



# **Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Guidelines for Long Day Care Services**

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## Definitions

**Approved kindergarten program provider** refers to early childhood education and care services approved and funded by the Department of Education and Training (the Department) to deliver a kindergarten program.

**Children in priority groups who may have additional needs or require additional support** include Indigenous children, children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children from low socio-economic families and vulnerable children at risk of entering the child safety system. These children and their families comprise the target groups identified for increased encouragement, support, and where required, sustained participation in a kindergarten program under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme.

**Diagnosed disability** means a child who has been diagnosed with a disability or long term medical condition by a health practitioner (e.g. speech pathologist, medical practitioner, paediatrician) and has a need for additional assistance.

**Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)** is a key component of the National Quality Reform agenda, approved by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and linked to the *National Quality Standard*. The Framework provides direction for educators to support and enhance children's learning and development and is focused on children from birth to five years, as well as their transition to school. Implementation of the EYLF is supported by a guide for educators and a guide for parents.

**Eligible children enrolled** means a child enrolled in the kindergarten program for at least 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year with the parent/family meeting the service's prescribed fees...

**Fee structure** means a breakdown of the annual and weekly cost per child in the kindergarten program.

**Health Care Card (HCC) subsidy** is a by-exception subsidy per child for HCC holders to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access. The subsidy is provided to the service to offset net out-of-pocket costs for eligible parents/carers. HCC subsidy is also available to Pensioner Concession Card holders with automatic HCC entitlements.

**Hours of attendance** means the actual hours of attendance per day and per week for children in the kindergarten program.

**Indigenous status** means a child who identifies (or their parents/guardians identify) as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

**Kindergarten program** refers to the education program planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher for children in the year prior to Prep (i.e. who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program). Kindergarten programs are provided for at least 15 hours a week and 40 weeks of the year.

**Long day care service** is a centre-based service approved to receive Australian Government Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Long day care services provide all day or part-time care for children aged birth to school-age

who attend the centre on a regular basis. Care is generally provided in a building, or part of a building, that has been created or redeveloped specifically for use as a child care centre, and children are usually grouped together in rooms according to age. Centres, in the majority of cases, operate for at least eight hours per day on each normal working day for 48 weeks per year.

**Low socio-economic subsidy (SEIFA)** refers to a per child loading of 25% of the standard subsidy for services operating in locations within the bottom 20% of Statistical Local Areas (using the *ABS Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) - Index of Relative Socio Economic Disadvantage*) to offset fees and thereby reduce out-of-pocket expenses for all parents accessing the program.

**Parent** means the person who is legally responsible for the care and management of a child whether it be because they are the child's father or mother (parent), a guardian or a kinship guardian.

**Qualified early childhood teacher** means

- a four year qualified early childhood education teacher, who holds an early childhood qualification(s) that meets the requirements of the *Child Care Act 2002* (Act) and sections 113 [(a) to (c)] or 114 of the *Child Care Regulation 2003* (Regulation) **or**
- a teacher currently registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) who holds an approved two or three year early childhood qualification that meets the requirements of the Act and sections 113 [(a) to (c)] or 114 of the Regulation **or**
- a primary teacher who has full registration with the QCT who is studying towards an approved two or three year early childhood qualification that meets the requirements of the Act and sections 113 [(a) to (c)] or 114 of the Regulation.

**Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme** refers to recurrent funding provided to support the delivery of kindergarten programs for children in the year prior to Prep (i.e. who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program).

**Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline** refers to a guideline developed by the Queensland Studies Authority that provides advice for qualified early childhood teachers regarding planning, interacting with children, monitoring and assessing learning, and sharing information about children's learning in kindergarten contexts.

**Remote area subsidy (ARIA)** refers to a per child loading of 50% of the standard subsidy to support employers to attract and retain qualified teachers for services operating in areas classified as remote and very remote (using the *ABS Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia {ARIA}*).

**Standard subsidy** is funding paid on a per child basis for each child in the year prior to Prep (i.e. who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program). The subsidy amount will be indexed annually in July in line with a combination of the State budget forecast wage/price index and the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

**The Department** means the Department of Education and Training in Queensland.

# Guideline 1. Kindergarten Program Provider Approval

## 1. Approval Process

- 1.1 Licensees will be invited to apply for kindergarten funding and kindergarten program provider approval at the discretion of the Department. Approval as a kindergarten program provider includes approval to receive kindergarten funding.
- 1.2 If a kindergarten provider is responsible for the operation of more than one long day care service, that provider must submit a separate application form on behalf of each service. Each application will be assessed according to the eligibility criteria.
- 1.3 The Department will determine a service's eligibility for kindergarten program provider approval according to criteria listed in *section 2 - Kindergarten Program Provider Eligibility Criteria* (see below).
- 1.4 If kindergarten funding and program provider approval is granted, the service will be required to enter into a service agreement with the Department and will be issued a Kindergarten Program Provider certificate.
- 1.5 If an application for kindergarten funding and approval as a kindergarten program provider is unsuccessful, the long day care service will be advised of the reasons for the decision and have a right of review. Requests for right of review are to be submitted in writing to the Department.
- 1.6 Approval as a kindergarten program provider is subject to ongoing compliance with eligibility criteria.

## 2. Kindergarten Program Provider Eligibility Criteria

Approval as a funded kindergarten program provider under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme will be assessed against the following criteria:

- 2.1 holds a current Queensland Licence for a Centre Based Child Care Service, under the Queensland *Child Care Act 2002* (or other applicable child care legislation)
- 2.2 approved to receive Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB) payments on behalf of eligible families
- 2.3 holds an appropriate public liability insurance of at least \$10 million
- 2.4. offers a learning program that:
  - 2.4.1 is provided for children in the year prior to Prep (i.e. who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program) for **at least** 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year
  - 2.4.2 is based on the *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline* or an alternative kindergarten learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Studies Authority.
  - 2.4.3 is delivered by:
    - Option 1** A **four year qualified early childhood teacher** who holds an early childhood qualification that meets the requirements of the *Child Care Act 2002* (the Act) and sections 113 (a) to (c) or 114 of the Child Care Regulation (the Regulation); or

**Option 2** A teacher currently registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) who holds an approved two or three year early childhood qualification that meets the requirements of the Act and sections 113 (a) to (c) or 114 of the Regulation; or

**Option 3** A primary teacher who has full registration with the QCT and who is studying towards an approved two or three year early childhood qualification that meets the requirements of the Act and sections 113 (a) to (c) or 114, and 119 of the Regulation.

- 2.4.4 In relation to Option 1, refer to the list of approved qualifications at <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/service/qualifications.html> Only qualifications which match an entry on the list exactly will be considered by the Department to support an application for recognition under Option 1 above.
- 2.4.5 In relation to Options 2 and 3, refer to the list of approved 2 and 3 year qualifications at <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/service/qualifications.html>. Only qualifications which match an entry on the list/s exactly will be considered by the Department to support an application for recognition under either Option 2 or 3 above.
- 2.4.6 Teachers with qualifications not on the current list of approved qualifications can apply to have their qualification determined as meeting the requirements of the Act and Regulation. For information see [www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/docs/child-care/child-care-form-20.doc](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/docs/child-care/child-care-form-20.doc)
- 2.5 demonstrates that the fee structure is not a barrier to access. For instance, it is expected that the fee for attending a kindergarten program at a long day care service should not be more than the daily fee charged for 3 to 5 year old children who access long day care.
- 2.6 enters into a service agreement with the Department.

### **3. Requirements as an Approved Kindergarten Program Provider**

- 3.1 Approved kindergarten program providers must display:
- 3.1.1 the Kindergarten Program Provider certificate
  - 3.1.2 the kindergarten program operating times
  - 3.1.3 the name, qualifications, teacher registration number or teacher recognition number of the teacher/s delivering the kindergarten program.
- 3.2 Approval as a kindergarten program provider remains valid subject to ongoing compliance with eligibility criteria, the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme policy and guidelines for long day care services and service agreement requirements.

### **4. Change in Circumstances**

- 4.1 Approved kindergarten program providers must notify the Department in writing within 14 working days of matters likely to affect their status as an approved kindergarten program provider (refer to *section 2 - Kindergarten Program Provider Eligibility Criteria*).

## **5. Suspension and Revocation of Approved Kindergarten Program Provider Status**

- 5.1 Without limiting any other rights it might have the Department may suspend the approved kindergarten program provider status at any time a kindergarten program provider fails to meet any eligibility criteria.
- 5.2 If the approved kindergarten program provider status is suspended in accordance with the service agreement, the Department will automatically suspend the eligibility to receive government funding for the program.

## **Guideline 2. Subsidies**

### **1. Funding Requirements**

- 1.1 Approved kindergarten program providers must ensure that Government investment is directed to the eligible-age cohort as outlined in the eligibility criteria in Guideline 1.
- 1.2 Continuation of kindergarten program funding is contingent on a kindergarten program provider's ongoing compliance with eligibility criteria, the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme policy and guidelines for long day care services and service agreement requirements.
- 1.3 Approved kindergarten program providers are required to comply with the requirements of their service agreement held with the Department.

### **2. Funding Approval**

- 2.1 Applications under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme will be assessed against the eligibility criteria by the Department.
- 2.2 The Department will make funding approval decisions.

### **3. Funding Calculation and Distribution**

- 3.1 Funding will be provided to approved kindergarten program providers who meet the eligibility criteria and enter into a service agreement with the Department. This section should be read in conjunction with Guideline 5 Data Collection and Reporting.
- 3.2 If an approved kindergarten program provider is responsible for the operation of more than one long day care service, for each long day care service that is successful in obtaining funding through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme, the approved kindergarten program provider will be required to comply with the requirements and conditions of a service agreement. Additionally, the approved kindergarten program provider will be responsible for ensuring that each long day care service that successfully obtains funding adheres to the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Guidelines for Long Day Care Services and complies with the relevant legislative funding authority.
- 3.3 Funding will be distributed quarterly in arrears to approved kindergarten program providers based on data submitted quarterly to the Department. Delays in submitting data may result in delays in payment of funding entitlement.
- 3.4 Kindergarten program providers delivering a program for at least 15 hours per week delivered by a qualified teacher will receive the subsidy for each child enrolled for 40 weeks in a calendar year. Pro-rata amounts will be paid for children enrolled for less than 40 weeks and will be calculated on the number of weeks that a child is enrolled.
- 3.5 Retrospective funding is not permitted under the policy except in instances where variations require reconciling. In such cases retrospective funding is limited to one payment prior to the payment in which the variation is found.
- 3.6 Variations that result in overpayment must be reported to the Department. Where possible, all overpayments will be recovered in the next reporting and payment cycle.
- 3.7 Approved kindergarten program providers should notify the Department, in writing, of any errors on the previous claim once detected.

#### **4. Commencement of Funding**

- 4.1 Eligibility for funding will commence from the date stipulated on the signed service agreement with the Department.
- 4.2 Kindergarten program provider service agreements require services to use Government funding to provide an approved kindergarten program at a cost that is not a barrier to access. In particular, the additional low socio-economic subsidy is designed specifically to offset fees and thereby reduce out-of-pocket expenses for all parents accessing the program while the remote subsidy is designed to offset the additional costs of teacher attraction and retention in remote areas.

#### **5. Standard per Child Subsidy**

- 5.1 This funding is paid on a per child basis for each child in the eligible age cohort ( i.e. children who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program).
- 5.2 The [standard subsidy](#) for long day care services was announced in 2009 and is indexed annually in July in line with a combination of the State budget forecast wage/price index and the CPI.
- 5.3 This subsidy is provided to assist with the costs of delivering an approved kindergarten program and to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access for families.
- 5.4 Advice on the current standard subsidy rate applicable for a financial year is accessible at <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/service/access-kindy/kindy-fund-scheme.html>

#### **6. Remote Area Subsidy (ARIA)**

- 6.1 This is a per child loading of 50% of the standard subsidy to support services to attract and retain qualified teachers in areas classified as remote and very remote (using the *ABS Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia {ARIA}*).

#### **7. Low Socio-Economic Subsidy (SEIFA)**

- 7.1 This is a per child loading of 25% of the standard subsidy for services operating in locations within the bottom 20% of *Statistical Local Areas (SLAs)* (using the *ABS Socio Economic Indexes for Areas {SEIFA} 1 and 2*) to offset fees to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for parents.

#### **8. Health Care Card Subsidy**

- 8.1 This is a by-exception subsidy per child for Health Care Card holders to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access.
- 8.2 The [Health Care Card subsidy](#) for long day care services was introduced in 2009 and is indexed annually in July in line with a combination of the State budget forecast wage/price index and the CPI. Current subsidy levels are available from <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/service/access-kindy/kindy-fund-scheme.html>
- 8.3 The subsidy will be provided for every Health Care Card holder and will be provided to the service to offset net out-of-pocket costs for eligible parents/carers. Health Care Card subsidy is also available to Pensioner Concession Card holders with automatic Health Care Card entitlements.

- 8.4 Approved kindergarten program providers are eligible to receive the Health Care Card subsidy for each child who meets the following criteria. The child:
- 8.4.1 is in the eligible age cohort for the approved kindergarten program
  - 8.4.2 has a parent/carer/guardian that holds a current Commonwealth Health Care Card or other Australian Government issued concession card with health care entitlement. For information on eligibility for Australian Government Health Care and other recognised concession cards see [A Guide to Centrelink concession cards](#).
- 8.5 Changes in Health Care Card eligibility within a funding period are to be recorded by the kindergarten program provider and reported to the Department in the next data collection period. Funding will be calculated on a weekly pro-rata basis and reconciled in the next payment cycle.

## **9. Fee Guidelines**

- 9.1 Fee levels should not be a barrier to access as:
- 9.1.1 the standard rate per child funding is provided by the Government to assist with the costs of delivering an approved kindergarten program and to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access for families.
  - 9.1.2 additional funding is provided to eligible services to reduce fees for families and to assist with the costs of attracting and retaining teachers in remote locations.
- 9.2 Approved kindergarten program providers must:
- 9.2.1 demonstrate the fee structure is not a barrier to access. For instance, it is expected that the fee for attending a kindergarten program at a long day care service should be no more than the daily fee charged for 3 to 5 year old children who access long day care
  - 9.2.2 document and communicate to families a comprehensive written fees policy. This should include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process
  - 9.2.3 notify parents and carers in advance of any changes to fee structures.

## **10. Change in Circumstances**

- 10.1 Approved kindergarten program providers must notify the Department in writing within 14 working days of:
- 10.1.1 any significant changes in the organisation such as entering receivership or bankruptcy, a change of licence or licensee, a change of address, banking details, a change of principal office bearers, contact persons (nominee), or key staff
  - 10.1.2 matters relating to their approval as a kindergarten program provider including change of teacher, additional kindergarten programs and program delivery structure.

## **11. Suspension and Revocation of Approved Kindergarten Program Provider Status**

- 11.1 Without limiting any other rights it might have the Department may also suspend the approved kindergarten program provider status at any time a kindergarten program provider fails to meet any eligibility criteria.

11.2 If the approved kindergarten program provider status is suspended in accordance with the Service Agreement, the Department will automatically suspend the eligibility to receive kindergarten scheme funding.

## **12. Relevant Forms**

12.1 Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Application Form

12.2 Service Agreement.

## Guideline 3. Approved Kindergarten Program

### 1. General Requirements

- 1.1 Approved kindergarten programs must comply with the:
  - 1.1.1 *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Right to Information Regulations 2009*
  - 1.1.2 *Information Privacy Act* and *Information Privacy Regulation 2009*
  - 1.1.3 *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*
  - 1.1.4 *Child Care Act 2002* and *Child Care Regulation 2003* (or other applicable child care legislation)
  - 1.1.5 *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
  - 1.1.6 *Commonwealth's Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

### 2. Staffing

- 2.1 Approved kindergarten programs must be delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher (as outlined in Guideline 1 Kindergarten Program Provider Approval).
- 2.2 Teachers must be employed under the relevant industrial instrument and have their professional status recognised.
- 2.3 Kindergarten program providers are required to keep up-to-date records of teachers' qualifications and where appropriate Queensland College of Teachers registration and where appropriate a copy of the letter of recognition issued by the Department.

#### **Emergency Relief**

- 2.4 If a teacher is ill or on unexpected leave, approved kindergarten program providers must meet the requirements of the *Child Care Act 2002* and make every effort to engage another qualified early childhood teacher to relieve.
- 2.5 A qualified early childhood teacher is to deliver the kindergarten program for at least 40 weeks a year. Where a kindergarten program operates for more than 40 weeks a year another early childhood educator with a minimum two year approved qualification may be engaged to deliver the program over and above the 40 week requirement.
- 2.6 For periods of unplanned leave of up to 10 working days cumulative per annum, if a qualified early childhood teacher cannot be recruited to relieve then the approved kindergarten program provider may engage educators with a minimum three year qualification that complies with the requirements of the relevant child care legislation.
- 2.7 For periods of 11 working days or more (cumulative per annum), if a qualified early childhood teacher cannot be recruited to relieve then the service must advise the Department as soon as practicable.
  - 2.7.1 If a suitably qualified relief teacher cannot be secured for periods greater than 11 working days, the service will be unable to claim these weeks as part of the kindergarten program duration.

- 2.8 Approved kindergarten program providers are required to report to the Department in writing within 14 working days of any changes in teaching staff employment.

### **3. Educational Program Delivery**

- 3.1 The kindergarten program must:
- 3.1.1 be suitable for delivery to children who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program
  - 3.1.2 be delivered for **at least** 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year
  - 3.1.3 be based on the *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline* or alternative learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Studies Authority

### **4. Professional Development and Support**

- 4.1 Kindergarten program providers are required to ensure that all teachers and assistants delivering the kindergarten program have access to professional development opportunities to assist in maintaining an understanding of current research into early childhood development and education and sustain high quality approaches to early childhood teaching and learning.
- 4.2 Professional development is to be provided under the requirements of the relevant industrial awards.

### **5. Integration with Other Services**

- 5.1 Kindergarten program providers are required to develop and maintain links with other early childhood education and care and family support services to increase access of children and families who would not normally access a kindergarten program and support existing enrolments.
- 5.2 To develop and maintain links with other community family services, approved kindergarten program providers are required to:
- 5.2.1 provide information for families about the range of support services available in the community
  - 5.2.2 facilitate access or referral to support services by children and their families
  - 5.2.3 where relevant, share information with other support services (with the consent of families) to ensure maximum participation and development of the child
  - 5.2.4 assist a smooth transition to school by establishing and maintaining appropriate information sharing processes.

### **6. Parent Participation**

- 6.1 Kindergarten program providers are required to actively engage parents and carers in their child's learning.
- 6.2 Kindergarten program providers need to ensure flexible and inclusive practices for parents and carers are developed to encourage participation including:
- 6.2.1 communication of program goals and information about child development

- 6.2.2 implementing a range of communication strategies adapted to the requirements of the community, to keep parents and carers informed on both educational and operational matters
  - 6.2.3 providing regular opportunities for discussions with individual parents and carers to share information about the child.
- 6.3 Kindergarten program providers are required to:
- 6.3.1 be sensitive to the cultural and social backgrounds of the families, their lifestyles and their child-rearing practices and that parents and carers are involved in addressing issues relating to their child's care and development
  - 6.3.2 implement a range of communication strategies to enable and encourage family participation in kindergarten activities, including input into kindergarten policy, decision making, quality assessment processes and user satisfaction surveys.

## Guideline 4. Kindergarten Program Enrolments

### 1. General Requirements

- 1.1 An approved kindergarten program provider must:
  - 1.1.1 implement a clearly articulated enrolment policy defining the eligible age cohort for each year of enrolment (e.g. a child born 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 would be eligible for kindergarten in January 2011)
  - 1.1.2 provide an approved kindergarten program for **at least** 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year to the eligible age cohort of children
  - 1.1.3 provide enrolment numbers, collected retrospectively with each quarterly funding claim
  - 1.1.4 meet group sizes and staff ratios as required under the relevant child care legislation.

### 2. Enrolment

- 2.1 Funding is only provided for the eligible cohort of children who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program, for **at least** 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year.
- 2.2 For an enrolment to qualify for Queensland kindergarten funding, the child **must be enrolled in the kindergarten program for at least 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year with the family meeting the [service's prescribed fees for the kindergarten program](#).**
- 2.3 Younger children may participate in the kindergarten program but Government funding is not provided for these children.
- 2.4 Approved kindergarten program providers are responsible for ensuring reasonable steps are taken to minimise claims for kindergarten funding for children enrolled in more than one kindergarten program.

### 3. Age Eligibility

- 3.1 Eligible children are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program.
- 3.2 Evidence of date of birth must be provided by the child's parent or carer prior to enrolment. The child should be enrolled in the name identified on the birth certificate or equivalent. For Australian born children either a birth certificate or birth extract and for non-Australian born children a passport or travel document must be sighted and a record of the date of birth kept by the kindergarten program provider enrolling the child for auditing purposes.

### 4. Government-funded Kindergarten Program

- 4.1 Each eligible child can access funding for one Government-approved kindergarten program at a time in the year prior to Prep from one kindergarten program provider at a time.
- 4.2 The only exception to this may be where a child is identified as not ready for Prep after completing a kindergarten program and likely to benefit from another year of the program (delayed exit).
- 4.3 Where a kindergarten program provider delivers more than one approved kindergarten program across a standard week and a child is enrolled for up to

five days per week across two approved kindergarten programs, the service can claim one subsidy only for that child.

## **5. Delayed Entry and/or Delayed Exit**

- 5.1 Children will generally access a kindergarten program in the year they are age eligible (i.e. at least 4 years by 30 June in the year they participate in kindergarten).
- 5.2 Delayed entry to kindergarten refers to the circumstances whereby a child older than kindergarten age can be approved for enrolment in a kindergarten program. Delayed exit means that a child can be approved to participate in an approved kindergarten program for a second year.
- 5.3 Where an approved kindergarten program provider approves an application for delayed entry or delayed exit, the child will be deemed eligible for enrolment in an approved kindergarten program and the service will be eligible to claim the Queensland kindergarten funding subsidy for the child.
- 5.4 Consideration of delayed entry to or delayed exit from approved kindergarten programs may be initiated by either the parent and/or the kindergarten teacher. Enrolment decisions should be informed by a child's developmental abilities, prior experiences and social emotional capabilities.
- 5.5 Applications and decisions to approve or deny delayed entry or exit from an approved kindergarten program are managed by the long day care service approved as a kindergarten program provider and in receipt of Queensland kindergarten funding. Services should provide guidance and information to parents on who is responsible for these decisions.
- 5.6 Applications for delayed entry and exit from kindergarten must be clearly documented. It is expected that both the parent and teacher would contribute to the completion of the application form.
- 5.7 In determining whether to apply for delayed entry to or delayed exit from an approved kindergarten program, parents should be encouraged to attach supporting documentation from relevant health or education professionals to the application form e.g. paediatrician report, speech language pathology assessment, and/or early childhood education and care teacher's reports.
- 5.8 Parents should be alerted to the benefits of seeking the views of health professionals who can provide advice and supporting documentation as to the development and abilities of their child. While kindergarten program providers should strongly encourage parents to seek the views of health professionals, long day care services approved as kindergarten program providers should give careful consideration to mandating any requirement to obtain health professional documentation, as it may not be appropriate to the child's individual circumstances.
- 5.9 Delayed entry to and delayed exit from an approved kindergarten program has implications for Prep enrolment. As part of the application process for delayed entry to or delayed exit from kindergarten programs, kindergarten program providers should require parents to provide evidence of consultation with the school Principal/Enrolment Registrar of the school where it is intended the child will attend Prep.
- 5.10 Decisions about delayed entry and exit from kindergarten programs should also be documented and provided to parents and teachers in writing within a

reasonable timeframe. At the time of making their application, parents should be informed of the timeframe in which they will be advised of a decision.

- 5.11 The Department may, at any time, request evidence of applications for delayed entry or exit and documented evidence of decision-making processes.

## **6. Children in Priority Groups Who May Have Additional Needs**

- 6.1 Children with additional needs are to receive equitable access to kindergarten programs under the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and the Commonwealth's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- 6.2 Kindergarten program providers must undertake the following actions to support inclusion of children with additional needs:
- 6.2.1 establish procedures for the inclusion of children with additional needs and
  - 6.2.2 manage the physical environment to cater for children with additional needs and
  - 6.2.3 ensure kindergarten program staff seek support and advice from relevant support agencies and establish open and collaborative relationships with parents and carers.

## **7. Fees**

- 7.1 Kindergarten program providers are required to:
- 7.1.1 demonstrate the fee structure is not a barrier to access. For instance, it is expected that the fee for attending a kindergarten program at a long day care service should be no more than the daily fee charged for 3 to 5 year old children who access long day care
  - 7.1.2 document and communicate to families a comprehensive written fees policy. This should include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process
  - 7.1.3 notify parents and carers in advance of any changes to fee structures.
- 7.2 Fee levels should not be a barrier to access as:
- 7.2.1 the standard rate per child funding is provided by the Government to support services to assist with the costs of delivering an approved kindergarten program and to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access for families
  - 7.2.2 additional funding is provided to eligible services to offset fees and thereby reduce out-of-pocket expenses for parents and to assist with the costs of attracting and retaining teachers in remote locations.

## **Guideline 5. Data Collection and Reporting**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 Approved kindergarten program providers are required to provide a range of data to determine funding entitlements.
- 1.2 The data collected will be used to calculate funding entitlements quarterly in arrears, based on actual enrolment numbers. Collections will occur in March, June, September and December.
- 1.3 The data may be used to measure progress in achieving universal access to quality early childhood education as required through the Queensland Government's early childhood policies and other commitments.

### **2. General Requirements**

- 2.1 Data is to be collected on service information, child enrolments, demographic characteristics of children, kindergarten program delivery and staffing within the service.
- 2.2 Approved kindergarten program providers are responsible for:
  - 2.2.1 providing data to ensure that the financial and performance reporting requirements outlined in their service agreement are met
  - 2.2.2 maintaining evidence-based records regarding their kindergarten program
  - 2.2.3 providing accurate and timely responses to any reasonable requests for data made by the Department. This includes but is not limited to:
    - 2.2.3.1 completing the Department's quarterly data collection to determine funding entitlements and
    - 2.2.3.2 completing the annual Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census conducted by the Queensland Government

### **3. Collection**

- 3.1 Data is to be submitted quarterly to the Department and will be used to calculate service funding entitlements.
- 3.2 Failure to provide complete, accurate and timely data may impact the provision of funding.

### **4. Reporting**

- 4.1 Data reported by approved kindergarten program providers is used to inform both funding and auditing processes.
- 4.2 In addition to quarterly reporting for the purposes of calculating kindergarten funding, approved kindergarten program providers are required to complete the Annual Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census. The census survey provides performance reporting data.

## Guideline 6. Monitoring Performance

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Approved kindergarten program providers are required to adhere to the requirements of these guidelines.
- 1.2 The Department may seek to confirm approved kindergarten program provider compliance with the guidelines.
- 1.3 Approved kindergarten program providers may be subject to an audit process to verify data provided to the Department and ongoing compliance with the guidelines.

### 2. General Requirements

- 2.1 Approved kindergarten program providers are required to maintain up-to-date records that provide evidence of:
  - 2.1.1 data to support funding claims
  - 2.1.2 ongoing compliance with the eligibility criteria for a kindergarten program provider
    - (a) holds a current Queensland Licence for a Centre Based Child Care Service, under the Queensland *Child Care Act 2002* or other applicable child care legislation)
    - (b) is approved to receive Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB) payments on behalf of eligible families
    - (c) offers a learning program that is:
      - provided for children in the year prior to Prep (i.e. who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in a kindergarten program)
      - available for **at least** 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year
      - delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher (see definition)
      - is based on the *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline* or an alternative kindergarten learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Studies Authority.

### 3. Site Visits

- 3.1 The Department may undertake site visits of approved kindergarten program providers for the purpose of confirming compliance with requirements of the guidelines.
- 3.2 Site visits undertaken by the Department may be planned with services receiving advanced notice or on an ad hoc basis.