



PRESCHOOL SERVICES IN THE ACT

Canberra Public Schools

All Canberra public preschool programs are part of a Canberra public school. The ACT Government provides quality preschool education for children in the year before they start school. Children must turn four on or before 30 April in the year of attendance to be eligible for preschool.

For further information visit http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education

Catholic Education

Catholic Early Learning Centres provide quality preschool and childcare programs for children who are four years of age by 30 April in the year of attendance. Centres are located regionally and are open from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm throughout the school year.

For further information visit <http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/>

Independent Schools

Preschools of Independent schools offer a diverse range of options for preschool education including Christian, Anglican, Catholic, Montessori and community preschools. The variety of schools in the sector reflects the diversity of the community in the ACT.

For further information visit <http://ais.act.edu.au/>

Centre Based Care

Many centre based child care services provide preschool education for children in the year before school, as well as education and care for children from 6 weeks of age. Each centre is unique and may be operated by a not-for-profit, profit or community organisation. All centres implement the National Quality Framework.

For further information visit <http://mychild.gov.au>

Family Day Care Schemes

Family Day Care services offer education and care for children in a home setting. Families can access full-time, part-time, before and after preschool/school, vacation and emergency care. A number of agencies coordinate Family Day Care including YWCA Family Day Care, Communities@Work, and Community Services.

For further information visit <http://mychild.gov.au>

Occasional Care

Occasional Care preschool services offer flexible booking arrangements for periods of an hour to a full day, depending on individual circumstances and centre capacity. For further information visit <http://mychild.gov.au>

Playschool

Independent Playschools are unique to Canberra and provide play based educational programs in a preschool style format. Session times and age groups vary. Please contact individual services for further information.

Playgroup (ACT Playgroups Association)

Playgroup is an informal session where parents, carers, babies and children aged from birth to school age come together in a relaxed and friendly environment. Playgroups are run by the parents of the children who attend. Playgroups are usually held once a week for a two hour session in a variety of venues. For further information visit <http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au/act/>

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Which preschool should I choose?

A. In the ACT we are proud of the diverse range of preschool services available to families. In choosing a preschool your decision will be influenced by your child's needs, family arrangements and the learning environment in which you and your child feel most comfortable.

Q. How do I enrol?

A. You can enrol in a preschool service by contacting your local service directly. Enrolment requirements, costs and times may vary depending on the service you choose.

Q. How do I find out when preschools are enrolling?

A. Enrolment times and dates can vary depending on the preschool service you are choosing. Canberra public, Independent and Catholic preschools have specific enrolment periods, while centre based childcare services offer continuous enrolment across the year. Contact the individual service for information about enrolment procedures.

Q. Does the preschool offer an orientation program?

A. Preschool services offer a range of orientation processes and procedures to support an effective transition for your child to preschool. This might involve visiting the service with your child and spending some time becoming familiar with the environment before they start. You can seek more information about orientation from specific services.

Q. How old does my child need to be to go to preschool?

A. Once again this very much depends on the preschool service you are attending.

- Long Day Care Services – preschool programs could include children 3 – 5 year olds.
- Public preschools - children must turn 4 on or before April 30.
- Catholic preschool (Early Learning Centres) - children must turn 4 on or before April 30.
- Independent preschools – ages vary depending on the school. Enrolment at some sites can start from 3 years of age.

Q. How many days will my child attend?

A. Attendance varies for public preschools, long day care services, independent preschools and Catholic Early Learning Centres. Sessions can run up to five days a week. Canberra public preschools provide free preschool sessions for 40 weeks of the year for children in the year before school.

Q. How much does preschool cost?

A. Preschool costs can vary depending on the service your child attends and the hours in which they attend. Through Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, Canberra public preschools offer free sessions for children in the year before formal schooling. Further information about childcare benefits/ rebates for specific services visit <http://mychild.gov.au>

Q. What should they be able to do before they start preschool?

A. There are no requirements about what children should be able to do before they attend preschool. The Early Years Learning Framework acknowledges that all children are unique and as such, learning varies depending on the child, their family and experience before preschool.

Q. What will they learn at preschool?

A. In early childhood settings the curriculum is delivered through play-based learning that recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

The Early Years Learning Framework guides curriculum decisions and supports learning outcomes in early childhood education. The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to five years and through the transitions to school. It communicates these expectations through the following five Learning Outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are effective communicators.