A young girl with long, wavy brown hair is climbing a wooden play structure. She is wearing a white t-shirt with a gold pattern and blue pants. She is holding onto a blue handle with her right hand and has her left hand on a wooden post. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees and a wooden structure.

# Education Guide For Carers of Children Living In Out-Of-Home Care

January 2019

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional land of the Kulin Nation and we acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land. We pay respect to their elders past and present and recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded and the structural inequality created by colonisation continues to this day.

We appreciate and celebrate diversity in all its forms. We believe diversity of all kinds makes our teams, services and organisation stronger and more effective.



Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family  
Welfare

Level 5, 50 Market Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
Australia

Telephone: (03) 9614 1577  
Facsimilie: (03) 9614 1774

Email:  
admin@cfecfw.asn.au  
Website: cfecfw.asn.au

Find us on Twitter  
@CFECFW  
and Facebook

ABN: 24 629 376 672  
RTO: 3696



## Welcome to the first Education Guide for Carers of children and young people living in Out-of-home care.

We acknowledge the contribution of the Department of Education and Training in developing this guide and input from carer agencies and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.

Education transforms lives.

Inclusive, accessible and quality education promotes lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. Actively supporting the learning, development and education of our children and young people is critical to prepare and position them for a fulfilling, rewarding and positive life.

Collectively, we want to make sure all children and young people in care are supported to achieve in education and have the same opportunities to access quality education from pre-school through to vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Fostering a love of learning and having high educational expectations and aspirations for all children is vital.

As a carer you have a critical role in actively supporting your child to succeed in education. Achieving a good education can change the life trajectory of a young person and build their confidence and self-esteem.

This guide aims to provide you with information about the range of supports and services to assist you and the children in your care to be connected and engaged in their education and to know where to go to get the support you need when you need it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Tsorbaris".

**Deb Tsorbaris** CEO  
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

# What's In This Guide?

There are four sections for different ages and stages of learning.

## Introduction **2**

About This Guide	4
Why Is Education Important?	4
Supporting Children In Out-Of-Home Care Through Early Childhood And School Years	5
Key Education Programs To Know About	6

## Learning And Education In The Early Years **8**

(Birth to primary school)	8
What Can I Do At Home To Support My Child's Learning And Development?	9
Early Childhood Services	10
Kindergarten and Playgroup	12
Immunisation	13
Learning And Education Supports	14
Services For Aboriginal Children	14
Supports For Children With Disabilities or Additional Needs	15
Financial Support	16

## Supporting Children Through Primary School **18**

(Ages 5 to 12)	18
Enrolling in Primary School	19
Changing Schools	21
Learning And Education Supports	22
Supports For Aboriginal Children	22
Supports For Children With Disabilities or Additional Needs	23
Dealing with Issues at Primary School	24
Immunisation	25

## Supporting Young People Through Secondary School **26**

(Ages 13 to 18)	26
Transitioning to Secondary School	27
Enrolling In Secondary School	28
Changing Secondary Schools	29
Supporting My Young Person's Learning	30
Alternative Education Options	32
Learning And Education Supports	34
Supports For Young Aboriginal People	35
Supports For Young People With Disabilities or Additional Needs	35
Financial Support	36
Dealing with Issues at Secondary School	38
Mentoring	38
Doctors in Secondary Schools	39
Additional Resources	39



## Supporting Young People Beyond School **40**

(Ages 16 and over)	40
Early School Leavers	42
Higher Education and Career Guidance	44
Further Study	45
Programs To Get Young People Ready For Higher Education	47
Employment and Financial Support	48



## Mental Health And Wellbeing **50**

Bullying	50
Support For Aboriginal Young People	51
Body Image And Eating Disorders	51
Life Skills And Personal Development	51
Drugs And Alcohol	51
Mental Health	52
Violence And Sexual Assault	52

## Support for Carers **53**

Aboriginal and Migrant Carer Support	53
General Carer Support	54
Carer Education And Training	55
Carer Mental Health And Wellbeing	56
Carer Peer Support	56
Financial Assistance For Carers	57

## About This Guide

This guide contains information about education and learning supports and services for carers and supporters of children and young people living in Out-of-home care. It includes supports and services for carers, financial supports and health and wellbeing guidance for children and young people.

Out-of-home care means living away from their parents in alternative care arrangements, including living with relatives or friends (kinship care); foster care; with permanent carers or in residential care.

This guide aims to actively support carers in the learning and education of their children and young people and to stay connected,

### Why Is Education Important?

Research tells us that children and young people living in Out-of-home care are at greater risk of poorer educational outcomes than those in the broader community and are at greater risk of:

- lower school attendance and engagement
- less developed foundational educational skills
- disengaging from school, and
- lower participation in higher education and university.

### Foster Carers and Kinship Carers Handbooks

There are handbooks for Foster Carers and Kinship Carers. Please refer to these for further information.

To access the Foster Carers Handbook, visit [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-foster-carers](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-foster-carers)

To access the Kinship Carers Handbook, visit [kinshipcarersvictoria.org/kinship-carers-manual](https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/kinship-carers-manual)

Note: The hyperlinks in this guide are correct at the time of publication. If you find a broken link, search the key words in your search engine, or via the Department of Education and Training website.

You play an important role in encouraging and supporting your child's education:

- helping them to build the skills and knowledge they need to thrive, and
- having high educational expectations and aspirations, of and for them.



# Supporting Children In Out-Of-Home Care Through Early Childhood And School Years

There are two agreements in place to support children and young people in Out-of-home care throughout early childhood and school:

- **Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care**

The Early Childhood Agreement outlines the shared responsibility for making sure all children up to five years of age in statutory Out-of-home care in Victoria are engaged with Maternal and Child Health services and high-quality early education and care. The Early Childhood Agreement is being refreshed in 2018-19.

- **The Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment “the Partnering Agreement”**

The Partnering Agreement between the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Health and Human Services, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, Independent Schools Victoria, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency outlines specific services and supports for children and young people in Out-of-home care. All government and catholic schools are required to have these supports in place for students in care. If they don't, contact your LOOKOUT Centre or talk to your school's Designated Teacher.



## Your School's Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is the main point of contact in Victorian schools for LOOKOUT Centres and has a key role in advocating for and supporting students in Out-of-home care to engage with education and to meet their learning goals.

For more information visit:

- [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/designatedteacher.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/designatedteacher.aspx)
- [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcpartneragreement.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcpartneragreement.aspx)
- [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcpartneragreement.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcpartneragreement.aspx)



## Learn more!

The Department of Education and Training has information on a range of topics for children and young people and their education.

- For information on **early childhood**, you can visit: [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/default.aspx)
- For information on **schools**, you can visit: [education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/default.aspx)
- For information on **TAFE and training**, you can visit: [education.vic.gov.au/training/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/training/Pages/default.aspx)
- For additional information for **carers**, visit: [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcresources.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcresources.aspx)

## Key Education Programs To Know About

There are a range of programs from kindergarten through to when your young person leaves school to support their learning and education.



### Early Start Kinder

The Victorian government provides an Early Start Kindergarten grant for eligible three-year-old children, and a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy in the year before they start school to enable eligible children to access 15 hours of kindergarten a week for free.

Visit

[education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earllystart.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earllystart.aspx)

### Best start

Best Start is an early years' initiative to support families and caregivers to provide the best possible environment, experiences and care for children from birth to age eight. The program focuses on children experiencing vulnerability and all Aboriginal children.

Visit: [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/beststart.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/beststart.aspx)

### LOOKOUT Centres

LOOKOUT Education Support Centres work with schools to enrol children, monitor and evaluate educational progress, and coordinate resources and activities to support the student's education. They aim to help schools better understand the needs and challenges of children in Out-of-home care and to make sure education is central to decisions about their care and placement.

As part of the LOOKOUT support, each school has a Designated Teacher who is responsible for welcoming students, helping them to settle into the school, and advocating for them and their needs. The Designated Teacher is responsible for making sure your young person receives the supports in the Out of Home Care Partnering Agreement. This includes an Individual Education Plan (IEP), Student Support Group (SSG) and Learning Mentor (LM).

Visit: [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx)

There are four Regional LOOKOUT Centres.

- South Western Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.swv@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.swv@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- South Eastern Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.sev@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.sev@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- North Western Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.nwv@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.nwv@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- North Eastern Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.nev@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.nev@edumail.vic.gov.au)





### **Navigator Program**

The Navigator Program supports young people aged 12-17 years who are disengaged from school to re-engage with education. An assertive outreach model provides intensive support to young people who have attended less than 30% of the previous school term. The program is being extended over 2019-2021.

The Department of Education and Training website contains information on how to make a referral, where Navigator is operating, which organisations are involved, and what to do if you do not live in one of the Navigator Program areas.

---

Contact Navigator on [navigator@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:navigator@edumail.vic.gov.au) or visit: [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/navigator.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/navigator.aspx)

### **Skills First Youth Access Initiative**

The Skills First Youth Access Initiative supports young people who have been or are on a Child Protection order, a Family Court Order or a Youth Justice Order to study government subsidised accredited training. Eligible young people will not have to pay tuition fees for a range of courses from VCAL, VCE, Certificate I to IV through to Diploma and Advanced Diploma.

---

Call **131 823** or visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx)



### **Reconnect Engagement and Learning Support Program**

Reconnect helps young people who did not complete Year 12 to enrol and stay in vocational training and to find employment.

---

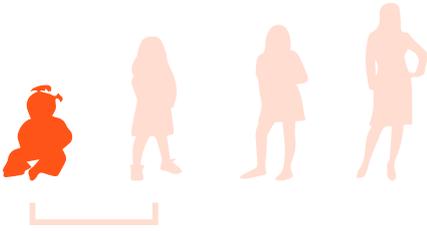
Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx)

### **Raising Expectations**

Raising Expectations is about increasing the number of young people in care to go onto higher education and university. It offers supports and resources.

---

Visit [cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations](http://cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations)



## SECTION 1

# Learning And Education In The Early Years

## Birth to primary school age

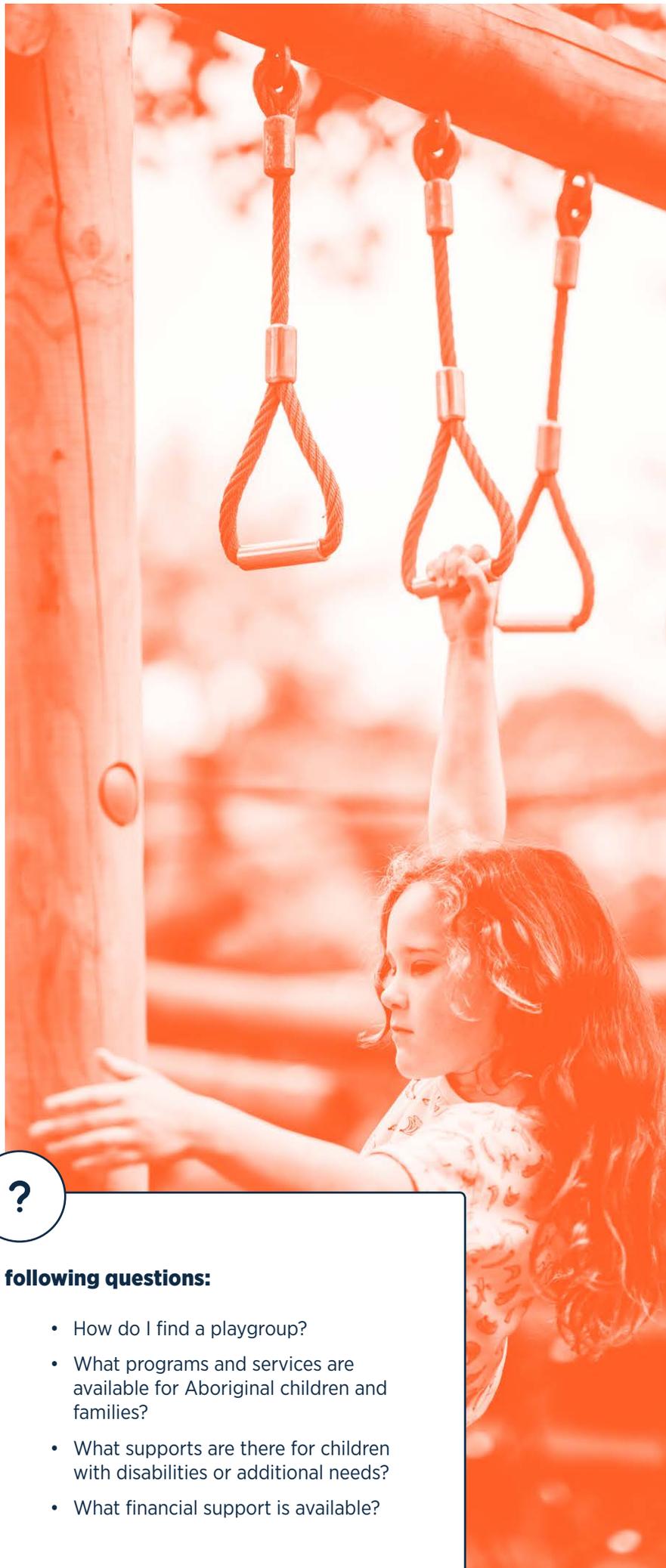
As a carer you play a very important role in helping your child to develop and learn.

Research shows that the early years of a child's life provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning. The first few years of life are a time when the brain develops and much of its 'wiring' occurs. The experiences and relationships a child has, coupled with good nutrition and good health, can affect this enormously.



### **This section will help you answer the following questions:**

- What can I do at home to support my child's learning and development?
- What are early childhood services?
- What early childhood services and programs are available for my child?
- What happens at kindergarten?
- How do I choose a kindergarten?
- How do I find a playgroup?
- What programs and services are available for Aboriginal children and families?
- What supports are there for children with disabilities or additional needs?
- What financial support is available?



# What Can I Do At Home To Support My Child's Learning And Development?

There are lots of fun and easy ways to support your child's learning and development at home. Below are some suggestions from the Starting Blocks website.



## GET ACTIVE

- Be active – take your child to the playground where they can run on the grass, jump over puddles, climb the play equipment and crawl about
- Play outside and encourage children to interact with nature



## WORD PLAY

- Read with your child and tell them stories
- Play with sounds. Try to hear and name different sounds such as a phone ringing
- Encourage your child to be creative with sounds and words - play with rhymes and get your child to try to rhyme



## PLAY

- Games galore – play hopscotch, hide and seek, animal games, such as jump like a kangaroo or walk slow like an elephant, or make up your own games
- Encourage your child's thinking and creativity - create and play with items you would normally think are rubbish such as an empty tissue box or toilet paper roll



## GETTING READY

- Get your child to help pack their bag before child care or preschool
- Let your child get themselves ready e.g. *brushing teeth, getting dressed*
- Splash time in the bath, let them play with the water and watch how it moves



## GROW AND CREATE

- Prepare food together – let your child help and explain in detail what you're doing e.g. *"now we're stirring the pot so the food can cook"*
- Grow your own veggies and explain to your child the process and responsibilities e.g. *watering them and leaving them to grow in the sun*



## GET OUT AND ABOUT

- Go to a park where they can feed the ducks in the pond
- Go shopping together



### Learn more!

Your local library is home to wonderful resources, including the 1000 Books Before School program and free access to the Story Box Library (at participating libraries).

To find out more visit the links below or check with your local library for more information:

[slv.vic.gov.au/live-learn/1000-books-school](http://slv.vic.gov.au/live-learn/1000-books-school)

[storyboxlibrary.com.au](http://storyboxlibrary.com.au)

For more information and suggestions on things you can do at home, visit:

[startingblocks.gov.au](http://startingblocks.gov.au) and [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)

## Early Childhood Services

### What Are Early Childhood Services?

Early childhood services and programs include day care, family day care, preschool, kindergarten and occasional care. For young children, early childhood services can make a big difference to their lives. The early years of life are one of the periods of greatest brain development. These services and programs build a strong foundation for the development of social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language skills.

### What Early Childhood Services And Programs Are Available For My Child?

#### Maternal and Child Health Service

The Victorian Maternal and Child health (MCH) Service is free and open to all families with children from birth to school age.

The MCH Service offers 10 free consultations at different stages of development and growth for your child. It is important that children have all of these visits and checks.

At each consultation you can discuss your concerns, talk about your parenting experiences and ways to improve your child's health, growth and development. The MCH Service also provides support activities including parent/carer groups. The Enhanced MCH Service gives extra help to children and families that really need it.

You can also call the 24-hour, 7 day a week MCH phoneline.

Call **13 22 39** or visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/mch.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/mch.aspx)

Note: In 2019 responsibility for MCH services will transfer to DHHS. You may need to search on the DHHS website if this link becomes broken.

?

#### Maternal and Child Health Service Consultations – when do they happen?

Consultations start with a home visit after birth then occur at 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 4 months, 8 months, 12 months, 18 months, 2 years and 3.5 years of age.

#### Early Childhood Education and Care Services

Early childhood education and care services include family day care services, centre-based services including kindergartens, long day care, and outside school hours care (OSHC).

The State and Commonwealth governments provide funding for a range of early childhood education and care services.

Every family and child is different, so it's important to think about your specific needs when choosing an early childhood education and care option.

All services operate under the National Quality Framework (NQF). They are responsible for the safety, health and wellbeing of the children in their care, as well as meeting their educational and developmental needs.

The Commonwealth government's My Child website has locations of services, contact details and quality ratings for childhood education and care services. You can also contact your local council and ask for the person responsible for the Early Childhood Agreement.

Visit [mychild.gov.au](http://mychild.gov.au)

## Types of care

### Day care or long day care

Centre-based care, mainly for children up to school age. Child care is usually available for all day or part of the day at a long day care centre. Some centres offer morning or afternoon sessions. Most long day care centres have an early education component to their program. Long day care centres are run by private companies, local councils, community organisations, individuals, non-profit organisations or by employers for their staff.

### Family day care

When an approved family day care educator looks after a child in the educator's home. Family day care can be all day, part time, casual, before and/or after school and during school holidays.

### Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children where programs are offered by a qualified teacher.

### Kindergarten or preschool

Kindergarten (also called preschool) is a program for young children delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher.

### Occasional day care

Centre-based care for families who don't need regular child care but do need someone to look after their children every now and then. Most occasional care centres have flexible operating hours and can cater for children whose parents/carers work irregular or unpredictable hours.

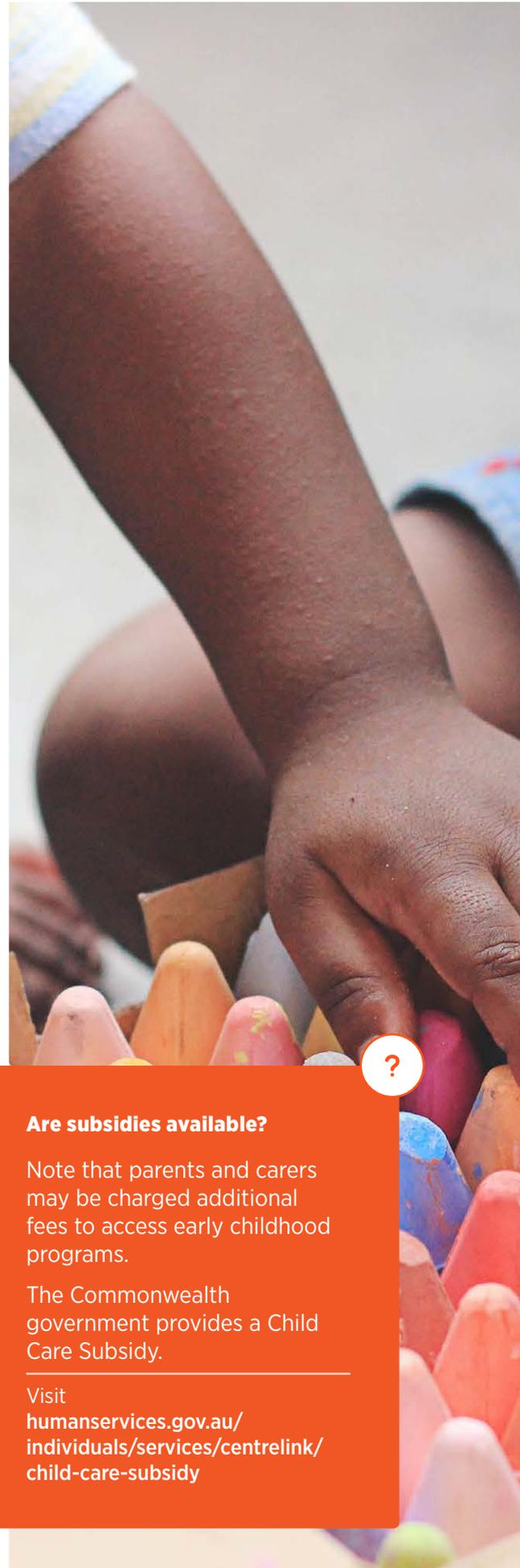


### Are subsidies available?

Note that parents and carers may be charged additional fees to access early childhood programs.

The Commonwealth government provides a Child Care Subsidy.

Visit [humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy](https://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy)



# Kindergarten and Playgroup

## What Happens At Kindergarten?

Kindergarten supports a child to 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 learn 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.

## How Do I Choose A Kindergarten?

The Commonwealth government's My Child and Starting Blocks websites have locations of services, contact details and quality ratings for kindergartens and preschools. You can also contact your local council and ask for the person responsible for the Early Childhood Agreement.

Visit [mychild.gov.au](http://mychild.gov.au)  
or [startingblocks.gov.au](http://startingblocks.gov.au)

## What Should I Ask When I Am Choosing A Kindergarten?

- Will I be eligible for any subsidies or other financial assistance?
- Will I be able to visit my child or call them at any time?
- Do you provide things like nappies and meals, or do I need to bring them from home?
- How will I know that my child's learning and development will be encouraged?

Starting Blocks has more information and checklists to help you choose a service. Visit [startingblocks.gov.au/at-child-care/choosing-a-service/](http://startingblocks.gov.au/at-child-care/choosing-a-service/)

## How Do I Find A Playgroup?

Playgroups bring young children, carers/ parents, families and communities together to learn and develop through informal play activities and social interaction. They help families to have fun and relax and to build friendships that last beyond playgroup. Playgroups all over Victoria have vacancies for new families.

Call **1800 171 882** or visit [playgroup.org.au](http://playgroup.org.au)



### Early Start Kindergarten

The Victorian government provides an Early Start Kindergarten grant for eligible three-year-old children and a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy in the year before school to enable eligible children to access 15 hours of kindergarten a week for free.

Your child can enrol if they are Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander, or if your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST).

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx)

## Immunisation In Early Childhood Education And Care Services

Under the 'No Jab No Play' legislation, parents and carers are required to provide an up-to-date Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register to show their child has received all vaccinations for their age. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is required by early childhood and care services to confirm enrolment and must be provided within two months of the child starting at the service.

Immunisation from an early age is highly recommended for all Australian children. Having your child immunised helps to protect them from the most serious childhood infections.

For more information visit:

- The Department of Health and Human Services  
No Jab No Play  
[health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/frequently-asked-questions](http://health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/frequently-asked-questions)
- Better Health Channel  
[betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisation-childhood](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisation-childhood)
- Australian Immunisation Register  
[humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register](http://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register)

  
 Australian Government  
 Department of Human Services  
**medicare**

**Immunisation history statement**

As at: 24 May 2017  
 For: POM CHEU AJAY  
 Date of birth: 10 March 2013  
 Immunisation status: up to date

Schedule	Date given	Immunisation	Brand name given
2 months	10 May 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
4 months	10 Aug 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
6 months	10 Nov 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
12 months	10 Mar 2014	Measles Mumps Rubella Hib Meningococcal C	MMR II Mentorix
18 months	10 Nov 2014	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	Priorix-Tetra
4 years	03 Mar 2017	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Polio	Quadacel

Next immunisation/s due	Date Due
No vaccines due.	

**Notice/s**  
 This child has received all vaccines required by 5 years of age.



## Learning And Education Supports

### What Programs And Services Are Available For Aboriginal Children And Families?

There are several programs specifically designed to support Aboriginal children in their early years. They are usually offered in addition to the programs and services outlined earlier in this section.

#### Koorie Maternity Service

The Koorie Maternity Service provides access to culturally safe and supported maternity care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families.

Visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/Koorie-Maternity-Services](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/Koorie-Maternity-Services)

#### Best Start

Best Start is an early years' service supporting children experiencing vulnerability. Across the 30 Best Start locations, six sites work specifically with local Aboriginal communities. They aim to provide the best possible environment, experiences and care for children from birth to eight years of age. Best Start focuses on increasing child and family participation in maternal and child health services and kindergarten.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/beststart.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/beststart.aspx)

#### In-Home Support Program

This program assists Aboriginal families to strengthen, support and improve their parenting capacity and improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of Aboriginal children aged 0-3 years. This support is respectful of cultural identity and promotes Aboriginal children and family wellbeing.

Call (03) 9481 0800 or visit [vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=87](https://vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=87)

#### Home-Based Learning Program

This program is an extension of the In-Home Support Program for parents/carers and families of children aged 3-5 years. It aims to empower Aboriginal families to provide home learning environments that enrich the early learning and development of their children. The programs operate at the Mildura Aboriginal Corporation, Mildura and the Swan Hill Aboriginal Health Service, Swan Hill.

Call (03) 9481 0800 or visit [vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=88](https://vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=88)



## What Supports Are There For Children With Disabilities Or Additional Needs?

If you are caring for a child with a disability or developmental delay there are programs and services to support you and the child in your care.

### Early Childhood Intervention Services

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) support children with a disability or developmental delay from birth to school entry and their families. ECIS provides special education, therapy, counselling, service planning and coordination, assistance and support to access services such as kindergarten and child care.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/ecis.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/ecis.aspx)

### Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program builds the capacity of funded kindergartens to support the access and participation of:

- Children with a disability and high support needs and/or
- Children with complex medical needs.

Talk to your kindergarten teacher about the supports available for your child at kindergarten.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx)

### Transition to school if your child has a disability or developmental delay

Preparation and planning to support a child's move from early childhood services to school is particularly important for children with a disability or developmental delay. If your child has a disability or developmental delay there might be extra things to think about and do before your child moves to school. Talk to your early childhood educator at the kindergarten or child care centre.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transsupport.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transsupport.aspx)





## Financial Support For Learning And Education During The Early Years

The State and Commonwealth governments fund a range of early childhood education and care services\* Kindergarten is mostly funded by the Victorian Government while day care services are mostly funded by the Commonwealth Government.

\*Note: there are different subsidies for child care and kindergartens and parents/carers may be charged additional fees to access programs. This is because the funding comes from different sources.

### What financial support is available for child care?

The Commonwealth Government offers a Child Care Subsidy.

For more information, visit [education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage](https://education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage) or [humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy](https://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy)

### Is there financial support available for grandparents looking after grandchildren?

If you're a grandparent or non-parent carer, you may get extra help such as child care payments and Medicare services.

You can contact the Grandparent Adviser Line on **1800 245 965** or visit: [humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/grandparent-advisers](https://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/grandparent-advisers)

### What financial support is available for kindergarten?

Your child may be eligible for free or low-cost kindergarten through either the:

- Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, or
- Early Start Kindergarten extension grant.

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy allows children to access up to 15 hours of kindergarten a week, delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before school for free or at low cost.

The Early Start Kindergarten extension grant offers free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible three-year-old children up to 15 hours a week, delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before school.

Your kindergarten service will apply for the kindergarten fee subsidy or extension grant on your behalf. The payment will be made directly to the kindergarten and will allow your child to attend up to 15 hours a week for free or at low-cost.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/how-much-kindergarten-cost.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/how-much-kindergarten-cost.aspx)

## Where else can I get more advice on financial support?

### Centrelink

As a starting point, you can contact Centrelink to discuss your individual situation. If you currently receive a full or part pension, you may be eligible for a concession card that gives you benefits on a range of essential services.

Contact Centrelink on their Families Line  
**136 150** or visit  
[humanservices.gov.au/individuals/families](https://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/families)

### Carers Victoria

The Carers Victoria advisory line provides information and support to carers, including advice on financial support, eligibility for benefits or for help in applying to Centrelink.

Contact on **1800 242 636** or visit:  
[carersvictoria.org.au](https://carersvictoria.org.au)

### Kinship Carers Victoria (Grandparents Victoria) (KCV)

The peak body for Kinship Carers in Victoria supports, informs, represents and advocates for the needs of Kinship Carers.

For more information call **03 9372 2422** or visit  
[kinshipcarersvictoria.org](https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org)

### Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV)

The peak body for Foster Carers in Victoria, works to improve the outcomes for foster carers and the children in their care.

Visit [fcav.org.au](https://fcav.org.au)

### Permanent Care and Adoptive (PCA) Families

PCA Families supports families formed through kinship care, permanent care and adoption and works with parents and carers to be confident in supporting their children and young people to achieve life success.

Visit [pcfamilies.org.au](https://pcfamilies.org.au)



## Additional Resources To Support Learning And Education In The Early Years

**The Department of Education and Training** has lots of information on learning and educating children in their early years

Visit  
[education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/default.aspx)

**Starting Blocks** has information about early childhood education, and learning and development to assist families to understand children's developmental milestones, what to expect from an early childhood education and care service, find services and learn about their quality ratings.

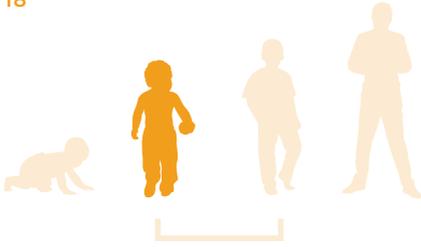
Visit [startingblocks.gov.au](https://startingblocks.gov.au)

**Raising Children** offers a wide range of resources and information for children of any age. Information is categorised by life-stage including babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

Visit [raisingchildren.net.au](https://raisingchildren.net.au)

**Early Learning Association Australia** has information and resources to support parents/carers throughout their child's early education. Parent/carer participation in their child's early learning and education provides the foundation for positive lifelong outcomes for children.

Visit [ela.org.au](https://ela.org.au)



## SECTION 2

# Supporting Children Through Primary School

**Ages 5 to 12 years**

The first years of school are an exciting and engaging time for your child. Building positive relationships and experiences in the early years of school is important to long-term development, learning and wellbeing.



**This section will help you answer the following questions:**

- When should my child attend primary school?
- How do I choose a primary school and enrol my child?
- What can I do if we live outside the school zone and I can't enrol my child at our chosen school?
- How do I prepare my child for starting primary school?
- What is a Transition Statement?
- What else do I need to prepare my child for school?
- What learning and educational supports are there at school?
- What supports are there for Aboriginal children?
- What supports are there for children with disabilities or additional needs?
- What if my child is struggling at school?
- What if my child has witnessed or is experiencing bullying?
- How can I keep my child busy during school holidays?
- What financial support is available?

# How Do I Prepare My Child For Starting Primary School?

Starting school is a big step for children and their families. It is a time of change that can be challenging and exciting. Here are some tips to help your child prepare for school.



## THE YEAR BEFORE SCHOOL

- Ask your child what they think about starting school
- Make sure they have regular health and dental checks and keep immunisations up to date
- Encourage your child to try to do things on their own such as dressing, going to the toilet, washing their hands, unwrapping their food and opening and closing their drink bottle
- Talk to your child's early childhood educator about things you can do at home to help your child's learning and development



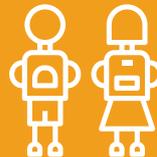
## THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

- Make sure your child knows who will take them to school and pick them up on the first day
- Help your child to organise their clothes, hat, shoes and socks the night before
- Show your child where you will meet them at the end of the school day
- At the end of the day talk to your child about what happened at school



## DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS

- Show your child where the school is and talk about how you will get there
- Be positive about starting school and enjoy your child's excitement
- Practice the things your child will need to do to get ready for school (e.g. *putting things in their bag, remembering to take a hat*)



## IN THE FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL

- Find out about what your child is learning at school. By doing this, you can support your child's learning and find out how your child is adjusting to school
- If your child is having difficulty at school, talk to their teacher. Talk to your child about what they think might help them
- Ask your child about their new experiences, what they like and what they find hard

### Learn more!

For more tips and guidance on helping your child transition to school, visit [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/pages/supporttransition.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/pages/supporttransition.aspx)





## Enrolling in Primary School

### When Should My Child Attend Primary School?

Many children start school after going to a kindergarten program or another early learning program. Some children may go straight from home to school.

To start Prep, the first year of primary school, your child needs to turn five by 30 April of that year and must be at school in the year they turn six, which is the compulsory school-starting age.

### How Do I Choose A Primary School And Enrol My Child?

Your child will usually go to the primary school closest to where your family lives if they are attending a government school. Keep in mind that some primary schools need to restrict their enrolment numbers – and the number of students they can take – to an area or zone around the school.

This means you need to live in a certain geographic area around the school to enrol. This is referred to as your neighbourhood school. Contact your school or local LOOKOUT Centre directly to find out more or if you are experiencing issues with enrolment.

You can also choose to send your child to a different government primary school if they have places available, or to a Catholic or independent school. To make your child's transition from kindergarten to primary school a happy and positive experience, it is important to consider which school will best benefit the learning and development of your child.

For more information on choosing schools, visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/choose-enrol-school.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/choose-enrol-school.aspx)

For further information on boundaries, visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/zones-restrictions.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/zones-restrictions.aspx)

For further enrolment advice or support, contact your LOOKOUT Centre: [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx)



#### In choosing a school for your child, you might think about:

- How far do you want to travel and is the school reasonably close to home and/or work?
- Will the school be able to cater for my child's needs and interests?
- What facilities does the school offer and are you comfortable with the 'feel' of the school?
- Will the teachers and the school curriculum support all aspects of your child's development, including social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs?
- Does the school's policy on homework and discipline reflect your own values and expectations?
- Does the school work in partnership with families?

## What Is A Transition Statement?

Every child moving from a funded kindergarten program to primary school will have a Transition Learning and Development Statement (Transition Statement) prepared for them. A child's Transition Statement is written by an early childhood educator. There is a section for families and the child to fill out too.

The Transition Statement summarises interests, skills and abilities of the child and identifies individual approaches and teaching strategies to support the child on their learning journey. It shares information about their learning, development and wellbeing between early childhood services, schools and Out of Hours School Care (OSHC) services (where applicable).

It is important for you and your child to contribute to the Transition Statement as it will give the prep teacher or OSHC educator an overview of your child. This will enable them to plan for their continued learning and wellbeing as they settle into school.

For more information about the Transition Statement, visit: [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/transition.aspx#link35](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/transition.aspx#link35)

## How Can I Support My Child If They Need To Change School?

Transferring from one primary school to another is a big step for most children. They are leaving behind the security of familiar surroundings and entering a new environment. In the case of some children in care, this may happen several times.

When a student transfers from one government primary school to another within Victoria, the outgoing school gives the principal of the new school a transfer note. The note includes information about the student – their name, address, emergency contact details, any medical conditions and their academic records.

It is useful for the new primary school to see school reports and examples of the child's work from their previous school. This will assist the new primary school to do all they can to make the transition as smooth as possible for the child.



### You can help your child in their transition to a new school by:

- Involving them as much as possible when you are choosing the new school
- asking them how they feel about the new school
- showing them around the school before their first day
- meeting their new teacher/s
- preparing them for school by talking about their first day
- keeping in contact with important friends from their previous school
- talking to them about the new school they will be attending
- finding opportunities to meet parents/carers and children from the new school.



### What Else Can I Do To Prepare My Child For School?

#### Prep for Parents/Carers

Articles about what children in Prep will learn and how to help them at home.

Visit: [education.vic.gov.au/parents/Pages/school-age.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/Pages/school-age.aspx)

#### Term Dates

Details about when school terms start and finish during the year.

Visit: [education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/datesterm.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/datesterm.aspx)

**Tips for Carers** has advice on the important aspects of starting school including what to expect from the school, continuing learning at home, reading, health and safety and school holidays.

Visit: [.education.vic.gov.au/parents/Pages/school-age.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/Pages/school-age.aspx)

## Learning And Education Supports

### What Learning And Education Supports Are There At School?

#### School Focused Youth Services

School Focused Youth Services are available across all Victorian school sectors (government, Catholic and independent) for students aged 10-18. They connect schools to a wide range of services, including direct support for young people, helping school staff and partners, and local planning to identify and address student disengagement.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/behaviour/engagement/Pages/sfys.aspx](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/behaviour/engagement/Pages/sfys.aspx)

#### Parent/Carer-Teacher Conferences

These meetings with your child's teachers give you an opportunity to:

- meet and get to know each other
- build a positive relationship
- share information about your child's interests and learning
- talk in-depth about your child's progress and student report.

Parent/carer-teacher conferences are valuable. They can help the teacher understand more about your child. You can also learn where you can help your child in their learning. Your school will let you know when they hold conferences and how to register. You can also ask for a conference at other times.

For more information: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/school-reports-conferences.aspx>

### What Supports Are There For Aboriginal Children?

#### Koorie Education Coordinators (KECs) and Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs)

The Department of Education and Training (DET) employs a Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) that includes Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs), Koorie Education Coordinators (KECs) and Koorie Education Managers (KEMs). The role of this dedicated workforce is to build the capacity of DET funded services and schools to better engage with Koorie learners and communities. They are available to provide expert advice and support regarding issues surrounding improved engagement and student performance.

For contact information, visit: [education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/marrungregional.aspx](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/marrungregional.aspx)

#### Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) Books In Homes

Three times a year, school age children can choose a book to inspire them in their reading and to help support connection to community and culture.

Visit [vacca.org/services/strengthening-culture/books-in-homes/](https://www.vacca.org/services/strengthening-culture/books-in-homes/)



## What Supports Are There For Children With Disabilities Or Additional Needs?

Each transition in a child's education is a significant milestone to celebrate. It can be exciting and daunting. For children and young people with a disability or who need more support, there may be additional challenges and uncertainty around what support is available.

For more information on the range of services and support available for children with a disability and additional needs, visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/default.aspx)

### Programs for Students with Disabilities

The Program for Students with Disabilities provides supplementary resources to schools to support the education of eligible students who attend regular and specialist schools. The funding is given directly to schools via the Student Resource Package.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psd.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/psd.aspx)

### Learning difficulties and dyslexia

There are several resources schools use to support students with learning difficulties or dyslexia.

For program support including the Language and Learning Difficulties Support Program and support for students with dyslexia, call 9097 1052 or visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/learning/Pages/dyslexia.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/learning/Pages/dyslexia.aspx)

### Enhanced Transition from Kindergarten to School

The DET has an enhanced process to support the transition to school for children with disabilities who have been supported with a Kindergarten Inclusion Support package. As part of this program, a Program Support Group brings together key people to support children with disabilities or developmental delays, or ongoing high-support needs or complex medical needs, from time of enrolment in a kindergarten program until transition into school.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx)



### LOOKOUT Support For Children In Out-Of-Home Care At Primary School

LOOKOUT Education Support Centres support schools with students in care arrangements. Each school has a Designated Teacher who works closely with the LOOKOUT team to make sure your child is welcomed, helping them to settle into the school, and advocating in their best interest.

Your school's Designated Teacher is responsible for making sure your child receives the supports described in the Out-of-Home Care Partnering Agreement. These include the Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Student Support Group (SSG), the choice of Learning Mentor (LM), and making sure there is appropriate contact between schools, case workers and carers.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx)

Regional LOOKOUT contacts:

- South Western Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.swv@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.swv@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- South Eastern Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.sev@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.sev@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- North Western Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.nwv@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.nwv@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- North Eastern Victoria Region Principal  
[lookout.nev@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lookout.nev@edumail.vic.gov.au)



## Dealing with Issues at Primary School

### What If My Child Is Struggling At School?

There are resources and supports to help you support your child if they are struggling at school. In the first instance, it is important to discuss this with your child's teacher to identify potential strategies to assist. You can also go to the Designated Teacher, Learning Mentor or Student Support Group for assistance.

For resources and information on supporting student health and wellbeing, including child protection, mental health and healthy eating, visit

[education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/default.aspx)

For information on school attendance, engagement and behaviour, visit

[education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/default.aspx)

### What If My Child Has Witnessed Or Is Experiencing Bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

If your child is experiencing bullying, take the bullying incident seriously, and know that your child's school will too. Talk to the school about your concerns. All schools should have a Bullying Prevention Policy and the action they will take should bullying occur.

For more information, visit

[education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/afdealingwithbully.pdf](https://education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/afdealingwithbully.pdf)

#### Bully Stoppers

Bully Stoppers calls on everyone in every school community to help prevent and respond to bullying. The DET Bully Stoppers online toolkit was developed based on national and international evidence and practice advice, to empower school leaders, teachers, parents/carers and students to understand what to do when they see bullying or if they are being bullied.

For more information on bullying and to access the Bully Stoppers online toolkit, visit

[education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx)

## Immunisation In Schools

Schools are required to request that parents and carers of school aged children provide them with an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register. Schools keep a copy of these statements for all enrolled students.

Prospective students will not be prevented from enrolling in primary school if they have not been immunised. However, students who are not immunised may be excluded if there is an outbreak of certain infectious diseases.

Immunisation from an early age is highly recommended for all Australian children. Having your child immunised helps to protect them from the most serious childhood infections.

For more information visit:

- The Department of Health and Human Services No Jab No Play: [health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/frequently-asked-questions](http://health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/frequently-asked-questions)
- Better Health Channel: [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisation-childhood](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisation-childhood)
- Australian Immunisation Register: [humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register](http://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register)



  
 Australian Government  
 Department of Human Services  
**medicare**

**Immunisation history statement**

As at: 24 May 2017  
 For: POM CHEU AJAY  
 Date of birth: 10 March 2013  
 Immunisation status: up to date

Schedule	Date given	Immunisation	Brand name given
2 months	10 May 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
4 months	10 Aug 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
6 months	10 Nov 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
12 months	10 Mar 2014	Measles Mumps Rubella Hib Meningococcal C	MMR II Menitorix
18 months	10 Nov 2014	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	Priorix-Tetra
4 years	03 Mar 2017	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Polio	Quadracel

**Next immunisation/s due** Date Due  
 No vaccines due.

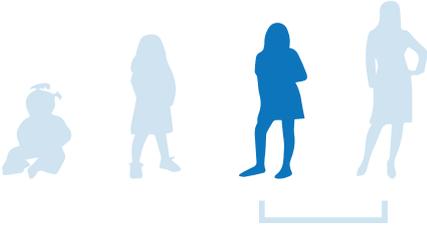
**Notice/s**  
 This child has received all vaccines required by 5 years of age.



### How Can I Keep My Child Busy During School Holidays?

Local Councils are a great place to find out about local activities over the school holidays. Go to your local council website or call them to find out about activities and/or programs. Don't forget libraries, sports centres and sporting clubs (basketball, netball, cricket and different football codes) run programs and activities in the holidays. The Victorian Government's website lists programs and activities available during school holidays.

For information on what's happening across the State, visit [vic.gov.au/school-holiday-activities.html](http://vic.gov.au/school-holiday-activities.html)



### SECTION 3

# Supporting My Young Person Through Secondary School

**Ages 13 to 18**

Moving from primary school to secondary school is a big step. The more information carers have and the more informed students are about the school they are going to and what to expect in a secondary school environment, the greater the chance of a happy and positive experience.



#### **This section will help you answer the following questions:**

- When should my young person start secondary school?
- How do I choose a secondary school and enrol my young person?
- What can I do if we live outside the school zone and I can't enrol my child at our chosen school?
- How can I prepare my young person to transition to secondary school?
- What can I do at home to support my young person's learning at secondary school?
- What will my young person learn during secondary school?
- What happens in Years 9 and 10?
- What is VCE and are there other options?
- How can I help my young person make choices about their education options?
- What learning and educational supports are there at school?
- What supports are there for Aboriginal young people?
- What supports are there for young people with disabilities or additional needs?
- Who should I talk to if my young person is not receiving the educational support they need?
- What if my young person is struggling at school?
- What financial assistance is available?

## How Can I Prepare My Young Person To Transition To Secondary School?

Moving from primary to secondary school is a major milestone for any young person. It's a time of big change in development, education and life. There are several things you can do at home to help your young person prepare for secondary school:



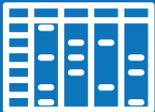
### BE POSITIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC

Your young person is more likely to look forward to starting high school if you're positive about it.



### HELP YOUR YOUNG PERSON TO DEVELOP GOOD STUDY HABITS

Create a comfortable place for them to study – this should be a quiet place away from distractions (TV, mobile phone), with internet access, desk and sturdy chair. Help your young person to set aside a time to study. Work out a daily timetable that incorporates all their needs and interests. Regularly viewed TV programs, activities and sport should all be part of the timetable.



### LEARN ABOUT THE TIMETABLE AND SCHOOL ROUTINES

What time does school start and finish; what time is recess and lunchtime?



### NERVES

Remind your young person that it is normal to feel nervous about starting high school and encourage them to talk about what they are worried about and keep communication open.



### FRIENDS

Encourage your young person to keep in touch with their primary school friends and spend time with them over the holidays.



### Most secondary schools work with primary schools to make transition easier.

As part of the transition from Grade 6 to Year 7, students in government secondary schools participate in an orientation day. All government schools hold this orientation day on the same day - often the second Tuesday of December.

At the orientation day, your young person may tour the school, meet teachers, ask questions and learn what they will be doing in their first year and meet other students.

## Enrolling in Secondary School

### When Should A Young Person Start Secondary School?

Secondary school covers Years 7 to 12, where students are usually aged 12 to 18.

It is a legal requirement in Victoria that young people remain in some form of education or training until they are 17 years old.

### How Do I Choose A Secondary School And Enrol?

In Grade 6 you will need to think about which secondary school your young person might go to in Year 7.

To make the transition from primary to secondary school a happy and positive experience, it is important to choose a school that will best benefit the young person in their learning and development. There is a good chance your young person will already have a sense about the school that they feel the most comfortable with.

Your young person will usually go to the secondary school closest to where your family lives if they are attending a government school. You can choose to send your young person to another government secondary school that has a different curriculum or focus, such as music or sport, if there are places available, or a Catholic or independent school.

### What Can I Do If We Live Outside The School Zone And I Can't Enrol My Child At Our Chosen School?

Like primary schools, some secondary schools need to restrict their enrolments – and the number of students they can take – to a particular area or zone around the school.

This means you need to live in a certain geographic area around the school to enrol. This is referred to as your neighbourhood school. Contact your school or your LOOKOUT Centre directly to find out more or if you are unable to enrol your young person even though you are in the area.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/boundary.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/boundary.aspx)

Although Year 7 enrolments are determined by secondary schools, all communication regarding the Grade 6 to Year 7 transition process must be in written form and lodged through your primary school until the Year 7 placement is confirmed. Transition materials for 2018-2019 will be made available to schools in March 2018.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/enrol.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/enrol.aspx)



#### When talking to the principal or school staff, consider asking these questions:

- What educational programs are offered?
- What are the teacher's/school's values and philosophies around educating students?
- How does the school support children with additional needs?
- What are the fees? Are there any other costs I'll be asked to pay over and above the fees?

The school will tell you what information is required for enrolment. Generally, enrolment requires a birth certificate, health and immunisation records, carer details and their legal status regarding the child and any court orders.

## How Do I Help My Young Person Change School?

Moving from one secondary school to another is a big step for most young people. They are leaving behind established relationships with friends and teachers and entering a new and unfamiliar environment.

Within Victoria, when a student transfers from one school to another, the outgoing school gives the principal of the new school a transfer note. This note includes information about the student – their name, address, emergency contact details, any medical conditions and their academic records.

Whether the young person is changing secondary schools within Victoria from another state or from overseas, it is useful for the new school to see school reports and examples of the young person's work from their previous school. This will help the new school to do all they can to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## How Can I Help My Young Person With Difficult Transitions?

Moving from primary to secondary school is an important transition point for children and young people. There are a range of transition programs and strategies to support students in their new environment. However, some children and young people struggle with this transition, which increases the possibility that they may disengage from school.

The school may need to make adjustments for your young person to transition from primary to secondary school. Schools need to develop a transition plan for all children and young people in out-of-home care that outlines the support that the student requires to make a successful transition, such as including additional days to visit the school and opportunities to build relationships with teachers. Speak to your school to see what arrangements are in place or can be made.

For more information, visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/transitions/Pages/risk.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/transitions/Pages/risk.aspx)  
or [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/starting.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/starting.aspx)

### As a carer you can help the transition into a new secondary school by:

- involving your young person as much as possible when deciding on a new secondary school
- asking them how they feel about the new school
- meeting their new teachers
- encouraging them to keep in contact with friends from their previous school.



### You can find out more about different schools in the following ways:

- You can **contact schools in the area and arrange to take a tour** of the school or meet with the principal to find out which school might best fit your young person. Often the primary school will let families know when there are tours of the local secondary schools.
- **Request an information pack.** These packs usually contain information about the school, enrolment forms, public transport, school policies such as internet use, bullying, uniforms, term dates, text books and more.
- **Attend information sessions.** At the end of Term 4, secondary schools hold information evenings for parents, carers and students joining the school as Year 7 students the following year. These may include an official welcome and meetings with teachers, followed by a more informal gathering where parents/carers and students can meet.

For more information on choosing and preparing for secondary school, visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/choosing.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/choosing.aspx)

## What Can I Do At Home To Support My Young Person's Learning At Secondary School?

There are lots of things you can do to support your young person's learning during school. Here are a few suggestions:



- **Show an interest in what they do** at school and talk about what they are doing and what they enjoy
- Encourage their **interest in different clubs, activities and sports** at the school
- **Try different activities at home** to build their skills, interests and confidence – *for example, through cooking, making things, gardening, helping around the house*



- **Visit libraries.** Often libraries have interactive fun activities, as well as books and DVDs. Audio books might be a good alternative to reading books. This might be something you can do together

- **Talk about stories in the newspaper,** on the internet or television to encourage them to think about other things going on in the world



- **Help them to create a vision board** – a collection of pictures, notes and ideas - to get them thinking about what's important to them, and what they dream of doing in the future

- **Have a set time for doing homework** and discuss/talk about their homework

- If possible, **have a dedicated quiet place where it is comfortable for them to do their homework.** You could ask them how this might look and what needs to be in it



- **Get involved in the school where you can** and get to know the teachers

For more ideas, visit:

[raisingchildren.net.au/articles/learning\\_primary\\_secondary\\_school.html/context/1224](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/learning_primary_secondary_school.html/context/1224)

## What Will My Young Person Learn During Secondary School?

The Victorian Curriculum sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is a common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

### Students learn about:

- **English**
- **Mathematics**
- **Health and Physical Education**
- **The Humanities:** civics and citizenship, economics and business, geography and history
- **The Arts:** dance, drama, media arts, music, visual arts, visual communication and design
- **Languages**
- **Science**
- **Technologies:** design and technologies and digital technologies

There are plenty of opportunities at school to try different subjects to get a feel for what they enjoy and might want to pursue during and after school.

### What Happens In Years 9 And 10?

Generally, in Years 9 and 10, students can select electives in addition to core school subjects. Most secondary schools offer a range of electives, so students can choose topics that interest them and find out whether it is something they want to pursue in the future.

This is an opportunity to start conversations and find out what your young person loves to do and what they are interested in, what they are good at and how they can explore options for training and study when they leave school. The people who can help you and your young person with career pathway planning and options at school include the school's careers practitioner, the year level coordinator, designated teacher, learning mentor and other teachers they have a good relationship with at school.

### Parent/Carer-Teacher Conferences

Parent/carer-teacher conferences are valuable. They can help the teacher understand more about your child. You can also learn where you can help your child in their learning. Your school will let you know when they hold conferences and how to register. You can also ask for a conference at other times.

For more information:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/school-reports-conferences.aspx>



# Alternative Education Options

## What is VCE and are there other options?

For students in Year 10, schools run information sessions for families and students about the education pathways they offer; what each one means, how to enrol and things to consider when applying for courses. It is important for both of you to attend this so that you know what the education pathways are and how the school can support you.

Have conversations early with your young person, the designated teacher, year level coordinator/learning mentor or a teacher who your young person relates to, about their strengths and aspirations for the future.

### Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

VCE is usually completed in Years 11 and 12, but can be started in Year 10, and covers more than 90 study areas. Subjects offered will vary from school to school, including Vocational Education and Training (VET) units.

Visit

[vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/index.aspx](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/index.aspx)

### Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

VCAL is a hands-on option for students in Years 11 and 12 with practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work.

Visit

[vcaa.vic.edu.au/pages/vcal/index.aspx](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/pages/vcal/index.aspx)

### Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VCE VET programs lead to nationally recognised qualifications, offering students the opportunity to gain both the VCE and a vocational qualification. Study areas include Agriculture, Horticulture, Conservation and Land Management, Business, Community Services, Creative and Digital Media, Health and many more.

Visit

[vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/programs/index.aspx](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/programs/index.aspx)

### School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT)

School Based apprenticeships or traineeships are available for students enrolled in VCE or VCAL. It combines at least one day per week practical workplace experience or in structured training at a registered training organisation.

Visit

[vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/programs/sbat.aspx](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/programs/sbat.aspx)

### Head Start School Based Apprenticeships

Head Start is a new model for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships where students can stay at school an extra year to finish their VCAL, VCE or apprenticeship. During this extra year they spend more time doing important, paid, on the job training.

Visit

[education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/headstart.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/headstart.aspx)

## How Can I Help My Young Person Choose Education Options?

Start conversations early about what your young person likes to do, is good at and is interested in. The earlier and more regular the conversations, the better prepared you will both be in working out the best education option(s) for them. Of course, this may well change over time – and for many students it does!

Most employers are looking for people who have completed Year 12 or a higher qualification, who are flexible, adaptable and willing to learn new things. Completing Year 12 and gaining a higher education or university qualification or trade after Year 12 provides more career choices and improves future life opportunities.

To explore study and career ideas, visit [myfuture.edu.au](http://myfuture.edu.au)



### Some suggestions for talking about education and career options:

- Listen and be open to their ideas
- Encourage them to focus on their strengths and the things they like to do. This way they are more likely to be engaged at school and want to learn
- Stay informed - go to career and study expos - ask the school what is coming up
- Be patient. Some young people have clear ideas about what they want to do, others will take longer to explore options and make decisions
- Remember - choosing one education pathway now doesn't mean they have to stay in it.
- Most people don't follow a straight path, there are lots of different ways of studying and learning



## Learning And Education Supports

### What Learning And Educational Supports Are There At School?

#### Flexible Learning and alternative education options

Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) are educational settings that primarily support secondary students at-risk of disengaging, or those whose needs are not being met within mainstream school. FLOs can provide highly individualized learning structures and plans coupled with a strong focus on providing holistic support for a young person's engagement and wellbeing. FLOs can include:

- Flexible government schools: registered schools that primarily enrol students that are at-risk or have already disengaged from education, such as community schools.
- Flexible learning campuses: learning settings or programs that are standalone registered campuses or mainstream schools.
- Flexible in-school programs: in-school learning programs specifically targeted to students at-risk of disengagement but are incorporated into a student's learning program at their current school.

You can discuss options with your Designated Teacher and with your LOOKOUT Education Support Centre to work through what might work best for your young person.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx?Redirect=2](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx?Redirect=2)

### Who Should I Talk To If My Young Person Is Not Receiving The Educational Support They Need?

#### The Out-of-Home Care Partnering Agreement

Schools, Child Protection Practitioners and Case Workers have a shared agreement to support the learning and development of children and young people in out-of-home care during the years they attend school. Where this is not working effectively, talk to the Designated Teacher or the Principal at your school.

If you do not feel your issue has been properly addressed, please contact your Department of Education and Training Regional Office: [education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx)

To view the Partnering Agreement, visit [education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/PartneringAgreement.pdf](http://education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/PartneringAgreement.pdf)

#### Homework clubs

Ask at your school about homework clubs or specific subject support clubs such as Maths and English. These are often weekly sessions for small groups with tutors who help students with assignments, homework and revision or to explain something the student may not understand. Homework Clubs are free.



## What Supports Are There For Young Aboriginal People?

### Individual Education Plans

Government schools are required to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for Aboriginal students and families. These plans are to detail explicitly student aspirations with wrap around support to assist students achieve agreed outcomes.

---

For more information, and to contact a member of the Koorie Education Workforce in your regional area, visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/wannikregional.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/wannikregional.aspx)

### Koorie Academy of Excellence

The Koorie Academy of Excellence helps students to complete school while developing their confidence, self-belief and know-how to successfully pursue their goals and dreams. It is designed to complement students' day to day learning.

---

Visit [vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=93](http://vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=93)

### Clontarf Academies

The Clontarf Academies aim to improve the learning, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal men. The five Victorian academies are in Bairnsdale, Mildura, Swan Hill, Robinvale and Warrnambool.

---

Visit [clontarf.org.au](http://clontarf.org.au)

### Wannik Dance Academies

The Wannik Dance Academies provide an educational program based around dance and aligned to the regular school curriculum for female Aboriginal students in Years 7 – 10. They are based in Ballarat, Eaglehawk and Mooroopna Secondary Colleges.

---

For more information, contact [Ballarat, Eaglehawk and Mooroopna Secondary Colleges](#) directly

### Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)

AIME provides Aboriginal secondary school students with the skills, opportunities, belief and confidence to finish Year 12. There are several programs which support Aboriginal young people finishing school and connect students with post Year 12 opportunities in higher education and employment.

---

For more information, visit [aimementoring.com](http://aimementoring.com)

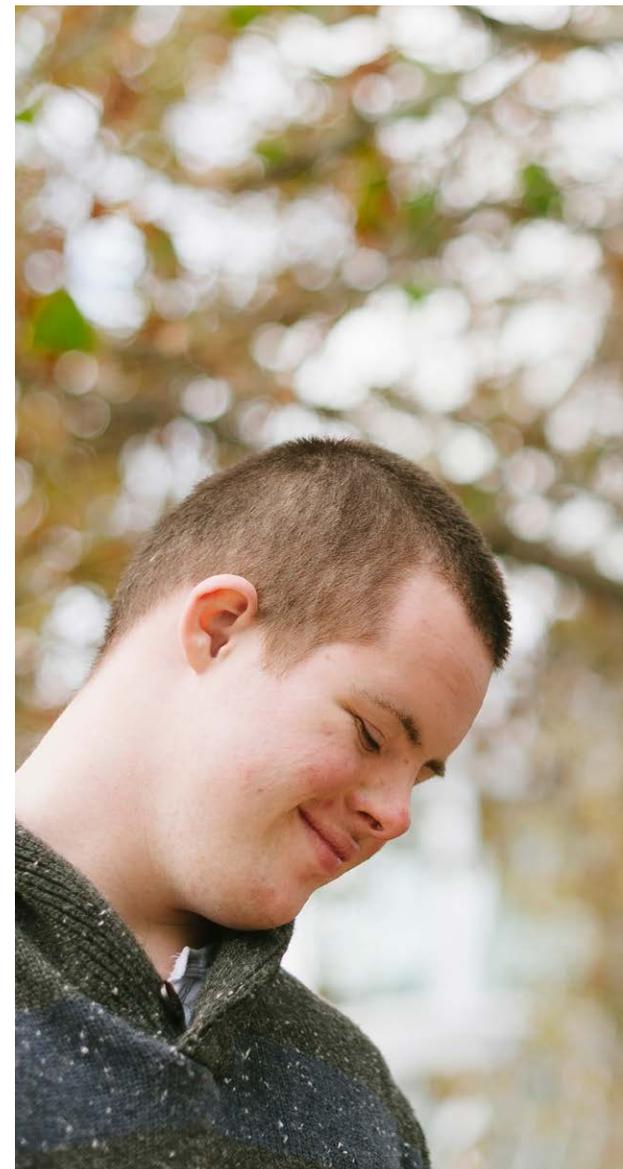
## What Supports Are There For Young People With Disabilities Or Additional Needs?

### Program for Students with Disabilities

The Program for Students with Disabilities provides funding for eligible students who attend regular and specialist schools. The funding is given directly to schools via the Student Resource Package.

---

For more information on the range of services and support available for children with disabilities and additional needs, visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/default.aspx)



# Financial Support For Children and Young People Through School

## Financial support for excursions, trips and sporting activities

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) provides \$125 per year for eligible students to take part in these activities.

Temporary foster parents or families holding a valid means-tested concession card are eligible to apply. CSEF opens in term one each year, and applications usually close at the end of February. There is also a special consideration category. Payments are made directly to the school for the student.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx)

## Client Support Funding Framework for Home Based Carers

The Framework outlines the most common everyday expenses that carers can apply for such as school, medical, transport and child care costs. This includes the purchase of specific items or services that exceed the day-to-day costs of what the carer allowance contributes to or high costs that place an unreasonable financial burden on the carer.

Visit [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria)

## Flexible Funding for Permanent Care placements

Flexible funding requests can be considered when the student is subject to a permanent care order in Victoria and is in an ongoing permanent care placement. This funding can help support a student to access additional educational support. Permanent carers can apply for funding more than once.

To request funding, contact PCA Families on 03 9020 1833 or email [info@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcafamilies.org.au)

## Paying for uniforms

From 2018 Victorian Government Prep students who receive the Camps, Sports and Excursion Funds (CSEF) automatically qualify for a uniform pack through the State Schools' Relief Fund.

The pack includes all basic uniform items for primary school to the value of \$125 per student.

From 2018, Victorian Government Year 7 students who receive a payment through the Camps, Sports and Excursion Funds (CSEF) automatically qualify for a uniform pack to the value of \$225 per student through the State Schools' Relief Fund.

The pack includes all basic uniform items for secondary school. Parents, carers and legal guardians must apply for CSEF by 28 February each year to be eligible for the uniform pack.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/uniforms.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/uniforms.aspx)

## The Department of Education and Training's Parent Payment Policy

The Department of Education and Training's Parent Payment Policy emphasises that all children should have access to the standard curriculum regardless of their family's ability to pay.

To learn more about the Parent Payment Policy, visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx)

## Marrung Education Scholarships

The Department of Education and Training offers up to 20 scholarships each year to high achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are completing Year 10 and planning on completing Years 11 and 12 in a Victorian Government school. Up to \$5000 is available over two years per student.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/marrung.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/marrung.aspx)



### Financial support for transport and travelling to school

You may apply for transport assistance if you meet the eligibility criteria. Before enrolling your young person (or child) at a new school, it is important to check travel options. This may be explained as part of the enrolment forms, during the information night or in school information packages.

Support options include:

- Victorian Student Pass - students residing in metropolitan Melbourne may be entitled to the Victorian Student Pass, which is administered by Public Transport Victoria.
- School Bus Program - The School Bus Program is an extensive school bus network that provides travel at no cost to eligible government and non-government students living in rural and regional Victoria. Students who are not eligible may still use the service by paying a fare.
- Students with Disabilities Transport Program - Transport assistance is available for eligible students attending their designated government specialist school.
- Conveyance Allowance Program - DET provides financial assistance in the form of a conveyance allowance to help families in rural and regional Victoria with the cost of transporting their children to and from their nearest government school/campus or nearest appropriate non-government school/campus.

---

For more information on transport assistance, visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/travel-school.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/travel-school.aspx)

### Support for financial hardship

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, support is available through the State Schools Relief Fund. It is also worthwhile speaking with someone at your school (your child's teacher or Learning Mentor, the Assistant Principal, Principal or the Designated Teacher) so that they can support you and make sure the young person (or child) in your care remains engaged in school.

Under the Fund, carers may be able to receive free or discounted:

- new school uniforms
- new school shoes
- new textbooks

Schools apply to State Schools' Relief for this support, rather than families. You are encouraged to talk to your designated teacher, school principal, assistant principal or student welfare coordinator about your situation and they will assess what you can receive.

---

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/stateschoolsrelief.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/stateschoolsrelief.aspx)

### Other scholarship opportunities

The Department of Education and Training offers over 20 different student scholarships.

Up to 200 Victorian primary and secondary students from Grade 4 to Year 11 receive a scholarship each year. Students must be citizens or permanent residents of Australia to apply.

Scholarships range in value from \$300 to \$1000. They are generally awarded to students who:

- demonstrate academic achievement
- demonstrate participation in their school and local community
- are in financial need (Health Care Card, a Low-Income Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card recipients or students receiving Youth Allowance).

---

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/student-scholarships.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/student-scholarships.aspx)

## Dealing with Issues at Secondary School

### What If My Young Person Is Struggling At School?

#### School Focused Youth Services

School Focused Youth Services are available across all Victorian school sectors (government, Catholic and independent) for students aged 10-18. Service providers deliver and/or connect schools to a wide range of services, including direct interventions for young people, capacity building for school staff and partners, and local planning to identify and address disengagement.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/default.aspx)

## Mentoring

### Where Can I Access Mentoring For My Young Person?

There are several mentoring programs which support interactive and positive relationships with secondary school students. Some programs are available online, so access to a mentor is not limited by where you live or whether you have transport.

#### Student Mentoring Program

The Department of Education and Training's Student Mentoring Program aims to promote school connectedness, engagement and aspirations for disadvantaged children and young people. Various programs operate within selected government schools and target groups within their school community / area. A key focus of the program in 2018 and 2019 will be on supporting Indigenous students, students in out-of-home care, or those from low socio-economic or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Further information on the Student Mentoring Program can be found at [education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/studentmentoring.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/studentmentoring.aspx)

#### Access Monash Mentoring

The Access Monash Mentoring program (co-funded by the Department as part of the Student Mentoring Program) is for Year 11 and 12 students at partner schools who want to explore post-school options but lack the confidence or knowledge about university study. Students are paired with an experienced and engaged Monash student mentor to work in a one-on-one mentoring relationship for the final two years of secondary school. The program aims to create student-to-student connections, helping secondary students from low socio-economic (low SES) communities bridge the gap from school to university.

More information on the program can be found at: [monash.edu/access/mentoring/about](http://monash.edu/access/mentoring/about)

#### Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience Program is about getting more indigenous young people into jobs and university by offering mentoring and tutoring.

Visit [aimentoring.com/au/about](http://aimentoring.com/au/about)



## Doctors in secondary schools

The Doctors in Secondary Schools program funds 100 Victorian Government secondary schools to have an adolescent health-trained General Practitioner (GP) attend up to once a week to provide medical advice and health care to its students.

All secondary school students who are enrolled in a participating school can access the GP, subject to providing the required consent for the services.

Participating schools, students and their carers will not incur any out-of-pocket expenses for consultations with the GP.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/doctors-secondary-schools.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/doctors-secondary-schools.aspx)



### Additional Resources To Support Children Through School

For more information on supporting your student at secondary school go to the **Department of Education and Training's** website.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/default.aspx)

**The Smith Family's Learning for Life** program provides financial assistance with student education and connects the child and their family to local learning opportunities and other supports.

Visit [thesmithfamily.com.au/programs/learning-for-life](http://thesmithfamily.com.au/programs/learning-for-life)

**Early Childhood Australia** has printed and online resources to assist carers and educators in helping children make the transition from preschool to school.

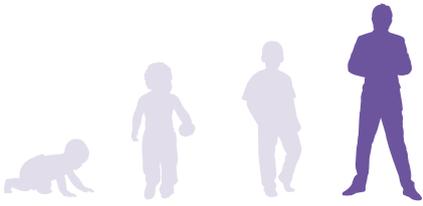
Call **1800 356 900** or visit [earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

**Sustainable School Shop** is an online store where you can purchase second hand items for school.

Visit [sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://sustainableschoolshop.com.au)

**KidsMatter** is an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services (like preschools, kindergartens and day care centres). It's a framework that helps these places take care of children's mental health. The website contains useful tips and resources on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of your young person at school.

Visit: [kidsmatter.edu.au](http://kidsmatter.edu.au)



#### SECTION 4

# Supporting Your Young Person Beyond School

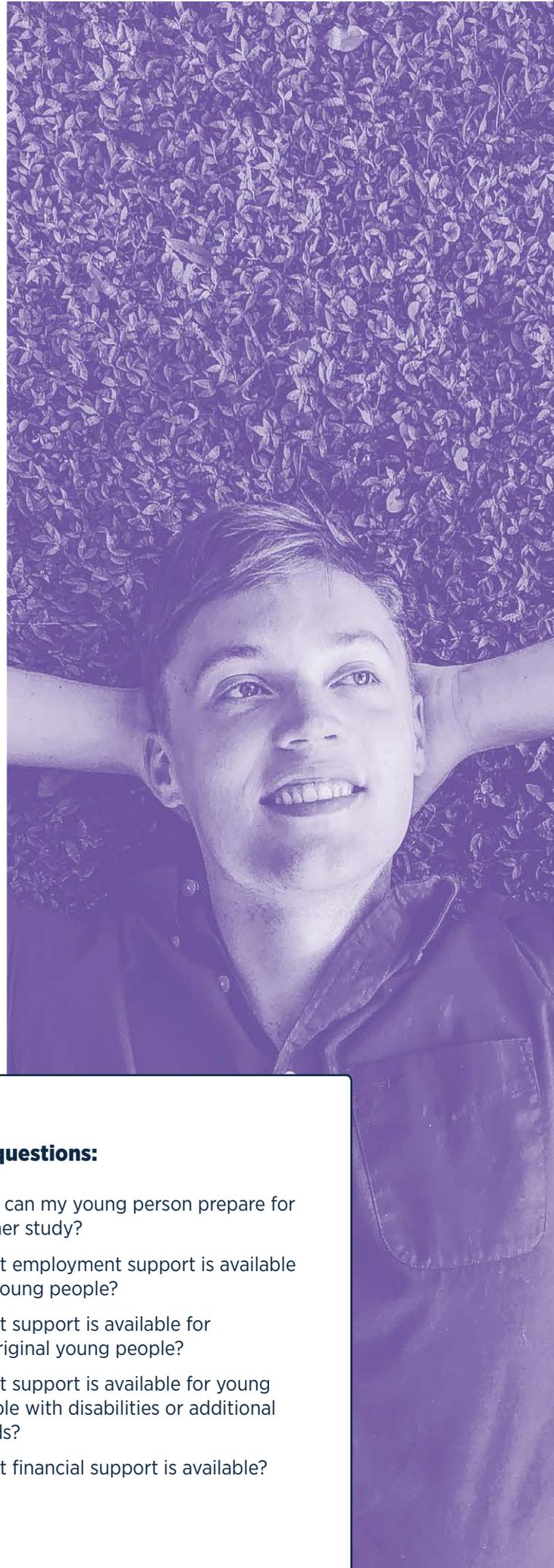
## 16 and older

You are likely to be one of the biggest influences on the education and career decisions of the young person in your care. Being involved in their learning will improve their motivation, attendance and achievement. You are an important role model for them.



### **This section will help you answer the following questions:**

- How do I talk to my young person about higher education, university, training and their career?
- What if my young person wants to leave school early?
- What are the options for further study?
- How can my young person apply for a course?
- What support is available to help my young person prepare for further education?
- How can my young person prepare for further study?
- What employment support is available for young people?
- What support is available for Aboriginal young people?
- What support is available for young people with disabilities or additional needs?
- What financial support is available?



## How Do I Talk To My Young Person About Higher Education And Careers?

In Years 9, 10, 11 and 12, young people start thinking about what they will do when they leave school. This might be studying at TAFE, university, an apprenticeship or employment. Study and training can open up many possibilities for young people in their work and personal life.

It is important that young people who have grown up or spent time in Out-of-home care are encouraged and supported, like any other young person, to pursue and aspire to higher education, and develop their knowledge and skills through formal study and/or training. This will help prepare them for the next phase of their life and provide more options for meaningful employment and a career.

When talking about education and careers with your young person:



- Focus on their strengths and areas of interest
- Encourage them to talk about their goals and aspirations – what they want for themselves and what they expect from themselves



- Listen and be open to their ideas
- Encourage discussion around areas of work and/or study, rather than specific jobs – unless they have a clear goal they want to work towards



- Remember it is their path – you will have your own ideas about the direction they should go in, empower them to make their decisions with your guidance
- Some young people have clear ideas about what they want to do, others will take longer to explore options and make decisions
- Encourage them to talk to a teacher, learning mentor or another trusted adult if that helps
- Be patient



Schools have regular ‘career/post school options’ newsletters and information so that you know when information sessions are being offered by local education and training organisations, higher education institutions, open days, career expos, etc.



### Learn more!

To find out more about what schools offer to assist you and your student in thinking about and planning for their future, visit:

[education.vic.gov.au/parents/career-planning/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/career-planning/Pages/default.aspx)

## Early School Leavers

### What If My Young Person Wants To Leave School Early?

You're probably already talking to your young person about the importance of education and further study to increase their chances of getting a better job in the future and having more options.

While young people are encouraged to complete Year 12, it may not work for everyone.

It can be hard for young people to make an informed decision about what they want to do, whether it's staying at school, doing a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course, going to university or leaving school and trying to find a job.

It's good to talk to your young person about why they might want to leave school and help them understand their options before they decide to leave school completely. Encourage them to meet with the careers coordinator at school and any teachers they relate to well.

It is important to let your young person know that they can return to study later, if they are not ready for more study straight after school. Learning is life long and doesn't have to end if they leave school early. Lots of people do it this way!

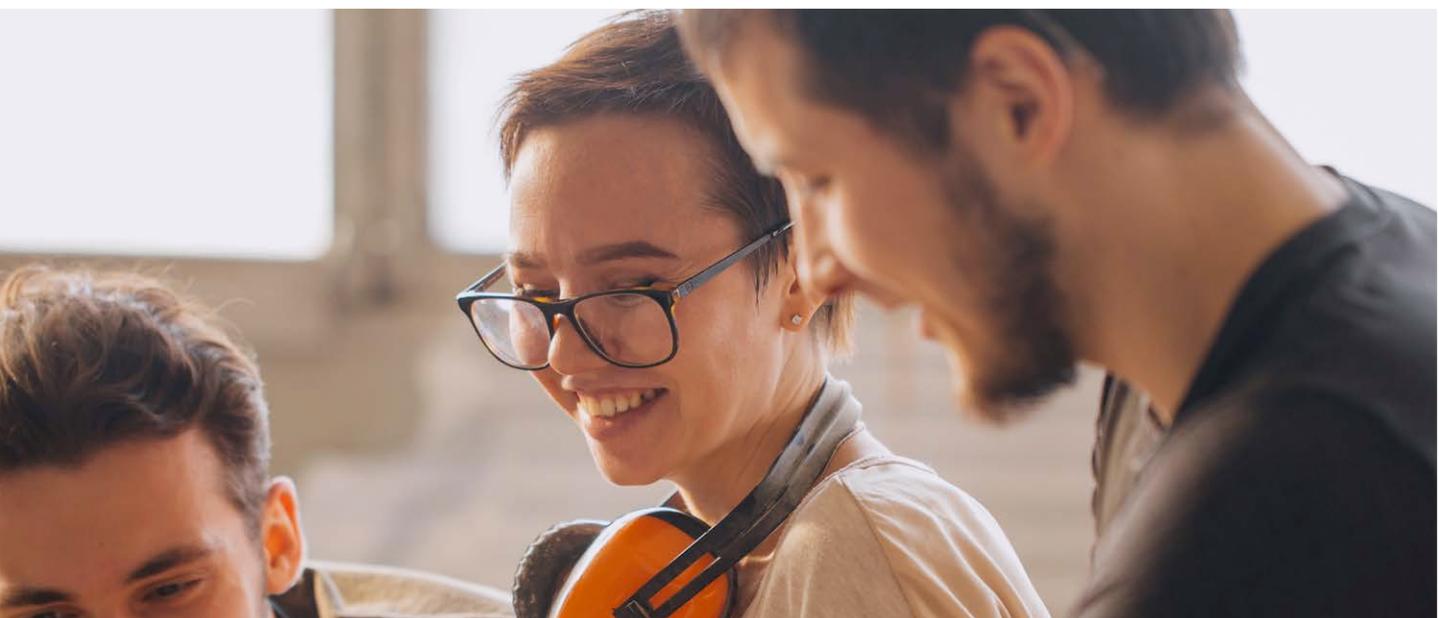
Note that in Victoria, students cannot leave school until they are 17 years old.

#### Careers/pathways staff

All secondary schools have careers or pathways staff who provide advice and support about education options in Years 10, 11 and 12 and when your student leaves school. They can also provide advice for young people who want to leave school at Year 10 to pursue training, employment and other study options. It is important that careers staff know the young person is in care and in most cases will be required to 'exit' care on or before their 18th birthday. This will affect the conversations, needs and challenges and give school staff a better understanding of how best to support the young person. It will assist in careers staff linking the young person into other supports and education options offered to care leavers.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/beyond/Pages/careerplanschool.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/beyond/Pages/careerplanschool.aspx) or [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care)

Visit: [education.vic.gov.au/parents/career-planning/Pages/leave-school-early.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/parents/career-planning/Pages/leave-school-early.aspx)



## What Learning And Training Options Are Available For Early School Leavers?

Many TAFEs, universities and other education organisations offer programs to build the skills of young people who have left school before Year 12. Contact the TAFE or university close to you to find out what they offer. It may work better for your young person to study in an environment that is different to mainstream school. Here are a range of programs and services that are worth looking into.

### Reconnect Engagement and Learning Support Program

Reconnect Engagement and Learning Support Program supports young people from age 17 onwards who did not complete Year 12 to enrol and stay in vocational training and to find employment. Reconnect offers a case management approach.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx)

### Local Learning and Employment Networks

LLENs have a particular focus on young people who are at risk of disengaging, or who have already disengaged from education and training and are not in full time employment.

Visit: [llen.org.au](http://llen.org.au)

### Skills and Jobs Centres

Located in TAFEs and some universities across Victoria, Skills and Jobs Centres provide expert advice on training and employment opportunities. They offer a whole range of services and work with a broad range of local industries to meet the needs of their local communities and industries.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/skillsandjobscentres/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/skillsandjobscentres/Pages/default.aspx)

### Transition to Work

Transition to Work aims to help support young people aged 15-21 on their journey to employment. It provides extensive pre-employment support to improve their work readiness, help get them into work, traineeships, apprenticeships or further education. Eligible participants may receive financial support to gain a qualification or employment as well as access to a range of other supports to get them job ready.

For more information and to find the provider closest to you: [jobsearch.gov.au/transition-to-work](http://jobsearch.gov.au/transition-to-work)

### Victorian Skills Gateway

The Victorian Skills Gateway is a directory of information to help students find the training or TAFE course that is right for them. You can search by course area and then look for the providers closest to you.

Visit [skills.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway/Students/Pages/default.aspx](http://skills.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway/Students/Pages/default.aspx)

### Skills First Youth Access Initiative

Offers young people who have been or are on a Child Protection Order, Family Court Order or a Youth Justice Order to study government subsidised accredited training. Eligible young people will not have to pay tuition fees for a range of courses and may be able to undertake more than one course.

It includes VCAL, VCE, Certificate I to IV and Diploma and Advanced Diploma Courses. To be eligible to study under the Skills First Youth Access Initiative and pay no tuition fees, the young person must be:

- under 22 years as at 01 January in the year of first commencing education and training; and
- 'have been' or 'is currently on' a Child Protection Order, Family Court Order or a Youth Justice Order.

For more information, call 131 823 or visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx)

### Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a hands-on option for students in Years 11 and 12 with practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work.

Visit [vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vcal/students/studentfaq.aspx](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vcal/students/studentfaq.aspx)

## Higher Education And Career Guidance

### VCE and Careers Expo

The VCE and Careers Expo is generally held in May each year at Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne. Representatives from lots of universities, TAFEs and other training providers are there to give you information about what they offer. They provide career and study advice and VCE information and resources. If you go, it is good to have a plan and work out which stalls you want to go so that it doesn't become overwhelming.

Visit [vceandcareers.com.au](http://vceandcareers.com.au)

### MyFuture

MyFuture is a national online careers information service with lots of information about different career areas, skills needed and level of skill required for different careers. You can explore areas of interest or areas you haven't thought about before! It has lots of information about career planning, career pathways and work transitions.

Visit [myfuture.edu.au](http://myfuture.edu.au)

### TAFE and university open days

Visiting a TAFE or university open day is a great way of finding out about what courses are offered, asking questions and gathering information on study options, student life and more. Open days tend to be in July and August and you may need to register.

For dates, visit [openday.com.au](http://openday.com.au)

### School outreach and university partnership programs

Many schools partner with universities to run outreach programs. Activities take place at the university and aim to familiarise students with a university campus and its facilities and increase their awareness of higher education and what university has to offer. Programs are tailored to different year levels starting at Year 7. Speak to your school for more information.

For examples of outreach programs visit:

- Federation University Australia: [federation.edu.au/future-students/information-for/regional-students/schools-outreach](http://federation.edu.au/future-students/information-for/regional-students/schools-outreach)
- La Trobe University: [latrobe.edu.au/outreach/school-partnerships](http://latrobe.edu.au/outreach/school-partnerships)
- Monash University: [monash.edu/access/outreach\\_programs](http://monash.edu/access/outreach_programs)



## Options For Further Study

**Please refer to the previous learning and training options for early school leavers.** In addition, there are lots of options to learn, train and study beyond school. It will depend on the future direction the young person wants to take, the Year level they leave school and the level of support they need to re-engage in training and study or prepare and go on to higher education and university.

When exploring further study:

- Talk to the school, trusted people, friends and family about different courses and places that offer training and study
- Search for ‘future students’ at the TAFE or University you are interested in. This is often a good starting point to find out what is available and what supports are offered
- Make sure the course your young person is interested in, is accredited, meets their needs and expectations and that they really want to do it. Talk to a carer organisation and/or someone at the school before paying for the course. There may be subsidies available to you or programs where there are no tuition fees.

Most TAFEs, universities and other learning organisations offer pathway programs to build the skills of future students to assist them in feeling more prepared and confident for further study.

Contact the TAFE or university where your young person wants to study to find out what they offer. As a starting point, look on their website or talk to the careers and transitions staff at school. Search for ‘future students’ at the TAFE or university you are interested in.

Currently, Federation University Australia and La Trobe University are the only universities in Victoria that provide specific supports and services for care leaver students. Care leavers who want to study at other universities should check with the university about supports they offer including scholarships.



### Free TAFE Courses

In 2019, the Victorian government is offering free courses at TAFE.

For more information, visit [vic.gov.au/freetafe/free-tafe.html](http://vic.gov.au/freetafe/free-tafe.html)

### Good Universities Guide

The Good Universities Guide can help you search for and compare University and TAFE courses across Australia.

Visit [gooduniversitiesguide.com.au](http://gooduniversitiesguide.com.au)

### University Koorie Units

Higher Education Units are located at universities around Victoria to support Aboriginal students in higher education and university. They create a network of Indigenous students and academics and provide an Indigenous presence on university campuses.

Visit

<http://vaeai.org.au/education/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=30> or [vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=103](http://vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=103)

### Toorong Marnong - Tertiary Information Services

Toorong Marnong provides an opportunity for students and communities to talk to universities about transition and support for Indigenous students. The service provides information regarding ATAR, degrees, planning for university, pathways and entry points to university and scholarships and study supports available to university students.

Visit

[vaeai.org.au/\\_uploads/\\_cknw/files/Toorong%20Marnong%20I-TIS%20FAQ.PDF](http://vaeai.org.au/_uploads/_cknw/files/Toorong%20Marnong%20I-TIS%20FAQ.PDF)

# Applying for Further Study

## How Can My Young Person Apply For A Course?

### Applying through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)

At school in Year 12 students are guided through the process of applying for courses at different TAFEs and Universities through one central portal - VTAC.

A student living in a care arrangement is eligible and should apply for Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) which recognises their personal circumstances. There is a tick box in Category Four to indicate that they have spent time in care. They may be awarded additional entry points to support their application.

This means that the TAFE or university can make sure they let the young person know about services, supports and financial assistance they offer to young people with care experience.

The VTAC website has information on how to create an account, how to search and apply for courses and scholarships, how to apply for SEAS and how to submit a personal statement. Ask teachers and careers staff for assistance if you need it.

Visit [vtac.edu.au](http://vtac.edu.au)

### Applying directly to enrol in a course

Depending on the course, your young person may be able to apply for their course directly to the TAFE, University or registered training organisation. They will help you with this process.

You can request a course guide and other enrolment forms and information directly by contacting the TAFE, university or registered training organisation.

Visit [vtac.edu.au/applying/courses/direct.html](http://vtac.edu.au/applying/courses/direct.html)



#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Careers, study and training

#### Skills and Jobs Centres

Located in TAFEs and some universities across Victoria, Skills and Jobs Centres provide expert advice on training and employment opportunities. They offer a wide range of services and work with a broad range of local industries to meet the needs of their local communities and industries.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/skillsandjobscentres/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/skillsandjobscentres/Pages/default.aspx)

**Learn Local organisations** (over 300) offer a large selection of adult community education and training programs state-wide. Courses range from basic computer skills to Certificates (including VET and VCE / VCAL) and Diplomas in areas such as business, community services and trades.

Visit [learnlocal.org.au](http://learnlocal.org.au)

#### Local Learning and Employment Networks

(LLENs) across Victoria help connect young people aged between 10–19 years old with education, training and employment opportunities in their local area. They focus on young people at risk of disengaging, or who have already disengaged, from education and training and are not in employment.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/Pages/llens.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/Pages/llens.aspx)

Local Learning and Employment Networks can facilitate access to **Structured Workplace Learning placements** for school students that are tailored to local priorities and employment opportunities. The placements link to the VET programs as part of their VCE, or VCAL.

Visit [workplacements.education.vic.gov.au](http://workplacements.education.vic.gov.au)

## Programs To Get Young People Ready For Higher Education

There are programs available to help young people prepare and feel more confident for further study. This includes young people who are returning to study.

### Foundation Access Studies (FAST) – Federation University Australia

The program runs over one semester and prepares students for study in a degree program. It provides alternative entry to a degree at Federation University and builds skills and confidence to undertake degree level study. It is targeted at students who do not hold prerequisites for entry into a degree and helps those who are returning to study.

Pathways to Study (P2S) - Federation University Australia: The P2S program:

- provides valuable skills to people considering further study
- aims to improve the employment prospects of students
- prepares students for further study at Federation University, especially at the Certificate IV or Diploma level and assists in building independent learning in maths, computers, oral and written communication
- enables people to become familiar with the campus and services available and can help with future course applications.

Visit [federation.edu.au/future-students/study-at-feduni/which-course/pathways](https://www.federation.edu.au/future-students/study-at-feduni/which-course/pathways)

### Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) - La Trobe University

This online program provides strong foundational skills and strategies for learning to prepare students for tertiary level education. It builds academic skills, confidence to study and equips students to make decisions about future learning. It assists in establishing a pathway to continuing education.

Visit [latrobe.edu.au/study/undergrad/how-to-apply/pathways/tep](https://www.latrobe.edu.au/study/undergrad/how-to-apply/pathways/tep)

### Doxa - University Pathways Program (UPP)

The Doxa UPP provides Year 9-12 students with a first-hand experience of university life and a taste of the world of work.

Visit [doxa.org.au/university-pathways-program](https://www.doxa.org.au/university-pathways-program)

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Housing support

**Education Youth Foyers** accommodate young people for up to two years. To be eligible, a young person needs to be aged between 16-24 and keen to enter and commit to staying in education and training. There are Education First Youth Foyers in Broadmeadows, Glen Waverley and Shepparton.

Visit [bsl.org.au/services/young-people/youth-foyers](https://www.bsl.org.au/services/young-people/youth-foyers)

**Melbourne City Mission Youth Foyers** provide long term supported housing along with services for education, training, employment and intensive casework support to young people aged 16–25 (who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless) to help them achieve independence.

Visit: [melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/youth-foyers](https://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/youth-foyers)  
or  
[foyer.org.au/foyers-in-australia/#where-are-foyers-located-in-australia](https://www.foyer.org.au/foyers-in-australia/#where-are-foyers-located-in-australia)



# Employment and Financial Support For Young People



## Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

The Youth Employment Scheme aims to increase the participation of young people (15-24) in their communities and in the workforce. They assist young people to gain paid work experience, training and qualifications that lead to sustainable employment.

Visit [economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/jobs-victoria/about-jobs-victoria/yes](http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/jobs-victoria/about-jobs-victoria/yes)

## Fed Uni - Pathways to Employment (P2E)

P2E is targeted at registered job seekers to help them become more job-ready and confident to find employment and training opportunities. P2E offers general study to help improve maths, computer and written English skills and to prepare for further study or to re-enter the workforce. It is run in partnership with local Job Services Australia (JSA) network offices.

Visit [study.federation.edu.au/#/stream/Pathway+to+study+and+employment](http://study.federation.edu.au/#/stream/Pathway+to+study+and+employment)

## The Jobs Victoria Employment Network (JVEN)

JVEN aims to help jobseekers gain employment. Specialist employment experts deliver services and work closely with employers to identify job opportunities and prepare job seekers for those roles. JVEN offers flexible services for jobseekers and respond to particular local or regional needs.

Visit [jobs.vic.gov.au/about-jobs-victoria/jobs-victoria-employment-network](http://jobs.vic.gov.au/about-jobs-victoria/jobs-victoria-employment-network)

## Reconnect Engagement and Learning Support Program

Reconnect helps young people who did not complete Year 12 to enrol and stay in vocational training and to find employment. It offers a case management approach.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx)

## Skills and Jobs Centres

Located in TAFEs and some universities across Victoria, Skills and Jobs Centres provide expert advice on training and employment opportunities. They offer a whole range of services and work with a broad range of local industries to meet the needs of their local communities and industries.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/skillsandjobscentres/Pages/default.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/skillsandjobscentres/Pages/default.aspx)

## Transition to Work

Transition to Work aims to help support young people aged 15-21 on their journey to employment. It provides extensive pre-employment support to improve their work readiness, help get them into work, traineeships, apprenticeships or further education. Eligible participants may receive financial support to gain a qualification or employment as well as access to a range of other supports to get them job ready.

For more information and to find the provider closest to you: [jobsearch.gov.au/transition-to-work](http://jobsearch.gov.au/transition-to-work)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### Supporting Young People After School

**CREATE Foundation's CREATE Your Future is a life skills program** designed to assist young people in the transition to independence from out-of-home care.

To find out more, call **1800 655 105** or email [clubCREATE@create.org.au](mailto:clubCREATE@create.org.au)

Visit [create.org.au/what-we-do/create-your-future-2](http://create.org.au/what-we-do/create-your-future-2)

**Leaving Care Hotline** offers support to young people aged 16 to 21 years who have left out-of-home care. You can call for advice, referral(s) to local support services, or just a friendly chat. They provide advice on education, work, accommodation and finances. Post Care Support, Referral and Information Services support young people aged 16 to 21 years who need support transitioning to independence.

Call the Leaving Care Hotline **1300 532 846** to find your local service provider or visit [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care)

## What Financial Support Is Available For Young People After School?

### ABStudy

ABStudy helps with costs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students who are studying or undertaking an Australian apprenticeship. Students, apprentices and parents or guardians of children younger than 16 can claim ABStudy.

Visit [humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy](https://humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy)

### Aboriginal young people transitioning to independence

This service provides culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal young people transitioning to independence/interdependence including from kinship care from 16 to 21 years of age.

Visit [providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care)

### Centrelink Support

The Commonwealth Government provides a number of financial supports for young people who are studying.

Visit [humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-students-and-trainees](https://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-students-and-trainees)

### Scholarships/grants and bursaries

There are lots of scholarships/grants and bursaries to assist more people to access education. Scholarships are for everyone!

Check out the Good Universities guide and the TAFE or university where you want to study. TAFEs and Universities may not have all their scholarships listed on their website, so it's a good idea to call them and talk to their scholarships person about scholarships they have, how and when to apply.

Visit [gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/scholarship/search#.WD5Rsfl953g](https://gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/scholarship/search#.WD5Rsfl953g)

### Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)

This allowance is a one-off \$1500 payment to assist young people who are moving from formal care to live independently. If the young person does not have a case manager/support worker, you can call the Leaving Care Hotline on 1300 532 846 for help to apply for the funding.

Visit [melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-\(tila\)](https://melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-(tila))

**SORTLI** is a play on the phrase – sort out your life. It is a free mobile app for young people with information to help them when they transition to independence.

Visit [createyourfuture.org.au/about-me/leaving-care/sortli/](https://createyourfuture.org.au/about-me/leaving-care/sortli/)

**Springboard** offers an intensive support service for young people transitioning from residential care who are not engaged in education, training or employment.

Call the Leaving Care Hotline on **1300 532 846** to find your local Springboard provider or visit [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care)

**Youth Central** has lots of information and resources for young people - study (training/education), health, jobs, housing, transport, money, know your rights, online safety and government information.

Visit [youthcentral.vic.gov.au](https://youthcentral.vic.gov.au)

**Lawstuff** has legal information for children and young people across Australia.

Visit [lawstuff.org.au/vic\\_law/topics](https://lawstuff.org.au/vic_law/topics)

**Victorian Legal Aid** provides free legal advice, information and education.

Visit [legalaid.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do](https://legalaid.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do)

**Youthlaw** provides free legal advice for young people under 25. Drop in clinics, phone and email. Common issues including dealing with transport fines, car accidents, tenancy, debts, becoming independent.

Visit [youthlaw.asn.au](https://youthlaw.asn.au)

**Whitelion** offers a variety of different mentoring programs for young people.

Visit [whitelion.asn.au/vic-mentoring](https://whitelion.asn.au/vic-mentoring)





## SECTION 5

# Looking After The Mental Health And Wellbeing Of Children And Young People In Out-Of-Home Care

It is important for young people to develop and maintain good emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing, and to build their self-confidence and self-belief. Good wellbeing and the right support will enable students to learn and achieve at school and get the most out of life. Many organisations offer information, resources and direct support on health, relationships, trauma and mental health. They are there to help you when you need it.

This section lists services, supports and information to assist both carers and the young people they care for.

## Bullying

### Kids Matter

Kids Matter has information on bullying. Most schools have zero tolerance bullying policies and take incidents seriously. It is important that any signs of bullying are raised with the school immediately and appropriate action is taken by the school to stop the bullying.

Visit [kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/bullying](https://kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/bullying)

### Bully Stoppers

Bully Stoppers calls on everyone in every school community to help prevent and respond to bullying and supports teachers, principals, parents, and students working together to help stop bullying.

Visit [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx)

## Support For Aboriginal Young People

### Bunjilwarra Koori Youth Alcohol and Drug Healing Service

Bunjilwarra Koori Youth Alcohol and Drug Healing Service is a culturally appropriate 12 bed residential rehabilitation service located in Hastings. It is a partnership between the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) and the Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) and supports young people aged 15 and 25 years with alcohol and other drug use.

Call **1800 014 446** or visit [bunjilwarra.org.au](http://bunjilwarra.org.au)

### Yarn Safe

Yarn Safe on the Headspace website provides resources for young Aboriginal people on mental health.

Visit [headspace.org.au/yarn-safe/mental-health-and-wellbeing](http://headspace.org.au/yarn-safe/mental-health-and-wellbeing)

### Wulumperi Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexual Health Unit

Provides information, advice, testing or treatment for sexual health. It primarily targets young people through the Indigenous Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health Project, which is funded through 'Close the Gap.'

Call **1800 458 406** or visit [internet.mshc.org.au/indigenous/Home/tabid/674/Default.aspx](http://internet.mshc.org.au/indigenous/Home/tabid/674/Default.aspx)

## Body Image And Eating Disorders

### The Butterfly Foundation

The Butterfly Foundation for eating disorders provides a National Eating Disorders Support Helpline that includes support over the phone, via email and online. The Helpline is staffed by trained counsellors experienced in assisting with eating disorders.

Call **1800 33 4673** or visit [thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/about-us/information-and-resources](http://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/about-us/information-and-resources)

## Drugs And Alcohol

### Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS)

Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) engage, support and strengthen highly vulnerable and high-risk young Victorians affected by, or at risk of being affected by, alcohol, drugs, mental health issues and social disconnection.

Call **1800 458 685** or visit [ysas.org.au](http://ysas.org.au)

## Life Skills And Personal Development

### MoneySmart

MoneySmart is a website with lots of tips, advice, tools and resources about managing money. There are some great teaching resources and information for young people when they are studying.

Visit [moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you/under-25s/studying](http://moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you/under-25s/studying)

### Reach Out

Reach Out provides specially targeted information and practical tools for young people from mental health to life skills and budgeting and also provides information for carers, educators and schools.

Visit [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

## Mental Health

### Your GP

Your GP can provide a mental health plan, which includes a referral to a psychologist.

Visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/mental-health-care-plans](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/mental-health-care-plans)

### Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

CAMHS offer comprehensive services for children and adolescents experiencing mental health problems. These services assess and treat children and adolescents (0-18 years) with moderate to severe, complex and disabling problems and disorders, and assist those with less severe problems with information and advice about where and how to get help and facilitate referrals as appropriate.

Visit [health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-services/services-by-population-group/services-for-children-and-adolescents/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services](https://health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-services/services-by-population-group/services-for-children-and-adolescents/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services)

### eHeadspace

A confidential, free and secure space where young people 12 - 25 or their carers and family can chat, email or speak on the phone with a qualified youth mental health professional.

Call **1800 650 890** or visit [eheadspace.org.au](https://eheadspace.org.au)

### Headspace

Provides a range of resources and supports for young people, families and professionals on health, relationships, trauma, mental health and more.

Visit [headspace.org.au/resource-library/category/resources-for-young-people](https://headspace.org.au/resource-library/category/resources-for-young-people)

### Youth Beyond Blue

A resource for young people experiencing stress, anxiety and depression. It has videos, fact sheets and you can chat online or call and talk to someone.

Call **1300 22 4636** or visit [youthbeyondblue.com](https://youthbeyondblue.com)

### Kids Helpline

A free, private and confidential telephone and online counselling for people aged between 5 and 25.

Call **1800 55 1800** or visit [kidshelpline.com.au](https://kidshelpline.com.au)

### Lifeline

Provides support and advice for people of all ages through a 24/7 phone counselling line and online web chat.

Call **13 11 44** or visit [lifeline.org.au](https://lifeline.org.au)

### Suicide Call Back Service

Offers crisis support to anyone in Australia who is aged 15 years and older and can help anyone who is affected by suicide, which includes anyone who is feeling suicidal and anyone who is worried about someone or caring for someone who is feeling suicidal.

Call **1300 659 467** or visit [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](https://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

## Violence And Sexual Assault

### 1800RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Family Violence and Counselling service

Provides information and support 24/7 either by phone or online with specific information and resources for individuals, carers, family and friends and professionals.

Call **1800 737 732** or visit [1800respect.org.au](https://1800respect.org.au)

### Centre Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence (CASA)

CASA provides information for young people about sexual assault, family violence and relationships.

Visit [casa.org.au](https://casa.org.au)



## SECTION 6

# Support for Carers

It is important for you, as a carer to feel supported, to know where to go for information and services, and to know what is available to assist you in looking after your own wellbeing.

## Aboriginal Carer Support

### Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

VACCA is the peak Aboriginal child and family welfare organisation in Victoria, protecting and promoting the rights of Aboriginal children and young people. VACCA provides programs and services to reinforce Aboriginal culture and encourage best parenting practices.

---

Call 03 8388 1855, email [vacca@vacca.org](mailto:vacca@vacca.org) or visit [vacca.org](http://vacca.org)

### Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI)

VAEAI provides Koorie community-based advice on the development of education programs and monitors their progress. VAEAI also advocates for Koorie community needs in education. VAEAI provides information and resources for carers related to learning and education for their young people.

---

Call 9481 0800 or visit: [vaeai.org.au/education/dsp-default-d.cfm?loadref=58](http://vaeai.org.au/education/dsp-default-d.cfm?loadref=58)

## Migrant Carer Support

### Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)

**AMES** provides a range of comprehensive settlement support programs, English language and vocational training, employment, community engagement and volunteering services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. There are centres across Victoria.

---

Visit: [ames.net.au](http://ames.net.au)

## General Carer Support

In addition to the resources and services listed below, you can contact your local council, maternal and child health, primary or community health service to find out what local services are available to support children, young people and families.

### Carers Australia Victoria

Carers Australia Victoria supports carers, including foster and kinship carers and offers respite, counselling and training. They also have a young carers program.

Visit [carersvictoria.org.au](http://carersvictoria.org.au)

### Carer Gateway

A national online and telephone service providing practical information and resources for carers. The interactive service finder helps carers connect to local support services.

Call **1800 422 737** or visit: [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au)

### Department of Education and Training

The Department of Education and Training has information on family and parenting services.

Visit: [education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/support/Pages/familyservices.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/support/Pages/familyservices.aspx)

### Helping Carers Helping Kids

An 11-part podcast series providing information and insights on a range of topics to support carers in their role. For more information and to listen to the podcasts.

Visit: [soundcloud.com/vicgovdhhs/sets/podcast-series](https://soundcloud.com/vicgovdhhs/sets/podcast-series)

### Kinship Carers Victoria (Grandparents Victoria) (KCV)

KCV is the peak body for Kinship Carers in Victoria. It supports, informs, represents and advocates for the needs of Kinship Carers.

For more information call **03 9372 2422** or visit: [kinshipcarersvictoria.org](http://kinshipcarersvictoria.org)

### Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV)

FCAV is the peak body for Foster Carers in Victoria and works to improve the outcomes for foster carers and the children in their care.

Visit: [fcav.org.au](http://fcav.org.au)

### Mirabel Foundation

Supports children aged 0-17 years and works to restore a child's sense of self-worth, belonging and hope for the future to reach their full potential as young adults. Programs and services are built around the needs of the child, their Kinship Carers and their community. Mirabel offers programs in early intervention, recreation, therapeutic groups, youth support, education, family camps and events, respite, kinship carer support groups and social awareness programs.

Call **03 9527 9422** or visit: [mirabelfoundation.org.au](http://mirabelfoundation.org.au)

### Parentline Victoria

Provides confidential telephone counselling, information and referral services to parents and carers with children up to 18 years old. Professional telephone counsellors from nursing, psychology and teaching backgrounds are available to discuss issues such as sleeping, managing tantrums, teenage conflict and family relationships. Interpreting assistance is available if required.

Call **13 22 89** or visit: [parentline.vic.gov.au](http://parentline.vic.gov.au)

### Permanent Care and Adoptive (PCA) Families

PCA Families provides support to families formed through kinship care, permanent care and adoption. The organisation works with parents and carers to be confident and skilled in their role, and support children and young people to achieve life success.

Visit: [pcafamilies.org.au](http://pcafamilies.org.au)

## General Carer Support (Continued)

### Positive Parenting Telephone Service (PPTS) for Grandparents, Carers and Families in Rural Victoria

PPTS supports grandparents caring for grandchildren, fathers, and rural families across Victoria. They are supported by weekly telephone calls over 6 to 10 weeks. You can also participate in PPTS online - with or without telephone support.

Call 1800 880 660 or visit: [gatewayhealth.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=90&Itemid=278](http://gatewayhealth.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90&Itemid=278)

### Raising Children

Provides comprehensive information, tips, articles and videos to assist and support parents and carers.

Visit: [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)

## Carer Education And Training

### Victorian Handbook for Foster Carers

The Victorian Handbook for Foster Carers contains important information for you. The handbook was developed in partnership with the Foster Care Association of Victoria, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, foster care agencies and contains input from foster carers and young people with a care experience from the CREATE Foundation.

Visit [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-handbook-foster-carers-word](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-handbook-foster-carers-word)

### The Victorian Manual for Kinship Carers

The Victorian Manual for Kinship Carers answers common questions and explains what to expect as a kinship carer, the out-of-home care system and the services available to you and your young person.

Visit: [kinshipcarersvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Manual-for-Kinship-Carers-web-version-2.pdf](http://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Manual-for-Kinship-Carers-web-version-2.pdf)

### Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma (SMART) Program

SMART produced by the Australian Childhood Foundation focuses on supporting children and young people in a range of educational and other settings. It is a free online training program.

Visit: [childhood.org.au/for-professionals/smart-online-training](http://childhood.org.au/for-professionals/smart-online-training)

### Carer KaFE

Carer KaFE provides training and education for statutory Kinship and Foster carers across Victoria.

Visit: [carerkafe.org.au](http://carerkafe.org.au)

### The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Offers training for carers and leads the Raising Expectations project aimed at getting more young people from care and care leavers into higher education and university.

Visit: <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations/>

### The Foster Care Association of Victoria

Provides free training for foster carers.

Visit: [fcav.org.au/news/training](http://fcav.org.au/news/training)

## Carer Mental Health And Wellbeing

### Lifeline and Care Ring

Lifeline and Care Ring services operate 24 hours a day, every day. All calls are confidential. Services are staffed by trained volunteers who are supervised by qualified staff and can provide information about community services, including services available to parents and carers. Services respond to callers of all ages with a wide range of concerns and emergencies, including matters relating to relationships, family matters, violence, depression/anxiety, unemployment, homelessness, money and more.

Call Lifeline on **13 11 14**  
(operates in Melbourne and most country regions)

Call Care Ring on **13 61 69**  
(operates throughout Victoria)

Visit [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

### Smiling Mind

A not-for-profit organisation working to make mindfulness meditation accessible to all.

Visit: [smilingmind.com.au](http://smilingmind.com.au)

### Mind Australia

Offers family and carer support services including a carer helpline, an online carer forum and free education and training.

Call **1300 554 660**,  
email [carers@mindaustralia.org.au](mailto:carers@mindaustralia.org.au) or visit  
[mindaustralia.org.au/services/victoria](http://mindaustralia.org.au/services/victoria)

### Mytime Groups

Mytime Groups support parents, grandparents and carers of children with disabilities or a chronic medical condition. It's a place for carers to unwind and talk about their experiences. It's a world away from appointments and therapy. It's support for you.

Visit [mytime.net.au](http://mytime.net.au)

### Positive Mental Health for Parents and Carers (Kids Matter)

Positive Mental Health for Parents and Carers (Kids Matter) reiterates the importance for parents and carers to look after their own mental and physical health. When parents and carers look after themselves and feel supported, they are better able to provide their children with the best care they can. They provide information and resources on relationships, identifying and managing stress, wellbeing strategies and more.

Visit [kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/positive-mental-health-parents-and-carers](http://kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/positive-mental-health-parents-and-carers)

### Knightlamp

Supports people caring for children and young people living with trauma. They offer workshops, books, blogs, podcasts and other services.

For more information, visit [knightlamp.org](http://knightlamp.org)

## Carer Peer Support

Peak organisations and community sector organisations offer peer support or networking for carers. Talk to the community service organisation you are connected with or the supports below.

### ParentZone

Visit: [anglicarevic.org.au/what-we-do/supporting-families/parentzone](http://anglicarevic.org.au/what-we-do/supporting-families/parentzone)

### Ozchild Kinship Care support groups

Visit: [ozchild.org.au/our-services/kinship-care](http://ozchild.org.au/our-services/kinship-care)

### Kildonan Uniting Care

Visit: [kildonan.org.au/programs-and-services/child-youth-and-family-support/kinship-care](http://kildonan.org.au/programs-and-services/child-youth-and-family-support/kinship-care)

### More information and to find other organisations offering kinship peer support

Visit: [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/caring-children](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/caring-children)

## Financial Assistance For Carers



### Carer Card (DHHS)

Foster, kinship and respite carers are eligible for a Carer Card. The program has a wide range of discounts and benefits on offer from businesses, local government and community organisations.

Cardholders are also entitled to free travel on public transport on a Sunday plus two return off-peak travel vouchers each year.

Call **1800 901 958**,  
email [carercard@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:carercard@dhhs.vic.gov.au)  
or visit [carercard.vic.gov.au](http://carercard.vic.gov.au)

### DHHS financial support for home-based carers

Assessed and approved Foster, Kinship, Permanent and additional needs local adoption carers are eligible to receive a care allowance where the Victorian Child protection service or a registered community service organisation places a child (aged 0 to 18 years) in their care.

Call **1300 552 319**,  
email [caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au)  
or visit  
[services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria)

## Financial advice

### Financial Information Service

A free, confidential service with education and information.

Visit [humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/financial-information-service](http://humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/financial-information-service)

### MoneySmart

A website with lots of tips, advice, tools and resources about managing money.

Visit [moneysmart.gov.au](http://moneysmart.gov.au)

### Money Help National Debt Helpline

Provides free phone financial counselling.

Call **1800 007 007** or visit [ndh.org.au](http://ndh.org.au)  
Visit [moneyhelp.org.au/tools-tips](http://moneyhelp.org.au/tools-tips)

### Payments and Services

If you are a grandparent or non-parent carer of children, you may be eligible for:

- Family Tax Benefit to help with the cost of raising children
- Child Care Benefit, Grandparent Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate to help with the cost of child care
- Medicare payments to help with health care costs
- Double Orphan Pension to help with the costs of caring for children who are orphans or can't be cared for by their parents
- Concession and Health Care Cards including Foster Child Health Care Card to help with accessing cheaper health care services and medicines
- Child support from one or both parents
- Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA) for extra support for parents/carers on income support payments while they work, study or train to enable them to enter or return to the workforce.

Visit:  
[humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/support-non-parent-carers](http://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/support-non-parent-carers)



## About the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

For over 100 years, the Centre has advanced the rights and wellbeing of children, young people and families in Victoria.

We advocate for the rights of children and young people to be heard, to be safe, to access education and to remain connected to family, community and culture.

We represent over 100 Victorian organisations working across the continuum of child and family services, from prevention and early intervention to the provision of out of home care.

Our members are at the forefront of supporting children, young people and families.

### Our Vision

Victorian children, young people and families are safe, happy and connected, with access to support when they need it.

### Our Purpose

**Policy and Ideas:** Develop, influence and advocate for public policies that advance the rights and wellbeing of children, young people and families and address the social, economic and cultural barriers to improving their lives.

**Research and Practice:** Lead and share research to support innovation and evidence-informed practice.

**Capacity Building:** Strengthen the capacity of organisations to provide services that best suit the needs of vulnerable families and children.

*Centre for Excellence*  
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.



Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare

Level 5, 50 Market Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia

Telephone: (03) 9614 1577

Facsimilie: (03) 9614 1774

[admin@cfecfw.asn.au](mailto:admin@cfecfw.asn.au)

Find us on Twitter @CFECFW  
and Facebook

[cfecfw.asn.au](http://cfecfw.asn.au)

The Centre acknowledges the  
support of the  
Victorian Government

