Dear Families

Important information regarding Towong Shires Council’s Early Years Services.

The Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a kindergarten program in the year before they start school. The funding is a contribution towards meeting the cost of the kindergarten program and is based on the number of children enrolled in the program at either Corryong or Tallangatta Kindergartens.

In 2019, your child will be/is attending our kindergarten program and will be counted as an eligible child when we submit our data as part of reporting requirements to the Department of Education and Training (DET).

Your child can attend only one funded kindergarten program in a single year. If your child is currently attending another children’s service that offers a kindergarten program please draw this to the attention of the other service.

www.towong.vic.gov.au
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WELCOME

This booklet provides valuable information about the Early Years learning experience and will help to prepare for this important time of your child’s life. Please keep it in a safe place as a handy reference for the year. Please note families can apply for a Kindergarten or Long Day Care placement via Council’s online booking system located at www.towong.vic.gov.au.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood is an exciting time to learn through social and interactive play. It is also a great opportunity for families to meet other people and to work with educators to promote a satisfying and long term beneficial educational experience for your child. Council extends a warm welcome to you and your family. In the best interests of your child, Council staff take great pride in the delivery of a quality service that meets the Australian National Learning Framework Standards. You are most welcome to contact your educators to learn more about the learning program or to discuss any concerns you may have. Research has shown that children who participate in a high quality early years programs are more likely to be prepared for formal education.

Educators develop an educational program based on your child’s interests, abilities and emerging skills utilising the early years learning framework alongside their knowledge and understanding of children’s development, learning styles and early childhood research.

KINDERGARTENS

Council operates two kindergartens in Towong Shire. These services are located at Corryong and Tallangatta.

Kindergarten programs are designed to improve your child’s development and social skills, like how to play with other children in a calm, sharing and rewarding way. The program supports children’s self-awareness, respectful relationships, language, literacy and numeracy skills. Kindergarten programs prepare children for school transition.

LONG DAY CARE – Tallangatta Only

Long Day Care applications will require a Centrelink Reference Number (CRN), copies of Birth Certificate, Full Immunisation Statements and an Ezidebit – Direct Debit Form to be provided prior to commencement. No Jab, No Play legislation applies.

Please note that Long Day Care booking requests can take up to 10 working days to process.

For online ‘Tallangatta’ bookings paste the following link into your web browser:

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Towong Shire Council’s Early Years services are guided by the Education and Care services National law (2010) and Regulations (2011), the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Framework and Child Protection protocol.

We aim to raise awareness of our Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander heritage and cultural diversity to allow children to respond to the local, national and international community with respect.

Our children are encouraged to interact with the broader community to enhance and enrich learning experiences to allow ongoing valued partnerships.

We believe that it is imperative to engage with local and regional agencies, schools, health services, libraries, and maternal and child health to enhance children’s development, enabling stronger partnerships and preparedness for continuous learning.

We acknowledge and value the role of parents/guardians in their child’s learning and development to allow us to strengthen partnerships with families to achieve the best possible learning outcome for children. We believe learning is enhanced through family involvement.

We believe in providing learning opportunities to promote and support awareness of sustainability and our responsibility for the natural environment.

We believe that children are competent, capable co-contributors and active participants in their own learning irrespective of individual needs. We offer an environment where each child’s wellbeing, independence and eagerness to experience new opportunities are fostered. We aim to give all children the tools for life-long learning whilst supporting inclusive practice for children of all abilities.

We believe all children of all abilities learn best through play to help guide their own learning outcomes by investigating, experimenting and exploring their environment.

We believe all children need to be exposed to intentional teaching to provide additional and meaningful scaffolding and extended learning experiences.

We believe that our programming should reflect children’s interests to allow extended learning in a happy, safe and secure environment.

We value the importance of building strong foundations in the early years to enhance and extend children’s learning in the five outcomes; identity, wellbeing, community, learning and communication.

We strive to support children, their families and guardians through positive and nurturing interactions to support good health and wellbeing outcomes; with guidance from our Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy.

Council educators are committed to continuous learning of our pedagogical skills. Together, we believe and support children in becoming, belonging, and being part the broader community for life-long learning.

We believe in the importance of creating a safe environment for children with all Council educators having quality professional development in child safety, first aid, anaphylaxis, CPR and wellbeing. All Council educators offer a quality of care for all children by adhering to child/staff ratios for consistent and safe supervision.
CONTACT INFORMATION

In regards to enrolments, fees and payments, please contact the Early Years Team.

Phone: (02) 6071 5100
Fax: (02) 6071 2742
Email: early.years@towong.vic.gov.au
Website: www.towong.vic.gov.au
Address: 32 Towong Street
(PO Box 55)
Tallangatta, VIC 3700

KINDERGARTEN CONTACTS

Tallangatta Kindergarten
Towong Street
Tallangatta VIC 3700
(02) 6071 2282

Corryong Kindergarten
47 Harris Street
Corryong VIC 3707
(02) 6076 1025

Child care only sessions

In the absence of a Kindergarten teacher the service may run as a “child care only” session with Diploma qualified staff. Notification will be provided at the parent sign-in counter should this occur.

A “child care only” session usually occurs due to staff shortages or an unplanned leave of absence. The regular educational program will be maintained on these days.

2019 KINDER TERM DATES

(First Term day for children)

Term 1: 29 January to 5 April
Term 2: 23 April to 28 June
Term 3: 16 July to 20 September
Term 4: 8 October to 20 December

* Each year Kindergartens are provided with four student-free days for professional development, planning and administration, curriculum development, and student assessment and reporting purposes.

FEES

2019 Three-year-old kindergarten fees:
$185 per term

2019 Four-year-old kindergarten fees:
$385 per term

NOTE: Fees are “set term fees” irrespective of the number of days a child attends. Fees are subject to change and are reviewed regularly.

Long Day Care fees:
$93 per day   $46.50 per half day (conditions apply)

* Child care subsidy (CCS) available (if eligible). This will assist in reducing the cost of your child care.

Deposits

No deposit is required for the kindergarten program, however Long Day Care is paid 2 weeks in advance.

To confirm your kindergarten position, all enrolment forms must be completed and submitted by October 1 the year preceding enrolment year.

Concession Card holders

Current concession card may be exempt from kindergarten fees. Please include a copy of your card showing the expiry date.
KINDERGARTEN PAYMENTS

Invoices for Kindergarten fees will be issued either by mail or email. Payment is required by the end of Week 2 of each Term.

Payments can be made:

- **In person at:**
  Towong Shire Council
  32 Towong Street
  Tallangatta VIC 3700

- **Mail:** Post a cheque or money order to:
  Towong Shire Council
  PO BOX 55
  Tallangatta VIC 3700

- **BPAY:** Use the Biller Code and Reference shown on the bottom of your invoice

- **Direct Debit:** Contact our Finance Department on (02) 6071 5100 for details

Non-payment of fees by the end of Week 4 of each term may result in your child’s enrolment being suspended until payment is made or an adequate payment arrangement has been put in place. If you are having payment difficulties please contact our Finance Department on (02) 6071 5100 to make a suitable and confidential payment arrangement. If payment is not received and there is no payment arrangement in place any outstanding fees will be referred to debt collection.

LONG DAY CARE PAYMENTS

Parents are required to complete an Ezidebit – Direct Debit form in order to make payment for Long Day Care Services. Payment will be direct debited from either a bank account or credit card on either a weekly or fortnightly basis, as nominated.

Fees exceeding a month in arrears will result in your child not being permitted to attend care until full payment is made or an adequate payment arrangement has been put in place.

OPTIONAL VISIT DAYS

Before your child commences kindergarten or long day care, you have the opportunity to visit the Early Years Service to discuss the process, fees, and learning opportunities for your child.

Your child will be invited to participate in an Orientation Day if attending Kindergarten. These days are particularly helpful for families entering into a new service.

Additional interviews are readily available to families throughout the year.

**Kindergarten Orientation day**

Orientation days (early December) allow families to visit the service after they have officially been offered a kindergarten placement. The Kindergarten Director is happy to discuss general kindergarten programs and routines. For more specific individualised discussion, families can request a private interview by contacting the Kindergarten Director or an Early Years Educator.

**Kindergarten Interview days**

Interview days are held for families to have private discussions with the teacher. It’s a time when families can inform the teachers of their more specific needs, and areas of concern for their child or advise how they can contribute to the kinder year. Council encourages parent and family interaction with kinder children.

**Booking for interview days**

Parent interviews are held in Term One and Term Three. Your Kindergarten Director will advise parents of interview dates. Additional meetings can be made on request, as needed.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Centre Policies
Procedural guidelines are kept in a manual and remain in the Early Years Service for staff and parent reference. The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations 2011 are also available to view.

Children’s records
Children’s enrolment forms and developmental records remain confidential and are available for you to view on request. Parent/teacher interviews will also give you the opportunity to see and discuss your child’s records.

Medical conditions
If your child suffers any medical conditions (especially asthma or anaphylaxis/food allergy), please discuss this with your Kindergarten Director.
Should your child be suffering from an infectious disease or illness please notify the Kindergarten Director.
Parents should keep their child/ren home if they are unwell or have an infectious disease that requires their exclusion from the education and care service.

Collection of children
Only the legal parent/guardian is able to have access to your child. A definition of legal parent/guardian can be found on the enrolment form. Parents/guardians can nominate people to collect their children on the enrolment form.
Parents are to inform the staff if an authorised person will be collecting their child. Authorised person/s will be asked to show identification upon arrival if staff have not met them before.

Custodial issues
Should you require any written information about your child for legal purposes, please submit a written request to the:
Manager Community Services
Towong Shire Council
PO Box 55
Tallangatta VIC 3700.

Parental concerns
The Early Years Service has a policy stating that any concerns should be forwarded to the Kindergarten Director or Lead Educator:
Corryong: 02 60761025
Tallangatta: 02 60712282

Lost property
From time to time, please check for lost property at the Early Years Service.
To avoid lost property, please have your child’s belongings clearly labelled.

Photography/Media
Throughout the year, educators will take photographs of the children to use in the development of student portfolios and in displays and for use in local media.
Educators are sensitive to the religious, cultural beliefs and custodian issues for families.
Parents are requested to indicate if they do not provide consent for photos to be taken on enrolment forms.
COMMENCING KINDERGARTEN OR LONG DAY CARE

Settling in

On the first few days, your child may need your support with settling into the Early Years environment. This can be done by greeting educators inside the service and then saying ‘goodbye’ confidently when you and the staff feel it is time to go. Some children take longer to settle than others. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to your child’s educator.

What your child needs to bring:

- A bag
- A sunhat (in term one and four);
- A change of clothes (labelled);
- A jumper (when appropriate);
- A water bottle; and
- A packed lunch (including fruit and a healthy snack, no sweets).
- Nappies (if attending Long Day Care)
- Baby wipes (if attending Long Day Care)

Please refrain from bringing toys to minimise loss or damage to personal items and please ensure all items are clearly labelled.

Council’s Early Years Service has a healthy eating (nutrition) policy that encourages parents to send along a lunch for their child that includes a variety of healthy foods such as bread, fruit and dairy.

Clothing and footwear

It is best to send your child along in casual, comfortable clothes, suitable for play. This allows them to freely participate in messy experiences such as playing with paint, clay, mud and water. While smocks are supplied, they don’t always prevent clothes from getting dirty.

Runners, shoes or sandals (no thongs) are recommended for safe play. In winter, jackets are needed for outdoor play.

Please ensure all clothing complies with our Sunsmart policy by ensuring clothing allows for covered shoulders (Please no singlets).

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Early years programs are further enhanced for children when families work with the child and educators. This will occur in many different ways. Families can also participate and engage in the service through other facets of the environment and program.

How will I know what is occurring in my child’s program?

Your Early Years Service provides information in the following ways;

- A noticeboard
- Program outline
- Displays in foyers and rooms
- Newsletters
- Handouts
- Student journals
- Interviews
- Transition learning and development statements
- Emails
- Daily interactions.

Friends Group
Early each year, a Parent Activity Group is formed. This group contributes to program planning, the organisation of social occasions and fundraising.

Being part of this valued group is an enjoyable way to find out more about your kindergarten while getting to know the Early Years Educators and other parents.

For more information, please contact your Early Years Educator.

**Supported Playgroup - Corryong**

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting all parents with the knowledge and skills to help their children thrive, from birth onwards. The importance of providing high quality care and stimulation to children from birth is well recognised. During early childhood, the foundations of social, emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing are established to support function and self-regulation before the age of five. Supported Playgroup provides parents with strategies to lead to optimum outcomes for children in a fun, informative and relaxing environment. For bookings and more information phone: **0448 058 108**

**Maternal and Child Health Services**

When you visit a Maternal and Child Health centre, the nurse will review your child’s health, growth and development. The nurse will also talk to you about your own health, and how your experience as a parent is going. The Nurse is also available to complete your child’s 3.5 year check prior to the Kindergarten year.

Maternal and Child Health services are by appointment only. For more information, please contact your closest Maternal and Child Health Service:

- Corryong: **0427 334 448**
- Tallangatta: **0417 535 978**

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**GIVE YOUR CHILD THE BEST START**

The National Quality Framework (NQF), for Early Childhood Education and Care services helps ensure your child is given the best possible start in life. Every state and territory is working to achieve the same quality outcomes for children, no matter where they live.

Ask your Kindergarten Director or educators about **7 QUALITY AREAS** that will help support your child’s start to life. This is very important.

**Ways to participate**

- Ideas to enhance children’s current interests;
- Supply the service with recyclable materials;
- Sharing of own special interests and hobbies, for example art, music, cooking, gardening or storytelling; and
- Sharing cultural activities.

For more information, please contact your early year’s educator.

**Fruit – Corryong only**

To promote healthy eating and foster family involvement, we invite families to join in the fun of a kindergarten session through assisting with cutting up fruit for morning tea. A piece of fruit supplied by each child is washed, chopped and arranged on shared fruit platters for the children. Educators ask that family helpers complete this during drop off or at 10:30am in preparation for our shared morning tea. This is a great opportunity to experience kindergarten through the eyes of your child. Parents are responsible for the supervision of younger siblings, if in attendance, while at the kindergarten.

Have a most enjoyable learning year.
TOWONG SHIRE EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CARE OPERATING HOURS/DAYS

Note: additional care hours may also become available. Families will be advised accordingly.

Days of operation are marked in 🌴 🍃 🌵

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OTHER SERVICES ACROSS THE SHIRE

For all 2019 Bellbridge, Mitta Mitta and Walwa Kindergarten enrolments please contact Community Early Years Childcare (CEYC) by phoning (02) 6056 4399 or email: admin@ceyc.com.au

Christmas closure:

The 2018 Tallangatta Early Years Learning Centre Christmas closure dates will be as follows:

Friday 21 December 2018 – Friday 04 January 2019

2019 Kindergarten enrolments:

Open: 1 August 2018
Close: 1 October 2018

Orientation dates for 2019 Kindergarten Children:

Orientation helps children learn more about the kindergarten environment that they will enjoy throughout 2019. It is also a great opportunity to meet the teacher and make new friends. During early December, Orientation days will occur on a designated day at each service between 9:30am and 11am.

Children will need to bring a hat, water bottle, piece of fruit and light healthy snack for morning tea. Parents are welcome to stay for the session.

Parents are encouraged to spread the word about 2019 enrolment dates and our planned orientation days.