

Let me ask what process we use at Yarra Valley Grammar to determine if a child is ready to
can be confused, so I hope that my article might help to clarify parent understanding.

Firstly, it is important to be aware that the first learning environment that any
child is exposed to is in their home. Parents are their child's first teachers and it is important to
provide a rich and stimulating environment. One of the first formal learning environments
is a kindergarten program which provides a structured environment for a child's learning.

A kindergarten program is a planned educational curriculum that looks at a child's stage of
development and then constructs a program to develop those skills as the child grows and
develops language development and gross motor development. Learning about differences
in people and cultures, setting routines, learning to listen and share with others as well as
learning to express themselves creatively are important aspects of a kindergarten program.
Continuing to provide a rich and stimulating environment for a child's learning is
availability of places. The Federal Government recommends that a child should attend 15 hours
a week by the end of 5 years old by the end of April in the year they start school.

At Yarra Valley Grammar, we offer full day kindergarten programs in our Early Learning Centre,
for 2 and 3 year olds, and one day programs and half days for 4 and 5 year olds from 9am to 3pm.
We also offer a half day program for 4 and 5 year olds from 9am to 12pm. Our teaching staff are highly
-based curriculum. In 2016, our Centre was
awarded Exceeding the National Quality Standard by ACECQA (The Australian Children's
Education and Care Quality Authority) across all seven areas assessed.

When I first meet young children and their families who want to come into our programs, I look to
see that the child is becoming more independent and that they are able to speak to me and
perhaps tell a little about their family, their likes, dislikes, pets or favourite foods and games. I
also look for signs of independence, such as the child being able to walk, run, jump, climb, and
play independently. I also look for signs of communication, such as the child being able to
they are doing. Sometimes they join in and don't want to leave! Following directions from me or a
teacher to go to a certain area or to do a certain activity is a good sign of communication.

Being able to speak clearly and express themselves is important, as are other signs of
independence skills like eating, hand washing and toileting. If a child has a history of ear
infections, it is important to know the history of the child's hearing and what treatments are in place to avoid developmental delays. Allergies and the like are
dealt with in a similar manner.

As part of our enrolment process, I try to avoid asking all the developmental and medical

gives me all the information I need to know about the child's health and development for our
program.

a non-interactive start for your child in the home and then as they progress towards starting a
kindergarten program.

- Read to your child every day. This is a well-proven, simple strategy that you can maintain.
- to start.
- Read regularly to your child from a young age.
- Provide opportunities for your child to mix with other children. This may start with siblings and friends, but you should encourage them to mix with other children.
- Provide a wide range of experiences for your child and explain them as they happen. This helps with understanding and language development. This doesn't have to be a formal activity.
- Don't jump in and solve a problem for a child. Let them try first and perhaps suggest things to them, depending on age. Positive comments, smiles and praise really help when a child achieves a new milestone. (But don't go overboard!)
- As children grow older, encourage them to explain what they are doing or thinking. Using their language is really important and will probably lead to less physical reactions, like hitting or biting.
- Don't use physical punishment or harsh words with your child. Children need positive role modelling.
- Always provide some quality cuddle time.

If the child does not seem to be responding to the program, I will make alternative arrangements for the family. Such as, if the child is not responding, the parents do respect advice and are always willing to do what they can to give their child the best elements to succeed in their learning.

Kindergarten will be a happy and wonderful time for your child and one you will have fond memories. Help children be successful by giving them the best start you can.

Melbourne's Child, September 2017

Mr Chris Lawson