

Mount Alexander Shire Early Years Plan 2022-2026

Our shire supports child-friendly communities where children thrive and belong.



Belonging

Our **kids** are happy, included and safe

We live in a child-friendly Shire for all children, they have a say in the decisions that impact them, and opportunities to play and learn throughout the year.



Our priorities

Connecting to place

Our **natural environment** opens a world of play, care and creativity

Our natural environment is a space for play and learning and a space for active recreation where children care about the environment and creatures.

How will we do it?

Supporting

Our **families** are supported by their community and their services

Families can access the support they need, when they need it and are aware of the support and services available to them locally.



Conduct a child-friendly audit of services, events and spaces in the shire, including for children with a disability

Support services, clubs and businesses to be child-safe and welcoming for families, and encourage play where possible

Formalise consultation with children to help inform our community's decision-making on issues that matter to them

Create more play opportunities for children, increasing winter programming and incorporating Aboriginal Children's Day in a calendar of events

Improve access to, and supports for local community and supported playgroups

Support and promote language, music and rhyme programming for ages 0-3 across the shire

Advocate for increased provision of child-focused health services, including paediatric, speech therapy, psychiatric, physiotherapy and disability support

Support efforts to increase childcare places throughout the shire (including kinder and OSHC) and state funding for infrastructure upgrades where required

Coordinate the delivery of parent education and support programs for our families to improve child wellbeing, child safety, healthy eating and family resilience

Establish centralised information resources that are accessible and open for children's activities, services and supports locally

Support child-friendly co-located service models that better meet the needs of children and families in the Shire

Coordinate opportunities for local early years professionals to connect and share practice

Identify ways to enhance our kinder enrolment processes (e.g. ensuring there is no wrong door for enrolments)

Ensure that local strategies to combat insecure housing consider the needs of children

Support our early years service providers and organisations to ensure safety for children at home and in the community (including child safe and/or family violence awareness)

Identify opportunities to expand nature-based education and play, including bush kinder programs

Identify needs and opportunities to support conservation bush-based education programs - such as wildlife warriors, junior rangers and animal welfare

Identify where walking and cycling paths would benefit children and families and ensure their voices and needs are prioritised in footpath upgrades and play space renewals



Collaborating

Our **service providers** are working together to make life easier for families

Services are connected and place-based and they work together to tackle barriers to families thriving.

