

Queensland Kindergarten Funding: Funding Category Guidelines

Funding declared under the *Community Services Act 2007*

Foreword

Every child, regardless of 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.

From 1 January 2024, kindergarten will be free for eligible-aged children enrolled in an Approved Kindergarten Program delivered by an opted in kindergarten service.

This \$2 billion investment over four years means kindergarten is not only world class, but removes cost as a barrier to access.

The Department of Education (Department) will provide funding to eligible kindergarten service providers to ensure greater access to a quality kindergarten program for Queensland children, and to remove the gap fees for the Approved Kindergarten Program for eligible children from 2024.

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 an affiliate of a Central Governing Body [CGB]).

To be eligible for and receive Subsidies, each service provider must have obtained Approved Kindergarten Program Provider (KPP) status.

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 Cap set by the Department; and employing qualified early childhood teacher/s.

Service providers whose fees are higher than the Funding Cap but meet all other eligibility criteria, will be eligible for Per Capita Kindy Funding.

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 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 Funding is provided to service providers that have not opted into Free Kindy. This funding includes:

- **Per Capita Subsidy** – 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 provide fee relief for the kindergarten hours.
- **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.

Kindergarten funding payments

Funding is provided to CGBs to distribute to their funded kindergarten members and affiliates, and to eligible individual 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).