3 Year Healthy Kids Check

A health and development check before preschool

From 1 November 2026, Medicare funds a Healthy Kids Check for every child aged 3. It is a longer appointment with your GP that looks at how your child is growing, seeing, hearing, talking and getting on, so that anything needing help is found well before school starts.

01 WHO AND WHEN

- **Who.** Children with a Medicare card, from their third birthday until they turn 4.
- **How often.** Once. Each child can have one Healthy Kids Check.
- **How long.** About 30 to 45 minutes. Tell reception it is a Healthy Kids Check when you book, so we allow enough time.
- **What to bring.** The Blue Book, and any notes from childcare or preschool.

02 WHY IT MATTERS

Three is a good age to take stock. Speech, play, movement and behaviour are developing quickly, and problems with hearing, eyesight or language are often not obvious at home. Nationally, almost 1 in 4 children (23.5%) start school developmentally vulnerable in at least one area. Support that starts before school makes the biggest difference, and most concerns turn out to be minor or easily helped.

03 WHAT WE LOOK AT

- **Growth.** Height and weight, plotted on the growth charts in the Blue Book.
- **Eyes and ears.** Eyesight, including how the eyes work together, and hearing, including any ear infections or glue ear.
- **Teeth.** Teeth and gums, and visits to the dentist.
- **Development.** Talking and understanding, movement, play and getting on with others.
- **Everyday life.** Behaviour, sleep, eating, activity, screen time, toileting, childcare or preschool, and family life.
- **Immunisations.** We check your child is up to date, so the 4 year vaccines are not missed.

04 GETTING READY

- **Fill in the 3 year checklist** in the Blue Book, including the Learn the Signs. Act Early milestones. It takes a few minutes and helps us focus on what matters.
- **Write down your questions.** Nothing is too small, whether it is fussy eating, tantrums, sleep or how your child talks compared with others.
- **Choose a good time of day.** Children show us more when they are well, fed and rested. A favourite toy or book can help.

05 WHAT HAPPENS ON THE DAY

Most of the check happens through play and conversation, so it rarely upsets children. Our practice nurse may start with height, weight and a simple eyesight and hearing check. Your GP then talks with you about how your child is going, watches them play, move and talk, and examines their eyes, ears, mouth and growth. There are no needles unless immunisations are due and you would like them done at the same visit.

06 COMMON QUESTIONS

- **My child is shy or will not join in.** That is very common at 3. Your observations at home count just as much as what we see on the day.
- **My child already has checks at preschool.** Preschool and child and family health checks are valuable, and the Healthy Kids Check adds a medical review that brings everything together in one place.
- **What if something is found?** Most concerns are minor. If anything needs a closer look, finding it now gives your child the best start at school.

07 AFTER THE CHECK

You receive a written summary. If everything is on track, we will remind you about the 4 year immunisations and the free StEPS eyesight test at preschool. If something needs a closer look, we explain why and arrange the next step, such as a hearing or eye test, a speech pathologist, a dentist or a paediatrician, and book a time to follow up.

BOOK SOONER IF YOUR CHILD

- Has lost words or skills they used to have
- Does not respond to their name or seems not to hear you
- Is hard to understand, or is not putting words together
- Has a squint, or you are worried about their eyesight
- Is not growing or eating as you would expect

GET URGENT HELP

Call 000, or go to the nearest emergency department, if your child:

- has trouble breathing or is very drowsy
- has a seizure (fit)
- suddenly cannot walk or use an arm or leg
- has swallowed something harmful, or call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26

This sheet gives general information. It does not replace advice from your GP, who knows your child's health and history.

Sources: Australian Government. Medicare Healthy Kids Check factsheet. 2026. Australian Early Development Census. 2024 results. NSW Health. My Personal Health Record (Blue Book); Learn the Signs. Act Early; Statewide Eyesight Preschooler Screening (StEPS).