

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Kindergarten Participation Update

Insights and resources for councils supporting CALD children and their families to engage in kindergarten.

April 2025

In this edition

Welcome to the latest edition of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Kindergarten Participation Project Quarterly Update.

In this edition, we cover:

- **updates on the CALD Outreach Initiative** - key developments, including council participation and program guidelines
- **items of interest** - significant sector updates
- **resources** - the latest resources available to support CALD children to participate in kinder
- **leading practice and case studies** - learn about how councils are supporting CALD kindergarten participation with practical insights.



Updates on the CALD Outreach Initiative

New councils join the CALD Outreach Initiative

Following a competitive EOI process conducted by the Department of Education in 2024, 26 Councils will participate in the CALD Outreach Initiative from January 2025 to June 2027. Four councils are joining the Initiative for the first time. We are pleased to welcome Alpine Shire Council, Ararat City Council, Ballarat City Council, and Mitchell Shire Council to the CALD Outreach Initiative in 2025.

Their participation marks an important step in expanding our collective efforts to support CALD families to access early childhood education and essential services.

The MAV looks forward to working alongside these councils, sharing insights, and strengthening community engagement across Victoria. We are excited for the journey ahead!

CALD Outreach Initiative Guidelines

The Department of Education has published the CALD Outreach Initiative Guidelines 2025–2027 to support the Initiative's implementation from January 2025 to June 2027. Developed by the Early Learning Operations and Monitoring (ELOM) Division in consultation with Area staff and the MAV, the Guidelines aim to strengthen processes and outcomes, reflecting insights from the 2023 CALD Outreach Initiative evaluation. They will be regularly reviewed and adapted based on stakeholder feedback.

[Click here](#) to view the full guidelines.

CALD Kindergarten Participation Welcome Pack

The MAV has released our CALD Kindergarten Participation Welcome Pack 2025. The Welcome Pack provides an overview of the targeted supports available through the MAV for CALD Outreach Workers and the general supports available to all councils. The pack also includes essential resources from the Victorian Government, the MAV and partners to increase CALD children's participation in kinder and other early years services. This welcome pack is a valuable tool to help new councils integrate into the initiative and build strong connections with CALD families. To access the welcome pack, please click [here](#).



CALD Outreach Initiative - Welcome and Orientation Session 2025

The MAV hosted the CALD Outreach Initiative Welcome/Orientation Session to formally welcome the new councils joining the initiative. The session provided new and existing councils with valuable updates and insights from both the Department of Education and the MAV, ensuring everyone is well-prepared for the journey ahead.

In addition to the informative presentations, the session featured an engaging group activity designed to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among councils.

This interactive segment offered an excellent opportunity for participants to connect, exchange ideas, and build a strong support network.

We are excited to see the impactful contributions of our new members as they join us in enhancing early childhood education access for CALD communities.



CALD Outreach Initiative - End-of-Year Event 2024

The MAV hosted CALD Outreach Initiative End-of-Year Event in December 2024. The event brought together council CALD Outreach workers, Department of Education representatives, and MAV staff to celebrate the incredible achievements from the year. From insightful presentations to meaningful discussions, the event showcased the tireless efforts being made to support CALD families to access early years education and other EY services.



Items of interest

Introducing the Arrival System

The Department has introduced a new purpose-built system called Arrival. From 2025 this system has replaced the Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS). Arrival is now the central place for managing existing data reporting and digital collection of daily kindergarten attendance. To read more about Arrival System, [click here](#).

New Early Childhood Language Service Provider

The Department of Education provides access to free language services to support parents and carers who speak a language other than English or use Auslan to understand key information about their child's education.

Since 1 January 2025, [All Graduates Interpreting and Translating](#) has been the new provider of language services for all government schools, department-funded kindergartens, and eligible early childhood support services. This service has been provided by VITS LanguageLoop in recent years. All graduates have run a training session in January. To access the recording of the training, [click here](#).

Resources

- **Early Childhood Language Services / vic.gov.au** – all CALD Outreach Workers are eligible to access free on-site, telephone and video interpreters via All Graduates to strengthen engagement with parents and carers who speak a language other than English or use Auslan.
- **Early Start Bright Future** – connecting professionals to health, education and care services for children in the years before school
In partnership with Children Services, the Department of Education has developed two resources to support early childhood education services engage with multilingual families.
- **Engaging with multilingual families** – a guide to support kindergarten services to engage with multilingual families and to overcome any communication barriers.
- **Hello Kinder** – An editable social story to support orientation for multilingual families and children.

CALD Outreach Initiative - Good Practice Examples

Assisting Families with Interview Sessions – Greater Shepparton City Council

Have you ever wondered how to make a kindergarten interview session more seamless and supportive for CALD families? Greater Shepparton City Council has been involved in the CALD Outreach Initiative since 2022. Council's CALD Outreach Worker attended kindergarten interview sessions at three council-operated kindergartens in South Shepparton, assisting families with enrolment. Over four days, they helped complete 20 welcome packs, allowing teachers to focus on building relationships with families. They also supported 12 families in obtaining up-to-date immunisation statements, ensuring their children could start kindergarten on time under the "No Jab, No Play" legislation. Their support streamlined the enrolment process and improved family engagement.



CALD Outreach Initiative Case Studies

Supporting successful registration and enrolment of CALD children starting in three and four-year-old kindergarten

CALD Outreach Initiative - Good Practice Examples



Multicultural Kindergarten Support Service - Moorabool Shire Council

Moorabool Shire City Council has been involved in the CALD Outreach Initiative since 2023. In January, the council delivered school/kindergarten readiness programs which included a 'Transition Thursday' update on their social media and website pages. Details of these can be found [here](#).

They also delivered a three-session group program to support families starting their kindergarten or school year in 2025, which included topics on building routine, packing your bag, and understanding the benefits of early childhood education

Communication Station - Mildura Rural City Council

Mildura Rural City Council has been involved in the CALD Outreach Initiative since 2023. The Council set up a 'Communication Station' in two kindergartens with the highest number of CALD families. Each station features an iPad with a translator app, guides on using interpreting services, a list of languages spoken, and steps to request an interpreter.

This initiative aims to improve access to information and strengthen connections between families, educators, and support services.

To learn more about Mildura's CALD Outreach Initiative, click [here](#).



CALD Outreach Initiative Case Studies

Supporting successful registration and enrolment of CALD children starting in three and four-year-old kindergarten



City of Greater Bendigo - Case Study

City of Greater Bendigo has been involved in the CALD Outreach Initiative since 2022. Bendigo is a major regional centre servicing the towns and rural areas of the Loddon region, about 150 kms northwest of Melbourne. While still significant, traditional reliance on manufacturing has diminished in recent years, with the development of a strong health, education and retail sector in the city. Commerce, finance and government administration are also important activities.

Source: [Know Your Council](#)

City of Greater Bendigo has an estimated population of 122,551 (as of June 2023) and is projected to grow to 155,596 by 2036.

Source: [City of Greater Bendigo](#)

While English is the predominant language, key languages spoken include Karen, Dari, Hazaragi, Dinka, and Mandarin. Around 9.7% of residents were born overseas, reflecting a diverse community. The region has 51 kindergarten services, including long day care and stand-alone kindergartens, with the City of Greater Bendigo managing two of them.

Source: [City of Greater Bendigo](#)

Objective

To help a newly arrived family on Skills in Demand (subclass 482) visa enrol their child in a funded kindergarten program and ensure they met the immunisation requirements for enrolment.

Challenges

1. The family had no support system in Bendigo, and they were unfamiliar with the Victorian early education and care system.
2. Despite conducting online research, they remained unsure about the available services.
3. They were not eligible for a Medicare card and the child's immunisation record was in a different language.

Actions

- The family was referred to the CALD Outreach Worker at City of Greater Bendigo by the Department of Education.
- The CALD Outreach Worker scheduled a meeting with the family and helped them find a kindergarten close to their home by contacting the council's Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) Team.
- The CALD Outreach Worker attempted to refer the family to have their immunisation statement translated in English for free through a NFP organisation. Unfortunately, due to delays with the free services, the family opted for a private translator.
- The translated immunisation statement was sent to the immunisation team and the child's vaccination records were updated on the Australia Immunisation Register (AIR).
- A catch-up vaccination plan was created for the child and delivered by the free Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service, ensuring she met the Australian immunisation schedule.

Results



The child was able to access necessary vaccinations through the MCH service and was enrolled on time in a funded kindergarten program at a local service - setting the child up for their educational journey and connecting the family with their new community.



We want to hear from you - have you got an example of work (big or small) to share?

Contact Ghulam Hussain, MAV CALD Outreach Policy Adviser at ghussain@mav.asn.au to share your case study.