

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
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NEW KINDERS GIVING VICTORIAN KIDS THE BEST START

Hundreds of Victorian children will be learning at brand new local kindergartens in Term 1, making early childhood education more accessible and helping families avoid the dreaded double drop-off, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today announced 11 new kindergartens located on or next door to existing school sites, creating education precincts in local communities to give all children the best start in life.

New kindergartens opening in metropolitan Melbourne include Reservoir East Primary School, Lalor Primary School, Movelle Primary School, Meadowglen Primary School in Epping and Barrawang Primary School in Wollert.

Kindergartens are also opening on interim sites at Essendon Keilor College, and North Melbourne Primary School, where a temporary location is being used until the new campus opens in Term 2. Rosewood Down Primary School is also using a temporary location until its new kinder opens in March.

Regional areas are also well served, with new kindergartens opening at Drouin West Primary School, Newhaven Primary School and Wonthaggi Primary School.

With 90 per cent of a child's brain developing before the age of five, early education has a profound effect on the way our kids develop. That's why we promised to deliver Three-Year-Old Kinder – making sure Victorian kids are ready for school and set for life, while also saving families thousands of dollars in standalone kinder fees.

Up to 140,000 children and families will benefit from Free Kinder this year under the \$270 million initiative, children enrolled in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will receive between 5 and 15 hours of funded learning each week, and those in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will receive 15 hours per week.

It's all part of the Labor Government's massive *Best Start, Best Life* reform – delivering Free Kinder, creating 50 government-owned and operated childcare centres and establishing Pre-Prep, an extra year of play-based learning that will also save families money and help more women back into work.

Free Kinder programs are available at 97 per cent of funded kindergarten services across the state, including sessional services and long day-care centres.

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

"Kindergartens on school sites are all about delivering the best facilities and education to children in early education by making the transition to school that much easier."

"We're already giving every Victorian kids an extra year of kinder – and now we're taking action to make sure kinders are more convenient and accessible for busy families."