

What is different about working in Sessional Kindergarten (or Preschool) for an Educator?

If you have been working in Long Day Care, you will find that there are a lot of differences in moving to work in Sessional Kindergarten (or Preschool).

The notes below are based on the Terms and Conditions of work at Sparkways Kindergartens, and the provisions of the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA) 2020. Current rates of pay are on the last page.

Group focused

Children are enrolled in weekly sessions of 15 hours which may be held over two or three days

- 3-year-old groups may have sessions of between 5 and 15 hours each week,
- 4-year-old groups have sessions of 15 hours per week

Hours of work

Educators will have paid rostered hours that include the session time (Contact Hours – actively engaging children) and planning time (Non-contact hours – child free setup, planning and observation-writing time).

Examples:

- **3-year-old Pink Group** has sessions on Tue and Fri from 8.15 am to 1.15 pm – a total of 10 hours of session time each week. Co-educator for Pink Group will be rostered to work 12.5 hours each week – Tue & Fri from 8.00 am to 2.45 pm. They will do their planning with the Teacher after each session. They have chosen to have a 30-minute unpaid break, free of all duties on Tue and Fri.
- **4-year-old Purple Group** has sessions on Mon, Wed and Fri from 8.30 am to 1.30 pm – a total of 15 hours of session time each week Co-educator for Purple Group will be rostered to work 18.75 hours each week – Mon, Wed, Fri from 8.15 am to 2.30 pm. The Educator will do their planning time with the Teacher after each session. They have chosen to have their lunch while they are carrying out their planning duties.
- **4-year old Green Group** has sessions on Tue and Thu from 8.15 to 3.45. The Co-educator for Green Group will have a 30-minute unpaid break, free of all duties, each day, and will have 14 hours of session time each week. They will be rostered to work 17.5 hours per week – Tue and Thu from 8.00 am to 4.15 pm, plus 2 hours on Mondays to do their planning time with the Teacher.

Educators may work in one, two or even three groups, and can work in more than one kindergarten to increase their hours. They can also work additional hours by doing Break Covers on days that they finish early, or don't have a session.

At Sparkways, Educators can also work on the Sparkways Relief team, accepting shifts on their non-working days to cover for Educators who are unwell or otherwise not able to come to work, or to do Additional Assistant work for School Readiness funded activities.

Positions available - Co-educator (Cert III minimum) and Diploma Educator

In each group, a Co-educator (Cert III qualification minimum) works alongside an Early Childhood Teacher to provide and facilitate play based learning, safety supervision, cleaning, planning, programming, liaison with families, the write up of observations and so much more.

If there are more than 22 children in the group, there will be two Co-educators, and one of these must be a Diploma Qualified Educator. There is no difference in the responsibilities of the two Co-educators. There is a small difference in pay between a Co-educator (Cert III minimum) and a Diploma Educator.

If children leave the group, and the number of enrolments drops to 22 or less, the Diploma Educator may need to move to another group, as either a Co-educator (Cert III minimum) or Diploma Educator, or their contract may be finished early.

10 weeks leave each year

Kindergarten sessions are run during the government school terms. There is 6+ weeks of term break leave and 4 weeks of annual leave each year that must be taken in school terms.

This extended leave arrangement with the term break leave is called 46/52, which means that you 'purchase' an extra 6 weeks of leave each year, by taking a lower hourly rate – to allow for payment over the full year.

If you work the whole year, starting in Term 1, you will be paid 52 weeks for the year. If you start in Term 2 or later, your paid annual leave will be proportionate to the amount of terms you have worked (example – if you start in Term 4 and work one term for the year, you will have accrued 1 week of annual leave).

Great benefits

- Generous paid sick and carer's leave, available to you from your first day of work
 - pro rata of 15 days per year – for example if you work 3 days each week, you will have 9 days of sick and carer's leave each year, available in advance
- Uniform provided
- Free First Aid, CPR renewals
- Free Flu Vaccinations
- Subscription to ECA Learning hub with quality professional development units that you can undertake at your own pace
- Annual professional development / networking days
- Annual appraisal and learning goals
- Tailored professional development to reach your goals
- Reward and recognition platform including discounts to 100's of major retailers
- Health and wellbeing initiatives
- Free and confidential access to professional counsellors and psychologists for you and your family members for working through personal or professional issues, through our world class Employee Assistant Program
- 10% Staff Childcare Discount* at our long day care centres in Whittlesea, Flemington, Footscray, Richmond and Carrum Downs
- We'll empower you to step up; step sideways; and flourish always in your pursuit of a meaningful career
- Being part of an inclusive team where coming together to collaborate and having a voice is encouraged
- Working within innovative environments where imagination, learning, fun and safety all come together
- Being part of a team who understand the importance of building a strong pedagogical practice
- Putting the children first and not budgets
- Working hard but having fun too!

VECTEA terms and conditions

Find out more about the VECTEA 2020 terms and conditions here: <https://ela.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FWC-Version-VECTEA-2020-2021-FWCA-3620.pdf>

Rates of pay

- At April 2023

The current hourly rates for co-educators are as below. There are small increases in rates each April and October.

Your length of professional experience will be reviewed with you when you start, to set the classification level and the date that you will increment to the next level.

Position	Classification and Level	Hourly rate – part time	Hourly rate – additional hours (relief shifts)	Hourly rate – Casual Staff – no leave entitlements
Co-educator	1.1 – on commencement	22.37	27.96	31.60
	1.2 – with one-year relevant experience	23.12	28.90	32.66
	1.3 – with two years relevant experience	23.87	29.84	33.73
	1.4 – with three years relevant experience	24.29	30.36	34.32
	1.5 – with four years relevant experience	24.95	31.19	35.26
	1.6 – with five+ years relevant experience	26.06	32.57	36.83
Diploma Educator	2.1 – on commencement	26.35	32.94	37.23
	2.2 – with one-year Diploma level experience	26.74	33.42	37.78
	2.3 – with two+ years Diploma level experience	27.14	33.92	38.35