

2026 Kindergarten Funding Essentials

Summary of key changes

The updated [2026 Kindergarten Funding Essentials](#) outline key funding subsidies, eligibility criteria and application processes for Queensland's approved kindergarten programs. They provide information to help you make the most of the available funding and resources. Based on stakeholder feedback, the amendments below have been made to improve clarity and understanding of requirements under free kindy.

Sessional Kindergartens and Long Day Care Services

Section 3: Service Provider Eligibility

- **Clearer KPP requirements:** Updated processes for eligibility, ownership changes, and exceptional circumstances provide greater transparency and consistency for providers.
- **Change of Ownership:** If a service changes ownership, the new Approved Provider must apply for KPP approval within six months and have a qualified ECT in place, ensuring uninterrupted program delivery. Services must not promote 'Free Kindy' or use the *kindy tick* until KPP approval is confirmed.

Section 4–5: Child Eligibility

- **Eligibility confirmation:** Clearer guidance ensures children turning five before 30 June can access one year of free kindy before starting Prep.
- **Equity in access:** Strengthened enrolment guidance ensures fair participation and compliance with program eligibility rules.

Section 6: Managing Enrolments

- **Access and attendance:** Clarified rules for multiple enrolments, SDK participation, and absence management. This supports accurate attendance data and equitable program delivery.
- **Early entry and Prep transition:** Clearer guidance helps services support continuity for children transitioning to school.

Section 7–8: Workforce and Program Delivery

- **Workforce capability:** Guidance on ECT qualifications and grace periods is now more precise, supporting compliance and professional growth.
- **Kindy Uplift:** Professional development, collaborative learning, and reflective practice are recognised as eligible funded activities, encouraging quality improvement.

Section 9: Kindergarten Funding

- **Funding integrity:** All funds must be used for eligible children within the relevant calendar year, strengthening accountability and financial transparency.
- **Inclusion and Kindy Uplift:** More flexible funding use supports inclusion, professional learning, and service improvement.
- **Updated subsidy rules:** Refined criteria clarify what funding can be used for, encouraging targeted and educationally focused spending.

Section 10–11: Claims, Data and Reporting

- **Claim adjustments:** Clearer processes for funding corrections and acquittals support timely resolution and effective communication with the department.
- **Privacy and data consistency:** New requirements ensure alignment with national data standards and updated Queensland privacy legislation.

Sessional Kindergarten

Section 3: Central Governing Body (CGB) Model

- **Role of CGB:** Enhanced direction to ensure CGBs are responsible for helping services deliver inclusive programs, manage enrolments, and maintain strong governance.
- **Volunteer Management Committees:** Strengthened clarity of expectations under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* to ensure committees are valid and compliant.

Section 5–6: Enrolment

- **Sustainability support:** Under-utilised Sessional Kindergartens may, with CGB approval, enrol eligible children full-time or a small number of non-eligible 3-year-olds in Term 4 before the kindergarten year, supporting viability and community access.

Section 12: Governance and Recordkeeping

- **CGB assurance requirements:** CGBs must comply with departmental governance and assurance provisions, including new CGB Governance and Assurance Guidelines.

Long Day Care

Section 6 & 8: Shorter Sessions of Care

- **Flexible delivery option:** Clarification provided for LDCs offering a *Shorter Session of Care* model (5–7.5 hours per day) for the kindergarten program. Gap Fee subsidies must match the reduced daily rate, ensuring fairness and affordability for families. Clearer guidance on record-keeping ensures accurate reporting and compliance with CCS requirements.

Section 8: Workforce Programs

- **Paid Planning Days:** Guidance confirms backfilling educators must be appropriately qualified and prevents duplicate claims if service ownership changes.
- **Subsidy spending:** Updated inclusions and exclusions ensure funding is used effectively for educational outcomes, not general operational costs.

Contact us

For more information regarding the 2026 Funding Essentials, please contact the Grants Management and Funding team on 07 3035 2244 or email kindyfundings@qed.qld.gov.au.