



Merri-bek
City Council



Merri-bek City Council's
**Preschool Field
Officer Program**



The Preschool Field Officer Program

The program provides practical support and advice to State-funded kindergarten programs in long day care centres and sessional kindergartens, supporting the inclusion of children with additional needs.

Preschool Field Officer work within the context of the early childhood program, acting as a consultant to the early childhood teacher and educators.

The program is provided by Merri-bek City Council and funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training at no cost to families or kindergartens.



Preschool Field Officer Key Roles

- Observing children with diverse needs and providing specialised and practical advice.
- Consultancy support to kindergarten staff with planning, implementation and review of developmentally appropriate programs for all children.
- Supporting and building capacity of early childhood teachers and educators with strategies and resources to ensure inclusive practices, such as providing specialised information on children's specific additional needs and identifying appropriate training.
- Supporting referrals and linkages to specialist services for children and their families.
- Assisting the application process for additional funding (Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program) if required.
- Providing an independent opinion as required when considering a second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

**Referral forms
are available
from:**

[merri-bek.vic.gov.au/
children-with-additional-needs](http://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/children-with-additional-needs)

The program assists children:

- Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.
- With a disability or developmental delay – including children with mild language delays, diverse needs and children with multiple disabilities.
- With additional needs from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Who have experienced trauma.
- Who have diverse learning needs.
- Who are experiencing social and/or emotional difficulties at kindergarten.

Other support for kindergarten teachers and educators

- Resources.
- Guidance on inclusion practices
- Information on specific additional needs
- Meeting with staff
- Program support: working with services to strengthen principles and practices embedded in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and National Quality Standards
- Identifying appropriate professional development opportunities
- Assistance to implement recommendations
- Linking with other agencies
- Early years network meetings.

The referral can be made by:

- Parent/Guardian.
- Kindergarten teacher.
- Paediatrician.
- Allied Health (Speech, Occupational Therapy).
- Maternal and Child Health Nurse.
- Inclusion Professional.
- Family Support agencies.

The Preschool Field Officer Program referral form is completed jointly by the professional and the parent/guardian and signed by both parties (where applicable).

For more information please refer to education.vic.gov.au

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) provides up to 15 hours of **FREE** kindergarten each week to eligible children.

Is my child eligible for ESK?

Your child is eligible if they are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the kindergarten program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- family has had contact with child protection.

Contact

Merri-bek City Council

Postal Address:

Locked Bag 10
Brunswick Victoria 3056

Phone 03 9240 1111

Email psfo@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Web merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Child Safety Commitment Statement

Merri-bek City Council is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. We believe children and young people have the right to be and feel safe and that their safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of everyone. You can read more about our Child Safety Commitment Statement at merri-bek.vic.gov.au/child-safe

Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话 Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	National Relay Service:	
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	नेपाली	Nepali	9280 0751	13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au	