

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Workplace Safety

Minister for Early Childhood



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MORE TEACHERS FOR VICTORIAN KINDERGARTENS

Early childhood workers will be supported to upskill and become kindergarten teachers, thanks to an innovative new partnership between the Andrews Labor Government and the Front Project.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt today launched the new Upskill Program in partnership with the Front Project, which will help up to 100 early childhood workers transition to university and become Bachelor-qualified kindergarten teachers.

Through the \$452,500 program, workers will receive wraparound supports including information sessions, webinars, study support, and professional and leadership development opportunities as they upskill to become early childhood teachers.

Students who face barriers to tertiary education will be prioritised to take part. These include those who are living and working in rural and remote areas, the first in their family to attend university, employed by smaller service providers, or where English is not their first language.

Diploma-qualified educators can apply if they live in Victoria, work in a Victorian early childhood setting or Three-Year-Old Kindergarten programs and intend to become an early childhood teacher through studying an approved bachelor's degree.

The program will commence in July 2022 to support students ready to begin their university studies in Semester 2 of the current academic year.

In an Australian first, the Labor Government is investing about \$5 billion over this decade to deliver 15 hours of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, adding about 4,000 early childhood teachers and 2,000 educators to the workforce.

To further support the growth of Victoria's early childhood sector and encourage more people to take up a career, VCAL will be replaced by the *VCE Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate* from 2023, giving secondary students more opportunities to study early childhood education and prepare them for entry into the sector while completing their VCE studies.

Victorians can also start a rewarding career in early childhood education and care, thanks to courses available at Free TAFE.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* invests more than \$217 million to ensure children across the state get the best start in life – with new and upgraded kindergartens and specialised support for children with disabilities and from cultural and economically diverse backgrounds.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"There has never been a more exciting time to pursue a career in early childhood education, which is why we are supporting more people – especially those from diverse backgrounds - to upskill and become kinder teachers."

"Our investment in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is creating thousands of new jobs, that's why we are continuously looking at innovative ways to support the next wave of educators and teachers."

Media contact: Ben Ansell 0488 777 170 | ben.ansell@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to The Front Project CEO Jane Hunt

“Our program is evidence-based and has been co-developed with the sector to support educators and provide them with the best opportunity to successfully transition from educator to degree-qualified teacher.

“At the Front Project we are committed to building workforce capability, improving the quality of the early childhood education system, and giving all children the opportunity to thrive.”