

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 30 January 2022

THE BEST START IN LIFE FOR EVERY VICTORIAN THREE-YEAR-OLD

Tens of thousands of children right across Victoria will start Three-Year-Old Kinder funded by the Andrews Labor Government this week, as part of a nation-leading reform to give every child the best start to their early education.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt today visited Banyan Fields Kindergarten in Carrum Downs to mark the statewide roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kinder services, part of the Labor Government's decade-long reform of early childhood education across Victoria.

Around 2,700 services across Victoria's 79 local government areas will deliver at least five hours per week of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten this year, before gradually scaling up to reach the full 15-hour program by 2029.

The Labor Government will invest almost \$5 billion this decade in this Australian-first reform, which provides three-year-old children with access to an additional year of funded kindergarten programs.

Research on the benefits of early childhood education is clear: children who have attended two years of a quality kindergarten program will have better cognitive and social skills when they start school, higher exam scores and better social and emotional outcomes at age 16, and be more likely to go on to higher academic study.

As well as the many benefits for Victorian children, this reform is delivering quality jobs for Victorians when we need them most – creating more than 6,000 teacher and educator jobs around the state and around 5,000 construction jobs over 10 years.

Children enrolled in funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will also receive a Kinder Kit, a colourful carry-case jam-packed with educational toys and resources to celebrate that kindergarten in Victoria now starts at age three.

The Kinder Kits will be distributed from the start of Term 1 to children enrolled in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, and have been created to complement learning at kinder with fun and creative activities that encourage family engagement in their child's education and promote awareness of the benefits of continued learning at home.

The Labor Government has supported kinder and early childhood services across Victoria to be COVIDSafe, protecting children and staff – with almost \$15 million in grants for services to deliver better ventilation and other COVIDSafe measures, alongside rapid antigen tests to be provided twice a week to every staff member.

Families can talk to their local kindergarten and long day care services about enrolling for 2022, and can look for a service near them by visiting the 'Find a Kinder Program' website at findakinder.educationapps.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We're leading the nation when it comes to giving kids the best start in life – today marks a huge milestone in our work to build the Education State and give every Victorian child the best opportunities, no matter where they live."

Quote attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"We couldn't be more excited to welcome families from right across Victoria into our Three-Year-Old Kinder programs – this reform will give a whole generation of children the early education they need to succeed in life."

For information about coronavirus visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call 1800 675 398.