

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Children

Minister for Disability



Friday, 6 September 2024

BUILDING A BETTER SYSTEM FOR FAMILIES

The Allan Labor Government is working with families and carers right across the state to make it easier to access services designed for children including maternal and child health, early education and family services.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn and Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Iwan Walters today hosted a children's roundtable, inviting parents and carers of children with a disability from across Melbourne to discuss programs and services that they have accessed for their children.

Roundtables are being held across Victoria throughout the year, and the discussions will inform policies, programs and initiatives that impact children from birth to 12 years old. Topics of discussion include maternal and child health, early childhood education and care, early parenting centres, kindergartens and family services.

The roundtables are taking place in Melbourne and rural and regional Victoria – to talk about families experiences of moving between services as their children grow and their needs change.

Our nation-leading investment in early childhood education through *Best Start, Best Life* is delivering Free Kinder for three- and four-year-olds, establishing 50 government-owned and operated Early Learning Centres, investing in kindergarten infrastructure and upskilling and attracting quality early childhood educators.

In addition to this, the Labor Government is investing in free universal Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, bringing together health support for new mums and babies wherever they are.

The *Victorian Budget 2024/25* delivered an additional \$28.8 million to meet increased demand for MCH services, dedicated Aboriginal services and the MCH program which provides extra support for families facing challenges such as disability, mental health, family violence and housing instability.

The Labor Government is creating generational reform that will offer our youngest Victorians the absolute best start in life, along with seamless support services for parents and carers.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"These roundtable sessions are a fantastic way for us to hear from parents and families on their experiences raising children and how things really work in their daily lives."

"I encourage parents to come along and share their experiences of raising children in Victoria, so we can support them to help their children thrive."

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Iwan Walters

"The Allan Labor Government is ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or challenges, has access to the vital services they need, from maternal health to early education."