighton Kindergarten in 2022.

As per council policy; Children who turn 3 between Feb 1 and April 30 are not able to attend the kindergarten program until the date of their third birthday (unless for the purpose of orientation.) Nor are they allowed to attend kindergarten under the supervision of their parents/guardians until they turn three.

As teachers we are often asked the question “Will my child be ready for Kindergarten?” and then “Will my child be ready for school?” This decision can often cause families a lot of anxiety and usually means we spend lots of time throughout the year revisiting this question. Here are some things to consider when making a decision about when to start your child’s education journey.

It is very important to consider when your child is likely to gain the most benefit from starting school, as this will help you determine when your child's kindergarten experience should commence. Once a child starts 3-year-old kindergarten, their education journey has commenced with an expectation of moving into 4- year-old kindergarten the following year and then school the year after.

How does the funding work?

In our experience we have found that many families are not aware of how the government funding works and wanted to clarify this for you. A set amount of government funding is provided per year for each child enrolled in the four-year-old Kindergarten program and from 2022, funding will also be provided for 5 hours of 3 year old Kindergarten.

In some circumstances children who are assessed as having delays in two or more key outcomes of learning and development may be eligible for a second year of **4 year old** funding. However, strict eligibility criteria apply to a second year of Kindergarten and children who are simply not ready for kindergarten or who are developmentally *immature* would not meet these criteria.

There is a misconception that there is an option for families to simply pay for a second year but this is not true. Access to the second year of 4-year old Kindergarten is only available under limited circumstances and should not be assumed as an automatic entitlement.

There is **no** provision for children to have a second funded year of 3 year old Kindergarten.

Deferment

If your child begins three-year-old kinder and you feel they are not ready, but they do not meet the eligibility criteria for a second year of Kindergarten, you need to speak to your child’s Kindergarten Teacher as soon as possible. It may be possible for your child to withdraw from the program and return the following year, but you do need to speak to your teacher early in first term and it is not guaranteed that your child can defer.

Age

In Victoria we have one of the world's youngest school starting rates. Although every child's development is unique, observation and research suggest that children who turn 3 or 4 between January and April can benefit significantly from waiting a year before they begin their educational journey.

In our teaching experience; a high percentage of children with birthdays between January and April will find it more difficult to cope with the Kindergarten program.

We have attached a letter about Kindergarten readiness which outlines further points to consider regarding Kindergarten readiness. At Kindergarten, children will be part of a large group of children. We have 22 children in our group with 2 educators and a parent helper.

What can be tackled or played with competently at home, without the distraction of noise and other children, can be a different experience in a Kindergarten setting. At Kindergarten communication, co-operation, creativity and conflict resolution are key aspects of the program provided. Being a successful member of a group involves a number of skills.

These include:

- the ability to concentrate, despite other things going on around you.
- being able to assert yourself when needed.
- being able to ask for help or clarification and
- being able to wait your turn and share materials.

Steps you can take

You know your child best. To help you make your decision you can discuss your options with people whose judgement you trust such as your Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Kindergarten Educators, School Teachers (especially Foundation and Prep) and other parents. You can also read more about Kindergarten readiness and/or attend Kindergarten readiness information sessions.

What if I decide to wait another year?

There are options to consider if you decide to wait a year. Playgroup, occasional care and family day care are available in the Bayside area and provide opportunities to develop your child's readiness for Kindergarten.

Setting up your child for success.

We will end by saying that unfortunately there are no hard and fast rules. Although each child is different, we advise parents that if in doubt; it is best not to push your child before he or she is ready.

We like to promote the idea; that we want children to **“thrive and not just survive.”** This ties in with our philosophy of having high expectations for every child. We are passionate about providing each child with the opportunity to gain the maximum benefit

from the Kindergarten's educational program. This in turn promotes a higher developed self-esteem rather than feeling like things are too hard or that they can't do what all the other children are doing.

A positive year at Kindergarten will give your child a great sense of achievement, and build confidence in himself/herself and his/her abilities. It will stand your child in good stead for school and for life in general.

We are here to help.

If you would like clarification or further information about when is the best time for your child to attend kindergarten, please share your concerns, thoughts and ideas openly with the teacher. If you would like to discuss Kindergarten readiness, we would be happy to make a time to chat with you.

Kind regards,

Kylie Lawson (Green Group Educator & Educational Leader) and
Kim Burgess (Red & Blue Group Educator)