



## Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood

Thursday, 20 May 2021

## BEST START IN LIFE: STATEWIDE THREE-YEAR-OLD KINDER

The Andrews Labor Government is working to ensure Victorian children get the best start in life – while creating thousands of new jobs for Victorians.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* invests \$400.7 million to deliver our nation-leading Three-Year-Old Kindergarten roll-out, build and upgrade early learning facilities and ensure our most vulnerable children remain supported as we recover from the pandemic.

This includes \$167.1 million to support the roll-out of our landmark Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform, which started in six regional local government areas in 2020, expanded to a further 15 areas in 2021 and will roll out to every community in Victoria in 2022. This will build to a full 15-hours per week program by 2029.

Not only will this investment give our kids a great start – it'll also give more Victorians the security of a good job, with 6,000 new positions across the state.

With the roll-out requiring 4,000 extra kinder teachers and 2,000 additional early childhood educators, this investment is creating opportunity for thousands of Victorians.

The Budget includes \$44.8 million to expand kinder facilities and fund more kinders on school sites so families can ditch the 'double drop-off' – an investment expected to create almost 300 extra local jobs in construction.

This is part of an investment of almost \$5 billion from the Labor Government over the decade to give children the best start in life with two years of play-based learning before school, while driving the creation of thousands of new jobs.

Another \$33.8 million will deliver tailored support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children to participate in early childhood education, ensuring no child is left behind.

This funding will establish new, intensive early education support for children affected by complex trauma, two 'safe haven' sites for the early engagement of vulnerable children, and the expansion of the kinder program at the Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute.

The Budget includes \$8 million to expand the Koorie Pre-School Assistants program to four new locations and continue the Koorie Families as First Educators program, as part of a wider \$39.3 million investment to improve outcomes for Koorie kids.

The Budget also includes \$91.6 million for the establishment of the Child Link register, a digital platform that enables the sharing of information to protect children's safety and wellbeing.

A \$31.2 million investment will support Early Years Management (EYM) to improve access and quality – and support the management of community-based kindergartens – as they help deliver three-year-old kinder across the state.

A \$2.7 million investment will help our kinders continue the delivery of the early childhood language program.

This year's Budget builds on investments from the Labor Government over the past six years, with \$2.9 billion invested in early childhood to ensure every child is ready for school, and ready for life.

**Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt**

*“We promised to deliver three-year-old kinder for every child, and with this Budget – we’re delivering it.”*

*“This investment means the next generation of young Victorians will have an extra year of learning, playing and making friends.”*

*“This Budget ensures that children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage get the tailored support they need and can participate in early childhood education.”*

*“Not only will it give our kids the best start in life, it’ll give thousands of Victorians a good, secure and meaningful job.”*