



**Explorers**  
Early Learning

# Kindergarten at Explorers

Explorers is committed to providing a rich, engaging and nurturing environment where every child can thrive. Our comprehensive Kindergarten Program and showcases how our commitment to **Learning for Life** equips children with skills and attributes for lifelong learning and development.

**Learning  
for  
Life**

## An Introduction to **Learning for Life** at Explorers Early Learning.

At Explorers Early Learning, our unique **Learning for Life** Curriculum tailors learning experiences to support children's development from our babies through to four year old kindergarten. Our programs are designed to foster learning by exploring the deep curiosities of children, ensuring a seamless **transition to school**.

Inspired by the **Reggio Emilia Approach**<sup>®</sup>, our program emphasises child and adult centred, inquiry based learning, encouraging experimentation, creativity and critical thinking.

Our Visual Arts Program is an example of our Learning for Life Curriculum. Our youngest children use clay to explore multisensory experiences, our toddlers learn how to roll and shape the clay, and our kindergarten children think cognitively about how to make a composition with clay.

## Explorers Kindergarten

The Explorers Kindergarten Program is completed over a two year period, commencing with the three year old Kindergarten Program.

Being active participants in the Explorers Kindergarten Program of three enables children to experience consistent ways from the age of being, doing, and learning, which includes familiar environments, faces, and secure relationships. This stability ensures a successful and effective transition through the kindergarten years and into school. Explorers three year old Kindergarten Program builds on the foundations of our Learning for Life Curriculum, further preparing children for four year old kindergarten and their future school journey.

### Example of Explorers Daily Kindergarten Routine

- Morning Meeting and Group Time
- Indoor and outdoor program
- Inquiry through sustained shared thinking and Projects
- Incursions and Excursions
- Small group experiences
- Rest and Quiet time
- Meal times

## Explorers Framework of **Joy**

The Explorers Framework of Joy Program has been thoughtfully created to include dynamic and engaging experiences for children to enrich their Explorers Learning for Life journey, based on the Reggio Emilia Learning Approach.

The Framework of Joy program is commencing with Visual Arts, Physical Education and Musical Theatre. The Explorers Framework of Joy will expand as the children's interests evolve.

The founder of the Reggio Emilia approach established, "there should be nothing without joy for children and their learning."

# A Reggio Emilia Inspired Kindergarten



At Explorers, our Kindergarten Program is deeply inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, a renowned early childhood educational philosophy from Italy. This approach emphasises child and adult centred learning and creates a meaningful environment where children can thrive.

## Here's what it means for your child:

### Conceptual Learning and Curiosity Driven Exploration

Children are seen as capable and curious learners. Our educators design the curriculum around children's curiosities, promoting motivation for children's understanding and meaningful connections.

We favour intentional conceptual learning, where children explore and understand key ideas and principles.

A conceptual approach to learning provides children with opportunities to investigate ideas, complex concepts and ethical issues relevant to their learning for life journey.

### Project Based Learning

We provide opportunities for children to explore concepts in depth, driven by their underlying curiosities about the world. These collaborative projects provide children with contexts for sustained shared thinking.

### The Role of the Environment

Our classrooms are beautifully organised and designed to support children's learning. We provide an abundance of materials, resources and equipment to foster play, exploration and creativity.

### Permanent Learning Contexts

We have flexible and permanent learning contexts for children. Permanent learning contexts are provided for play based experiences such as construction, visual arts, dramatic play and communication.

Permanent learning spaces are modified to support the learning and development goals intentionally developed for individual children and groups.

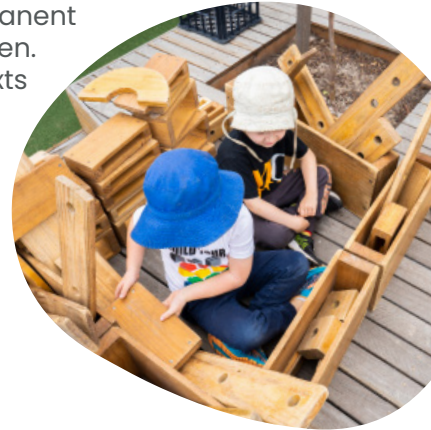
### Strong Relationships

We build and foster respectful relationships between educators, children, and families. Partnerships with families enhance the educational experience.

By embracing these principles, the Explorers Kindergarten Program ensures that children develop the funds of knowledge they need for the changing world they will encounter. This includes, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, teamwork and digital literacy.

### The Hundred Languages of Children

Children express and communicate their ideas, theories and understanding in many ways. We design rich contexts for learning and communication.



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Reggio Emilia program in action.

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# What is School Readiness at Explorers?

3 & 4 year old Kindergarten

The National Early Years Learning Framework refers to school readiness as the ability to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging learning situations. These skills are essential for a child's successful transition to school. Here is what school readiness means to us at Explorers.

## 1. Wellbeing

Wellbeing takes place through attachment, nurturing and caring relationships. Educators at Explorers design learning experiences for children to develop a strong sense of being and belonging, optimism, resilience, and positive attitudes to learning. Wellbeing encompasses both physical and mental wellbeing.

## 2. Self Regulation

Self regulation involves managing emotions, energy, and behaviour.

Developing these skills helps children build perseverance and persistence, enhancing their relationships with others. These attributes are crucial for higher cognitive functioning in the brain.

## 3. Cognitive Skills

Learning skills are marked by curiosity, problem solving, and the ability to focus and concentrate. Children learn to think critically and engage in early literacy and numeracy experiences.

## 4. Communication

Effective communication skills are crucial for children to transition to school. Children are encouraged to think critically to express themselves, listen, understand instructions, and engage in responsive conversations including verbal and nonverbal communication.

## 5. Positive Attitudes towards Learning

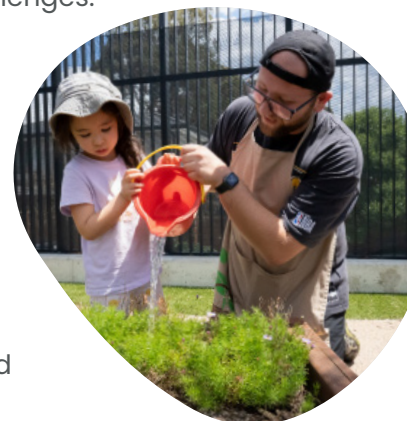
Positive attitudes towards learning, such as confidence, persistence and optimism are essential. Children learn to exhibit a willingness and preparedness to engage in new experiences and challenges.

## 6. Respect for Diversity

Children who respect diversity are inclusive. Inclusive attitudes are essential for children's equitable relationships with others regardless of race, gender, culture or religious beliefs. Inclusive attitudes enable children to interact respectfully and empathetically.

## 7. Autonomy

Children learn to be autonomous, able to manage basic self care tasks independently, such as dressing, eating, and personal hygiene. They also show initiative by seeking information and asking questions.



## What is the Victorian Government Approved Kindergarten Tick?



The Victorian Government has introduced the Kinder Tick to help families find funded and approved Kindergarten Programs. The Kinder Tick tells families that:

- Our Kindergarten Program is recognised and **funded by the Victorian Government**.
- The program is led by a qualified **Early Childhood Teacher (ECT)** also known as a Kindergarten Teacher. ECTs must hold a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education or equivalent, typically a 4 year degree.
- We offer a **play based** learning program, as highlighted in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).



**Kindergarten Program**  
in action

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## Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)

Every government approved and funded Kindergarten Program must adhere to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) guidelines for all age groups.

The VEYLDF upholds an image of the child as a rights holder and a competent learner with the capacity to learn from birth.

This Framework sets outcomes to guide early childhood professionals' work.

# Kindergarten FAQs at Explorers

	Explorers LDC	Sessional Kindergarten	Early Learning Centre (ELC)
Government approved and funded Kindergarten Program	✓	✓	✓
Program led by an Early Childhood Teacher ( <b>Bachelor of Early Childhood or equivalent</b> )	✓	✓	✓
Must adhere to the Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF)	✓	✓	✓
Play based Learning	✓	✓	✓
Days of attendance	Flexible 1 - 5 days*	Set days & Times	Set days & Times
Open for school holidays (Open 52wks per year)	✓	✗	✗
Full Days – Before and Afterschool care included	✓	✗	✗
All meals are provided	✓	✗	✗
Incursions and Excursions included	✓	Service Specific	Service Specific
One drop off for siblings under school age	✓	✗	✗

\* 4YO Funded Kindergarten: for funded enrolment, minimum of 2 days per week attendance.

## Why do families choose Long Day Care (LDC)?

The main reason families choose LDC, such as Explorers is due to the flexibility required by working parents, who require care during school holidays, before 9am, and/or after 3pm. With two working parents, sessional kindergarten and ELC can be very challenging. Other benefits include all siblings under school age can attend one location, and cooked meals are provided.

## What is Free Kinder?

The government provides a subsidy for children attending kindergarten in a LDC setting, such as Explorers, reducing your out of pocket costs. This applies to both 3 and 4 year old kindergarten.

Free Kinder is a maximum of \$2050 per calendar year for each child attending 15 hours plus per week. If you choose to attend only 1 day (7.5 hours) in 3 year old kindergarten, your child is eligible for \$1025.

## What funding is available for children who attend an Explorers Kindergarten?

In addition to the Free Kinder subsidy, most parents are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

## What hours is my child required to attend?

- 3 year old kindergarten – a minimum of 7.5 hours per week. (1 day)
- 4 year old kindergarten – a minimum of 15 hours per week. (2 days)

## What age does my child need to be for Explorers Kindergarten?

In Victoria, children must start school no later than the year they turn 6. Children turning 5 between 1 January – 30 April have the option to start school in that year.

## Can I attend both Sessional Kindergarten & Explorers' Kindergarten Programs?

Yes, we accept children who attend both programs. Children attending the Explorers program will be prioritised in terms of days and classrooms. Each child can claim Free Kinder at one kindergarten only.

## What if I don't know what year my child is going to school?

It is common for children born between January and April to commence school the year they turn 6. We recommend families discuss their goals with their child's Kindergarten Teacher to make a plan. Our program caters to children turning 6 between January and April by making the learning concepts more challenging.

## How do I enrol my child into the Explorers funded Kindergarten Program?

The Explorers Family Support Team will communicate with each family on how to nominate a funded 3 or 4 year old kindergarten place for the following year.

## Is there any connection between Explorers Kindergarten and my chosen Primary School?

For children claiming Kindergarten Funding through Explorers, your teacher will complete a Transition to School statement in Term 4 about your child, that is then sent to your chosen primary school.

## We're Here to Help

For more information on Free Kinder, please visit the **Victorian Government Website** or contact our Family Support Team on 1300 000 335.



For more **FAQs**

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