

# KINDERGARTEN

*"Is my child ready?"*

## Q&A FACT SHEET



Starting kindergarten is an exciting time for you and your child. But sometimes it can be tricky and confusing trying to decide whether they are ready to begin their educational journey; *Is my child old enough? Do they have the skills required to cope with a busy kindergarten session? Will delaying their start help them to be better equipped to learn once they reach Primary School?* This Q&A Fact sheet is designed to help you make an informed decision.

### When is my child eligible to start Kindergarten?

- 3yo Kinder - All children who turn 3 before the 30<sup>th</sup> April in the year they attend, are eligible for our 3 year old program. *Note : As our kindergarten is not licensed for children under the age of 3, your child will be unable to begin until after their 3rd birthday. For a child born in March-April for example, they will miss a large part of their 1st term of kinder.*
- 4yo Kinder - All children who turn 4 before the 30<sup>th</sup> April in the year they attend, are eligible for our 4 year old program.

*Important note* - Just because your child is eligible, does not necessarily mean that they are ready to begin. It is very important for families to carefully consider whether or not their child is really ready for the start of their education journey.

### How do I know if my child is ready to start Kindergarten?

All children learn and develop at different rates, and whilst our kindergarten programs are designed to support individual needs of each child, in a typical session children will be expected to:-

- *separate confidently from parents*
- *interact positively and share ideas, space and resources with others*
- *follow simple instructions and routines*
- *pay attention for short periods of time and complete tasks*
- *demonstrate increased independence – eg. choose activities to engage in, pack away their own belongings, open and close their lunch box*
- *manage their toileting needs independently eg. Use the toilet, wash their hands, manage their clothing*
- *regulate their own behaviours and emotions in socially acceptable and safe ways*
- *ask for help when required*
- *stay awake during the day without the need for a nap (we do have rest periods and accommodate children who may occasionally fall asleep, but children who are still having regular day naps may not cope with the busy kinder environment)*



My child can meet most or all of these expectations – your child will be well placed for a happy, productive and enriched kinder experience.

My child cannot yet meet most or all of these expectations – We will work with your child through their kinder journey to continue to develop their school readiness skills. If your child has additional needs, we will work closely with you to best support their learning and development. If your child is showing developmental delays in 2 or more areas as assessed by their teacher, they may be eligible for a second year of either 3 year old kinder or 4 year old kinder (but not 2 years of both).

My child is considered “young” (born between January – April) and cannot yet meet most of these expectations - While it is important to note that each child develops at different rates and has different experiences in their early years, it is *often* the case that younger children benefit from waiting a year and deferring their kinder start. For this reason, you may like to consider delaying their kinder start to the following year. There are no disadvantages of younger children starting kinder a little later, with research showing that the longer a child is given to mature socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively, the more prepared they will be for school and the more they will thrive in their future academic years.

### **Can my child just have another year of kindergarten if they need it?**

The Department of Education (DE) provides funding for only 2 years of funded kindergarten (3YO kinder + 4YO kinder) per child, before they commence school.

- If your child is in 3yo kinder, they can only access a 2<sup>nd</sup> year if they are assessed as eligible by the kindergarten teacher and must show developmental delays in 2 or more areas. Simply being “young” (born between January – April) is not enough of a reason to be granted a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 3YO kindergarten by DE.
- If your child is in 4yo kinder, they can only access a 2<sup>nd</sup> year if they are assessed as eligible by the kindergarten teacher and have not previously accessed 2 years of 3YO kinder. They must show developmental delays in 2 or more areas. Simply being “young” (born between January – April) is not enough of a reason to be granted a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 4YO kindergarten by DE.

Important Note - A 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 3YO or 4YO kinder is not guaranteed and is reserved for children demonstrating developmental delays. We therefor strongly urge parents of younger children to consider what age they would like their child to start school **BEFORE** commencing a kindergarten program.

### **Support & Further Info**

We are here to help! Should you require further assistance in making an informed decision, please feel free to contact us:-

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