



Access to Early Learning

What is Access to Early Learning?

AEL is an early intervention program funded by the Department of Education and Training, which identifies three-year-old children from families with complex needs and supports their participation in quality, universal kindergarten by addressing barriers to their participation.

The AEL Practitioner will work with parents to select an accessible local kindergarten program for their child, and support the parents and their child throughout the year to attend kindergarten. This can be in a stand-alone kindergarten, or in kindergarten programs delivered in long day care centres. It may also include visiting kindergartens or orientation days with the parent and supporting the child's enrolment in kindergarten.

The AEL Practitioner will support parents by:

- identifying and supporting children and families' access to 15 hours of kindergarten,
- working with families to address any barriers that may prevent their child attending or participating in kindergarten,
- visiting the family in the home to help promote learning through play,
- work with the parent to enhance their understanding of their child's learning and development, and increasing the parent's confidence and ability to respond to their child's needs,
- assisting with the child's transition to four-year-old kindergarten program,
- linking the family with any other support services the parent or child may need.

AEL is distinguished primarily by its outreach service. An experienced facilitator will visit each family, building relationships with parents that encourage effective in-home learning, the child's enrolment and sustained engagement in kindergarten.

The program also fosters important connections and collaboration between the family, the kindergarten service and its educators, and other services to ensure the child is supported.

Children who are eligible for AEL

Children who are or will be at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend a kindergarten program in the Greater Shepparton area and with a minimum of 2 relevant characteristics

- known to Child Protection
- child or parent intellectual or physical disability
- family violence
- mental health issues
- sexual assault
- alcohol and drug abuse.

The families referred to AEL experience complex family circumstances that may mean their Early Start Kindergarten grant alone would be insufficient to sustain attendance and additional support could be provided by AEL.

**To refer to the AEL program please
contact Central Intake on 1800 161 306
or send a referral form to
centralintake@familycare.net.au**

