

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



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STATE-RUN CHILDCARE CENTRE OPENS FOR 100 KIDS IN BENDIGO

The Allan Labor Government is giving Victorian kids the best start in life with the first four government-owned and operated childcare centres opening their doors.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards today joined children and families and staff at Eaglehawk North Primary School to officially open Early Learning Victoria Nyernilang Lar.

The new centre, positioned right next door to Eaglehawk North Primary School to make drop-offs easier and simplify the transition to school, has space for up to 102 local children each day and offers long day care as well as three and four-year-old kindergarten programs.

Nyernilang Lar has five purpose-built rooms designed to cater to the different age groups enrolled at the centre – including a consulting room for child and family services, such as maternal and child health and allied health, and a multi-purpose room for community meetings and playgroups.

The other three Early Learning Victoria centres – at Sunshine Primary School, Murtoa College and Moomba Park Primary School – also opened their doors for this year.

More than 400 children across these four sites will be the first to benefit from the 50 new centres being built by the Labor Government. They will all be in areas that need extra childcare places the most, known as childcare deserts, and where there are higher rates of disadvantage.

The centres are low fee, making childcare more affordable and helping parents or carers return to work or study – and Free Kinder is on offer. All centres are also located on or near school sites, ending the dreaded double drop off for local families.

Each centre also has space for other supports like maternal and child health, playgroups and allied health services, further meeting the needs of local families.

From next year, 18 Early Learning Victoria locations will deliver more than 1,800 licensed places for local children and families as part of the Labor Government's nation-leading \$14 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms to improve access to early childhood education and care.

Interested families can tour Early Learning Victoria centres to learn more about the centre and the programs offered. To find out more visit earlylearning.vic.gov.au/enrol.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"We're helping busy families in Bendigo access the services they need and saving them thousands with Free Kinder."

"Childcare is a Commonwealth responsibility. But busy parents need more support. That's why we're stepping in and delivering affordable, government-run centres close to schools."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"Victorian families deserve access to high-quality early childhood education and care no matter their postcode – we're giving our littlest Victorians the best start, so that they get the best opportunities in life."

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“This historic investment in early childhood education is about setting our kids up for the future and investing in Victorian families.”

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

“We’re investing in government-run childcare centres so families don’t have to choose between quality care and making ends meet – now we have childcare and kinder right next door to Eaglehawk North Primary School”

“More childcare places in the areas that need them most mean more parents can work, study, or get ahead without the stress of long waitlists or high fees.”