



THE NSEYC BUZZ

The Official Newsletter of Northern Schools Early Years



Members of the NSEY Management team, school principals, teachers and educators at the Victorian Early Years Awards in November 2023

Hello from our CEO

Firstly I'd like to extend a warm welcome our children and families to a new year of kindergarten in 2024, including those starting kinder for the first time, and that have returned from last year. We are so happy to have you all as part of our learning community!

Last year was another big year for NSEY, which was topped off by our winning not one but TWO Victorian Early Years Awards in recognition of our implementation of 15 hours of kindergarten for 3-year-olds, as well as the Minister's Award for Excellence for our Kindergarten to Grade 6 model. We are so humbled and grateful that the hard work of our teams has been acknowledged.

We've recently welcomed two new members to our expanded Management team: Sean Ryan has commenced as our new Operations Manager, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience from several years in senior early childhood leadership roles, and Brinda Mootosamy has stepped up as our new Area Manager, formerly the Centre Manager at Glenroy Hub Children's Centre! Mausum Talwar has also taken a step up to become the 2IC at the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre. Congratulations to Sean, Brinda and Mausum!

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We will be saying farewell to Elicia Napoli our Operations Manager at the end of this term. Elicia has been an integral part of the NSEYC management team over the past 4 years and will be missed by all. We wish Elicia all the very best as she ventures into a new career path.

In this issue you will also find out about our School Readiness Plans focus area for 2024, our brand new kindergarten program at Roxburgh Park Primary School, the importance of home language for children, and how we can all work together to keep children safe at kindergarten and in the community. Happy reading!

Sigi Hyett,
Chief Executive
Officer





School enrolment for 2025

If your child is turning 5 years old by 30 April 2025 and is eligible to start school next year, it is time to decide where they will go to school.

Victorian government school enrolments in Foundation (Prep) for the 2025 school year will open from Monday 15 April 2024, the start of Term 2. Families are asked to submit enrolment applications by Friday 26 July 2024.

1. The first step is to use [Find my School](#) to locate your designated neighbourhood school (referred to as your local school) and other nearby government schools.
2. Contact a government primary school to book a school tour or to learn more about the school and the enrolment application process.
3. Submit an enrolment application for Foundation (Prep) by Friday 26 July 2024.

Fact Sheets are available in 40 different community language from the Department of Education Website.

Click the links below.

- [Fact Sheet in English](#)
- [Fact Sheet in Arabic](#)
- [Fact Sheet in Turkish](#)
- [Fact Sheet in Punjabi](#)
- [Fact Sheet in Urdu](#)



Upcoming important dates and events



- 11th March to 9th April (expected) - [Ramadan](#)
- 29th March - [Good Friday](#)
- 31st March - [Easter Sunday](#)
- 2nd April - World Autism Day, International Children's Book Day
- 6th - 16th April - [Nature Play Week](#)
- 9th/10th April – Eid al Fitr
- 15th April - School enrolments open
- 22nd April - 30th April - [Passover \(Jewish\)](#)
- 5th May - 12th May - [Road Safety Week](#)
- 31st May - NSEYC Annual General Meeting

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Please ensure you sign your child in when dropping them off at kindergarten, and sign them out when you pick them up (using the iPad provided).

By law, we are required to keep track of children's attendance at kindergarten. It also helps us to monitor whether children are accessing the full 15 hours of kindergarten that are funded by the government.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Kinder enrolments are still open for 2024!

If you know someone who is looking to enrol their child in kindergarten for 2024, let them know we still have a few vacancies at some of our services! We offer FREE 15-hour programs for 3 and 4-year-old children, with services located across Hume and Merri-bek areas as well as in North Melbourne and Gisborne. [Visit our website](#) for more information about how to enrol or contact our office on 9306 1662.



What's happening across our services



New service at Roxburgh Park Primary School

Last year we successfully applied to become the approved provider of a brand new 4-room kindergarten located at Roxburgh Park Primary School. The service is now up and running, offering free 15-hour programs for 3 and 4-year-old children. Our Management team and our Early Childhood Teachers Rose and Maryam are doing a wonderful job establishing the program, and the kindergarten is already proving popular with local families.

In line with our K-6 model, we're super excited to be working in partnership with the Roxburgh Park Primary school community to enable smooth transitions and continuity of learning for children as they move from kindergarten to primary school!

Glenroy Hub Children's Centre celebrates its 2nd birthday

We can't believe it's been two years since this wonderful service opened! This team has achieved so much in such a relatively short time and is really embedded in the broader Hub community. We couldn't have said it any better than one of the families attending the Hub, who sent this lovely feedback to the team:

"The Glenroy Children's Hub has been a very special place for Lara and Oliver. Whenever I come to collect my grandchildren I walk into spaces that are so inviting, bustling with happy and busy children supervised by warm and totally engaged educators.



"It is clear the children are treated as individuals and I would be inclined to say loved. The peer interactions are delightful and the learning programs – their variety and depth – are first class. All in all a model for other centres to come and learn from." Thank you for the feedback Carolyn, and well done to Brinda, Mausum and the whole GHCC team!



Expansion completed at Lorne Street Kindergarten

The new modular building at Lorne Street Kindergarten has been completed, along with a brand new outdoor play space. The works were completed with very minimal impact on the existing kindergarten rooms and the Maternal and Child Health service. The new kindergarten room opened at the start of Term 1, meaning we can now offer more places for children at this very popular service! Heidi Duthie has joined the Lorne St team as the teacher for the new 3-year-old group. Welcome Heidi!

Importantly, the new building includes a dedicated car park on

Lorne Street, which reduces the traffic on McBryde Street where Fawcner Primary School is located.

This project was a great example of the strong partnership between NSEY, Merri-bek Council (who owns the building), Fawcner Primary School, the Victorian School Building Authority and the builders, Rendine. Thanks to all involved who made it all come together on time despite some construction challenges during the build!



Victorian Early Years Awards winners - TWICE!

Taking a moment to celebrate our success

We were thrilled (and more than a little surprised) to be honoured with two Victorian Early Years Awards at a beautiful ceremony held in Southbank on 9th November 2023.

NSEY received:

- the Access and Participation Award for Fast-tracking 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for children at risk, and
- the Minister's Award for our K-6 model which supports continuity of learning for children.

The Minister's Award is a special commendation award presented by the Minister for Children that is selected from the pool of finalists across all 9 award categories. We are so humbled and grateful.

We are very proud of our K-6 model where we work in close partnership with the schools where our kindergartens are co-located, a model that is quite unique in Victoria. Plus our Management team works so hard behind the scenes to make sure we are delivering the best for our communities. It's wonderful to have these efforts recognised and to celebrate our achievements.

We're also super proud that one of our teachers Michelle Ives was a finalist for Early Childhood Teacher of the Year, a great acknowledgement of her incredible work. Michelle goes above and beyond for her children and families, and is an inspiration to her peers.

Huge thanks to the Victorian Government and the Department of Education for such a beautiful night.



You can learn more about our awards and nominations by watching these videos on YouTube:

- [Access and Participation Award](#)
- [Minister's Award - K-6 model](#)
- [Michelle Ives, ECT of the year finalist](#)



From top left to bottom right: Members of the NSEY Management team, school principals, teachers and educators at the Awards; Sigi Hyett (CEO) and Val Karaitiana (NSEY Board Chair); Michelle Ives (ECT at Glenroy Central Kindergarten); Sigi and members of our Board and School Principals Executive Group.



Our School Readiness Funding focus for 2024

School Readiness Funding (SRF) provides extra support for Victorian government-funded Kindergarten programs to help children gain the most from their learning. The amount of School Readiness Funding each service receives is based on the level of need of the children enrolled at their service. This is informed by parental occupation and education data. Many of our kindergarten services are located in areas with high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage, which means we attract significant funding across our organisation.

The main focus of our School Readiness Plans for 2024 is strengthening communication and language development for children, and the continuation of our Wellbeing Program. This involves Family Support Workers and Social Workers being based at our services with the highest level of SRF to provide direct support to children and families with emerging vulnerabilities, as well as building the capacity of our teachers and educators. Coaching and mentoring will also take place across most of our services, empowering educators to deliver a meaningful program that supports children's communication language and literature, and to use individual children's ideas and dispositions to further their communication and language development.

Communication and language training program

Language development is the process through which children develop the ability to comprehend others and express themselves using verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Children's language development supports many aspects of their development, including the areas of emotional, social, cognitive development. Development of language also supports children's progress with formal learning including literacy and numeracy and science.

The Communication and Language Training Program is designed to support all educators to understand and implement strategies and experiences which support the development of children's language. It includes:

- Four face to face professional development group sessions delivered by our Teaching and Learning Facilitators
- Follow-up during fortnightly service visits from the Teaching and Learning Facilitator / Pedagogical leader
- Supported by external Professional Development sessions delivered by Catharine Hydon, Kerrie O'Neill (Circularity Consulting) with a Communication focus, plus Music and Movement Professional Development by Louise Dorrat





Child Safe Standards in Victoria

New Child Safe Standards now apply in Victoria, to better protect children and young people from abuse. The Child Safe Standards require organisations involving children to have policies, procedures and practices to keep them safe. It is important that parents and carers also understand the Child Safe Standards.

Resources for parents

The Commission for Children and Young People provides fact sheets about the Child Safe Standards for parents/carers in a range of languages:

- English
- Arabic | العربية
- Hindi | हिन्दी
- Punjabi | ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
- Other community languages

Our commitment to child safety

The Northern Schools Early Years Cluster Inc. is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We have robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing board members, staff and volunteers.

We are committed to regularly training and educating our board members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our board members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.



Information for parents and carers about the Child Safe Standards

Child safe organisations

When your child is in the care of an organisation you want to know that they will be safe from abuse. The Child Safe Standards are designed to prevent child abuse in organisations.

The Child Safe Standards apply to over 50,000 Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children. These include:

- schools and outside school hours care
- kindergartens and early learning centres
- sporting clubs and recreational groups
- coaching or tuition services
- out of home care services
- local councils
- religious and faith-based organisations
- hospitals, health and disability services
- professional babysitting services
- overnight camps for children.

You can find a full list of the types of organisations that must meet the Child Safe Standards at www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/who-do-the-standards-apply-to-page

How do the Child Safe Standards protect my child?

The Standards require organisations to take actions in a range of areas, including:

- background and suitability checks of staff and volunteers
- codes of conduct for staff and volunteers
- training and supervision of staff and volunteers
- documented risk assessments for activities
- clear procedures for reporting and acting on any concerns or allegations
- commitment to listening to children and encouraging them to speak up if they don't feel safe.

Children have a right to be safe. Organisations have a responsibility to protect children from harm.



How do I know if an organisation is meeting the Child Safe Standards?

You can look on their website or talk to the staff. The organisation should have documents like:

- Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Code of Conduct for workers and volunteers
- information about how to raise safety concerns.

Some questions you could ask include:

- What are you doing to meet the Child Safe Standards?
- Do you have risk assessments for activities?
- Do your staff and volunteers have appropriate checks, training and supervision?
- What are you doing to encourage children to speak up if they feel unsafe?
- Who can I talk to in the organisation if I have a concern or complaint?
- What is the process if I raise a concern or complaint about child safety?

You have a right to talk to organisations about how they are keeping your child safe from abuse. If you are concerned that an organisation is not keeping all children safe or is not meeting the Child Safe Standards, take action.

What can I do if I am not sure my child is safe?

Take action if you are concerned that an organisation is not keeping your child or other children safe.

Talk to someone senior at the organisation. Tell them what you are worried about and try to find a solution together.

If the organisation does not address your concerns, contact their regulator. If you are unsure who the regulator is, you can contact the Commission. The Commission has information about regulators because we work with them to ensure compliance by all organisations with the Standards.

How do I ask my child if they feel safe?

Below are some examples of questions you can ask your child, changing the wording depending on your child's age.

- Do you know that you should always feel safe, no matter where you are?
- What do you like about [the organisation]? Is there anything you don't like?
- Have you ever felt uncomfortable, worried or not safe? Who would you talk to if you feel unsafe?
- Has anyone at [the organisation] ever talked to you about what they can do to make you feel safe?
- Do the staff listen to you and the other children?
- What do you hope will happen if you tell someone you don't feel safe?

Contact the Commission for further information or to talk about the Child Safe Standards:

- Telephone us on 1300 782 978 or (03) 8601 5281
- Email us at contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au
- Visit the Commission's website: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Commission for Children and Young People on (03) 8601 5281.