

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Workplace Safety

Minister for Early Childhood



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DELIVERING SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL KINDER FOR 2022

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering extra support to kindergartens across the state, helping them stay COVIDSafe and continue to deliver world-class early childhood education to Victoria's littlest learners.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt today announced a minimum funding guarantee for sessional kindergarten services for this year, alongside an extra \$7.4 million in COVIDSafe support for services to keep children and staff protected.

Sessional kindergartens delivering funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for the first time this year will have their minimum funding guarantee based on their 2021 four-year-old enrolments.

Services already delivering three-year-old programs will be guaranteed funding of 80 per cent of the combined three- and four-year-old enrolments in 2021.

To keep the youngest children – who cannot yet be vaccinated – safe at kinder, an extra investment in kinder services' COVIDSafe measures will help all services delivering a funded kindergarten program in 2022 meet any additional costs associated with helping to reduce the spread of the virus for the first half of the year.

The payments will provide \$946 per term to services with 49 or fewer kindergarten enrolments, and \$1,576 per term to services with 50 or more kindergarten enrolments in for Terms 1 and 2.

In an Australian-first, the Labor Government is investing almost \$5 billion this decade to provide three-year-old children with access to an additional year of funded kindergarten programs – giving them the best start to their education journey.

From this year, all three-year-old children across Victoria will have access to at least five hours of kindergarten, which will scale up to reach the full 15-hour program by 2029.

Victoria is leading the nation with its landmark Three-Year-Old Kindergarten statewide reform, ensuring the most vulnerable children remain supported as the state begins to recover from the pandemic, and creating fantastic jobs for educators 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 people who wish to help shape the future of the next generation of young Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"We know our youngest children are still unable to be vaccinated against coronavirus – so we're supporting every kinder service across Victoria to invest in measures to keep children and staff safe."

"I can't wait to see three-year-olds across Victoria start their kinder programs this year, and I'm proud that our Minimum Funding Guarantee is giving kinder services the certainty they need to deliver fantastic early education."