

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title	Manager Early Childhood Education
Program	Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)
Employment Status	Full Time
Tenure	Permanent
Classification	Contract
Position reports to	CEO
Location	Varied ECEC sites across Victoria

Kids First is a child and family services provider and early years education specialist. We have proudly been at the heart of community care in Victoria since 1896. Our proud history is matched with a progressive mindset as we continually deliver Australian-first and sector leading programs designed to strengthen family relationships, support healing and recovery from trauma and set children up for brighter futures.

We nurture an inclusive and rewarding culture that attracts and retains talented people, bound to a common purpose. Built on our legacy of more than 130 years of community service, we actively support our people to ensure exceptional education and support, every day, every time.

Kids First is a child safe organisation and is committed to maintaining a child safe environment for children and young people who access our services.

As an Equal Opportunity employer, we respect and value diversity and inclusion. We welcome everyone to apply, regardless of age, ethnicity, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and physical ability. Reasonable adjustments will be made for people with disabilities where they are operationally viable.

Our Vision

All children and young people thrive in resilient, strong and safe families and communities.

Our Values

Our HEART values encapsulate the way we work together and partner with children and families to bring positive and sustainable outcomes.

Position Purpose



Hope
We believe that change is possible and achievable



Empowerment
We build on people's strengths and support their ability to make positive changes in their lives



Accountability
We are open and transparent in everything we do



Respect
We value all people



Trust
We act in an ethical, inclusive, professional and open manner

The Manager, Early Childhood Education and Care is responsible for providing strong, professional, and effective operational leadership across Kids First Australia’s Early Childhood Education and Care programs throughout Victoria, within the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) directorate.

Working in close partnership with the Chief Executive Officer, the role ensures the delivery of high-quality, safe, and sustainable services that are fully compliant with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), National Quality Framework (NQF), the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Standard (NQS), the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), and Victorian Child Safe Standards.

The role has a particular focus on:

- Ensuring exceptional education and support for every child and family, every time.
- Providing strong operational leadership, governance oversight, and regulatory compliance across the ECEC service stream
- Supporting continuous quality improvement across all centres, including oversight of assessment, rating, quality improvement plans, and regulatory engagement
- Fostering a culture of collective leadership that embeds Kids First’s vision, values, child-safe principles, and strategic and workforce plans
- Ensuring the consistent implementation and effective functioning of the Kids First Early Years Model across all services
- Leading the financial management and operational performance of the ECEC budget to ensure sustainability, compliance, and efficient use of resources

Organisational Relationships

Supervisor	CEO
Direct Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Leads (Up to 5) • Pedagogical Practice Lead • Administration Support Officer
Internal Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Manager –. • Early Years Model Lead • Child Youth and Family Services Management & Leadership • Senior Leadership Group • Executive • All Kids First employees
External Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE • DFFH • Local Council • Primary Health • Child Protection • Community Organisations

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and People Management

- Provide strong, values-based leadership to the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce, ensuring Kids First’s vision, values, child-safe principles, and strategic priorities are embedded across all services.
- Lead the operational implementation of integrated practice models for children aged 0–5 years, including children and families experiencing vulnerability, trauma, and complex developmental or family circumstances.
- Ensure the Kids First Early Years Model is consistently embedded across all centres, working in close partnership with the Pedagogical Leader and the Early Years Model Lead.
- Foster a culture of collective leadership, accountability, innovation, and continuous improvement, responsive to policy, funding, and sector reform environments.
- Apply a proactive and adaptive leadership approach to managing change, reform, and service improvement within a dynamic regulatory and funding context.
- Lead workforce planning strategies to attract, engage, develop, and retain a high-performing ECEC workforce.
- Oversee recruitment, induction, performance development, and retention strategies to ensure workforce capability, compliance, and sustainability.
- Provide structured supervision, coaching, and performance oversight to Area and Pedagogical Leaders in accordance with the Kids First Supervision Policy, including workload management, professional development planning, and performance review processes.
- Respond collaboratively and decisively to critical incidents, workforce matters, and complex employee support needs, ensuring duty of care and organisational policies are upheld.
- Model professional conduct and ethical leadership, consistently conveying Kids First’s values and strategic goals through decision-making and behaviour.

Service Delivery and Operational Management

- Lead and manage the day-to-day operational performance of all ECEC services across Victoria.
- As a Person with Management and Control ensure day to day operations, compliance, and child safe practice is consistently evidenced at all 17 centres.
- Ensure service delivery is compliant with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), National Quality Framework (NQF), Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, National Quality Standard (NQS), Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), and Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Maintain strong, collaborative partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including Department of Education, Local Council, the Coleman Foundation, Child Protection and community partners, to support integrated service delivery and shared outcomes.
- Ensure the Pedagogical and Area Leaders partner to support curriculum implementation, service design, and continuous improvement aligned to evidence informed practice.
- Lead, mentor, and coach ECEC teams to achieve agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), service agreement requirements, and quality benchmarks.
- Ensure risk management, compliance, reporting, and governance frameworks are actively monitored, implemented, and reviewed across all centres.
- Provide high level advice, consultation, and operational guidance to ECEC Leaders and the broader workforce on ECEC service delivery, compliance, and practice matters.
- Oversee incident management, compliance responses, and regulatory engagement, including timely notifications, corrective actions, and follow up as required.
- Ensure consistent communication, connection, and alignment across all centres, fostering a unified organisational culture grounded in Kids First values.

- Provide accurate, timely, and meaningful operational, performance, and compliance reports to the CEO and other stakeholders as required.
- Represent Kids First Australia and the ECEC portfolio on internal and external committees, working groups, networks, and forums, and attend meetings on behalf of the CEO when required.

Financial Management and Sustainability

- Lead the financial management of the ECEC operating budget, ensuring alignment with service agreements, staffing profiles, occupancy demand, and strategic priorities.
- Monitor attendance, utilisation, and demand trends, implementing forecasting and corrective strategies to optimise financial sustainability across centres.
- Work collaboratively with the Finance team to identify efficiencies, manage financial risk, and respond proactively to budget pressures.
- Actively identify and pursue opportunities for service growth, enhancement, and innovation in collaboration with the Transformation and Impact directorate.

Quality, Risk and Compliance Management

- Ensure a strong culture of quality, safety, and continuous improvement across all ECEC services.
- Oversee the development, implementation, and review of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) to support continuous quality improvement and regulatory readiness.
- Ensure child safety principles and practices are embedded in all service operations, leadership practices, and workforce development.
- Monitor and ensure compliance with all legislative, regulatory, contractual, and organisational risk management requirements.
- Lead responses to audits, assessments, ratings, and regulatory visits, ensuring timely, coordinated, and evidence-based engagement.
- Promote and embed a proactive approach to risk identification, mitigation, and management across all service areas.

Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- Demonstrate personal accountability for workplace health and safety, in line with legislative and organisational requirements.
- Ensure ECEC services actively comply with occupational health and safety legislation, policies, and safe work practices.
- Promote employee wellbeing, psychological safety, and safe systems of work across all centres and teams.

Capability Framework – key selection criteria

Formal Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary qualifications in education or other related discipline
Skills & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly developed operational management and leadership skills including managing employee reviews, supervision, coaching and feedback to ensure employees are supported, developed, and engaged to provide optimum practice and service delivery.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound Early Childhood Education and Care regulatory, program and pedagogical experience, including holding the position of a Person with Management and Control. • Demonstrated experience in motivating and supporting employees in a changing reform environment. • Demonstrated experience in the implementation of continuous improvement and professional development activities for Early Childhood Education and Care services. • High level organisational skills in change management and practice development. • Sound report, policy and procedure development and writing skills. • Sound financial/budget management experience. • Contemporary knowledge of relevant government policy and research in respect to evidenced based services for children, parents, and families. • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
Other Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong commitment to working systemically with children and families who have been affected by family violence, child abuse and neglect and other social and wellbeing issues. • A good understanding of or willingness to learn about Aboriginal culture, values and protocols and a demonstrated capacity to work in a culturally informed and respectful manner. • Current Victorian Working with Children Card • Willingness to undertake a Police Check

Inherent Physical and Psychological Demands

Activity	Frequency – Daily Regular Occasional
Managing competing priorities	Frequently
Computer based activities	Often
Conflict/ confronting situations	Sometimes
Driving	Often
Walking, climbing stairs, bending	Sometimes
Attending external locations	Often