

Queensland Kindergarten Funding

Frequently asked questions

sessional kindergartens

About Free Kindy

What is Free Kindy?

Free Kindy in Queensland provides eligible children with 15 hours per week or 30 hours per fortnight 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 and long day care services. Families can search online for 'Free Kindy Queensland' or with the Free Kindy finder: www.qld.gov.au/FreeKindy

Service eligibility for Free Kindy

How does a service qualify for Queensland Kindergarten Funding?

A sessional kindergarten 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 sessional kindergarten 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 (KPP), a sessional kindergarten must be affiliated with a Central Governing Body and have 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 led by a qualified early childhood teacher and follow the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline or an equivalent curriculum. Additionally, to opt into Free Kindy, the sessional kindergarten 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), sessional kindergartens need to register and [create an account in QGrants](#). To submit a KPP application through QGrants, refer to [New KPP Application for Sessional Kindergartens](#).

What is the role of a Central Governing Body?

A Central Governing Body (CGB) is funded by the Department of Education (the department) to support sessional kindergartens in delivering quality, affordable kindergarten programs. CGBs distribute funding, ensure compliance with governance and assurance requirements, and provide operational and professional development support to sessional kindergartens and their management committees. They act as the primary contact for sessional kindergartens, oversee enrolments, and submit data to the department. CGBs also monitor fee compliance with the funding threshold, report misuse of funds, and seek departmental approval for changes to program delivery. Legally, they are contractually bound to manage funding responsibly and ensure sessional kindergartens meet eligibility and compliance requirements.

Can a service change their CGB?

A sessional kindergarten can choose to transfer its membership from one Central Governing Body (CGB) to another at the end of a calendar year. Once a sessional kindergarten has signed an Affiliate Agreement with the new CGB, this CGB must provide the Department of Education (department) with confirmation of the new membership. The department will then confirm the transfer date with the new and previous CGBs.

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 30 June in the year they attend an approved kindergarten program. They must be enrolled in an approved kindergarten program, and funding is based on enrolment, not attendance.

Parents must provide proof of birth, such as a birth certificate, passport, or government-issued document, with alternatives available for Aboriginal children or Torres Strait Islander children.

Families can only claim funding for one program per child per year.

A delayed exit from kindergarten is possible through discussions with educators and professionals, allowing a second year of funding, with a maximum of two years funded.

Children turning 6 years and 6 months before 30 June are ineligible for funding.

Unvaccinated children can participate if the provider's enrolment policy permits.

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 sessional kindergarten 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 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 an approved kindergarten program 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.

Sessional kindergartens must seek approval for Queensland Kindergarten Funding by emailing 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.

Free Kindy funding

How does a service claim kindergarten funding?

Sessional kindergartens (affiliates only) are funded collectively through an Affiliate Agreement with Central Governing Bodies (CGBs), who distribute funding based on these agreements. Payments from the Department of Education (the department) are made to CGBs in two block grants annually, with an acquittal process completed at the end of each term. To claim, sessional kindergartens must use the prescribed Child Care Management System platform through their CGB. A service must meet all eligibility requirements, accurately record attendance, and submit claims within the required timeframes. Services must not charge families if there is a delay in forecast submission.

Can a sessional kindergarten increase their fees?

Opted in sessional kindergartens must maintain their fees for a 12-month period so they stay within the funding threshold set by the Department of Education (the department). This threshold ensures that families do not pay out-of-pocket fees for the approved kindergarten program.

Sessional kindergartens are permitted to increase their fees to take effect from the beginning of a calendar year but are not able to increase their fees during the kindergarten year. If the increase to the annual fee charged for the approved kindergarten program results in the fee being over the funding threshold, the sessional kindergarten will be notified by the Central Governing Body for a joint discussion with the department. Exceptional circumstances, such as rising operational costs, may be considered by the department, which has the discretion to review fee increases and determine ongoing eligibility for Free Kindy.

Can a sessional kindergarten 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. It does not include 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 all children to fully access and participate in a kindergarten program?

Sessional kindergartens are able to utilise their Inclusion-ready funding to support 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 the 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.

Sessional kindergartens can also access interpreter and translations services.

Any families having trouble accessing free kindergarten can contact the department's Grants Management and Funding team by email 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. Sessional kindergartens should first inform their Central Governing Body about the vacancy and collaborate with them to find a qualified replacement. If an immediate replacement isn't available, the service may need to explore exceptional circumstances provisions to continue receiving funding.

Services must be actively trying to recruit and submit nil claims each quarter. They mustn't use the Kindy Tick, nor can they be listed on Free Kinder Finder, until they meet funding eligibility requirements.

Sessional kindergartens should ensure all actions and communications are well-documented, as this information may be required during assurance reviews by the Department of Education. For detailed guidance, refer to the [Queensland Kindergarten Funding Essentials for Sessional Kindergartens](#).

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.