



**Kids On Gallaghers**  
Childcare Centre

# 3 & 4 Year-Old Kindergarten



## KINDERGARTEN IN LONG DAY CARE

Fitting the hours of a sessional kinder program into a working day is difficult for many families. Our centre operates 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs within the child care centre environment, providing flexibility and convenience for families.

Traditionally, a funded kindergarten program could only be accessed at sessional kinders. This has changed over the past decade and now kindergarten programs are available in both long day and sessional formats.

We implement an emergent curriculum in our kindergarten, in which the program is planned according to the emerging interests and needs of the children. This curriculum allows each child to develop and learn at their own pace, and engage in learning experiences in their own way. It enables us to extend each child's individual development through open-ended experiences, and encourages children to engage in activities that have come from their own ideas thus empowering them to become confident and independent learners.

Experiences within an emergent curriculum program can be altered regularly to meet the children's everchanging needs and interests. However, experiences may also stay the same for many weeks to give children an opportunity to master their skills. This flexible approach ensures that children are constantly learning and challenged throughout their time at kinder. They leave kinder well-prepared and ready for the important & exciting transition to school.

### **Free Kinder:**

The Best Start, Best Life reform will help all Victorian children dream even bigger through increased access to quality early childhood education and care. A critical part of the reform is Free Kinder, which will support access to two years of high-quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children by making this free.

All early childhood education and care providers that deliver a funded kindergarten program in Victoria are eligible to receive Free Kinder funding from 2023, subject to meeting specified terms and conditions.

To receive Free Kinder funding, service providers will be required to opt in to provide Free Kinder and accept the terms and conditions of funding via the process details and child eligibility.

Kids on Gallaghers is able to offer both 3- and 4-year old's 15 hours per week, per child, receiving the full amount supported by the government into the family account on a fortnightly basis. **(During school terms only).**

**Please refer to the Free kinder pamphlet for detailed information available in centre foyer.**

The 3- and 4-year-old program is implemented by 2 Bachelor trained Teachers alongside the Assistants in the room. This gives the teachers the opportunity to support each other and the children benefit by having 2 Bachelor trained teachers in the room with them.

The ratio in the kinder room is based on 1 educator to 11 children

### **How Kinder program will run:**

Kids On Gallaghers offers a 3-year-old kindergarten funded program as well as a 4-year-old kinder funded program. Both programs will consist of 15 hours of funded kindergarten (2 days a week in the Kinder 4 room) which runs Monday – Friday in our Kinder room.

In a kindergarten program, qualified teachers support children by offering them a range of learning experiences and activities that are both stimulating and fun. Your child's learning and curiosity will be encouraged through experiences and activities such as exploring the natural world, being exposed to new ideas and solving problems.

The kindergarten programs will be tailored to meet the needs of children. Qualified teachers support children's learning and development through play-based learning.

**Play-based learning is how young children learn best.** It helps them to build important skills such as language, maths and science concepts, how to manage their emotions and get along with others. Children also develop their imagination, curiosity and a love of learning when learning through play.

### ***Research shows that two years of quality kindergarten are better than one.***

Each child is observed & planned for, and their needs addressed, to prepare children for school. Our teacher is more than happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Teacher interviews take place twice a year, to discuss development in the year prior to school.

We believe that children learn best through play, so we incorporate those elements into our programs, and refrain from making children write their name or trace letters. When planning the children's activities, we aim to present a program that is structured to a certain extent, yet allows for a lot of choice, spontaneity and flexibility. Our kinder program prepares each child for the move to school, in a manner which is non-threatening and educational.

Play is the children's way through which they learn and make sense of the world around them. Play is also a process of development in everything a child does whereby a child's curiosity is fulfilled by use of fantasy, imagination, independence and sensory exploration. Our play-based curriculum is child-oriented; emerging from current interests, needs and developmental levels of the group. We provide an indoor/outdoor program where children can choose where they wish to play and explore. We find that kinder aged children learn most readily when the curriculum is relevant to their lives.

Our program is interactive and exploratory involving interaction with a rich variety of materials and equipment. We also incorporate as many 'real life' play experiences as possible into the program.

Our first priority is to instil a love and appreciation for meaningful learning, thus helping to ensure children reach their full potential in later years. It is through this child-oriented play-based curriculum that children gain a range of social, emotional, cognitive, lingual and physical skills.

## **4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN (PRE-SCHOOL)**

### **Transition reports**

Towards the end of the year, Transition Learning and Development Statements are written for those children moving on to school. These transition reports are a great way to ease the transition to school, and bridges the gap between us and the primary schools.

## WHAT IS A PLAY-BASED CURRICULUM?

Play is the children's work through which they learn and make sense of the world around them. Our play-based curriculum is child-focused, emerging from their current interests, needs and development levels. We find that kinder-aged children learn most readily when the curriculum is relevant to their lives.

Our play-based program is interactive and exploratory, involving interaction with a rich variety of materials and equipment. We also incorporate as many 'real life', meaningful play experiences as possible, *e.g., woodwork, threading, home corner, dramatic play*

Children learn vital skills through a play-based curriculum as they are encouraged to make choices and share in decision making. Their progress is monitored by their participation in hands-on experiences and observational assessments, not by worksheets or academic-based routines.

Early literacy, numeracy, STEM, and creative art experiences are provided in our daily program, both intentionally and spontaneously. We don't have specific times in the day where we focus on academic skills or knowledge as we know that children learn all they need to know through play (with gentle intentional teaching by educators).

The indoor and outdoor areas are used throughout the entire day. Outdoor play focuses on play-based learning, too, but also allows more scope for gross motor play such as running, skipping, balancing, climbing etc. The focus outside is also on interacting with nature and caring for plants and animals.

Children learn as they pursue their passions and questions. There are long stretches of uninterrupted time for the children's play and exploration during the day, believing that children deserve to engage deeply with one another and with their ideas, questions and challenges.

The children are taught new techniques and are introduced to a range of creative materials, but are always encouraged to use their own ideas and carry out their own work. All children progress through the same stages in their artistic development but proceed at an individual rate.

Our educators will encourage your child to explore and investigate a range of materials and express their thinking and emerging understandings in a variety of ways. Educators will support their curiosity and creativity and encourage them to investigate and solve problems. We will help them to capture their learning and share their thinking.

We will also help your child to transition from kindergarten to prep and encourage your involvement in the process. Your child will have a transition statement prepared by our kinder teacher, with input from you and your child. This statement provides a snapshot of your child's learning across their kinder year and contains valuable information for your child's prep teacher. It explains what sort of learner your child is, their strengths and interests, and ensures your child's primary school knows how to support your child from the moment they arrive.

Structured play-based learning in kindergarten provides long lasting developmental benefits. Here are 10 benefits of participating in a kindergarten program:

- Evidence demonstrates that 2 years of kinder are better than 1 year.
- Neuroscience research show that early learning is vital for optimal development.
- Age-appropriate play-based learning supports your child's holistic development. This is facilitated by learning through play, risk-based play, nature play, indoor/outdoor play and messy play.

- Social, cognitive, and emotional development, as well as communication and teamwork skills, are enhanced.
- Kindergarten teachers are trained to identify and support children who have additional needs.
- Children learn about science, maths, literature, and environmental awareness by participating in play-based learning activities.
- Creative and innovative thinking is enhanced through imaginative play, construction, art and music activities.
- Mathematics and logic are developed through games and play.
- Prepares children for the transition to school in the coming years.
- High-quality kindergarten programs are tailored to each child's individual needs and interests.

## WHAT IS PLAY?

- Play is important because it is the child's "work". Play is not an organised activity like football, swimming lessons, ballet etc. While these are worthwhile activities, they are not play. It is through play that children make sense of their world. It is the world in which they learn to socialise, problem solve, and develop their creativity and independence.
- Play is having fun. Children can play alone or with other children. In the first years of life, the wiring of a child's brain is very important as it is this wiring that builds the basic capabilities of the brain. In kinder, the children will be exposed and introduced to many varying play experiences.
- Play is child directed. It is a teacher's role during play-based learning to create an engaging environment, facilitate, model and direct the child to develop their individual skills. By providing these play-based learning provocations, children are developing fine motor skills, language and literacy, cooperating, turn taking, resilience, and problem-solving strategies. They learn about size, shape, position, number, letter recognition, and develop independence.

## WHAT DO WE FOCUS ON AT KIDS ON GALLAGHERS?

Children learn more in the first 5 years of life than at any other time. Kindergarten provides children with an environment that encourages and supports their development. It gives your child the opportunity to explore the world and gives them a solid foundation to learn the skills that are required for transitioning to school. To support this transition, we focus on:

- **Independence**
  - Confidently enter kindergarten without hesitation or apprehension
  - Responsibility for belongings
  - Dressing and undressing themselves
  - Using the toilet independently
  - Self-serving meals and pouring drinks
  - Confidently explore the indoor and outdoor environments on their own
  - Pack up after themselves and have respect for equipment
  - *Lunch Box Days* in term 4 where children bring lunch boxes to kinder & are familiarised on how to open wrappers, peel fruit, push straws into juice boxes etc. (4-year-old kinder only)

- **Social Interactions**
  - Communication and listening
  - Cooperation
  - Working with and alongside others in small and large groups
  - Conflict resolution and resolving disagreements
  - Turn taking and sharing
  - Making and keeping friends
  - Group times
  - Build positive relationships with peers and teachers
  - Understand social boundaries and behaviour limits
  - Mentoring and nurturing younger children
- **School Readiness**
  - Develop an increased attention span
  - Name recognition
  - Early literacy, *e.g., language, sounds, letter and word recognition, pencil control*
  - Early numeracy, *e.g., number recognition, counting, size, shape, patterns, colour*
  - Early STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths)
  - Creative art experiences
  - Music, movement and drama experiences
  - Develop a love for learning and eagerness to learn about the world around them
  - Using school equipment, *e.g., scissors, sticky tape, glue sticks, hole punchers*
  - In 4-year-old kinder, free hearing screenings conducted by *Knox Audiology*
  - An end-of-year graduation ceremony for children moving off to prep
- **Sustainability and Community**
  - Gardening and growing edible gardens
  - Cooking experiences
  - *'Pre-School Buddies'*
  - Recycling and water saving activities
  - Caring for centre pets
  - Community projects
  - Multicultural events and celebrations
  - Interaction with the natural environment
- **Skill Development**
  - Fine motor skills, *e.g., developing finger and hand control*
  - Gross motor skills, *e.g., developing balance and coordination*
  - Concentration
  - Problem solving
  - Remembering instructions and following directions
  - Speech development
  - Cognitive skills, *e.g., cause & effect, reasoning, memory, visual processing*
- **Health and Safety**
  - Nutrition and healthy bodies
  - Mental health and wellbeing
  - Yoga and mindfulness
  - Yearly *Responsible Pet Ownership* incursion
  - Yearly *Healthways Water Safety* incursion
  - Free dental screenings conducted by *Smiles for Miles*
  - Introductory body safety



- **Emotional Development**

- Develop self-worth and confidence
- Build self-awareness and respect for others
- Recognise, convey and express their emotions
- Self-discipline
- Show concern and empathy for others
- Build resilience and self-esteem
- Maturity level
- Self-regulation (being able to manage their own feelings and behavior)

## HOW DOES KINDERGARTEN IN LONG DAY CARE DIFFER TO SESSIONAL KINDER?

At Kids on Gallaghers, families are offered the opportunity to attend a specialised kindergarten program, within a more flexible environment, that caters for families working and studying by providing extended hours of education and care. With the centre being open for up to 11.5 hours a day, children have access to a high-quality learning program for the whole day as opposed to short sessions spread over a number of days.

Families are able to choose which days they wish to attend the kindergarten program and for any length of time, unlike sessional kinder which has smaller sessions spread over a number of days. It also allows families the opportunity to drop all of their children off at the same time and pick them all up together at the end of the day.

In long day care centres, the kinder children get to enjoy additional experiences outside of the kindergarten program. The children regularly mix with their younger peers and have the opportunity to take on mentoring roles. Research has shown that these interactions have many benefits for children.

Additionally, one of the benefits of attending kindergarten in a long day care setting is consistency for children and families. A child can begin in the babies or toddler groups and move through to the older kindergarten age groups having developed a sense of belonging to the service and educators.

The kindergarten curriculum runs throughout the calendar year, including school holidays and is only non-operational when the service is closed (on public holidays and weekends). Whereas, sessional kindergarten services correlate to school terms with limited hours.

All meals are provided, from breakfast in the morning to a late snack in the late evening, whereas at a sessional kindergarten, meals are normally provided by the family. This is a part of the service we provide to all long day care and kindergarten children, ensuring they are being provided healthy meals and snacks that meet all nutritional requirements.

Our kindergarten programs have university qualified Early Childhood Teachers who develop and deliver the kindergarten educational program along with qualified educators, just like they do at sessional kindergarten.

Like other long day care and sessional kinder services, we are rated and assessed under the same standards and frameworks. All are governed by the same laws and regulations and need to meet the same national standards including the requirement for qualified university Early Childhood Teachers to develop and deliver the curriculum and follow the national mandatory educational frameworks.

In Victoria, the '*Kindergarten Tick*' identifies a service that offers an approved funded kindergarten program. Every service that displays that tick offers a quality kinder program which is approved and regulated by the Victorian Department of Education, just like ours.

When you see the Kinder Tick, you can be confident:

- the program will be led by a qualified teacher
- children will benefit from play-based learning
- the kindergarten program is funded and approved by the Victorian Government
- the program meets government guidelines and complies with the National Quality Framework.

In long day care, fees are subsidised by the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), whereas in a sessional kindergarten, they are subsidised by the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

The Child Care Subsidy is calculated differently for each family as it is determined by the number of hours a child is accessing kindergarten and is also based on work/study hours and income assessments. The daily fee charged by a long day care service also factors in all meals, daily consumables, and the extended hours of the service.

From 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2022, families with children aged five or under in long day care setting will get a higher child care subsidy for their second child and any subsequent children. The annual cap will also be removed from 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2021, which means that child care will be a lot more affordable for families in the coming years.

In a sessional kinder subsidised by the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, the fees are much lower for families as they are only paying for short sessions of kinder spread over a number of weeks. It can be a very affordable option for families, but does not have the same flexibility with days and hours as long day care does. Some children are entitled to free kindergarten in sessional kinders, but only if they meet certain eligibility requirements.

To summarise, the similarities and differences are as follows:

<b>LONG DAY CARE KINDERGARTEN</b>	<b>SESSIONAL KINDERGARTEN</b>
3-year-old kindergarten program led by a university-trained early childhood teacher	3-year-old kindergarten program led by a university-trained early childhood teacher
4-year-old kindergarten program led by a university-trained early childhood teacher	4-year-old kindergarten program led by a university-trained early childhood teacher
Set assistants for the rooms, with multiple additional educators available to work with or alongside the group	Set assistants for each kinder group
Run by professional child care providers	Often run by not-for-profit organisations or affiliated with schools
High-quality, play-based, indoor/outdoor program	High-quality, play-based, indoor/outdoor program
Operates Monday to Friday for 52 weeks per year. Open from 7:00am to 6:30pm daily. Only closed on public holidays and weekends.	Operates in sessions across the week for 40 -41 weeks per year. Sessions are usually between school hours. Closed on school holidays, public holidays and weekends.



Flexibility of days and attendance times, with the ability to request casual days or permanently change days	Sessions are pre-planned by the kinder, usually between school hours, with set drop off and pick up times
Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late snack provided	Meals usually provided by families
Subsidised by the Child Care Subsidy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>covers the cost of a full day of kinder/long day care</li> <li>has a daily rate</li> <li>ongoing weekly payments</li> </ul>	Subsidised by the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>covers the cost of kinder sessions</li> <li>charged by term or year</li> <li>once-off or termly payments</li> <li>more affordable</li> </ul>
Siblings can attend at the same time in younger rooms / all get dropped-off & picked-up together	Sessional kinder is only for the child attending the kinder program
Provides toileting and nappy changing facilities and can assist with toilet training children	Children are often required to be fully toilet trained to attend kindergarten
Must be fully vaccinated to enrol	Must be fully vaccinated to enrol
Creates individual learning plans for each child, documentation on their progress and provides detailed transition statements to schools	Creates individual learning plans for each child, documentation on their progress and provides detailed transition statements to schools

## HOW CAN FAMILIES SUPPORT THEIR CHILD'S TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL?

- Talk regularly with your child about the experiences they might engage in, the friends they will make, and the interesting things they will learn
- Encourage them to put on and do up their own shoes, and carry their own bag
- Walk past the new school so that your child knows what it looks like
- Learn the names for break times such as recess or lunch
- Encourage eating and drinking without help by supporting your child to wrap and unwrap their food and fill up their drink bottle
- Share and discuss positive experiences from your own school days
- Ask for their help in naming items and uniforms, so they know how to identify them if they get lost
- Show where you will pick your child up each day, and explain what to do if you are late or not there
- Talk about staying safe at school
- Attend the school's transition days and meet your child's teacher
- Find the prep classrooms, lockers, play areas, toilets, lunch spaces and drinking taps together
- Reassure your child that if they are unsure of anything, to ask an adult
- Borrow library books to read together
- Teach your child how to share and take turns

- Encourage your child to dress themselves, so they can manage tasks like taking their jumper on and off
- Provide nutritious meals
- Establish a “goodbye” routine with your child
- Create a routine around sleep (*5-year-olds need 10-12 hours sleep each night.*)

## INFORMATION FROM THE VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT

### What you need to know



Over the decade, the Victorian Government is investing almost \$5 billion to introduce funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten. Children across the state will benefit from 2022. This will mean another year of learning, playing and making friends for all Victorian children.



## What is the difference between a kindergarten program in a long day care (childcare) centre and a standalone kindergarten?



Children can attend a 3-year-old program at either a long day care (childcare) centre or at a standalone kindergarten. These are places that might also offer a 4-year-old kindergarten program.

No matter where your child goes to kindergarten, teachers and trained educators will lead the program.

A long day care centre can offer a full day of education and care, including a kindergarten program. The teacher-led kindergarten program is integrated with additional hours of education and care. At a standalone service, a kindergarten program will only run on certain days and at specific times. These days and hours are set by the kindergarten service.



## What will my child experience at kinder?



Young children learn about the world through play. It gives children the opportunity to use their imagination and practise important skills. It also helps their social and emotional development, and wellbeing.

In a kindergarten program, children use play to build their language skills and learn about numbers and patterns. They also learn how to get along with others, share, listen, and manage their emotions. Teachers and educators help children become curious, creative and confident about learning.



## Educational and social benefits

Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support children's development. These benefits last into the school years and beyond.

The evidence also shows that 2 years are better than one when it comes to early learning.

A quality kindergarten program will have more of an impact for children who start at age 3 rather than 4. The benefits are even greater for children who are in vulnerable circumstances.



Two years of kindergarten are better than one



Starting a quality kindergarten program at an earlier age leads to even more positive effects on child development



Children who attend a kindergarten program are less likely to be developmentally vulnerable at school

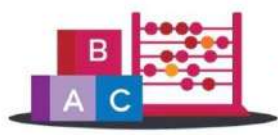


Quality play-based learning is a powerful way to support learning and development



At kindergarten, children learn key skills for life, including creative thinking, social and emotional skills, and early literacy and language skills

Children in Year 3 who attended kindergarten were 15 to 20 weeks ahead of those who did not<sup>1</sup>



At age 16, students who had attended two to three years of kindergarten had higher scores in English and maths<sup>2</sup>

For every \$1 invested in early childhood education, Australia receives \$2 back over a child's life – through higher productivity and earning capacity, and reduced government spending on health, welfare and crime<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup>E4 KIDS, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE <sup>2</sup>EFFECTIVE PRE-SCHOOL, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, UNITED KINGDOM <sup>3</sup>A SMART INVESTMENT FOR A SMARTER AUSTRALIA, PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS & THE FRONT PROJECT

The Victorian Government is making it easier for families to find funded and approved kindergarten programs. For kinder you can count on, just look for the Kinder Tick.

