

# Queensland Kindergarten Funding

## Frequently asked questions

### long day care services

## About Free Kindy

### What is Free Kindy?

Free Kindy in Queensland provides eligible children with 15 hours per week of free kindergarten for up to 40 weeks or 600 hours per year in a government-approved kindergarten program. It supports children's early learning and development in the year before they start school. Free Kindy removes financial barriers for families so that more children have access to quality early childhood education.

### Is kindy free for all families?

Yes. Kindy is free for all eligible kindy-aged children who attend a government-approved free kindergarten program.

### How can I find my nearest Free Kindy service?

There are more than 2,200 services across Queensland that offer Free Kindy at both sessional kindergartens or long day care services. Families can search online for 'Free Kindy Queensland' or with the Free Kindy finder: [www.qld.gov.au/FreeKindy](http://www.qld.gov.au/FreeKindy)

## Service eligibility for Free Kindy

### How does a service qualify for Queensland Kindergarten Funding?

A long day care service must be an approved Kindergarten Program Provider delivering a government-approved kindergarten program. The program must be delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and follow the **Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline** or an equivalent

curriculum. It must cater to children in the year before Prep who turn four by 30 June in the year they attend. Additionally, the long day care service must offer a minimum of 600 hours per year (typically 15 hours per week for 40 weeks) to ensure children receive a structured, play-based learning experience.

### What are the eligibility requirements to become a long day care Kindergarten Program Provider?

To qualify as an approved Kindergarten Program Provider, a long day care service must be an approved centre-based service with a rating of Working Towards or higher under the National Quality Standards (NQS) and deliver a minimum of 600 hours per year of a government-approved kindergarten program. The program must be delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and follow the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline or an alternate kindergarten learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Additionally, to opt into Free Kindy, the long day care service must keep its daily or hourly kindergarten fees below the funding threshold set by the Department of Education.

### How can a service apply to become an approved Kindergarten Program Provider?

To become an approved Kindergarten Program Provider (KPP), long day care services need to register and **create an account in QGrants**. To submit a KPP application through QGrants, refer to **New KPP Application for Long Day Care Services**.

## What happens if a service changes ownership?

The new owner of the service will be required to submit a new application for the service to become an approved Kindergarten Program Provider (KPP). A long day care (LDC) service must have a fully qualified early childhood teacher (ECT) delivering the program at the time of submitting their KPP application. LDC Services applying to change ownership with a 'working towards' ECT with an exceptional circumstance approval in place at the time of application will be eligible for approval. If the existing approved 'working towards' ECT remains at the service during the change of ownership, the new approved provider will be able to apply for KPP approval.

## Child eligibility for Free Kindy

### Which children are eligible for Free Kindy?

Kindy is for children four years of age by 30 June the year before they start Prep.

To check whether a child is of eligible age, enter their birthday into the [kindy age calculator](#).

### What are the eligibility requirements for children in an approved kindergarten program?

A child must be four years old by June 30 in the year they participate and must be enrolled for 600 hours annually. Proof of age, such as a birth certificate or other official documents, must be provided before enrolment. If these are unavailable, a community leader from an established organisation who is known to the child may verify a child's identity. Funding is limited to one kindergarten program per child per year, with a maximum of two years, including delayed exit cases, which require documentation. Long day care services must track second-year funding recipients in their Child Care Management System.

Children not receiving Child Care Subsidy and unvaccinated children remain eligible for funding, with enrolment decisions at the discretion of the provider.

A child who has reached 6 years and 6 months by 30 June is ineligible for funding, even if it would be their first year in kindergarten.

## Can a child access Free Kindy if they don't receive the Child Care Subsidy?

Yes. Eligible-aged children enrolled in an approved kindergarten program at a long day care service are eligible for Free Kindy even if they don't receive the Child Care Subsidy.

## Are there additional costs for the hours before and after the kindy program?

Yes. If a child attends kindy in a long day care service, families will need to pay for the hours of care before and after the kindy program. These costs may be covered in part by the Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Queensland Government funds 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year of Free Kindy.

Free Kindy funding is unique to the parent/carer account's eligibility circumstances and is applied after the CCS discount. On family accounts, the service would apply their daily fee for the Long Day Care component, apply the CCS percentage to those hours which is then supplemented with 15 hours Free Kindy funding. This can be either two 7.5 hour or three 5-hour days, depending on the service's delivery model.

## Can a child be enrolled in an additional kindergarten program at the same service?

Enrolling children in an additional kindergarten program at the same service will mean that the long day care service will be unable to claim the available subsidies for the second program if the child has already received 15 hours of Free Kindy. It is expected that enrolments of eligible-age children in a second program at the same service should incur a different fee as the second program is not subsidised. The fee in this case should reflect the full cost of the kindergarten program delivery before subsidies.

## Can a child be enrolled in multiple programs at different services?

Yes, however an eligible child can only access funding for one program of up to 15 hours per week at a time. Where a child attends multiple long day care programs or multiple sessional programs, the service must support parent choice regarding which service receives the Free Kindy funding.

Where an eligible child is enrolled in a program in both a funded sessional kindergarten and a long day care service, the sessional kindergarten will receive funding for the child. The family will have an out-of-pocket cost for the second enrolment.

## Can children on visas access Free Kindy?

Families with children on certain visas can access kindergarten for free. Eligibility for Free Kindy depends on the child's visa status. Children holding visas that are exempt from state school fees or those on recognised Refugee or Humanitarian visas are eligible for Free Kindy. Parents and carers must provide current visa information upon enrolment. Refer to the **Queensland Kindergarten Funding Essentials** for a comprehensive list of eligible visas and further information.

## Can a child access Free Kindy if they are unvaccinated?

Unvaccinated eligible-aged children can participate in an approved kindergarten program and receive Free Kindy funding. The decision to enrol an unvaccinated child is for the approved provider in accordance with their enrolment policies.

## Can a child start Prep early and still get Free Kindy?

Early entry to Prep is allowed under Part 4, Section 17 of the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 for children turning 5 by 31 July, if the school principal deems them ready.

Services must seek approval for Queensland Kindergarten Funding by emailing [kindyfundings@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:kindyfundings@qed.qld.gov.au) with evidence of unconditional early Prep enrolment. If approved, funding applies from the date the school principal accepts the unconditional enrolment. This evidence must be retained for assurance reviews.

## What happens if a child needs a second year of kindy due to delayed exit?

Delayed exit from kindergarten is a very important decision for a family and their child's service provider to make. Families are encouraged to arrange a meeting with their child's kindergarten teacher and other relevant professionals to discuss any concerns about their child's readiness to start school and potential delayed exit from kindy.

Where it has been determined that a child needs to repeat kindy, they will receive Free Kindy for both years. Services will also need to document and keep evidence of decision-making for delayed exit as part of the quality assurance process.

A child who has reached 6 years and 6 months by 30 June is ineligible for funding, even if it would be their first year in kindergarten.

## Does a child need to be at the service for more than 7.5 hours a day to receive Free Kindy?

Each long day care service determines how and when their kindy program is delivered. A child is eligible for Free Kindy if they are enrolled in a kindy program for 15 hours a week or 30 hours a fortnight, 40 weeks a year. Families can confirm the days and times the kindy program operates with their service provider and any requirements they may have regarding enrolment and attendance.

## Free Kindy funding

### How does a service claim kindergarten funding?

A service must be an approved Kindergarten Program Provider and submit child level data through their Child Care Management System or software provider. A service must meet all eligibility requirements, accurately record attendance, and submit claims within the required timeframes. Services must not charge families for the Free Kindy component if there is a delay in forecast submission.

### Can a long day care service increase their fees?

A long day care service must keep its daily or hourly kindergarten program fees below the funding threshold to qualify for Free Kindy. The Department of Education (the department) sets this threshold, which is indexed annually in July. Long day care services that opt in to Free Kindy must maintain fees within the threshold for 12 months but can increase them once per year on or after 1 July.

If a fee increase exceeds the threshold, the department will contact the long day care service to provide them with an opportunity to lower their fees to remain eligible for Free Kindy. Long day care services unwilling or unable to meet the threshold can opt out of Free Kindy and switch to the Per Capita Kindy Subsidy, but services cannot receive both funding sources at the same time.

## Can a long day care service still receive funding if they opt out of Free Kindy?

A Per Capita Kindy Subsidy is provided to service providers that have not opted into Free Kindy. This funding is provided for each eligible child enrolled in an approved kindergarten program delivered by an approved Kindergarten Program Provider, who is not eligible to opt into Free Kindy, and provides fee relief for the kindergarten hours. Service receiving the Per Capita Kindy Subsidy are not eligible for any other kindergarten subsidies. Services who have not opted in to Free Kindy cannot advertise that they offer Free Kindy.

## What funding is available to services to support eligible children to fully access and participate in a kindergarten program?

Long day care services can utilise their Inclusion-ready funding to support eligible children to feel welcome and included at kindy.

Services receiving Kindy Uplift can access funding to help deliver programs, resources, supports and professional development to build educator capability. This helps strengthen cultural responsiveness and improve children's learning and development.

The Department of Education (the department) supports approved Kindergarten Program Providers to welcome children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with a range of translated resources available. Any families having trouble accessing free kindergarten can contact the department's Grants Management and Funding team by email [kindyfunding@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:kindyfunding@qed.qld.gov.au) or phone 3035 2244 if they require further assistance.

## Workforce support

### What happens if a service loses an early childhood teacher?

It's crucial to act promptly to maintain compliance with funding requirements. Approved providers should notify the Department of Education (the department) when they lose their early childhood teacher (ECT) by emailing [kindyfunding@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:kindyfunding@qed.qld.gov.au).

Services should collaborate with the department to explore options such as applying for a 60-day grace period or utilising exceptional circumstances provisions to maintain approved Kindergarten Program Provider (KPP) status and continue to receive funding.

Services must be actively trying to recruit an ECT and submit a nil claim every quarter. The service will not be able to use the Kindy Tick nor be listed on the Free Kinder finder until the funding eligibility requirements have been met.

It is important that all actions and communications are well-documented, as this information may be required during assurance reviews by the department. For detailed guidance, refer to the [Queensland Kindergarten Funding Essentials for Long Day Care Services](#).

### What workforce programs or initiatives can educators access?

The Free Kindy program is supported by workforce initiatives to strengthen service delivery and promote a professional career in the sector.

These initiatives focus on attracting, retaining, and upskilling early childhood teachers and educators. They include:

- financial incentives, such as scholarships with wraparound supports and access to early childhood professionals,
- practicum placement subsidies,
- professional development to meet qualification requirements and
- career pathways into the sector.

Check the [Early Childhood](#) website for further information on Queensland Government workforce initiatives under the Queensland Early Childhood Workforce Strategy.