

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 7 May 2019

BRUNSWICK WEST KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN LEARN IN FRENCH

Brunswick West children will reap the long-term benefits of learning in another language while attending kindergarten, thanks to a program launched by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today visited Dunstan Reserve Child Care Centre in Brunswick West to see its new French language program in action.

Children attending the integrated kindergarten program at the centre have been participating in weekly language sessions since Term 1. The service is working to embed the language across their kindergarten program, including in their art, sport and music lessons.

The kindergarten is one of eleven in Victoria that will deliver a French language program in 2019, as part of the Labor Government's \$17.9 million *Early Childhood Language Program*.

The Andrew Labor Government is providing funding for around 160 kindergarten services across the state to deliver the language programs— at no cost to families.

Weekly language sessions of up to three hours will be delivered in about 150 kindergarten services, and a further 10 kindergartens will become bilingual, where children will benefit from half their program being offered in a language other than English.

These programs are expected to reach more than 5,000 children in a range of languages including Mandarin, Punjabi, Arabic, Italian, French, Spanish, Auslan and Aboriginal languages.

There are many benefits to learning additional languages at a young age, including increased literacy.

Making Victoria the Education State starts with the early years. That's why, in an Australian first, the Labor Government is investing almost \$5 billion over the next decade to deliver a full 15 hour per week subsidised kindergarten program for three-year-olds, to be progressively rolled out from 2020.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"We are giving Victorian children the opportunity to learn languages other than English – helping them prepare for life in a more connected world."

"Learning in another language has fantastic rewards for young children – improving brain function as well as helping them to read and write in English."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Metropolitan Jenny Mikakos

"It's fantastic to see Brunswick West children immersed in French at a young age and no doubt reap the long-term benefits of learning a language other than English."