

Preschool enrolment

When to enrol in preschool

If your child turns 4 before 1 May, they can start preschool on the first day of term 1 of that year. If your child turns 4 on or after 1 May, they can start preschool on the first day of term 1 the following year.

Children are entitled to access 4 terms of preschool in the year before they start school.

If possible, submit a [preschool registration of interest form](#) at your local and/or preferred preschool(s) by 30 June in the year before your child is due to start. You can, however, register your interest at any time during the year.

Forms can be downloaded from the link above, or collected from your nearest preschool.

More information about children who may be eligible to start preschool throughout the year (eg children transferring from an interstate preschool) is available from the [school and preschool enrolment policy](#).

When making a decision about the best time for your child to attend preschool, it is also important to consider when it may be the best for your child to start school.

Similar to preschool, government schools have a single intake date – visit [enrolling in primary school](#) for more information. If your child's birthday falls before 1 May in the calendar year, you have a choice about whether to enrol your child in school at the beginning of the year they turn 5 or the next year (when they turn 6).

Your child must be at school by their sixth birthday, which is the compulsory school starting age.

If you are uncertain about the best time for your child to attend preschool, or feel your child may benefit from starting preschool later, talk to your local preschool director or school principal about your preschool and school enrolment options.

Extended transition to preschool

If your child has a disability and/or high support needs and a personalised learning plan (One Plan), at your request a transitional arrangement with school might be possible so that your child can access additional preschool for up to a term. The preschool director and school principal, in collaboration with support service staff, will determine if additional time in preschool will benefit your child's education. During the transition period to school, your child will be enrolled at school.

Aboriginal children and children in care may have an extended period in preschool up to 6 years of age. All children are required to be attending school by their sixth birthday.

Preschool options

All preschools give priority consideration to children living within the local catchment area. It is only in exceptional circumstances where the demand for a preschool from families living in the preschool's catchment area exceeds the number of places available that a child may not be offered a place in their local preschool. If this is the case, the preschool director or school principal will contact you to discuss possible alternative options, and every effort will be made to offer you a place in your second choice of preschool.

Your child can attend another preschool, if that preschool is not under enrolment pressure and has places available to accommodate the request. If your preferred preschool is not your local preschool, indicate at least 2 preferred preschool options on the [preschool registration of interest form](#), in case your preferred preschool is full. There is a space on the registration of interest form to write the reasons why you are seeking a place at your preferred preschool.

To help your planning, preschool directors or school principals may be able to give you an idea of likely enrolment numbers and the impact on places available.

Preschool enrolment offers

A statewide preschool enrolment process provides all families with the same information about accessing preschool vacancies. There are 2 rounds of enrolment offers.

In the first round, preschools will offer places to children living within a preschool's local catchment area. If more children are seeking a place at a preschool than there are places available, the preschool will allocate places based on the department's 'priority of access' criteria. These criteria prioritise vulnerable children, including Aboriginal children and children in care (subject to a custody or guardianship order under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)*).

All children living in rural communities where there is no other alternative government preschool will be offered a place in the first round of enrolment offers.

If the preschool has available places after the first round, a second round of enrolment offers will then be made to children living outside the preschool's catchment area. The department's priority of access criteria will continue to apply. Children who were not able to be accommodated in their local preschool and live nearby are also considered as a priority.

A preschool may apply a second level of priority of access criteria developed by the preschool and their governing council to help manage high demand and to take into account local circumstances. For example, children who attend child care nearby or at the preschool, or children who will be attending or have siblings enrolled at a nearby school.

You can ask the preschool director or school principal for more information about how places are allocated using the priority of access criteria.

Declining an enrolment offer

You can choose to decline an offer of an enrolment but if you are offered a place in the first round of offers, it is recommended that you accept this enrolment offer as there is no guarantee that you will be offered a place in your preferred preschool.

There is space on the enrolment acceptance slip to record your intention to remain on the registration list of your preferred preschool. (The acceptance slip is sent with the letter offering you an enrolment place). Keep in mind that by accepting a first round enrolment offer, it will not affect you being offered a place at your preferred preschool. It will however, secure you a place at your local preschool, if your preferred preschool is full.

If you are offered a place at your preferred preschool in the second round of offers, when you confirm the enrolment, the preschool director or school principal will notify the other preschool of your enrolment in your preferred preschool, so this place can be offered to another child.

Attending preschool at 2 different sites

Your child is entitled to 15 hours per week of preschool and this can be accessed over 2 sites. When you are enrolling your child, you can negotiate this arrangement with the preschool director and/or school principal.

Support for children with no English

If your child has no English when they start preschool they may be eligible for additional support to help them to participate. The Preschool Bilingual program provides funding to preschools based on the languages spoken by their children. Ask your preschool director or school principal for more information about the Preschool Bilingual program.

Children starting at a private school with a mid-year intake

The single intake policy only applies to government preschools and schools in South Australia. If your child will be attending an independent school in a mid-year intake, they are not eligible to start at a government preschool in term 3 of the preceding year.

Accessing 4 terms of preschool

Children are eligible to access 4 terms of preschool in the year before they start school. This entitlement cannot be accessed over 2 years.

In circumstances where a vulnerable child is absent from preschool for an extended period (eg due to a prolonged illness, transient housing arrangements, parent/carer's mental health illness) the preschool may offer additional sessions during the year to make up those missed, if the service has capacity to do this within existing resources.

'Catch up' sessions are not usually provided when a child has been absent due to general sickness or family holidays/other commitments.

