Is your child ready for 3 year old kinder?

All children who turn 3 years of age before the 30\textsuperscript{th} of April of the year they enrol are eligible for 3 year old kinder.

It is very important however, that families carefully assess whether or not their child is really ready for the start of their kinder journey.

Once a child starts 3 year old kinder, they are then on the path to move into 4 year old kinder the following year and then school the next year.

So, ultimately if a child starts 3 year old kinder too early they most likely will not be ready for 4 year old kinder and school.

We do not want to see children struggling through either of these preschool years and certainly do not want to send children off to school before they are ready. We see no disadvantage when children start kinder a little later. In fact the longer you give your child to mature socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively, the more prepared they will be for preschool and school and the more they will get out of these experiences.

Over the years, our observation has been that children who turn 3 between January and April benefit from waiting a year and starting 3 year old kinder the year they turn 4.

Each child develops differently and has had different experiences in their early years but it is often the case that younger children can sometimes find kinder very challenging. Things that children feel very comfortable doing at home with their family sometimes become very challenging in a large group environment.

**EXPECTATIONS OF A 3 YEAR OLD IN OUR PROGRAM:**

- Belong to a group of 21 children and interact positively with peers and educators
- Begin to share with others – resources, spaces, ideas
- Start to follow instructions and respond to guidelines
- Follow a basic routine
- Pay attention for short periods of time and start to complete small tasks
- Begin to feel more confident separating from parents
- Start to become more independent – there are 2 adults to support and educate 21 children, and one of the goals in our 3 year old program is for the children to learn to be independent and to become confident decision makers, therefore children are expected to start to learn how to do things for themselves. For example: turn taps on, wash their hands wipe their nose, choose a puzzle, start to toilet themselves and dress and undress themselves
- Attend an afternoon session – does your child still sleep during the day?
- Begin to control their own behaviour and emotions

There are other options to consider if you decide to wait a year. Play group is a great option for children to start to develop these skills in the year prior to 3 year old kinder. Link to Play Group Victoria website: