

2026–27 Victorian State Budget

Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP

Minister for Children

19 May 2026



Families,
Fairness
and Housing

Victoria's Children Portfolio

Free primary health services that promote health, wellbeing, safety, learning and developmental outcomes for children and their families.

High quality early childhood education delivered in a range of settings.

Services for children and families with emerging, escalating or complex parenting, interpersonal or social support needs.

Supports for children and young people in need of protection or at risk of significant harm within their families.

Leaving care services

Those who have left care up to 21 years



Maternal and Child Health



Early childhood



Family services



Child protection



Care services

Statutory services

Birth to school aged

3 years to school aged

Pre-birth to 18 years

Pre-birth to 18 years

Our vision: equity of outcomes and access for Victorian children and families

Statewide Maternal and Child Health services

Every child and family has access to Maternal and Child Health services in Victoria to ensure they have the best start to life.



615,000

Key ages and stages consultations (24-25)



15,700

families supported by Enhanced MCH consultations (24-25)



109,700

Callers supported by the 24/7 MCH line (24-25)



Giving children the best possible start in life

- › The 2026-27 State Budget invests **\$6.8 million** and **\$1.7 million ongoing** to open the new Hastings Early Parenting Centre on the Mornington Peninsula.
- › Since 2019-20, the Victorian Government is expanding the network from 3 to 13 EPC across the state, including the first ever Aboriginal-dedicated Early Parenting Centre.



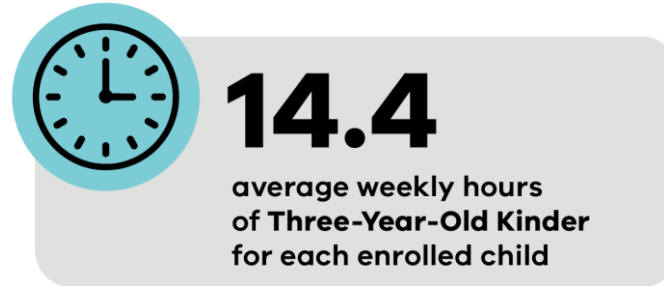
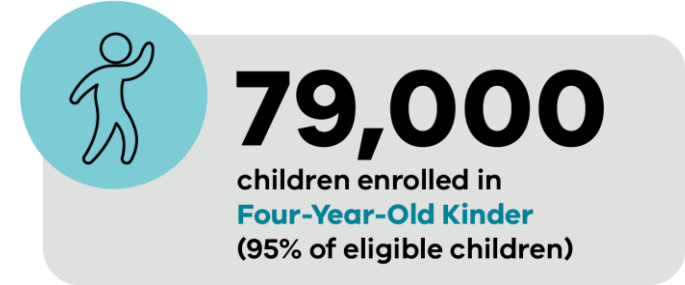
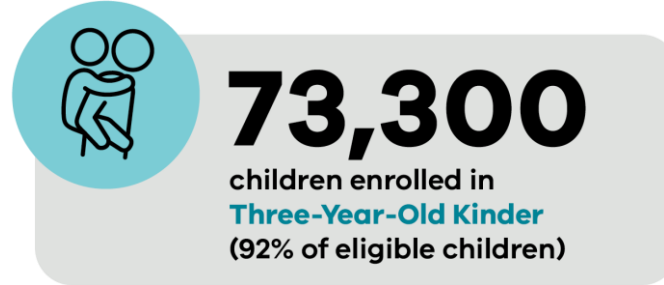
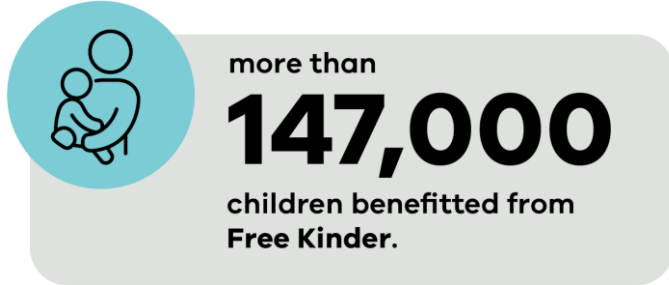
Continuing our nation-leading early childhood education reforms

- › Now in their sixth year, the **Best Start, Best Life** reforms have transformed early childhood education in our state.
- › Since launching these reforms, Victoria has made a record investment of around **\$8.2 billion** to deliver them.
- › **Free Kinder** has saved families **\$1 billion** in fees and benefited more than **570,000** children and their families.
- › More than **350,000** children are expected to benefit from more hours of teacher-led kindergarten programs between 2020 and 2026.
- › Victoria's kindergarten workforce has grown by more than **60%** since 2019.
- › We have awarded more than **5,800** early childhood teaching scholarships.
- › Nearly **1,000** children have been able to enrol in one of the new Early Learning Victoria government-owned and operated childcare centres.



Improving children's access and participation in early learning

In 2025:



In 2026:



Investing in early childhood infrastructure

Since 2015, we have invested **\$3.8 billion** in early childhood infrastructure to deliver and support hundreds of projects, with more to come.

To date, the funding has delivered and supported more than **10,500** projects, creating more than **36,000** kindergarten places, including through:

- › **100+** new and expanded kindergartens on or near school sites
- › **275+** Capacity Building - Building Blocks grants
- › **9,350+** Improvement, Inclusion and IT grants.

Through the Victorian Budget 2026-27, we are investing **\$498.2 million** to support:

- › continued delivery of new and expanded early learning facilities across the state in 2029 and 2030
- › a further **5** of the **50** government-owned and operated Early Learning Victoria centres.



Prioritising quality, safety and support for Victorian children

- › Building on the **\$137 million** investment to date in response to the Rapid Child Safety Review, we are adding:
 - » **\$26.2 million** for enhanced **regulatory and enforcement** activities at early childhood education and care services.
- › This Budget is also supporting children's development through:
 - » **\$7.4 million** for **Kinder Kits**, with free books, toys and educational materials for children starting Three-Year-Old Kinder
 - » **\$3.6 million** for language programs at 200 kinders, including 21 bilingual services, through the **Early Childhood Language Program**
 - » **\$3.2 million** for **early childhood intervention services** for children with specific needs who are ineligible for NDIS due to residency status.



Child Protection and Family Services

In 2026-27, overall investment for child protection and family services is **\$2.4 billion**, an increase of 65% per cent since 2019-20



19,854

families supported for family services in 2024-25.



151,587

reports to child protection services in 2024-25.



2,886

Aboriginal families supported by family services in 2024-25



Helping families stay connected, stable and strong

The **2026-27 State Budget** delivers **\$361.8** million to help protect and support Victoria's most vulnerable children and young people. This includes:

- » **\$164.7 million** over two years to continue earlier interventions to keep families together and safe, including supports for children and young people at risk of justice engagement.
- » **\$126.2 million** to deliver the first stage of a modern, fit-for-purpose ICT system, replacing outdated client information management and reporting systems, enabling better outcomes for children and families.
- » **\$70.9 million** to improve outcomes for children and young people in care.
- › This Budget also invests **\$14.9 million** to provide cost-of-living relief for carers.
- › Investment is underpinned by new nation leading legislation – *Children, Youth and Families (Supporting Stable and Strong Families) Act 2026* and the *Children, Youth and Families (Stability) Act 2026*.
- › The Acts work together to enhance early intervention and better support children, young people and families to keep them together whenever it is safe to do so.



Further enhancing Aboriginal led service delivery

- › **The 2026-27 State Budget** also invests in Aboriginal-led service delivery over two years including:
 - » **\$5.1 million** to further expand the nation-leading Community Protecting Boorais program that enables delivery of Aboriginal-led investigations of child protection reports in authorised Aboriginal and Community Controlled Organisations.



Modernising technology systems for better service delivery

- › **The 2026-27 State Budget** invests **\$126.2 million** across four years to commence an Information and Communication Technology transformation across our service system.
- › This funds the first phase of digital transformation that will make it easier for workers to do their jobs, to improve data reporting and security, and ultimately improve client outcomes.
- › Investment will replace the Integrated Reporting Information System (IRIS) system, and deliver foundational design for broader child protection, family violence, state-funded disability and youth justice programs.



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In this presentation, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

Available at <<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-the-2026-27-budget-estimates/hearings>>.