

MELBOURNE/VICTORIA

AGES 3-5

APPLICATION GUIDE

AIRBOTIX FAMILY GUIDES

# Melbourne / Victoria Free Kinder and Pre- Prep

## 2026 Quick Check on Differences between Parent Application and Fees

First confirm when your child can start 3-Year-Old / 4-Year-Old Kindergarten, then use Find a Kinder to find services; finally submit the application according to the registration method of the council or service. Pre-Prep will not be automatically available to every Melbourne child in 2026.

Verified version on July 11, 2026

Parents of children aged 3-5 in Melbourne and Victoria



# 01

## Let me give you the conclusion first: there are only four steps in the application sequence.

1. **Calculate the age and year first:** Open the Starting Age Calculator on the Victoria [Starting kindergarten](#) page and enter the child's date of birth. Don't just go by "turning 3 this year" as services and councils deal with annual eligibility rules. 2. **Find a service:** Search by suburb or postcode in [Find a Kinder Program](#) to confirm whether the service has a Kinder Tick, provides 3-Year-Old Kindergarten, 4-Year-Old Kindergarten or Pre-Prep, and whether it is sessional kinder or long day care. 3. **Confirm who will receive the application:** sessional kinder may be collected by council central registration, the service itself or an independent operator; long day care and independent schools usually need to contact the service directly. Don't think of Find a Kinder as a unified enrollment system. 4. **Complete admission documents after submission:** After receiving the offer, submit birth/identity information, contact information, medical and allergy information, immunization records, etc. as required by the service. Families who need long-term day care process CCS separately, and do not treat the CCS application as a Free Kinder application.

**Things you can do today:** Save the child's DOB, home address/postcode, preferred services and alternative services, open the service page and record the application entrance, deadline, session time, whether there are additional care hours, and the council or center that needs to be contacted.

# 02

## What exactly are you applying for: Don't mix the three concepts together

### Funded kindergarten / kinder program

This is a play-based learning program led by qualified early childhood teachers. Children in Victoria typically attend two years of funded kindergarten before entering school: 3-Year-Old Kindergarten, followed by 4-Year-Old Kindergarten or Pre-Prep in a graduated transition. Courses can be held in a standalone/sessional kinder or in a long day care centre.

### Free Kinder

Free Kinder is the Victorian Government's support for participating funded 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten / Pre-Prep services. It is not a voucher that parents reimburse themselves: the funds go directly to the service.

- **sessional kinder:** When participating in Free Kinder, the program is usually free.
- **long day care:** Services will apply Free Kinder as the Victorian Government Free Kinder offset clearly marked on the invoice; families may still have to pay for additional care, meals or other service periods.
- Free Kinder is open to all eligible families and does not require a Health Care Card, Pension Card, Australian citizenship, proof of address, or first compliance with CCS.
- Free Kinder can only be used in one kinder service at the same time. If a child attends kinder in two services at the same time, the service must be informed of which one to choose to use the funding.

Fees are based on the latest invoice and written description of the service. See Victoria's official [About Free Kinder](#) ↗.

# 03

## Pre-Prep 2026: Where Melbourne families are most misjudged

Pre-Prep is a 4-Year-Old Kindergarten reform that gradually increases the number of hours and is not a separate enrollment portal that all children will automatically receive in 2026.

Victoria's ultimate goal is for all children to have access to up to 30 hours a week in the year before starting school by 2036; the rollout will be phased by LGA and priority group.

**2026 statewide priority cohorts** can receive 16–25 hours of Pre-Prep when eligible, ranging from:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children;
- Children of refugee or asylum seeker background;
- Children who have had contact with Child Protection, including out-of-home care and past contact.

If your child is on an Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning pathway, also ask the service or council to confirm 2026 eligibility for you. Families do not need to guess at the evidence format and can simply ask the service which supporting document is required.

For most metropolitan Melbourne households, officials state that Pre-Prep will begin rolling out in Melbourne metropolitan LGAs from **2034**; however priority groups have early eligibility across the state. Whether the child actually has a Pre-Prep place at the service you choose, and for how many hours per week, must be confirmed by the service or council.

Ask these five questions when applying:

- Will this location offer 15-hour 4-Year-Old Kindergarten in 2026, or Pre-Prep?
- If Pre-Prep, for which cohorts, how many hours per week, and how many weeks per year?

# 04

## Melbourne / Victoria Actual Application Checklist

### A. Prepare a family information package first

- Child's full name, date of birth, common name and home address/postcode.
- Parent/carer contact details, at least a stable email and mobile number.
- Birth certificate, passport or identity/birth information required by the service.
- Medicare details; if applying for or evaluating CCS, prepare parent and child CRN and other information.
- current Immunization History Statement of the Australian Immunization Register (AIR).
- Allergy, medical, dietary, language, cultural and additional needs information; prepare support letter if applicable.
- If it involves priority cohort, Health Care Card or multiple birth, first ask the service or council which certificates are accepted.

### B. Search and compare services

Use [Find a Kinder Program](#) ↗ to first list 3–5 accessible services, and then open the service or council pages one by one. Records: program type, setting, suburb/address, bus or driving time, session days/hours, additional care, application owner, closing date, whether Free Kinder is a free program or invoice offset, and information to be submitted after the offer.

# 05

## Council registration makes a real difference: use your LGA's page

The following is an example verified as of 2026-07-11 to illustrate "find the council page first" rather than setting a uniform deadline for all of Melbourne.

### **Monash: central enrolment, but does not manage all services**

The City of Monash explains that it manages applications for most council kindergartens and maintains central registration; it does not manage applications for long day care or independent schools. For these, please contact the service directly. The 2026 deadline listed on the 2027 page is **2026-06-30**, followed by subsequent offer rounds; this only applies to Monash's central enrollment range.

Entrance: [Monash Kindergarten Enrolments ↗](#) · [2027 application information ↗](#)

### **Yarra: 2027 with Central Registration System**

Yarra City Council explains that for 2026 places, you need to contact the preferred center directly; for 2027, use the Central Registration System, and the page states that offers will be sent out in August 2026. Don't apply service-direct experience from 2026 directly to 2027.

Entrance: [Yarra kindergarten ↗](#)

### **Casey: register first, then distribute according to offer rounds**

City of Casey's process includes EOI, registration in June, offers starting in August, and service finalize enrollment from November to December. The page description can fill in up to 15 session preferences, and the file includes proof of birth; it also clearly states that there is no traditional waiting list, but is processed

# 06

## No Jab No Play: Check AIR records now

For child care or kindergarten enrollment to be finalized, the service requires a current Immunization History Statement showing that the child has completed vaccinations for that age, or has completed vaccinations that the child is currently able to receive. Victoria officials say the accepted document is a statement from the Australian Immunization Register; a letter from a GP or council cannot replace it.

Do this before applying:

1. Download your child's AIR Immunization History Statement from myGov; if you don't have a Medicare card, follow the instructions on the Victoria page to contact the Australian Immunization Register.
2. If the record is missing, overseas vaccinations are not synchronized, or the child needs a catch-up, contact the GP, vaccine clinic or local council immunization service and ask when the AIR can be updated.
3. Submit the current statement to the final enrollment service; do not think that uploading it to the council portal completes the enrollment file of the service.
4. If you have medical or special circumstances, ask the service directly for the support period and acceptable documents. Do not judge whether your child can enroll.

Official entry point: [Victoria immunisation ↗](#) · [No Jab No Play for early childhood services ↗](#). This is a compilation of public information required by health and law and does not replace the judgment of doctors, services or governments on individual cases.

# 07

## CCS Application Checklist: Only processed when using approved child care

If you choose standalone sessional kinder, you usually don't need to apply for CCS because of Free Kinder. If you choose long day care or other approved child care, CCS may be used to reduce the cost of additional care. The eligibility and amount are determined by Services Australia based on the family situation.

- Check eligibility on Services Australia's [Child Care Subsidy](#) page.
- Submit a CCS claim through your myGov/Centrelink account; Services Australia recommends applying before your child starts care.
- Prepare parent/partner, child, care arrangement, residence, income estimate and CRN information required for services.
- Confirm that you are responsible for the care fee and use approved child care service; long day care falls within the scope of approved center based day care, but you still need to check the specific service.
- After receiving the service enrolment prompt, confirm the enrolment in myGov to avoid CCS not taking effect due to unconfirmation.
- Confirm family income as required by Services Australia every financial year to avoid subsequent balancing, arrears or payment cessation.

The most important billing issue: requiring long day care to display CCS and Free Kinder offset separately. Free Kinder does not require you to meet CCS; CCS does not allow additional care

# 08

## 2027 Foundation / Prep: Don't confuse school application with kinder application.

If your child wants to enter the Foundation (Prep) of a Victorian government primary school in **2027**, the steps listed on the Victoria page are: Use Find My School to find the designated neighborhood school, contact the school, download the Foundation Enrollment Information Pack and submit the application. The official deadline for 2027 Foundation application is **2026-07-31**; the school is expected to notify the results from 2026-08-03 to 2026-08-14, and the deadline for accepting offers is 2026-08-28.

This is a primary school enrollment process, not Free Kinder or Pre-Prep registration. Entrance: [Enrolling in Foundation \(Prep\)](#) ↗.

# 09

## Last page: Check 10 minutes before submission

I have checked DOB and year using the official Starting Age Calculator.

I know whether I am applying for 3YO, 4YO, Pre-Prep, or Foundation (Prep).

I know whether the service is sessional/standalone or long day care.

I know whether Free Kinder is a free program or an invoice offset.

I do not regard Free Kinder and CCS as the same subsidy.

I have verified the address, hours, applicants and availability on the Find a Kinder and Services page.

I have submitted by the real entrance of the council or service and saved the receipt/application ID.

I have prepared an AIR Immunization History Statement and supporting documents for service requirements.

If I need long-term day care, I have applied for or confirmed CCS on myGov and asked about the cost of additional care hours.

If the child is on Prep in 2027, I have additionally checked the school application node for 2026-07-31.

# 10

## Sources, versions and boundaries

This version was verified on **11 July 2026 (AEST)** from the following official sources:

- [Victorian Government: Starting kindergarten ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: Find a Kinder Program ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: Types of kinder programs ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: About Free Kinder ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: Pre-Prep availability and rollout ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: Registering and enrolling in Pre-Prep ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: Enrolling in Foundation \(Prep\) ↗](#)
- [Victorian Government: Immunisation ↗](#)
- [Health Victoria: No Jab No Play ↗](#)
- [Services Australia: Child Care Subsidy ↗](#)
- [Services Australia: How to claim CCS ↗](#)
- [Monash, Yarra, Casey and Whittlesea council enrolment pages ↗](#)

Dates, rollout, hours, availability, offer rounds, service fees, CCS amounts and required documents may change; return to the original page to confirm before submitting. This article is a compilation of information and is not intended to be educational, medical, legal, immigration, tax, welfare or individual cost advice.



# About Airbotix Family Guides

Airbotix Family Guides breaks down the real local choices parents have to make into age, city, official entry and next steps. If you need more information on Australian family growth, you can visit [airbotix.ai](https://airbotix.ai) ↗; for questions about courses, activities and cooperation, please contact Rain. Free Kinder, Pre-Prep, CCS and immunization requirements are always based on the most current page for the corresponding government or service.

NEXT STEP

# Choose the entrance you need now

To check Airbotix Family Guides, go to the official website; to inquire about courses and family learning paths, contact Rain; for Free Kinder qualifications, Pre-Prep rollout and the latest entrance, go back to the official Victoria page to check.

[hello@airbotix.ai](mailto:hello@airbotix.ai)

WEBSITE

## Airbotix official website

Learn about Family Guides, courses and workshops.



[airbotix.ai](https://airbotix.ai)

SALES

## Contact Rain

Scan the QR code to add Airbotix Sales WeChat to inquire about courses, activities and cooperation.



[Rain · Sales WeChat](#)

SOURCE

## Victoria Official Free Kinder

Check current eligibility, participating services, and long day care fee offset rules.



[vic.gov.au/free-kinder](https://vic.gov.au/free-kinder)