

Early Childhood Education Foundation Information Sheet

Background

Over 60,000 children access kindergarten programs across Victoria each year. Many of these children miss out on the opportunity to attend a quality kindergarten program in the year before they commence school because their parents are unable to afford the fees.

The Early Childhood Education Foundation

In August 1997, the Early Childhood Education Foundation (the Foundation) – was established by Dr Terry Nienhuys with an original endowment of \$20, with the sole purpose of providing funding to enable disadvantaged children to attend a kindergarten in their local area.

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) was appointed as the Trustee of this endowment fund. Over the past 17 years, under ELAA's management, the Foundation has provided more than \$125,000 in kindergarten fee support to nearly 200 families.

The Foundation strives to:

- ensure that children from families experiencing financial difficulties have access to a funded kindergarten program which will enhance their opportunities to succeed in life by providing funds that contribute to attendance fees
- develop a program where contributions from donors such as the community, kindergarten services, other organisations and the corporate sector support its mission.

About ELAA

ELAA is a not-for-profit, organisation formed in 1991 to provide management support and resources to assist volunteer parents and service managers who operate early learning services in Victoria.

ELAA's vision is excellence in early learning for every child. As a national peak body, we champion excellence in early learning for children across Australia, and support parents and service providers. ELAA believes that all young children and their families should have access to high quality educational programs, which provide a stimulating, safe and caring environment. These programs aim to promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of skills and competencies for children.



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Receiving assistance from the Foundation

Assistance can be sought from the Foundation to cover kindergarten fees charged to parents, where there is a demonstrated financial hardship for the family. An application in the prescribed form must be made on behalf of the family by the service where the child is enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program.

It is the Foundation's expectation that services will also demonstrate that they are making a financial contribution and/or providing practical support to ensure the child attends the funded kindergarten program.



Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to access support from the Early Childhood Education Fund, the following criteria must be met:

- 1 The child must have a place in a funded kindergarten program (the program).
- 2 The family must be experiencing genuine financial hardship.
- 3 There must be clear evidence of physical, emotional, cognitive and social risks for the child if he/she does not attend the program.
- 4 The family must demonstrate a commitment to ensure the child will regularly attend the program.
- 5 The service provider must demonstrate the financial and/or practical support that is being provided to ensure the child attends the program.

Conditions for granting funds

Grants will be made subject to availability of funds, and will be based on an assessment of individual applications. Funding will not be provided retrospectively for terms that have already been completed, or to cover outstanding fee debts. The maximum amount of funds available will be limited to the amount of kindergarten fee subsidy set by the Department of Education and Training.

A fully completed application form must be presented with appropriate evidence/documentation addressing each of the eligibility criteria described above.

Funds will be allocated to eligible applicants and paid on a term-by-term basis. Services must fulfil the following criteria to access funds for each term:

- present an updated claim form at the conclusion of each term to access funding for the following term
- provide evidence to demonstrate that the child attended the program during the previous term
- to access the final term's payment, a letter from the family or from the service on behalf of the family, must be attached to the claims form demonstrating how the funding and support has benefited the family/child.

In order to grow the Foundation's donor base, the Foundation may also contact services who have accessed support for children attending the service, for testimonials, photos etc. from time to time.

Assessment process

To make an application to the Foundation, the criteria listed must be clearly addressed with supporting documentation attached. An assessment committee will assess applications for eligibility. Applicants will be advised within four weeks if the application is successful.

Please send applications to:

Early Childhood Education Foundation
c/o ELAA, PO Box 1246
Collingwood VIC 3066

Further information:

Phone: 03 9489 3500 or 1300 730 119
Web: www.elaa.org.au

ELAA respects and values the privacy of all personal and health information provided to us. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information we collect, use or disclose is accurate, complete, up-to-date and stored in a secure environment protected from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Our Privacy Policy is based on the 10 Privacy Principles outlined in Schedule 1 of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the Health Privacy Principles outlines in Schedule 1 of the Health Records Act 2001.