

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Children
Minister for Disability



Saturday, 15 February 2025

GROWING OUR REGIONAL KINDER WORKFORCE

The Allan Labor Government is making sure Victorian kids get the best start in life – strengthening the early childhood education workforce to support more kinder places for children and better support for working families.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today launched the latest round of the Labor Government’s Certificate III Upskill Support Program and announced an expanded partnership with Deakin University – to help train more early childhood teachers particularly in regional and rural areas.

Applications are now open for the Certificate III Upskill Support Program, which will provide 400 places for educators looking to upskill to a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.

This includes \$7,000 in financial support, that can be used for living expenses while studying and working. This year, half of the places are reserved for students in rural and regional Victoria – meaning students can study and work close to home. In 2024, 416 students accessed the upskilling payment.

Deakin University is also offering online courses for early childhood education students who want to study while working. As part of Victoria’s Early Childhood Tertiary Partnerships program, Deakin is one of several institutions providing tailored study options.

Scholarships of \$25,000 for bachelor’s students and \$12,000 for graduate diploma students are available through the Early Childhood Scholarships Program.

More than 200 places are available over two years, with priority access for applicants from selected rural and regional areas, including Ararat, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Southern Grampians, and Ballarat.

These initiatives will strengthen the early education workforce – meaning more kinder places for children and better support for working families.

Applications for the Certificate III Upskill Support Program close on 13 June, for more information visit, vic.gov.au/financial-support-study-and-work-early-childhood#certificate-iii-upskill-support-program.

Deakin is currently taking applications for its employment-based pathways, for more information visit, vic.gov.au/financial-support-study-and-work-early-childhood.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

“We’re giving every child the best start and every parent the support they need. That’s why we’re not just investing in Free Kinder and infrastructure – we’re making sure there are enough highly trained teachers and educators to deliver kinder programs, with real financial and professional support to get them there.”

“Investing in early childhood education is investing in our future. By training more teachers and educators, and supporting their careers, we’re making sure families have access to quality, affordable kinder close to home – no matter where they live.”

Quotes attributable to Deakin University Head of School for the School of Education, Professor Damian Blake

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“Through our partnership with the Victorian Government, Deakin will provide the wraparound supports necessary to help early childhood educators upskill while working in the sector and assist Victorians keen to change their career and become early childhood teachers.”

“Having the option to study while working in the sector allows Deakin students to access hands-on learning while fostering supportive professional networks that will help them in their career journey.”