

Media Release

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



Monday, 18 March 2024

SUPPORTED PLAYGROUPS OFFERING KIDS THE BEST START IN LIFE

The Allan Labor Government continues to invest in offering children the best start in life, celebrating National Playgroup Week across the state.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today visited the Maidstone Child and Family Centre to help parents, children, caregivers and staff celebrate National Playgroup Week.

The event was open to parents and children from Supported Playgroups and community playgroups in the Maribyrnong City Council area.

The Labor Government invests more than \$11 million a year to enable around 17,000 parents and their pre-schoolers to attend the Supported Playgroups program in 79 Local Government Areas across the state, with local councils being the main providers.

At Supported Playgroups, children from birth to school age and their parents enjoy a range of fun play opportunities and activities together. Parents also find out about local services and support networks in the community.

A qualified facilitator leads these fun sessions during which parents develop their skills and confidence to support their child's wellbeing and development including language, communication, and social skills.

Supported Playgroups are an evidence-based approach, developed by the Parenting Research Centre through an \$8 million Victorian Government investment. They are proven to improve outcomes for children, to support parents and to strengthen the early home learning environment for families experiencing disadvantage.

Some sessions are delivered in language, and there is an opportunity for parents to practise strategies in their own home with one-on-one coaching.

Parents can find out more about Supported Playgroups by speaking with their Maternal and Child Health nurse or contacting their local council.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"There is no more important job than getting children off to a great start in life, and we're proud to be able to help parents access the support they need close to home and when they need it."

"This evidence-based Playgroup program has been developed right here in Victoria and empowers parents to support their babies and toddlers develop language, forge social skills and become engaged and immersed in the world around them."