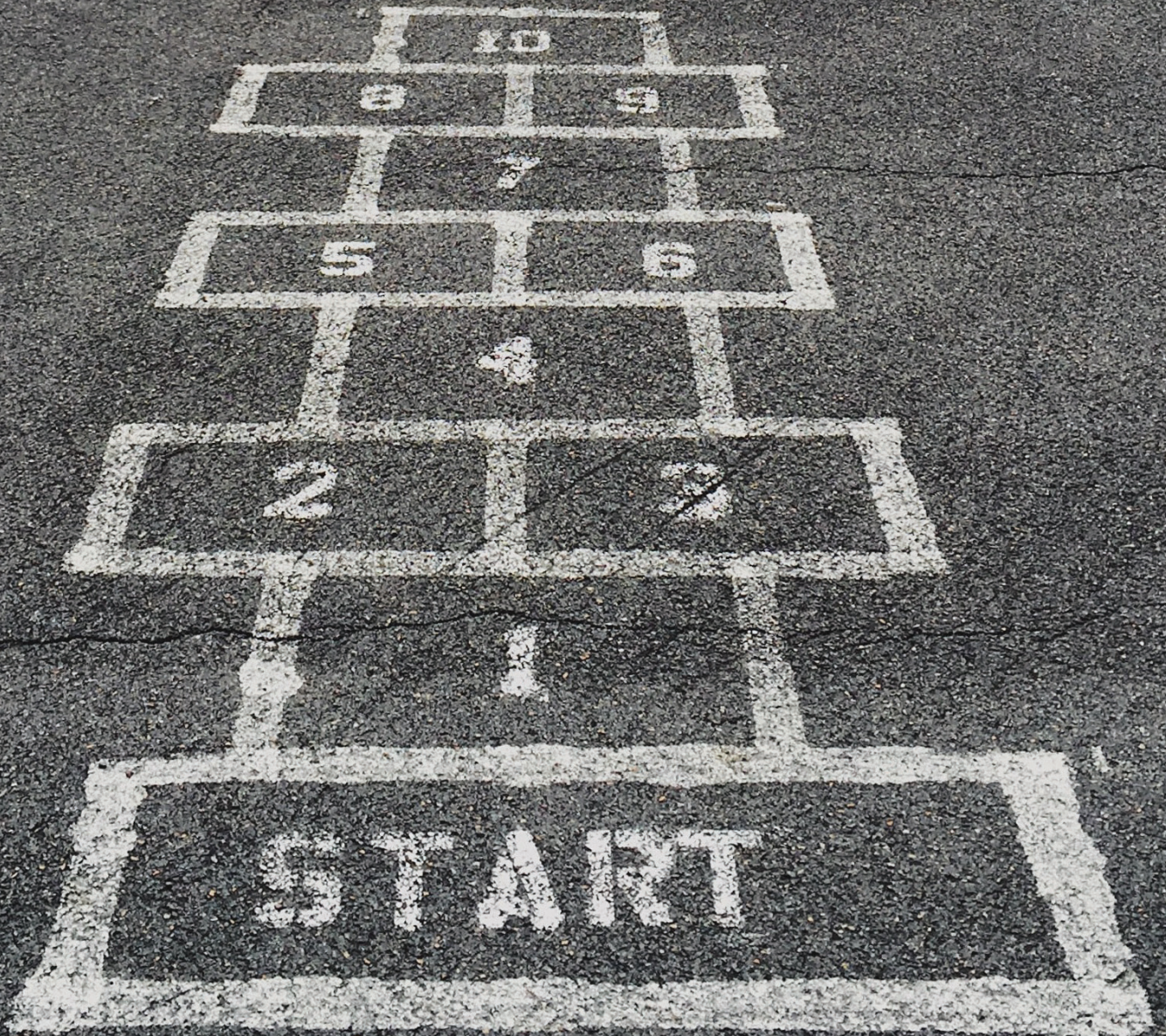


RESOURCE BOOKLETS for Kinship Carers

Education





State Schools' Relief

State Schools' Relief is a not-for-profit organisation that improves the lives of tens of thousands of disadvantaged Victorian students, and their families, each year.

One in ten Victorian state school students are supported by State Schools' Relief.

SSR's simple and practical service ensures that all students can attend school in warmth and comfort with a greater sense of belonging and improved self-esteem, which in turn enhances their educational engagement.

State Schools' Relief's principles

- **Unity**
- **Equality**
- **Dignity**
- **Belonging**

Issues such as poverty, neglect, family illness, abuse and homelessness continue to affect many Victorian families.

SSR provides government school students with new uniforms, footwear and educational resources, including learning devices.

SSR works side by side with all Victorian primary, secondary, specialist and language schools to ensure that any students facing hardship have the necessary items they require for school.

Ensuring that every young person is able to participate with the same pride and dignity as their peers.

Email: contact@ssr.net.au

Phone: 03 8769 8400, 8.30am–4.30pm Mon-Fri

Website: <https://stateschoolsrelief.org.au/>

Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three-year-old children where programs are offered by a qualified teacher. Some services will be able to offer your child a place in a program for four year olds or a mixed age group.

Applications for Early Start Kindergarten funding are made by the service on your behalf and the grant is paid directly to the service.

IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE?

Your child is eligible if they are aged three by 30 April in the year they will start kindergarten, and:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred to Child FIRST), or
- your child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (for more information, see the brochure Early Start Kindergarten for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children).

HOW DO I ENROL MY CHILD?

You can enrol your child by contacting a kindergarten service near you and asking to access Early Start Kindergarten. Alternatively your Child FIRST or Child Protection worker can do this on your behalf, or a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) in your nearest Department of Education & Training office can help you apply.

WHEN TO APPLY

You can enrol your child by notifying the kindergarten you wish to attend or your local council of your child's eligibility for Early Start Kindergarten.

If your child's birthday falls between 1 January and 30 April, you will need to determine the year your child will start school to work out which year they will access Early Start Kindergarten. You have the choice of whether your child attends school in the year they turn 5 or 6. Subsequently, they can access Early Start Kindergarten in the year they turn 3 or 4.

To find a kindergarten service or child care centre with a funded program visit www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice or contact your local council. You can find out the phone number for your local council by visiting <https://www.viccouncils.asn.au/find-your-council/council-contacts-list>.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE ABOUT EARLY START KINDERGARTEN?

For more information about Early Start Kindergarten, visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/early-start-kindergarten>, contact your regional Department of Education & Training office (see below for contact details of regional offices)

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACTS - Call 1800 338 663

North-Eastern Victoria – Benalla/Glen Waverley/Ringwood/Seymour/Shepparton/Wodonga

North-Western Victoria – Bendigo/Coburg/Greensborough/Mildura/Swan Hill

South-Eastern Victoria – Bentleigh/Dandenong/Frankston/Leongatha/Moe/Sale/Warragul

South-Western Victoria – Ballarat/Footscray/Geelong/Horsham/Keilor/Warrnambool



Raising expectations

Everyone's path to TAFE or uni is different. Raising Expectations is here to help care leavers find theirs.

Raising Expectations supports young people in care and care leavers to access and succeed at TAFE and university. It is a collaboration between the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Federation University Australia, La Trobe University and Swinburne University of Technology. The Victorian Department of Education and Training is the program's funding partner.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Raising Expectations partner universities understand the unique needs of care leaver students and offer tailored support to assist them to access their chosen course or program and to support and services that will help them to succeed.

Partner universities each offer financial, academic and personal supports to care leaver students.

Working collaboratively with partner universities, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare raises awareness of care leaver student needs in the community and education sectors. The Centre collaborates with the multiple sectors and services that work with young people with a care experience to increase the knowledge and skills of professionals and carers about the support and opportunities available to care leavers.

800+ FEE-FREE TAFE COURSES FOR CARE LEAVERS

A Victorian Government initiative, the Skills First Youth Access Initiative gives eligible care leavers aged 24 and under access to over 800 TAFE courses without paying tuition fees.

To find out more about accessing TAFE, contact hello@raisingexpectations.com.au or visit the Skills First Youth Access Initiative website.

GETTING STARTED

Visit the website: the Supporters page is a great place for teachers, workers, careers practitioners and carers to get information.

Visit the website with your young person: the Students page covers lots of FAQs.

CONNECT WITH A UNIVERSITY

Visit the University Partners page for more information on what they each offer.

Email: hello@raisingexpectations.com.au

<https://www.raisingexpectations.com.au/about>

LOOKOUT Education Support Centres

LOOKOUT Education Support Centres are designed to boost the capability of early childhood services, schools, carers, child protection practitioners and out-of-home care services to improve educational outcomes for children and young people living in out-of-home care.

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND STUDENTS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Research indicates that children and young people living in out-of-home care are at greater risk of poorer educational outcomes than those in the broader community. Young children and students in out-of-home care are at greater risk of:

- poor kindergarten and school attendance and engagement
- failing to develop foundational educational skills and reaching expected benchmarks
- disengaging from compulsory schooling
- not achieving any academic qualification.

SUPPORT IN KINDERGARTEN

LOOKOUT Early Childhood Learning Advisors (ECLAs) facilitate and monitor children in out-of-home care's participation in two years of high-quality kindergarten, promote Early Start Kindergarten and a supportive transition to school.

In recognition that children in out-of-home care experience complex and intersecting barriers to education, and are often supported by several professionals and carers, ECLAs play a coordinating partnership role.

ECLAs promote the Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care where 11 signatories have agreed to prioritise the children's health, wellbeing and engagement of children in high quality early learning programs.

SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

LOOKOUT centres assist children and young people in schools through:

- professional development with staff to support students educational and socio-emotional needs
- advice to schools to support individual students
- reviewing enrolment decisions that aren't in a student's best interests
- facilitating opportunities for students to participate fully in school life (including camps, excursions and extracurricular activities).

LOOKOUT centres focus on professional development, advocacy, expert advice and support to build the capability of professionals who work with children and young people in care, making sure education is at the centre of decisions made about care, placement and future.

CONTACT

- South Western Victoria Region - Principal: Andrew Kohane lookout.swv@education.vic.gov.au
- South Eastern Victoria Region - Principal: Murray Geddes lookout.sev@education.vic.gov.au
- North western Victoria Region - Principal: Marise Boff lookout.nwv@education.vic.gov.au
- North Eastern Victoria Region - Principal: David Rose lookout.nev@education.vic.gov.au



Education
and Training

Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)

There are many programs and resources available to help schools meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities.

The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) gives government schools extra funding to help them support students with disability and high needs.

Schools use the funding in different ways, depending on the needs of each child.

This can include:

- specialist staff, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech pathologists
- specialist equipment like assistive technology
- training for teachers so they know more about your child's disability or additional needs
- specialist teachers
- education support staff such as teacher aides.

WHO IS THE PSD FUNDING FOR

PSD funding is available for schools who are supporting children with disability and high needs. There are seven categories of eligibility criteria.

- Severe behaviour disorder
- Intellectual disability
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Severe language difficulties with critical educational needs

For more information about the PSD eligibility criteria speak to your child's school or visit the website <https://www.vic.gov.au/program-students-disabilities-psd>

APPLYING FOR PSD FUNDING

If you think your child's school could apply for one of the seven categories of the PSD, talk to the school principal.

If the principal thinks it's possible to apply for funding, they'll set up a student support group. You'll be part of the group.

The student support group helps find the best category for the application. They help gather any other documents – such as reports – to support the application.

IF THE PSD APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL

If the application is successful, your child's school will get the funding. The student support group will meet to talk about how your child's learning and support plan and how best to support your child's needs.

IF THE PSD APPLICATION IS NOT SUCCESSFUL

If the PSD application is not successful, there are other supports available.

The student support group will meet to talk about how best to support your child's needs and also discuss your child's learning and support plan.

Schools must make reasonable adjustments to help meet your child's needs. Reasonable adjustments are made regardless of PSD funding.

Schools get funding through the Student Resource Package for every child. This funding is provided so that schools can meet the needs of all students.

DISABILITY INCLUSION

Visit Disability Inclusion: extra support for children with disability for more information.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/program-students-disabilities-psd>



Education
and Training

Supported Playgroups

Giving you the opportunity to develop your parenting skills and confidence to support your child's wellbeing and development.

Supported Playgroups are a free program for families across Victoria with children from birth to school age.

A qualified facilitator leads these fun sessions where parents develop their skills and confidence to support their child's wellbeing and development.

At Supported Playgroups, parents and children enjoy a range of fun play opportunities and activities together. Parents also find out about local services and support networks in the community. Eligibility criteria applies.

WHO TO CONTACT

To find out more about Supported Playgroup, speak with your local Maternal and Child Health nurse or contact your local council

BULLY STOPPERS PROGRAM

A program that supports students, parents and carers, teachers and principals in working together to make sure schools are safe and supportive places at Department of Education and Training

<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/supported-playgroups>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/pledge.aspx>



Education
and Training

Koorie Engagement support officers

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) are an important support for Aboriginal students in the Victorian state education system.

The role of KESOs is to engage and support Aboriginal students, their families, teachers and school staff. Koorie Education Coordinators assign a KESO to each school with Aboriginal students.

KESO contact information can be obtained through each region's Koorie Education Coordinator

Schools, parents and community can obtain assistance with Koorie cultural inclusion, Koorie education guidance and support through their region by contacting the Koorie Education Coordinators (KEC) with enquiries.

Service Support Managers (SSM) can also be contacted to assist with referrals for Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESO).

KECs are able to arrange for a regional KESO to be assigned to any school where contact with Koorie families may be requested.

KESOs are area-based professionals who are members of the local Aboriginal community with an understanding of Aboriginal culture and the history of their community.

KESOs provide advice to schools about culturally inclusive learning environments, coordination of services to support engagement and improved outcomes for Koorie children and young people.

KESOs work with families, communities, education and service providers to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to participate fully in education. They support students and families through transitions across all learning stages where appropriate: into early years, primary, secondary and further education.

North-Eastern Victoria

Email: enquiries@education.vic.gov.au /Phone: 1800 338 663

North-Western Victoria

Email: enquiries@education.vic.gov.au /Phone: 1800 338 663

South-Eastern Victoria

Email: enquiries@education.vic.gov.au /Phone: 1800 338 663

South-Western Victoria

Email: enquiries@education.vic.gov.au /Phone: 1800 338 663



Education
and Training

Navigator program

The Navigator program supports disengaged young people aged 12 to 17 years old to re-engage with education and learning and works with them to get back to school.

- Navigator supports disengaged young people to return to education and learning.
- Students enrolled in or intending to enrol in a Victorian government and non-government schools and education settings are eligible to participate in Navigator.
- Participation in Navigator is by referral.
- Consent from the young person's parent or carer must be sought before the referral is made. It is strongly encouraged that the young person is also made aware of and supportive of the referral.
- In certain circumstances, a referral can be submitted without consent.
- Anyone can refer a young person to Navigator and this policy sets out specific requirements and processes for referrers, based on whether they are:
 - o from the young person's current school or education setting
 - o if they are the young person's parent or carer
 - o if they are any other person (i.e. not the young person's parent, carer or from their school or education setting).
- Schools are responsible for supporting the re-engagement of Navigator participants in education.

Navigator supports disengaged young people by working with the young person, their family and support network to address issues underlying disengagement and help them re-engage with their education.

Navigator is delivered by contracted community service organisations that work closely with local schools and Department area teams. In each area, the program is tailored to its local community and services.

Participation in Navigator is by referral and anyone can make a referral. Referrals must be made by completing an online referral form. The local area Navigator Coordinator can also assist with making a referral. navigator@edumail.vic.gov.au

The following information outlines the requirements relating to referring a young person to Navigator.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A young person must be eligible to participate in Navigator. To be eligible, a young person must meet the following 3 criteria:

- be 12 to 17 years of age (inclusive)
- be enrolled in, or intend to enrol in a Victorian education setting (including non-government schools)
- have attended 30% or less of the previous school term, or equivalent, or not be attending an education setting at all.

CONSENT FROM PARENT, CARER OR MATURE MINOR FOR THE REFERRAL

Participation in Navigator is optional and consent from the young person's parent or carer must be sought before the referral is made. It is strongly encouraged that the young person is also made aware of and supportive of the referral.

Where a parent or carer is unable or unwilling to consent to the referral and the young person is a mature minor for the purpose of making a decision about a referral to Navigator, the young person may consent to the referral instead.

Parent or carer consent to submit a referral is important as Navigator is built on a model of strong partnerships between young people, their family, the education provider, community service organisations and the Department. These groups work in collaboration to address and overcome the young person's barriers to educational engagement. Establishing strong partnerships between these groups from the outset is integral to the success of the program.

Contact : navigator@edumail.vic.gov.au

Important Department of Education Resources for Children and Young people in OOHC

Kindergarten Inclusion Support

Support is available for funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs.

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS) is designed to contribute to the delivery of quality kindergarten programs in line with the National Quality Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

The support from KIS programs is in addition to the existing resources available to the kindergarten staff and may not fully cover all costs.

The KIS program:

- provides assistance to complement early childhood teacher knowledge and skills, while acknowledging their expertise in supporting children's learning and development
- supports early childhood teachers to build their capacity to develop and implement an inclusive program
- supports early childhood teachers to contribute to positive outcomes for children, as defined in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- responds to the child's abilities and strengths, as well as their needs by supporting the kindergarten to enhance their learning and development.

CONTACTS

For more information about the KIS disability and complex medical needs program, contact the regional advisory group convenor for your area:

South western Victoria region

Gateways Support Services, Geelong West – (03) 5221 2984

Uniting Lentara, Broadmeadows – (03) 9351 3600

Pinarc Disability Support, Ballarat – (03) 5329 1300

Uniting Wimmera, Horsham – (03) 5382 6789

South eastern Victoria region

Uniting Gippsland, Leongatha – (03) 5662 5150

Latrobe City Council, Morwell – (03) 5128 5645

Yooralla, Cranbourne – (03) 5990 9640

North western Victoria region

Noah's Ark Inc, East Bendigo – 0433 884 052

Uniting Lentara, Broadmeadows – (03) 9351 3600

Mallee Family Care, Mildura – (03) 5023 5966

North eastern Victoria region

SCOPE, Benalla – (03) 5762 7121

Uniting Connections, Ringwood – (03) 8870 4017

A Positive Start to School Resource Kit

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/professionals/Transition-to-School-Resource-Kit.pdf>

The Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit (the Kit) includes practical guidance for early childhood professionals working with children and families while they transition to school.

Out of home care Education Commitment

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/PartneringAgreement.pdf>

The Early Childhood Agreement outlines the shared responsibility for ensuring all children up to five years of age in statutory OOHC in Victoria are engaged with Maternal and Child Health services and high-quality early education and care.

The Partnering Agreement aims to ensure that:

- processes are in place to actively support the educational achievement of every child and young person in OOHC
- there is a coordinated approach to supporting the educational, health and social, cultural and emotional needs of children and young people in OOHC
- all parties understand each other's roles and responsibilities and work cooperatively and in the best interests of the child and young person
- strategies are implemented to improve outcomes related to student enrolment, attendance, educational achievement, case planning, retention and

Koorie Individual learning plans

<https://www.deadlystory.com/page/identity/education/2-school/assistance-available-to-koorie-students/individual-education-plans>

Victorian government schools are required to work with Aboriginal students and families to develop Individual Education Plans or IEPs. IEPs should state the specific interests, needs and goals of each student and provide a plan about how and when these will be achieved, what support will be provided and who is responsible. IEPs should be reviewed regularly, with both the student and their family.

For more information you can contact your local Koorie Education Coordinator through your Department Regional Office. Children in out-of-home care can also access support from Lookout Centre staff in developing an IEP.

Individual Education Plans Guide

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/individual-education-plans-ieps/resources>

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN? (IEP)

An IEP describes the adjustments, goals and strategies designed to meet the educational needs of an individual student to enable them to reach their potential. An IEP is essential in guiding the educational planning and monitoring of a student's unique learning needs. It is the practice and process that will have the greatest impact in supporting students.

WHICH STUDENTS REQUIRE AN IEP?

IEPs are required for:

- students in statutory Out-of-home care (OOHC)
- Koorie students (as required by Marrung — Victorian Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026)
- students supported under individualised disability funding programs including the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) and Disability Inclusion
- students in youth justice (custody and community)
- students in re-engagement programs under contract arrangements with another school or provider
- students undertaking Flexible Learning Options (FLOs).

WHY IS AN IEP IMPORTANT?

An individual education plan is important because it:

- supports the school and classroom teacher to develop a meaningful learning program for individual students and to track progress against SMART goals
- provides an opportunity to share information between school, student, family and other support professionals
- helps schools to determine resources required to achieve the student's learning goals
- promotes student confidence and engagement through involvement in the process.

An IEP also serves to establish the process by which teachers and schools are meeting their legal obligations and accountabilities for students with additional learning needs under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.



KCV's community resources for kinship carers booklets

1. Planning for more effective access visits
2. How to run a successful support group and be an effective carer advocate/representative
3. The Orange Door services
4. Support for informal kinship carers
5. Grief and loss
6. How to make a complaint – and get heard
7. Court orders – the role of Child Protection and the courts
8. Education
9. Financial support for kinship carers
10. Rights
11. For children & young people with an emotional or physical disability
12. Assistance for those coping with suicide
13. LGBTQIA+ families & communities
14. Mental health and family relationships
15. Camps & respite
16. Carers' wellbeing
17. Legal community
18. Local governments
19. Support for grandparents and non-parents caring for children



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is supported by the Victorian Government.