

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 31 January 2023

MORE MONEY IN FAMILIES' POCKETS AS FREE KINDER KICKS OFF

Thousands of Victorian children will start their early childhood education this week, as up to 140,000 families benefit from the Andrews Labor Government's Free Kinder initiative in its very first year.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today visited Will Will Rook Preschool in Glenroy to welcome children and families starting their kinder journey.

The Preschool runs a bush kindergarten program and offers a combined kindergarten program for three- and four-year-olds, with all enrolments free.

It's one of more than 2,750 early childhood services across the state offering the Labor Government's once-in-a-generation kindergarten reform of Free Kinder for Victoria's three- and four-year-olds in 2023.

Ninety-seven per cent of Victoria's kindergarten providers have opted-in to Free Kinder, including sessional kinder and long day-care centres.

The initiative will see children enrolled in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten receive between 5 and 15 hours of funded learning each week this year, and those in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten receive 15 hours per week.

Thanks to a grant of \$1.58 million through the Labor Government's Building Blocks Capacity Grants program, Will Will Rook Preschool now also has an additional classroom to support three-year-old kinder programs and modern indoor and outdoor learning environments.

The impact of the Free Kinder initiative is life changing. Free Kinder will save families up to \$2,500 per child each year and give Victorian parents – most of whom are women – greater flexibility to return to work if they choose.

Over the next decade, this support will increase further, with Four-Year-Old Kindergarten transitioning to Pre-Prep by scaling up to 30 hours of play-based learning each week.

Children enrolled in funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will also receive a free Kinder Kit full of fun and educational toys, books and resources, helping them to grow and thrive through creativity and play.

It's all part of the Government's massive \$9 billion Best Start, Best Life and \$5 billion Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reforms – delivering early childhood education to help children thrive, save families money and support parents, especially women, to return to work if they choose.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Through our Free Kinder reform, we're helping families save thousands of dollars and making sure every child gets the early education they need to get the best start in life."

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

"Our Free Kinder initiative means more choice, flexibility, and money in families' pockets. We know it will go a long way in helping families and give thousands of children across the state access to these vital years of early education."

Quote attributable to Member for Broadmeadows Kathleen Matthews-Ward

"The first day of kinder is a huge milestone for families. There is nothing more rewarding than watching your children make new friends and learn skills that will last them a lifetime."

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