

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for Early Childhood



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TWO YEARS OF FREE KINDERGARTEN FOR THE BEST START IN LIFE

The Andrews Labor Government is encouraging young families to enrol their children in Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten for 2024, ensuring every Victorian child can have the best start in education and life.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today joined former AFL star Bachar Houli at Altona North Children's Service to encourage parents of all cultures and backgrounds to get their applications in for 2024 now.

In 2024, Bachar's son Mohamed will start Three-Year-Old Kindergarten – and today, his dad shared his motivations for enrolling his children in kindergarten and spoke of the benefits kinder has had on his family.

Many councils with central enrolment processes will begin allocating kindergarten places in July, with families encouraged to start visiting local kinders to discuss enrolment options that work best for them.

With Free Kinder, more children and families can access and attend kindergarten, extending the learning that children do at home and saving families up to \$2,500 in fees per child each year.

Before starting school, children can attend Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for 5 to 15 hours per week, followed by Four-Year-Old Kindergarten for 15 hours per week.

A survey of Victorian parents with children enrolled in funded kindergarten in 2022 found 94 per cent considered attending kindergarten to be important for their child's education.

Research agrees, with play-based learning identified as a powerful way to support a child's learning and development, with two years of kindergarten better than one.

Play encourages children to use their imagination and make discoveries while learning to listen, share and take turns. Children also learn about numbers, words and language, develop social and emotional skills, and build essential skills that go on to serve them for life.

Families are encouraged to organise a time to visit their local kindergarten services, so they can meet staff and see the services in action. Parents should also look for a Kinder Tick, so they can be confident their child will be attending a funded kindergarten program.

To find out more about kindergarten and how to enrol, visit vic.gov.au/kinder or contact your local council.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt

"Everyone benefits from kindergarten. Children get to experience new adventures while getting quality early education and families, in particular women, have more flexibility to return to work if they choose."

"What a child experiences between the ages of three and five can make a big difference to their development and wellbeing. Free Kinder supports every Victorian child to get the best start in life, no matter where they live."

Quote attributable to Bachar Houli

"Early education has allowed my two girls to mix with kids of different backgrounds and cultures, and to learn more about themselves and others. My son Mohamed is so excited to be starting Three-Year-Old Kindergarten in 2024, and I can't wait to see what he learns about the world."

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