

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
Minister for Environment



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BUILDING A STRONGER KINDERGARTEN WORKFORCE

Thousands of early childhood teachers and educators are set to join Victoria's kindergarten workforce in coming years, thanks to a \$159 million investment in training and development by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today visited Merri Community Child Care Centre and Kindergarten in Thornbury to meet Chelsea Ford, one of more than 3,500 teachers who have joined Victoria's kindergarten workforce through government-funded scholarships since October 2018.

With this new investment, the Labor Government is now delivering a total of almost \$370 million to attract high-quality teachers and educators to the sector and support existing professionals.

With Pre-Prep rolling out from 2025, the Government is also helping key sector partners plan ahead, with up to \$8.5 million in Workforce Planning grants now available to help local governments and Early Years Managers profile their local workforce, forecast future needs and deliver plans to support teacher and educator demand.

Immediate support, including targeted financial incentives and access to recruitment agencies, is already available to help early childhood services recruit quality teachers and educators. Eligible professionals can access up to \$50,000 to move to hard-to-staff locations, plus \$9,000 to join or re-join the workforce.

The Labor Government's Free TAFE initiative is also boosting the number of early childhood educators available to give children the best start in life, with thousands of students enrolling in the Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care courses since 2020.

To support workforce development and retention, a range of free career development opportunities is available, including mentoring for first-year teachers, communities of practice for second- and third-year teachers, and Early Years Learning Networks for teachers in leadership roles to share professional expertise.

Experienced early childhood teachers and educators can also develop their coaching and mentoring skills through a new professional learning program starting in Term 2.

Victoria's Best Start, Best Life reforms are delivering huge benefits to local children and families. By 2032, children will have access to 15 hours of funded Three-Year-Older Kindergarten and 30 hours of Pre-Prep each week.

Anyone interested in joining this growing sector can also access a dedicated Early Childhood Jobs website featuring available roles, updates and resources from across the sector.

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

"We're backing the next generation of teachers and educators with more pathways into a rewarding career, while ensuring the early education workforce has the support it needs now and into the future."

"A quality early childhood education starts with the best teachers and educators. That's why we're supporting the sector with workforce initiatives, training opportunities and planning grants to ensure kindergartens have the highly skilled professionals they need."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"Early years in education are some of the most important, that's why we're delivering the investment needed to ensure our local kids have the resources and support they need to get the very best start."

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