

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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READY FOR SCHOOL: KINDER FOR EVERY THREE-YEAR-OLD

In an Australian first, every Victorian child born under a re-elected Andrews Labor Government will start kindergarten a year earlier, giving them the skills and experiences they need to be ready for school.

Labor will invest almost \$5 billion over the next decade to deliver a full 15 hours of three-year-old kinder, with the rollout beginning in 2020.

This will be the largest social, economic and educational reform ever undertaken in early childhood learning in Victoria's history.

The Andrews Labor Government welcomes Federal Labor's commitment to support three-year-old kinder, which stands in stark contrast to the Federal Liberal Government, which continues to threaten funding for four-year-old kinder.

Labor's commitment is also good news for families struggling with the cost of living. Right now, many are forced to scrimp and save to cover the costs of three-year-old kinder – around \$5000 a year for 15 hours – while the vast majority see their kids miss out.

Recent research conducted by community service provider Uniting shows that nearly one in five families do not have their children enrolled in early learning because of the cost.

But under Labor's plan, around a quarter of Victorian families will pay nothing at all.

For families with a higher income, the Labor Government will cover 65 per cent of their child's kindergarten costs, consistent with the current subsidy for four-year-old kinder. This represents a saving of at least \$3500 for families whose children attend a standalone kinder.

Those with kids who go to long-day-care will also benefit, with these centres given funding to employ teachers in their three-year-old rooms. Centres that make cost savings due to our investment will be required to pass any savings on to families.

Under Labor's plan, every Victorian child will have access to at least five hours of subsidised three-year-old kinder by 2022, progressively scaled up to 15 hours per week over the next decade.

The reforms will see three-year-old kinder rolled out to six regional local government areas (LGAs) by 2020, with Buloke, Hindmarsh, Northern Grampians, South Gippsland, Strathbogie and Yarriambiack all set to benefit.

In 2021, an extra 15 LGAs will come on board – Alpine, Ararat, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Hepburn, Indigo, Loddon, Murrindindi, Southern Grampians, Towong and West Wimmera.

This initial expansion will roll out to regional Victoria first, covering the areas that already have the capacity and facilities to meet demand – allowing us to get on with building the rest.

A re-elected Labor Government will work closely with the early childhood sector, including local councils, to deliver this reform.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Every parent worries about whether their child will be ready for school. With an extra year of kinder – and all the learning and play that brings – we'll make sure they are."

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“With their commitment to expand the existing funding arrangement for four-year-old kinder to three-year-olds, Bill Shorten and Federal Labor are showing the national leadership that our nation sorely needs.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Education Jenny Mikakos

“Universal access to three-year-old kinder is an Australian-first and make no mistake, this will change lives.”

“While the Federal Liberal Government refuses to meet its commitments on four-year-old kindergarten, Labor is determined to make sure our kids are ready for school and ready for life.”

“Both Australian and international research shows that the single most impactful reform we can make to our education system is to expand kinder to three-year-olds.”