



Chairo Christian School

Learning Framework

PAKENHAM CAMPUS
ELC, Pre-Kinder and Kinder



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Early Years Learning Framework	2
Identity	2
Community	2
Wellbeing	3
Learning	3
Communication	3
When should I send my child to kindergarten?	4
What year is my child eligible for kindergarten?	4
How do I know if my child is ready for kindergarten?	5
Additional funding for children with additional needs	5

Early Years Learning Framework

While curriculum is important within early childhood education at Chairo, it is not the key focus in our ELC (Early Learning Centre)—the children are. A meaningful, integrated, emerging curriculum linking to the Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being, and Becoming) is the most beneficial to children's learning across all developmental domains. Play is the main focus, as children journey through life to explore the beauty of God's love and their uniqueness as created beings made in His image.

The programs offered are carefully and thoughtfully planned to properly cover all five learning outcomes stated. These are: Identity, Community, Well Being, Learning and Communication. Within these learning outcomes, the eight practice principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework are embraced. These have been identified to support and sustain practice to enhance children's development towards achieving the learning outcomes, including:

- Family-centred practice
- Partnerships with professionals
- High expectations for every child
- Equity and diversity
- Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- Integrated and intentional teaching and learning approaches
- Assessment for learning and development
- Reflective practice

Identity

At Chairo, we believe that building a strong sense of identity in children can be accomplished through:

- An understanding of who God is as the Creator of mankind and the natural world (Genesis 1:26-27)
- An understanding of who they are as created beings made in the image of their Maker, therefore being unique and valued
- An understanding of their responsibilities towards others: care, empathy and respect.

Community

We believe that because children are part of humanity, they are equal before God, born into families by God's design (Genesis 2:24-25), and belonging to community groups at large. Children are capable and competent, and they are able to contribute to the community by becoming the people and fulfilling the purposes that God has designed. Ways in which children contribute to the community within our ELC are demonstrated when they:

- take on tasks in groups (initiating and following direction);
- volunteer to ask and answer questions (contributing to learning);
- share and take turns; and
- show concern and care for others.

Wellbeing

We believe that although all people are born into a fallen world and are therefore sinful (Romans 3:23), children are capable of growing and can be nurtured in a healthy way. This is achieved through the development of strong relationships with the ELC educators; the greater school community; parents and extended family; and the community at large, as well as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Early social and emotional development helps to lay the foundations for future mental health and wellbeing, and for physical health and learning. Physically, this includes the development of fine and gross motor skills and coordination. Emotionally and psychologically, this includes the development of resilience and healthy self-concept, and spiritually this includes growing in their understanding that this is God's world and that they have purpose and value within God's plan.

Learning

For children, learning is a process of discovery—about God, the world and who they are—through the *guided unfolding* of teachers and parents. Children are active learners who learn best when encouraged to be involved, given choices, and presented with a variety of opportunities. Children's natural curiosity and creativity are fostered by encouraging them to use their five senses to explore the world around them, to inquire, plan, collaborate, grapple with, and solve problems.

Communication

Through the development of relationships that are built on the basis of a relationship with God and collaborating with parents, being positive, encouraging, inclusive and purposeful, children will be able to express themselves verbally and in other ways through a variety of experiences such as visual arts, performing arts and literacy.

These learning outcomes are met through play. Educators observe and interact with the children to enhance and develop their individual abilities and capacity to learn. Literacy and numeracy, science and arts are included in the internal and external environments of the Kindergarten programs. Contributions from the greater community, with visits from the fire brigade, police and ambulance services, are also extremely valued.

When should I send my child to kindergarten?

Research shows that engaging children in high-quality learning experiences benefits all children and their families and can improve a child's learning and development outcomes, emotional wellbeing, longer-term educational and social outcomes, and life experience. It is vital that children receive these benefits when they are emotionally and socially ready for the experience.

The state government provides funding to subsidise fifteen hours of kindergarten for each child in the year before school. A second year of kindergarten is available for children who meet the eligibility criteria, and are deemed to have a developmental delay in at least two areas. It is important to note that the majority of children are only eligible for **one year** of funded kindergarten. Children who withdraw from a funded program once they commence are not eligible for a second year anywhere in Victoria.

Children are eligible to attend kindergarten if they are turning four before the end of April in any given year. Some parents choose to wait an extra year, especially if their child is born between January and April. The conversations about when a child is ready for kindergarten, and when a child is ready for school, need to take place before the child begins their funded kindergarten year. This decision is critical and has long-reaching implications.

Maternal and Child Health Services staff and kindergarten staff provide valuable information to parents about when to begin the more formal educational journey. As each child is only eligible for one year of funded kindergarten, it is important to determine when they would benefit most from starting school and then enrol to attend kindergarten the year before that. Some families may choose to enrol in pre-kinder the year prior to their funded kindergarten program.

It is important that families take the time to make an informed decision now. Please take the opportunity to visit kindergarten open days to discuss this with qualified teachers or early childhood educators. Alternatively, you could talk to your pre-kinder teacher, long day care provider or local maternal and child health nurse.

What year is my child eligible for kindergarten?

'Think carefully about when your child is likely to start school, and therefore when is the best time for the child to have a kindergarten experience.' (DEECD, 2011)

If your child was born in the ranges below	Earliest year eligible to attend school	Earliest year eligible to attend funded four-year-old kindergarten	Earliest year eligible to attend unfunded three-year-old pre-kindergarten
1.05.2011 – 30.04.2012	2017	2016	2015
1.05.2012 – 30.04.2013	2018	2017	2016
1.05.2013 – 30.04.2014	2019	2018	2017
1.05.2014 – 30.04.2015	2020	2019	2018
1.05.2015 – 30.04.2016	2021	2020	2019

Children are required to start school by the time they turn six. However, if your child was born between the start of January and the end of April, you may choose to defer sending him or her. For example, if your child turns four on 1 April, you may choose to have them attend the following year.

Children are funded by the state government for **one year** of kindergarten in the year before they commence school, and those who withdraw from a state funded four-year-old kindergarten program *once commenced* are not funded for a second year anywhere in Victoria. Parents therefore need to plan ahead and work back from the year of school commencement. Note: a second year of funding can still be applied for if a child has significant developmental delays in two or more areas.

How do I know if my child is ready for kindergarten?

There are many factors to consider when thinking about sending your child to kindergarten, including emotional maturity and social confidence. Questions to ask yourself include:

- Can my child separate easily from me?
- Can my child be understood by other people?
- Can my child express his or her needs clearly?
- Does my child have the stamina to attend and enjoy a full kindergarten session?

Please speak to a maternal child health nurse, kindergarten teacher or pre-school field officer if you are unsure of your child's readiness. Children who turn four between January and April in the year they attend kindergarten can often struggle and will be with mainly older children.

Children are not able to withdraw and recommence in a state-funded place once they start their kindergarten year. If they have two or more significant developmental delays they may be eligible for a second year of funding. However, funding will not be available if a child is 'not ready' for kindergarten. Parents are advised to determine when they want their child to attend school and work back from there with regards to kindergarten attendance.

Additional funding for children with additional needs

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services offer supplementary assistance to kindergartens to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in the kindergarten program. Applications are made by the kindergarten teacher in consultation with parents, early childhood intervention agencies, and pre-school field officers. Applications are made in the year prior to the child starting kindergarten and strict criteria exist for an application to be made. Please speak to the pre-school field officer on 5624 2540 for further information regarding funding availability for children with special needs.