

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Children
Minister for Disability



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BILINGUAL KINDERS CONNECTING KIDS TO THE WORLD

Learning a language has a profound positive impact on children’s learning – and the Allan Labor Government is providing more language education to help give early learners the best start to life.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today visited Templestowe World of Learning to reveal the names and locations of 11 early learning services that will be offered a place in Victoria’s nation-leading bilingual kindergarten program from Term 1, 2024.

The expansion is part of a \$3.7 million investment to increase the diversity of children’s language skills in Victoria’s kindergartens, build stronger local communities and prepare children for an increasingly connected world.

Around 800 four-year-olds currently attend 10 existing bilingual kindergartens, where they learn in a language other than English for 12 hours of their weekly 15-hour kindergarten program. This expansion will give more than 400 more children the opportunity to learn in another language.

Reflecting the success of early years language learning in Victoria, three of the funding recipients are expanding their existing language program from three hours per week. The other services will introduce a bilingual learning program that reflects the rich community diversity of their children and families for the first time.

Language education plays a vital role in children’s development – increasing their reading and writing skills, boosting their self-esteem, and strengthening their cultural identity.

To help children develop their language skills, qualified language teachers incorporate language learning into fun everyday kinder activities such as singing, dancing, painting and storytelling.

The proposed languages of the 11 new service providers are Auslan, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese, and Gunai/Kurnai, a local Aboriginal language.

Teaching Aboriginal languages strengthens Koorie cultural inclusion and gives children opportunities to learn about and share Victorian Aboriginal languages, culture and history.

Auslan creates learning environments that value Deaf culture, promote access and inclusion, and provide direct employment opportunities for Deaf teachers.

The bilingual kindergarten program is part of the Labor Government’s Early Childhood Language Program, which currently supports around 7,000 children at 200 kindergartens to learn in a language other than English at no cost to parents.

Through our nation-leading \$14 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, we are transforming early childhood education to help children thrive, save families money and support parents to return to work or study.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

“Learning another language unlocks so many opportunities – these bilingual kinders will not only give our kids lifelong skills, they will connect them with communities and cultures from around the world.”

“With languages that reflect the rich cultural diversity of our local communities, these 11 kinders are joining an extraordinary learning program that develops cultural awareness, builds social skills and strengthens identity.”

Media contact: Nelson Barber 0473 163 333 | nelson.barber@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Kindergartens that will be offering the bilingual kindergarten program from Term 1, 2024

Where multiple languages are listed, the teacher recruitment process will determine the final language delivered.

- Albanvale Community Kindergarten (Albanvale) – Vietnamese
- Bethal Primary School Kindergarten (Meadow Heights) – Arabic, Hindi or Punjabi
- Brentwood Kindergarten (Glen Waverley) – Auslan, Chinese (Mandarin) or Japanese
- Dala Yoroo (Bairnsdale) – Gunai/Kurnai, an Aboriginal language
- Donvale Early Learning Centre (Donvale) – Chinese (Mandarin)
- Iramoo Kindergarten (Wyndham Vale) – Auslan, Karen or Spanish
- Shine Bright Helm Street Kindergarten (Kangaroo Flat) – Auslan, Karen or Punjabi
- Springvale Service for Children (Mulgrave) – Chinese (Mandarin), Karen or Vietnamese
- Vista Valley Kindergarten (Bulleen) – Italian
- Vista Way Kindergarten (Wyndham Vale) – Auslan, Chinese (Mandarin) or Punjabi
- Woodhouse Grove Kindergarten (Box Hill North) – Chinese (Mandarin) or Japanese