

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
Minister for Environment



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TIME TO ENROL IN KINDERGARTEN FOR 2024

With kindergarten enrolments now opening for 2024, the Andrews Labor Government is encouraging young families to enrol their children and give them the best start in life.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today launched the 2024 kindergarten enrolment campaign by encouraging parents to talk to their local kindergarten service about enrolment processes and timelines.

In Victoria, Free Kinder is available for three and four-year-olds at participating services, including sessional kindergartens and long day-care centres.

97 per cent of kindergarten providers are currently participating in the Labor Government's Free Kinder initiative, saving families up to \$2,500 in fees per child and giving parents and carers – particularly women – greater flexibility to return to work if they choose.

With Free Kinder, children enrolled in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten receive between 5 and 15 hours of funded learning each week, and those in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten receive 15 hours per week.

Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support a child's development, with two years of quality kindergarten having greater impact on children who start at three years of age rather than four. The benefits are even greater for children experiencing vulnerability or who need extra support.

At kindergarten, children are given the opportunity to use their imagination and practice important skills, such as problem-solving, through play-based learning. They also learn key skills for life, including creative thinking, social and emotional skills, and early literacy and language skills – preparing them for being formal school education.

Highly skilled teachers and educators guide learning and development, helping children to become confident, curious and creative while developing concentration and independence, forming positive relationships and making friends.

To ensure a kindergarten meets their needs, families are encouraged to organise a time to visit so they can see the service, its staff and the children in attendance. Families should also look for a Kinder Tick, so they can be confident their child is attending a funded kindergarten program.

Families with children born between January and April can choose the year in which they start Three-Year-Old Kindergarten. These children can start in the same year they turn three or in the year they turn four. If unsure, speak to your local service about the best time for your child to start kindergarten.

Parents can find kindergarten services near them by visiting vic.gov.au/kinder or contacting their local council.

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

"To dream big, children need the best start in life. That's why we've made it easier than ever for families to enrol their children in two years of quality early childhood education."

"Two years of play-based learning is proven to give children a solid foundation for education and life. Contact your local kindergarten service today to find out how to enrol your child for 2024."

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