

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Wednesday, 23 April 2025

MORE KINDERS AND MORE FREE HOURS AS ENROLMENTS OPEN FOR 2026

The Allan Labor Government is opening more kinders and adding more free kindergarten hours for families across Victoria – adding to the \$630 million that busy Victorian families have already saved through Free Kinder.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today visited Lollypop Creek Kindergarten in Werribee to announce the locations for new kinders on school sites and the opening of kinder enrolments for 2026.

The Labor Government will open new kinders at Seville Primary School, Willow Grove Primary School and Rochester Secondary College in 2027.

All three will be on school sites – helping more families ditch the dreaded double dropoff and increasing the number of kinders on school sites by 13 in 2027, creating more than 1,900 kindergarten places.

In 2026, the Government is also opening Pre-Prep – additional hours for Four-Year-Old kinder – to 12 new local government areas. This means another 3,000 children at 130 services eligible for up to 20 hours of kinder per week.

Families in the 12 local government areas of Benalla, Buloke, Corangamite, East Gippsland, Horsham, Loddon, Mansfield, Mitchell, Pyrenees, Strathbogie, Wangaratta and Wodonga will join families in the six local government areas which started Pre-Prep this year.

The Government is also giving up to 25 free kinder hours each week to priority demographics, no matter where they live. This will help more than 5,000 children including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background and those who have had contact with Child Protection.

More than 145,000 children and their families are saving up to \$2,600 per child each year through the Labor Government's Free Kinder program, which is available at 97 per cent of funded kindergartens across the state.

It's important. With 90 per cent of a child's brain developing before the age of five, early education has a profound effect on the way children develop and gives them the best start in life.

Since Free Kinder started in 2023, the Labor Government has picked up the bill for Victorian families and saved them about \$630 million in education fees. This year, they'll save another \$350 million.

Enrolments are now open for 2026 – for more information families can go to www.vic.gov.au/sending-child-kinder

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"We know Victorian families are doing it tough, and Free Kinder puts \$2,600 back in their pockets every year."

"Free Kinder gives our littlest Victorians the best start in life but it also gives parents, particularly mothers, the freedom to go back to work if and when they choose."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"Kinder enrolments are open for 2026, and with Pre-Prep available for even more families and more kinders opening close to home, we're helping every Victorian kid get the best start in life."

"We're opening more kinders on school sites every year – helping children make the transition from kinder to school."

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Quote attributable to Member for Werribee John Lister

“For young families Free Kinder means more choice, more flexibility, and more money in their pockets. With this reform we’re making sure every child in Werribee gets the early education they need to thrive.”