

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
Minister for Environment



Saturday, 17 June 2023

UPGRADING OUR KINDERGARTENS TO BE FUTURE READY

Quality education gives kids the best start in life, so the Andrews Labor Government is making sure kinders have the modern resources and equipment they need as education and technology evolve.

90 per cent of a child's brain develops before the age of five, so to ensure that kinders and early childhood educators are best prepared to support this growth, the Labor Government is investing \$10 million to help upgrade and improve their facilities and IT equipment.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today opened a new round of *Building Blocks Improvement* grants for eligible kindergartens, which will assist with upgrades and improvements for Early Childhood service providers across the state - because all kinders deserve access to high-quality facilities.

The *Building Blocks Improvement* stream offers grants to help kindergartens refurbish buildings and facilities, as well as purchase IT equipment to deliver engaging and modern educational programs and upgrade administrative systems to make staff and parents' lives easier.

The total amount for grants has more than doubled, with up to \$750,000 now available for renovation or refurbishment of existing early learning facilities — an increase of \$250,000 since 2022. Funding for small-scale facility updates is also available, with expanded grants of up to \$150,000 for minor infrastructure projects.

Blended learning between technology and play-based education best sets children up for the future, so we've also made up to \$2,000 available to kinders and childcare service providers to purchase IT equipment and other technology for use in kindergarten programs.

Applications for IT-related grants close on 30 July, while applications for early learning facility upgrades and minor infrastructure grants close on 3 September. To apply for a Building Blocks Improvement grant or find out more, visit schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-improvement.

Through our Best Start, Best Life reforms, we've also made it easier for local councils and kindergarten service providers to apply for grants in the Building Blocks Capacity Building and Planning streams so that they can better plan for and meet demand as Victoria grows.

Other streams of the Building Blocks program have also seen a boost in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* – with more money now available under both the *Capacity* and *Planning* streams to improve and grow kinders across the state.

This means that Building Blocks now provides Capacity Building grants of up to \$4.5 million for new integrated children's centres, \$4 million for new early learning centres and \$1 million for expansion projects, plus planning grants of up to \$150,000 for project planning and design.

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

"We're helping local councils and early childhood services deliver upgrades and improvements to kindergartens across the state, so all children have access to the modern facilities they need for the best start in life."

"These grants provide important funding for kindergarten upgrades, helping early childhood services to renovate or refurbish buildings and facilities and invest in the technology needed for a modern early learning experience."

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