

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for Early Childhood



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HELPING REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN GET THE BEST START

Children of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds can access two years of free or low-cost kindergarten to give them the best educational start to life, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's investment into the early years.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt today announced three-year-old children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are the latest cohort to benefit from 15 hours per week of free or low-cost kindergarten through the Early Start Kindergarten grant.

This is part of a \$2.5 million Labor Government boost to help reduce the effects of disadvantage on children's long-term outcomes.

Early Start Kindergarten provides access to a program delivered by a qualified teacher which supports children's language and social development. The grant is available to children who turn three-years-old before 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend kindergarten.

From 2021, the grant has been expanded to include children of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Early Start Kindergarten continues to be available to children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, as well as families and children who have had contact with Child Protection.

Early Start Kindergarten Extension Grants are also available to refugee and asylum seeker children to attend Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, to ensure they can access two years of high-quality early learning before they start school.

Parents and carers can enrol their child by contacting their local kindergarten and asking to access the Early Start Kindergarten grant.

In an Australian-first, the Labor Government is investing \$5 billion this decade to deliver two years of funded kindergarten for all Victorian children, with the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten underway this year.

Early Start Kindergarten will continue to offer 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible children during the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"We know that a great early childhood education can set children up to be happy, healthy and resilient for life."

"That's why we're providing high quality kindergarten programs for children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds at little or no cost to families."

"We are investing to help all Victorian children — no matter where they live or what their circumstances — to have the very best start in life, because no child should be left behind."