



THE NSEY BUZZ

The Official Newsletter of Northern Schools Early Years



Hello from our CEO

Can you believe we are well into the second half of 2025 and we're already preparing Transition Learning and Development Statements and getting ready for 2026? The year has flown by.

It has been a difficult time for the early years sector of late, with recent distressing news of the abuse that has occurred in some early childhood services, and the resulting reviews and changes to policy and legislation (read more about this on page 4). NSEY strongly supports these changes and is committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that children are safe and protected from harm in our care. However, we know it has been hard on educators and families alike to learn of these things occurring.

Our staff conference last week provided a timely opportunity for our teams to come together to support one another, get inspired by some great professional learning, and 'fill our cups' so that we can continue to effectively support children and families during these challenging times. Read more about this on page 7.

In other positive news, we recently welcomed three new members to the NSEY Board:

- Amy Carson from Merri-bek Council (member)
- Anthony Grech (Treasurer)
- Mick Overman (Assistant Treasurer).

This Term's issue brings you:

Kindergarten enrolment & important dates - 2

Pre-Prep eligibility for 2026 - 3

Child Safe Standards - 4

NSEY Staff Conference - 7

News from our teams - 8

Supporting children during times of crisis - 9

Parent Opinion Survey - 9

The NSEY Board is made up of amazing people from a range of disciplines who generously volunteer their time. I am grateful to be working with them all to steer the NSEY towards the best outcomes for our children and communities!



Sigi Hyett,
Chief Executive
Officer

Enrolments for 2026 are now open



**Best Start
Best Life**

KINDERGARTEN
Victorian Government Approved

VICTORIA
State Government

Remember to register your child for kindergarten in 2026, if you haven't already!

If your child is currently attending 3-year-old kindergarten, you must submit an enrolment registration to secure a place in a 4-year-old program for 2026. For those children attending 4-year old kindergarten who will go to school next year, you must enrol at the school. This does not happen automatically.

- To register for a 3 or 4-year old program in the City of Hume: [complete the Council registration form](#).
- To register for a 3 or 4-year-old program in the City of Merri-bek: [complete the Council registration form](#).
- Complete our online forms for [Rothschild Road Kindergarten](#) (Gisborne) or [Molesworth Street Kindergarten](#) (North Melbourne) contact the NSEY Office on 9306 1662 or email us at office@nseyc.org.au.
- To register for long day care at Glenroy Hub Children's Centre, go to the [Merri-bek Council website](#) or call 9240 1111.

You can also pick up enrolment forms from our office, our kindergartens or school offices. If you need any assistance to register, please contact our enrolments team on 9306 1662.

Some children will be eligible for Pre-Prep in 2026. Please let the council or our enrolments team know if you think your child is eligible (more information on page 3).

Important dates



- 3rd September - Early Childhood Educators' Day
- 4th September - Indigenous Literacy Day
- 8th September - International Literacy Day
- 11th September - RUOK Day
- 17th September - Australian Citizenship Day
- 20th Sep–5th Oct: Term 3 School Holidays

School term dates for 2025/26

Term 3	Monday 21 July - Friday 19 September
Term 4	Monday 6 October - Friday 19 December
Term 1 2026	Tuesday 27 January - Thursday 2 April
Term 2 2026	Monday 20 April - Friday 26 June 2026



For more information about our services, for help with enrolling, or any other queries please contact us on 9306 1662 or email office@nseyc.org.au and we'll be happy to help!



Pre-Prep eligibility for 2026

Did you know that “Pre-Prep” will be available for some children at our kindergartens from 2026? Pre-Prep offers a longer kindergarten program in the year before school, which means there will be more time for children to deepen their learning and development.

Pre-Prep starts next year across Victoria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, children who have had contact with Child Protection, or any child accessing Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning in 2025.

Our kindergarten services will be offering between 22.5 and 25 hours of Pre-Prep for eligible children in 2026.

What is Pre-Prep? How is it different from a Four-Year-Old kindergarten program?

Over the next ten years, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is becoming Pre-Prep, with programs gradually increasing from 15 to 30 hours per week. Some children will be eligible in 2026 or 2028 (see below), and eventually all children will access Pre-Prep.

Pre-Prep offers a longer program in the year before school, which means there will be more time for children to deepen their learning and development.

Pre-Prep is a play-based learning program led by qualified teachers. Like Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, Pre-Prep will follow the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

The only difference between Pre-Prep and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is the number of hours per week that are available.

**More hours,
more learning,
more play**



**Best Start
Best Life**

KINDERGARTEN
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How many hours can my child access?

Children who are eligible for Pre-Prep can access between 22.5 and 25 hours per week, depending on the service they attend.

Is there a cost for the additional hours?

No, all NSEY sessional kindergarten programs (including Pre-Prep) are delivered free, at no cost to families.

Will my child attend a separate program to the rest of their Four-Year-Old peers?

No. The way we are structuring the timetable means that children attending the Pre-Prep program will attend alongside other Four-Year-Old children (and in some cases, Three-Year-Old children if it is a mixed 3 and 4-Year-Old program) and will have the same teachers. Other families will not be aware of which children are attending the Pre-Prep.

If you are unsure about your child's eligibility or would like more information, call our enrolments team on 03 9306 1662. You can also read more about Pre-Prep on the Victorian Government's website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/preprep>



Child Safe Standards in Victoria

Child Safe Standards apply in Victoria to 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. Find out about the latest Child Safety reforms by visiting <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

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

Changes to Child Safety regulations

From 1 September 2025, national reforms will further strengthen child safety in early childhood education and care services across Australia, with faster incident reporting, updated digital policies and clearer regulatory expectations.

These changes reflect the findings of Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework and the sector-wide commitment to embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations into the governance, practice and culture of early learning environments. You can read about the changes on the [Australian Department of Education website](#).

A new comprehensive [Early Childhood Worker Registration Scheme](#) with national coverage is also being established.

On 2 July 2025, the Victorian Government commissioned an independent Rapid Child Safety Review in response to allegations of child sexual abuse in early childhood, education and care settings. The findings of this Review will inform further changes, and we will share this information with you as it becomes available.

It is unacceptable that children experience harm or abuse in the settings they are entrusted to, and we at NSEY welcome the renewed focus on improving systems and regulations that are essential for keeping children safe.



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.



NSEY Staff Conference 2025

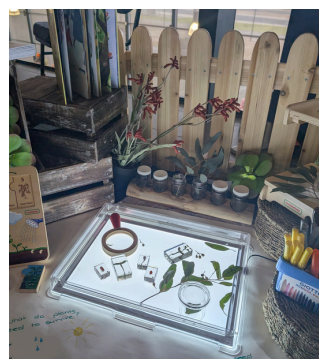
We recently held our annual Staff Conference, a chance for our teams to step away from their services, share in professional learning, and connect with colleagues from across the organisation. The event was held at the Hume Global Learning Centre in Craigieburn.

It was an action-packed day full of inspiration, empowerment and a little bit of challenge, courtesy of our fabulous guest speakers, including:

- Psychotherapist, author and educator **Rebecca Harris**, who spoke about child mental health, and how to and work with the impacts of early trauma and adversity
- Clinical Psychologist **Kate Barelle**, who spoke about educator wellbeing and the importance of looking after ourselves and each other at every level
- our very own Teaching and Learning Facilitator **Linda Hyett**, who spoke about the environment as the 'third teacher', providing inspiration and practical ideas to create learning spaces that respond to the local context, and
- early childhood consultant **Sarah Louise Nelson**, who talked about the concept of 'Professional Love' and how genuine connection, trust, and care form the foundation of both child safety and professional wellbeing.

We also had a trade fair where some of our early childhood partners and suppliers set-up displays of their resources, with representatives from Modern Teaching Aids, Bellbird, FKA Children's Services, and Sister Sensory, as well as our in-house 'pick and mix' style loose parts shop.

The room was buzzing throughout the day, with lots of laughter, good food, hugs, conversations, provocations and (as has become a tradition at our conferences) a big group singalong led by our Communication and Engagement Manager and singer/songwriter Bec Howell.



Thank you so much to all of our presenters and exhibitors, our staff who attended, and our Management and Administration team members who contributed to making the event a success (special mention to Aleyda for all of her work behind the scenes!).



News from our early learning teams



'Exceeding' rating for Coolaroo South Kindergarten

Coolaroo South Kindergarten at Coolaroo South Primary School has undergone its first Assessment and Rating against the National Quality Standard since coming under the management of NSEY, and have achieved a rating of 'Exceeding' overall, from a previous rating of 'Meeting'. Huge congratulations to teachers Huma & Senem and the whole team for this recognition of their commitment to quality outcomes for children, which they demonstrate every day. Below are some highlights from the report:

"Quality practices were evident throughout the service, supporting a strong sense of continuity, belonging, and security for each child. Warm and trusting relationships supported all children to freely engage within the play-based curriculum and contributed to a welcoming and inclusive environment."

"Connections with the community were established and used to enhance each child's learning and development. Educators strove to understand the individual needs of children and families attending the service and those of the wider community."

"The co-location of the kindergarten within the school promoted strong professional collaborative relationships that supported continuity of learning for children and their families and assisted children and families to feel prepared and confident about future transitions."

NSEY at the Melbourne University Education Careers Expo

The Northern Schools Early Years team were delighted to participate in the Melbourne University Education Careers Expo recently. The Expo aimed to foster meaningful connections between teacher candidates and future employers - and that we did!

The Early Years students who will be graduating this year were so excited to learn about the wonderful impact and work of the NSEY. Our team shared information about our integrated service delivery model of "kindergartens on school sites", working alongside schools, Allied health, Maternal Child Health nurses and social workers, as well as the many supports our graduates receive such as coaching and mentoring and progression opportunities. The upcoming graduate teachers were so inspired and excited to take up opportunities within the NSEY. We look forward to participating in more of these types of events as part of our Workforce Development Strategy.





News from our early learning teams - continued

Celebrating Book Week

We recently celebrated Book Week across our services, with the theme of "Book an Adventure"! Even our Management and Administration team dressed up as our favourite adventure book characters and had a morning tea to celebrate (top photo).



Back row:

Gaganpreet as 'Huckleberry Finn', Jen as 'Doctor Dog', Rose as 'Little Red Riding Hood', Deb as 'Alice in Wonderland', Linda as 'Harry Potter', Sophia as 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe', and Katie as 'Giraffes Can't Dance'.

Front row:

Zosia as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', Aleyda as 'Ratatouille', Sigi as 'Thelma the Unicorn', Bec as Dorothy from 'The Wizard of Oz'.

NSEY presents at 'Landscape Design for Children's Wellbeing' seminar

Linda Hyett, our Teaching and Learning Facilitator and Sigi Hyett, our CEO were proud to present at the 'Landscape Design for Children's Wellbeing' seminar recently, hosted by Jeavons Landscape Architects.

The theme for the conference was "Landscape in Schools - A Children-First Approach" (a topic we could talk about for days!).

It was a wonderful opportunity to share some of our key learnings with a vast array of stakeholders who influence the development of children's outdoor play spaces. Thank you to Mary Jeavons and Bruce Grillmeier for the invitation to present!





Supporting children in times of crisis

There is a lot happening in the world at the moment, and much of it is impacting our communities directly. Serious issues like conflict, disaster and climate change can cause fear, worry and anxiety, even for very young children. Without parents always being aware, children and young people may be exposed to news and media relating to big global problems.



Children always look to their parents for a sense of safety and security – even more so in times of crisis. Your child's kindergarten teacher can also help, so let them know if you think your child is feeling worried or anxious.

UNICEF provides useful tips on how to talk to children about conflict and war, which you can read here: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war>

Help us by completing the Parent Opinion Survey



Each year, parents and carers of children enrolled in a funded kindergarten program are invited by the Department of Education to provide their feedback and views about their satisfaction with their child's kindergarten program. The feedback from parents and carers provides valuable information that is used to plan improvement in kindergarten programs and education offerings. At NSEY we use this information to work out where things are going well and where we need to make improvements.

The survey usually takes place in October. It takes about 20 minutes to complete, and is usually available in a range of community languages. The survey is completely voluntary and anonymous.

The response rates across many of our kindergartens have been quite low in the past, which means we miss out on this valuable information. We would love it if more parents could take the time to give us their feedback (however we also know that parents are extremely busy and it can be hard to find the time!).

When the survey opens this year, if you would like to complete it but feel you need some assistance, please let the kindergarten team know, or visit our enrolments team at 208a Hilton Street and they can support you.