



Young Adventurers
Early Childhood Services

2021

Kindergarten Enrolment Information Pack





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**Please return your enrolment application forms by the due date
31st July 2020**

Contact Information

Contact 03 50329729 or email admin@yamail.com.au if you require any further information. Families are welcome to make a time to visit our Kindergarten program to assist them with their Kindergarten application and choosing a Kindergarten. Due to Covid-19 restrictions please make an appointment first.

About us

Young Adventurers is locally owned and operated Early Childhood company. Approved Providers Marg & Scott Hartshorn first opened Young Adventurers in Swan Hill in July 2015 at 24 Yana Street.

Marg has a Degree in Early Childhood and over 20 years' experience providing early childhood programs across a range of settings in the Swan Hill area. Together Marg & Scott have created a unique environment set on 2 acres of established trees, gardens and lawns where children can play and immerse themselves in a variety of rich learning experiences and be a part of small groups with qualified and experienced educators.

We provide a long day care program for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years. In addition to our childcare programs we also provide a separate 4 year old Funded Kindergarten program approved through the Victorian Government.

About kindergarten

In Victoria there are many different Kindergarten options available to parents including programs that run over three short days or two long days. Some Kinders are managed by local primary schools and are located on the school site or close by, some are managed by not-for-profit community based organisations or cluster managers and some are provided by private providers.

To be an approved Kindergarten there must be at least one Degree Qualified Teacher responsible for the program and children must attend for a minimum of 15 hours per week. The program must be available for 40 weeks of the year. There is no minimum group size or designated operating hours that Kinders must abide by. All Kinders have the flexibility of adjusting their hours to meet the needs of the local community and these hours are usually determined in the months leading up to the program commencing each year provided each child is offered a minimum of 15 hours per week. The curriculum is based on outcomes from the Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework and the National Early Years Learning Framework.

The amount of Kindergarten Funding that a Service receives is determined by the number of children enrolled and is paid directly to the Kindergarten to assist with the cost of employing Degree Qualified teachers & Assistants, purchasing resources and equipment and providing reduced fees for families.

From 2018 some Funded Kindergartens will also receive additional 'school readiness' funding to contribute towards the cost of accessing specialised support such as training, resources & visiting specialists such as speech therapists. The level of 'school readiness' funding provided is based on the level of schooling and activity that parents in the community undertake – this is how primary schools are funded and gives the Department a snapshot of the demographics of the local community. Parent surveys are used to obtain this information however a parent's level of schooling or work activity has no bearing on which Kinder they should choose or whether or not their child will be offered a place. The parent information requested in the 'school readiness' questionnaire is solely to determine how much funding should be provided to each kinder.

Victorian Kindergarten Guidelines stipulate that children are only entitled to enrol in one Kinder program at any one time and are only entitled to one year of funded 4 year old Kinder. There are some exceptions such as when a family, service and/or GP/Maternal & Child Health Nurse/Early Intervention/School or other professional determines in collaboration with the Teacher and family that it would be in the child's best interests to delay starting school and instead return for a second year of funded Kindergarten. Your child's teacher would begin these conversations with families at any time during the year however a final decision is not usually made until late in the child's kindergarten year.

As per the Kindergarten Funding guidelines we ensure our program is delivered by a Degree Qualified Early Childhood Teacher for a minimum of 15 hours per week. As per expectations of a funded kindergarten program we provide a high level of literacy, numeracy/maths, science and technology

incorporated into our program. We accommodate between 12 and 16 children per day with at least two educators – one Degree Qualified Early Childhood Teacher and one Degree or Diploma or Certificate III qualified Assistant.

We are very fortunate at Young Adventurers to have three Degree Qualified Teachers in our program Marg Hartshorn, Verlie Carroll & Holly Reither. Marg oversees the program including managing the enrolments and placements and teaching for Verlie and Holly when they are at lunch, undertaking office/planning time or when they attend training. We also have several Kindergarten Assistants who work alongside the Teachers throughout the week.

In 2021, our Kindergarten program will be offered from 9am to 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday commencing on Wednesday 27th of January and concluding on Wednesday 8th of December.

Additional days or times outside of the kinder booking may be available – please see attached Fee schedule.

Is Kindergarten compulsory?

It is not compulsory for children to attend a funded 4 year old kindergarten program prior to starting school however many parents choose this option for their child and we fully promote the benefits of children having access to early childhood programs in the year prior to their formal schooling.

In addition the Victorian Government advocates strongly for all eligible 4 year old children to participate in a Funded Kindergarten Program and as such provides financial assistance directly to the kindergartens to assist with the cost of employing teachers and providing resources.

Eligibility for Funded Kindergarten

There is an age cut off for eligibility to access a Funded 4 year old kinder program: children must turn 4 by the 30th April in the year they go to kindergarten. Some exceptions do apply for children eligible for the Victorian Government's Early Start Kindergarten program – see Early Start Kindergarten Grants.

Each child must only access one year of Funded 4 year old Kindergarten. An application must be made in Term 3 to the Department of Education & Training for any child to access a second year of Kindergarten at which time certain criteria must be met. Second year Funding is not guaranteed.

Why choose kindergarten?

The information below is taken directly from the Department of Education & Training website regarding Kindergarten:

Going to kindergarten is an important step for your child. It will help them learn skills that they will build on throughout their life.

At kindergarten your child will grow socially and emotionally. Their ability to think, use and recognise language and their fine motor skills will be developed through play, art, dance, music, movement and interacting with others. Most importantly, your child will be learning to become an effective learner as they develop and extend their communication skills, build their self-confidence, learn to be creative, and develop skills that assist them with reading, writing and mathematics.

A kindergarten program provides a supportive environment in which early childhood educators work to support children's learning and development, and to achieve the outcomes identified in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Each program aims to:

- *Provide each child with a broad and rounded experience in all areas of learning and development*
- *Offer children a range of experiences in a rich indoor and outdoor environment, using a variety of materials and equipment*
- *Support life-skills development in children as they learn to:*
 - *get along with others and be a member of a group*
 - *show respect and caring for others*
 - *be comfortable with people who are different and to see beyond differences to similarities*
 - *balance their own needs, rights and responsibilities with those of others*
- *Support and nurture resilience, flexibility and other skills and qualities that help children to deal with major transitions, new situations and changes in their lives*
- *Offer support to parents through contact with experienced, knowledgeable and sensitive professionals with whom they can talk and share concerns, and from whom they can receive encouragement*
- *Deliver the benefits that networking with other families can afford parents in terms of sharing experiences and offering support.*

Kindergarten participation also helps to identify children who may need extra support for their development and offers links to targeted support services. This helps to ensure that children receive this assistance as early as possible. Kindergarten also provides an opportunity for families to develop links with their communities and other supports.

A range of options are available for families and service providers to enhance the inclusion of children with additional needs in funded kindergarten programs. Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and accepts and respects individuality and diversity. Inclusive programs encourage and allow all children genuine opportunities to access and participate in kindergarten programs.

Organisations receiving kindergarten funding are required to have in place policies and procedures that promote inclusive practice and equality of opportunity for all children. This includes ensuring their enrolment, access and inclusion policies:

- *promote fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs*
- *support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation*
- *do not inadvertently present barriers to participation.*
- *comply with Victorian and federal legislation, including the:*
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)*
 - *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Victoria)*
 - *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 From the Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*

Kindergarten programs are guided by State and National frameworks which promote high quality, inclusive education and care for all children. These include:

- *The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*
- *The Early Years Learning Framework*
- *The National Quality Framework*

The practice principles for learning and development identified in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework underpin service delivery provided by early childhood professionals including kindergarten and Early Childhood Intervention Services professionals. The principles guide early childhood professionals to work together with children and families to achieve best outcomes for every child. The practice principles are:

1. *Family centred practice*
2. *Partnerships with professional*
3. *High expectations for every child*
4. *Equity and diversity*
5. *Respectful relationships and responsive engagement*
6. *Integrated teaching and learning approaches*
7. *Assessment for learning and development*
8. *Reflective practice*

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework provides the following definition. "Inclusion involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision making process. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued, and that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference".

Enrolment information

To ensure your child's enrolment can be processed correctly we require the following information:

- your child's name and address and details of any additional needs on the enrolment form provided by our service
- information about yourself and any other parents, carers or guardians in your child's life on the enrolment form provided by our service
- details of people who can collect your child including any court orders or parenting orders regarding custody/access of your child with any parent or guardian on the enrolment form provided by our service
- information about their medical health and immunisation status of your child including a copy of your child's immunisation history statement or record provided by Medicare to be attached to the enrolment form provided by our service (compulsory).
- a copy of any current Health Care Card or Pension/Concession Card relevant to your child (if eligible).
- Families claiming Child Care Subsidy to reduce the cost of their Kindergarten Fees will be required at the commencement of the Kindergarten year to sign a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) form provided by our Service as part of the new Child Care Subsidy rules. A booking will then be submitted by the Service to Centrelink and parents/guardians will be required to confirm the booking with Centrelink through their MyGov app or directly with Centrelink before any Child Care Subsidy can be paid to the Service.

Enrolment applications should be returned by the due date 31st July 2020 (the year prior to the kindergarten place needed). Places will then be allocated using the Government's priority of access guidelines and the most current Kindergarten Guide from the Victorian Department of Education & Training.

Enrolments received after the closing date will still be considered however availability may be limited.

Please note we cannot offer placement for any child in our kindergarten program until after the closing date for applications 31st July 2020. This is due to the Government's Priority of Access guidelines where all applications are considered and places allocated according to these guidelines.

We encourage families to request the two days they prefer for Kindergarten and we will try to accommodate these requests however we cannot guarantee your requests. In 2021 we plan to offer the Kinder program on Mon, Tues & Wed only and childcare in the Kinder on Thurs & Fri. If you have a specific request for Kinder on a Thursday please let us know and depending on demand we may be able to extend our program to a Thursday.

Returning your child's enrolment form if the details provided change

It is recommended that you complete the enrolment form using the most current information for your child. Information such as moving addresses, changing contact phone numbers or updating health care cards or immunisation information can be updated at any time by contacting our centre on 03 50329729. All information provided on enrolment forms will be confirmed prior to your child's first day at Kindergarten.

Orientation visits

You can arrange a time to visit our Kindergarten during any weekday in June/July 2020 where your child can participate alongside you in any of the activities provided. This is a good idea if you are weighing up whether to enrol your child at Young Adventurers or another local Kindergarten program.

A more formal orientation day(s) will be held in November & December of the year prior to Kindergarten starting. Families will be contacted to arrange a time when we can accommodate you and where you will be able to ask questions and meet other children and families from our Kindergarten.

Children who are already enrolled in any of our Young Adventurers programs will have many more opportunities to visit the Kindergarten in the year prior to commencing Kindergarten to assist them to become familiar with the teachers and program. Your child's current educators can arrange short visits to the Kindergarten in Term 4 on your behalf. Please let us know if you have any reservations regarding transition times or if you have any questions about the transition program.

Helping my child to settle

Families are welcome to spend time with their child in our setting at any time during the Kindergarten year. Our experienced Teachers will provide comfort and support to children and will keep you well informed of how your child is settling in. Starting Kindergarten can sometimes be a child's first experience spending time away from one or both parents and therefore we recognise that it may take some time for both the child and parent(s) to adjust to this new routine.

Things you can do to help both yourself and your child settle in include making sure you arrive on time and keep to the same times each day. This will help your child to plan their day and begin to understand the pattern of play, snack, play, lunch, play, snack and home. Allow plenty of time to get ready for Kindergarten in the mornings. Have a pre-determined set of 'Kinder clothes' that your child can easily select from in the morning – see 'What to Bring to Kinder' section below. We recommend labelling all items of clothing to help your child look after their belongings. Encourage your child to be independent in putting their own belongings in their lockers on arrival and packing their bag at home time as it is good practice for primary school.

Try to stay positive for your child even if you are feeling anxious about leaving for the day. Your child will feel reassured if they see you feeling safe and relaxed during drop off and pick up times. Please let the teachers know if you have any reservations so they can help provide you with reassurance. Parents can call any time during the day to see how their child is going. We want your child's experience to be positive and will call you if we feel that your child is not coping with your separation. Sometimes children who are reluctant to attend benefit from shorter sessions initially until they have become more confident.

We do get questions from time to time about lunchboxes and how will children be able to manage their own lunch box at school if we don't have lunch boxes at Kinder. Research shows that the most important skill your child needs for school readiness is to be happy, confident and be able to communicate their needs and have an increased level of concentration and be able to socially get along in a group. These are the skills we focus on the most and we are very fortunate to be able to work on these skills with your child in our small class sizes.

What to bring to Kindergarten

'Kinder clothes' usually consist of something comfortable and something that is not new and able to be washed and worn with ease such as tracksuits, leggings, jeans, t-shirts and windcheaters. Avoid sending your child in any clothing that is special or costly as children will participate in a variety of painting, craft and messy play activities. Shoes need to be well fitting to avoid tripping. Some families prefer to send gumboots or washable 'cros' for messy play which is fine provided they are well fitted. Spare shoes and clothes should be packed daily for your child.

Drink bottle: Whilst we provide access to drinking water throughout the day your child may be more comfortable bringing their own drink bottle from home. Please ensure you label this for them to ensure they can find it themselves. Children often have identical drink bottles, bags and clothing items and it's important that they can identify which items belong to them.

Hat/sunscreen: In summer our centre has a Sunsmart Policy that requires all children and educators to wear appropriate sun protection including a wide brimmed hat and sunscreen. Children prefer their own hat and can be very reluctant to wear something borrowed.

Bag: Children enjoy being able to carry their own bag or backpack to 'school'. This helps them to develop their independence and learn to pack and look after their own belongings during the day at kinder.

Food: You do not need to send any meals or snacks for your child to Kindergarten as we have a cook that provides morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on a daily basis. There is no charge for meals. A menu is provided in the foyer which you are welcome to contribute suggestions to at any time. Fruit is also regularly available throughout the day. If your child feels they want to pack a lunchbox for Kinder we suggest you send fruit which can easily be consumed such as apples, mandarins, grapes or bananas.

We understand some families like to celebrate their child's birthdays or special occasions during their time at Kindergarten. Please check with your child's teacher first to determine if there are any allergies or guidelines.

Absent from Kindergarten due to holidays or illness

We recommend children stay home from Kindergarten if they have a high temperature or if they feel unwell or show any signs of illness such as being lethargic, pale, restless night's sleep, cough, rash or spots. In our experience we find children who are generally unwell do not benefit from being at Kindergarten as they are unable to find somewhere to sleep or rest undisturbed and prefer to be comforted by a parent at home. Our centre has an illness policy regarding the process for sending home children who appear to be unwell. We understand that families may need time away from the program for holidays or other events. Please let your child's teacher know if you may be away and an expected return date. Our centre is closed on Public Holidays. Families can download the free Kindynow app to mark their child absent up to four weeks in advance for illness or holidays.

Early Start Kindergarten Grants

Early Start Kindergarten Grants are available to eligible children to provide free or low cost kindergarten for three year old children where programs are offered by a Degree qualified teacher. Some services will be able to offer your child a place in a program for four year olds or a mixed age group if they are eligible for an Early Start Kindergarten Grant.

Is my child eligible? Your child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten if they are aged three by 30 April in the year they will be attending a kindergarten program, and:

- your child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST).

How do I enrol my child in Early Start? You can enrol your child by contacting a kindergarten service near you and asking to access Early Start Kindergarten.

Applications for Early Start Kindergarten funding are made by the service on your behalf and the grant is paid directly to the service.

Children who have accessed Early Start Kindergarten are still eligible for free or low cost four year old kindergarten in the following year. Children who have completed one year of Early Start Kindergarten when they are 3 years of age are not automatically eligible to start school the following year. In Victoria all children must turn 5 years of age by the 30th April in the year they commence formal schooling.

Kindergarten Term Dates

Our Kindergarten operates for 40 weeks of the year following similar school term dates provided by the Victorian Government. During school holidays the Kindergarten program will not operate. Some children may still attend the centre for child care during this period – see fee schedule Options. Please book early if you would like your child to attend during the school holidays. Our Kindergarten is closed on Public Holidays. Families who choose Option 1, 2 or 4 will be charged the usual fee for any Kindergarten or Child Care booking that falls on Public Holidays.

Routine maintenance of the Kindergarten may take place during some or all of the school holidays. The Kindergarten room may be unavailable during this time however children who are booked in during the school holiday period may be accommodated in our 3-4 year room subject to availability.

The first day and last two days of the Kindergarten year will be Teacher only days. Previously we have found most Kinder children are absent the last few days of Kinder as they are attending Transition days at local primary schools. Families choosing Option 1, 2 or 4 may still access childcare at our centre on the teacher only days to help with working families both at the beginning and end of the Kindergarten year.

Kindergarten classes for 2021 will commence on Wednesday 27th January 2021

Term One: Wednesday 27th January – Wednesday 31st March (10 weeks)

Term Two: Monday 19th April – Wednesday 23rd June (10 weeks)

Term Three: Monday 12th July – Wednesday 15^h September (10 weeks)

Term Four: Monday 4th October- Wednesday 8th December (10 weeks)

Kindergarten Fee Options – 4 options to choose from

We provide a number of different fee options for kindergarten families to suit your needs – see attached Fee Policy and Fee Schedule. We have also included a copy of our Services Child Care Subsidy Policy and Cancelling Child Care or Kindergarten Policy.

Please contact us if you are unsure which fee option best suits your needs.

Kindergarten full fee rates set by our Service do not increase during the year however any changes to families eligibility for Child Care Subsidy may directly affect their out of pocket expenses. It's important that families claiming Child Care Subsidy inform Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS eligibility or rate as any changes are passed onto families through our Service. For more information please read the attached Fee Schedule and Fee Policy.

To provide flexibility for families there are four different fee options to choose from.

Which option do I choose?

Option 1 - Some families need longer hours and also need childcare during the school holidays. Option 1 is ideal for this situation.

Option 2 - Some families only need Kinder and childcare before and after their kinder session but don't need anything in the school holidays. Option 2 would suit them.

Option 3 – Families who have a Health Care Card or Concession Card or are eligible for Early Start Kinder Grants. Children will be limited to attending Kindergarten only during the program hours of 9am to 4.30pm. They may elect to pay extra if they intend to arrive before 9am or leave after 4.30pm however this would need to be booked in with our Service and the family would need to contact Centrelink regarding their eligibility for Child Care Subsidy as costs incurred outside of the Kinder program are not covered by Health Care Cards/Concession Cards.

Option 4 Childcare: Families who choose a Childcare day in the Kinder program in addition to their two kinder days. Whilst Kindergarten is a minimum two day booking families who require additional days may request this option and will pay the usual Childcare rate for any additional days - this is a good solution for families who work more than two days a week. For example a family may choose Option 1 for two days a week of Kinder and also choose Option 4 for one extra childcare day giving them a 3 day booking (2 days Kinder & one day childcare subject to availability).

Child Care Subsidy is available to eligible families including Kindergarten families choosing Option 1,2 or 4 and is taken directly off your Kinder fees. Please contact Centrelink to check your eligibility prior to enrolment.

Child Care Subsidy amounts are decided by Centrelink not Young Adventurers Early Childhood Education Services. Child Care Subsidy amounts are forwarded directly to the Service in arrears after a child's attendance. Our Service requires payment from families two weeks in advance and is based on a Child Care Subsidy estimate only. Any failure by Centrelink to forward Child Care Subsidy amounts to the Service due to a parents/guardians eligibility including the amount of child care subsidy paid to the Service will result in the parent/guardian being billed for this outstanding amount.

Returning your enrolment application forms

Please complete the attached enrolment application forms (4 pages) and return it to the address provided by Friday 31st July 2020 – see Contact Information page. Please keep this enrolment information pack and fee info for future reference. We only require you to return the 4 page enrolment application forms.

No deposit is required however you must indicate on your enrolment form which Fee option you are selecting by stating Option 1, 2, 3 or 4 at the top of page 1.

You will be contacted regarding the outcome of your application by 1st September 2020 at which time you may be offered a place in the Kindergarten program or you may remain on a waiting list until a place becomes available.

We understand sometimes circumstances change and you may need to withdraw your enrolment application. Please contact us immediately in this situation so we can offer the place to another family.

Use the same enrolment form for both Kindergarten and child care (you do not need a separate form for any additional hours or days outside of the Kindergarten program) just add the additional childcare days to your kinder forms.

Paying your fees

Fee payments for the 2021 Kindergarten year will commence from January 2021. Our Service will contact families in December (around the same time as Transition days) to arrange a payment start date and to confirm if you prefer fortnightly, weekly or monthly payments which we find work much better for families claiming the Child Care Subsidy.

Return your Kindergarten enrolment application forms by 31st July 2020

Placements will be advised by 1st September 2020

Due to Covid-19 Restrictions the Australian Government has placed the childcare subsidy system on hold until the end of June 2020.

As a result we are unable to provide an updated fee schedule for the 2021 Kindergarten year.

We apologise for this inconvenience and will endeavour to provide an updated fee schedule for 2021 as soon as possible.

We have provided our current fee schedule as a guide (subject to change).

Return your enrolment application forms in person or by post to:

Young Adventurers

24 Yana Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585

Ph: 03 50329729

or

Email: admin@yamaail.com.au

Our preferred method of contact to notify families of enrolment is by email. Please inform us if this is not your preferred method of communication.

Notification of enrolment will be sent by 1st September 2020. If you receive a Letter of Offer from us for a Kindergarten place you must respond to the Letter of Offer by the due date to secure your place.

If no reply is received by the due date and contact has not been made with the centre your place may be forfeited and offered to another family on the waiting list.

Information about our programs and progress of Kindergarten applications will be updated regularly on our Facebook page: Young Adventurers Early Childhood Education Services.

Additional copies of this information pack are available on our website www.youngadventurers.com.au