

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education



Sunday, 5 April, 2020

## FREE SESSIONAL KINDER FOR VICTORIAN KIDS

Parents will be able to send their children to sessional kindergarten for free during term 2 and sessional providers will be given the funding certainty they need thanks to a major funding boost from the Victorian Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the Government will provide up to \$45 million in extra funding to support sessional kindergarten providers, who have seen numbers decline significantly as more and more parents choose to keep their kids at home.

The funding will provide approximately \$485 per child for term 2 for each child enrolled in a funded kindergarten program – allowing providers to continue teaching and caring for Victorian kids, including the children of essential workers and vulnerable children, subject to health directions.

The funding will be available for community-based, local government and school providers that are offering sessional programs.

To be eligible for the additional funding, these services must not charge families and allow children to attend 15 hours a week of kinder for free.

As well as helping local kindergarten services remain financially viable during this challenging period, the funding will help keep kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators in their jobs.

Early childhood services in Victoria are continuing to operate, in line with advice from the Victoria's Chief Health Officer. Early childhood service providers are expected to follow AHPPC guidance including to promote good hygiene. Further guidance on measures to maintain the health and safety of children and staff can be found on the DHHS website.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"We are making sure Victorian children can still go to kinder and get an early childhood education during this difficult period, without parents worrying about fees – this will save jobs, save kinders and save families hundreds of dollars."*

*"This funding will mean sessional kindergarten providers stay financially viable, even if enrolments drop as parents decide to keep their children at home because of coronavirus."*

*"Our kinder teachers and staff are doing an outstanding job ensuring Victorian children continue to get early childhood education during this challenging period – the last thing they should be worried about is losing their jobs."*