

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education
Minister for Agriculture



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FREE TAFE BUILDING CAREERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

There has never been a better time to begin a rewarding career in early childhood education, with the Andrews Labor Government making it easier than ever to start a Free TAFE course in early childhood at South West TAFE.

Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney today visited the Port Fairy Community Services Centre to see the benefits of South West TAFE training in action, meeting recent Certificate III in Early Childhood Education graduate Claire Adams and other childcare staff.

The Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care is one of more than 60 courses on offer across the state as part of Free TAFE, offering tuition fee-free training for some of Victoria's most in-demand industries.

Early childhood educators are among the state's most-needed workers, with plenty of career opportunities for those looking to train or retrain in the area.

Since being added to the Free TAFE course list in 2020, almost 50 local students have completed a course in Early Childhood Education at South West TAFE, with more than 60 currently enrolled across the two courses.

In 2023, South West TAFE will have 140 places available across its Certificate III and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care as part of Free TAFE – with locals strongly encouraged to apply and make the change to a rewarding new career.

Victoria's TAFE system is helping to deliver the workforce for the Labor Government's \$5 billion Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform and the nation-leading \$9 billion *Best Start, Best Life* early childhood education reforms.

Best Start, Best Life will include making kindergarten free from 2023, establishing 50 government-owned and affordable childcare centres, and delivering a universal 30-hour a week program of play-based learning for four-year-old children across Victoria by 2032.

More than 5,800 people have enrolled in a Free TAFE Early Childhood Education and Care Certificate III or Diploma course since 2020.

Since Free TAFE was introduced by the Labor Government in 2019, more than 115,000 students have benefited, saving more than \$281 million in tuition fees.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"Free TAFE shows how targeted investment in training can help support the specific workforce needs of communities in South Western Victoria and create lasting career opportunities for people who live here."

"There are many great career opportunities in early childhood education and this government is making it easier than ever for people to access them through high quality fee free training."

Quote attributable to South West TAFE CEO Mark Fidge

"We are proud to be developing skilled staff in the Early Childhood education sector as it is such an important beginning for children."

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