

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Friday, 21 February 2025

HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR NEW PARENTS OPENS IN BENDIGO

New mums and dads in Bendigo can access the support they need for free thanks to the Allan Labor Government's new Early Learning Centre – ready to welcome families from today.

Premier Jacinta Allan officially opened the new facility, which will offer free specialist sleep, settling and feeding services, support with the health and wellbeing of both babies and parents and help for families to navigate the challenging early years of parenthood.

Nearly half of Victorian families face sleep and settling issues, leading to higher risk of post-natal depression, isolation and stress for parents and behavioural, mental and physical development problems for children.

The brand-new facility in Bendigo is designed to be a home away from home for new parents – with 10 residential family units and four day-stay places. Families can access both short and longer-term programs to improve the health, wellbeing and development of children up to four years old.

Family units are designed to fit the needs of all families, including those with multiple children, or where parents may need to bring grandparents and other carers in during their stay.

The Labor Government's \$165 million investment to expand Victoria's early parenting services is delivering 12 new and upgraded Early Parenting Centres, providing support to more than 5,000 additional families every year.

Building on these investments, the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* also delivered funding to increase the time newborns spend with maternal and child health nurses, as well as funding to support new dads' groups across the state.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Being a new parent is one of the most amazing experiences, but it can also be one of the most stressful."

"No parent should have to struggle alone. This centre means that families across Bendigo can get the support they need, right when they need it, and they don't have to worry about the cost."

Quote attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"The Bendigo Early Parenting Centre is designed to be a home away from home for Bendigo's newest mums and dads – supporting them with sleeping, settling, feeding, health and wellbeing and how to navigate the challenges of the first days of parenthood."

"We know that the first 1,000 days of a child's life are the most important for their development – new families in Bendigo will be the first of many generations to benefit from the free support at this new Early Parenting Centre."

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

"Parenting isn't always easy, but with this state-of-the-art centre, local families now have access to expert advice and care tailored to their needs."