

Queensland Kindergarten Funding: Funding Category Guidelines 2025

Funding declared under the *Community Services Act 2007*

Foreword

Every child, regardless of location or life circumstance, deserves the best start in life. Access to a quality kindergarten program supports that start. It lays the foundation for every child in Queensland to thrive and achieve life-long success.

Kindergarten is free for eligible-aged children enrolled in an Approved Kindergarten Program delivered by an opted in kindergarten service. This investment by the Queensland Government provides all eligible aged children with access to a quality kindergarten program in the year before fulltime schooling regardless of their location or circumstance.

The Department of Education (Department) provides funding to eligible kindergarten service providers to ensure greater access to a quality kindergarten program for Queensland children, and to remove gap fees for families for eligible aged children. Approved Kindergarten Program Providers (KPPs) are required to pass on these savings when they opt in to Free Kindy.

Definitions

In this document, capitalised words are defined and have meaning under Queensland Kindergarten Funding Agreements and Terms and Conditions.

Kindergarten funding category

Kindergarten Funding is provided to eligible service providers delivering an Approved Kindergarten Program to support the cost of delivering kindergarten. The objectives of this Funding are to:

- improve educational outcomes for children;
- increase participation and attendance of all kindergarten age children in Queensland;
- target funding to children who need it most;
- improve inclusiveness of services;
- improve affordability by removing gap fees for families; and
- help children reach their full potential when they are at kindergarten.

Approved kindergarten program provider status

An Approved Kindergarten Program may be delivered at a funded long day care service or a funded sessional kindergarten (through membership with or as an affiliate of a Central Governing Body [CGB]).

To be eligible to receive Subsidies, each service provider must have obtained Approved KPP status. This requires providers to have a current service approval under the Education and Care Services National Law, have a rating of Working Towards National Quality Standards (NQS) or higher, and be delivering an Approved Kindergarten Program.

Kindergarten funding eligibility criteria

To be eligible for Funding, service providers must meet two sets of criteria.

1. **Child-eligibility criteria** – service providers may claim Funding for eligible-age children only; and
2. **Service-eligibility criteria** – service providers must meet a range of criteria including, but not exhaustive of, holding a current service approval; being registered as an Approved KPP; delivering an Approved Kindergarten Program; ensuring the maximum daily fee for the Approved Kindergarten Program is below the Funding Threshold set by the Department; and employing qualified Early Childhood Teacher/s.

Service providers whose fees are higher than the Funding Threshold are not eligible for Free Kindy. They must meet all other eligibility criteria to be eligible for the Per Capita Kindy Subsidy which must be used to reduce kindergarten fees for families.

Kindergarten funding

Free Kindy Funding is provided to opted in service providers through one or more Subsidies. These include:

- **Base Subsidy** - provided for each eligible child enrolled in an Approved Kindergarten Program delivered by an Approved KPP that has opted in to Free Kindy.
- **Gap Fee Subsidy** - covers the parent fee component of the Approved Kindergarten Program in a long day care service for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks or 600 hours a year.
- **Service Location Subsidy** - provided to service providers where the service is located in an eligible remoteness category using the Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) remoteness measure at the SA2 geographic level.
- **Kindy Uplift** – provided to eligible service providers to respond to children’s learning and development needs through provision of evidence-based initiatives.
- **Inclusion Ready Subsidy** – provided to service providers to support inclusion of **all** eligible children in an Approved Kindergarten Program, irrespective of diversity of background or additional needs.

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 KPP, 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.

Kindergarten funding payments

In a sessional kindergarten, Funding is provided to CGBs to distribute to their funded kindergarten members and affiliates. Funding is provided directly to eligible funded long day care service providers.

Kindergarten Funding Essentials and subordinate documents

Approved KPPs must comply with the requirements outlined in the *Queensland Kindergarten Funding Essentials* and any other fact sheets, guidelines and policies as published or amended from time to time by the Department.

Assurance

To obtain assurance that Approved KPPs are expending funds in accordance with the intent of Kindergarten Funding, the Department will conduct assurance reviews of Approved KPPs.

Monitoring and compliance

Approved Providers are required to provide a range of Funding data for their Approved KPPs to enable the Department to monitor Funding and compliance with Kindergarten Eligibility Requirements and ensure that they are meeting their contractual obligations.

Measures

The Kindergarten Funding outcomes will be measured against improvements in:

- vulnerability data through the Australian Early Development Census; and
- kindergarten participation and attendance data through the Department's annual Early Childhood Education and Care Census and the services' Child Care Management Software (CCMS) passed through an Application Programming Interface (API).