

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MLC

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep
Minister for Workplace Safety



Friday, 15 July 2022

MORE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED MOST

More early childhood teachers and educators will be eligible for financial incentives to encourage them to work in kindergarten programs where they're most needed, as part of the Andrews Labor Government's landmark *Best Start, Best Life* early childhood education reforms.

Minister for Early Childhood Education and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today visited Guardian Childcare & Education in Abbotsford to announce a \$1 million expansion of the Early Childhood Incentives program, encouraging early childhood teachers and educators to work in hard to staff areas of Melbourne and rural/regional Victoria.

For the first time, qualified early childhood educators will join teachers in being eligible for financial incentives for joining or returning to the sector, as well as those coming from interstate and New Zealand.

Individual incentives of \$9,000 are available for qualified teachers and educators starting their careers, re-joining the sector or relocating to Victoria from interstate or New Zealand.

Location incentives of \$9,000 are also available for educators willing to relocate to high-priority services across the state to deliver the nation-leading rollout of universal Three-Year-Old Kindergarten. There are also existing location incentives of \$9,000 to \$50,000 for early childhood teachers who take up a role at a high-priority service.

On top of these incentives, between \$2,000 and \$8,000 in relocation support is also available to educators and teachers who are awarded an incentive and are relocating more than 200kms to take up a role.

The Labor Government is also supporting more people to become early childhood teachers, with up to 175 extra state government-funded places available in the 2023 intake of Australian Catholic University's Accelerated Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, as part of the Innovative Initial Teacher Education (IITE) program.

The program of accelerated study gives diploma-qualified educators the opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree and become early childhood teachers in 18 months, after receiving recognition of their eligible prior studies and experience.

This program, delivered by three universities across Victoria, allows students to continue their studies and paid employment at an early childhood service.

As part of the \$9 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, the Labor Government is making kindergarten programs free from 2023 and will establish 50 government-operated childcare centres over the decade. Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will also transition to Pre-Prep with 30 hours of learning by 2032, in addition to Victoria's nation-leading roll out of 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

The Early Childhood Jobs site provides a free online platform for the early childhood sector to connect in one place to look for, apply for and advertise jobs and incentives. <https://jobs.earlychildhood.education.vic.gov.au/>.

Applications for the next ACU intake are open from August. Find out more at vic.gov.au/kinder.

Quote attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Education and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt

"We're supporting our early childhood workforce with more financial incentives and innovative courses to ensure we attract, retain and support dedicated staff to deliver the best educational start for Victorian children."

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Quote attributable to Australian Catholic University's National Head of School of Education Professor Donna King

"ACU is at the forefront of educating early childhood teachers in partnership with the Victorian Government through our innovative course which supports experienced early childhood professionals to take their next step and become teachers."