

Is your child ready for 4 year old kinder?

Children who turn 4 years of age before the 30th April of the year they enrol are eligible for 4 year old kinder.

It is really important however, that families carefully consider whether or not their child is ready for 4 year old kinder as this year prior to school is a very important year for children's growth and development. If children are not ready to learn within an educational program provided in a large group environment then they will not get the most out of their preschool experience and therefore will be ill equipped to begin school the following year.

It is not the case that children who are younger and less mature will *automatically* be able to do 2 years of funded 4 year old kindergarten before school. An assessment needs to take place during the child's year at kinder and there is eligibility criteria which the child needs to meet. If your child **does not** meet the criteria then they will be ineligible for a second funded year and if they are not ready for school then other options may need to be considered, such as child care.

We want to see children thrive in their year before school and be confident that they are ready to start school and learning in a more formal educational environment. Over the years we have seen many children start 3 year old kinder too early, then move into 4 year old kinder younger and more immature than their peers and barely cope with the environment, program and the expectations. We then see families struggle with the decision - to send them to school or not?

Each child develops differently and has had different experiences in their early years but it is often the case that younger children can sometimes find kinder very challenging. Things that children feel very comfortable doing at home with their family sometimes become very challenging in a large group environment. We see no disadvantage when children start kinder a little later. In fact the longer you give your child to mature socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively, the more prepared they will be for preschool and school and the more they will get out of these experiences.

EXPECTATIONS OF A 4 YEAR OLD IN OUR PROGRAM:

- Belong to a group of 26 children and interact positively with peers and educators
- Attend a program which provides 15 hours of kinder a week
- Be able to share with others – resources, spaces, ideas
- Be able to follow instructions and respond to guidelines
- To be respectful of educators and listen to others
- To start to focus their attention and complete tasks for themselves and with the support of educators
- To be able to separate from parents/caregivers more confidently and with minimal support
- Begin to be an independent learner and decision maker – our goal for children is to develop their self-help skills and be able to do many things for themselves. Some of the more basic things include: wiping their nose, toileting and washing hands, dressing and undressing, pouring their own drink, etc. During the year the expectation is that children learn to make choices about where and who they play with, when they need to eat, and how to open lunchboxes, unwrap food and eat independently.
- Take some responsibility for the kinder environment and resources – take care of the equipment when playing with it and help to pack things away at pack up time.
- Have some level of control over their behaviour and emotions and learn to self-regulate different feelings and responses

If you are not sure whether your child is ready for 4 year old kinder, please speak to an early childhood professional.

*Please note, these expectations are a guide. Not all children develop the same way and not all children will be ready to do these things at the same time. Our program is inclusive and takes into account the range and diversity of children's development and learning styles.