

# Media Release

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



Monday, 7 October 2024

## INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The Allan Labor Government is supporting early childhood teachers and educators to have long and rewarding careers in the sector, through funding for programs that encourage workforce retention.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today launched the 2024–25 Innovation Grants Program – with grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000 available to early childhood services who are innovating to keep early career teachers and educators in the workforce.

The grants support teachers and educators in the first five years of their career, and applicants are encouraged to work together with other providers to develop programs and services that enable early career educators to stay in the workforce.

Since 2021, the Innovation Grants Program has awarded nearly \$250,000 in funding to early childhood services including Monash Vale and Bridge Early Learning Centres, who developed EMPOWER – a suite of tools that support early career teachers at their services.

No two days are ever the same in early childhood education. EMPOWER enables teachers to consider how to respond to a variety of situations including building relationships with children and their families, working in a team, teaching and managing the transition to work.

The Labor Government is supporting Victoria's early childhood workforce to grow and thrive, with free career supports and professional development. Nearly 1,000 early childhood teachers have already participated in the End-to-End Workforce Supports program, including coaching and mentoring.

More than 4,000 early childhood professionals have also accessed the Three-Year-Old Teaching Toolkit to support the delivery of high-quality kindergarten programs. We are giving every Victorian kid the very best start in life, and this starts with supporting their early childhood educators.

Through our nation-leading \$14 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, the Labor Government is transforming early childhood education to help children thrive, save families money, and support parents and carers to return to work or study if they choose.

Applications for 2024-25 Innovation Grants close at 5pm on Friday, 1 November 2024. To apply or find out more visit [vic.gov.au/innovation-grants-program](https://vic.gov.au/innovation-grants-program).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

*"These grants are just one of the ways we're supporting early childhood services to grow and retain their workforce. I can't wait to see the innovative ideas that will be put forward."*

*"We're supporting Victoria's early childhood workforce to grow and thrive, with targeted career supports and development opportunities for teachers and educators in the first five years of their careers – right when they need it most."*