



# State Budget 2008

4J FROM THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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## **\$29 MILLION BOOST TO SUPPORT EARLY INTERVENTION**

Pre-school age children with a developmental delay or disability will be able to access more special education, therapy and counselling services with the Brumby Labor Government today announcing an additional **\$29 million** over four years, to boost early intervention services.

Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, Maxine Morand, said the funding would provide 1000 extra early childhood intervention places for children with a developmental delay or disability, and would also provide additional help for those with complex needs to attend kindergartens.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to ensure all young children are given the best possible start in life," Ms Morand said.

"We are delivering more funding and higher quality services to respond to the needs of young children with a disability and their families and ensure they have support and assist them to achieve their potential.

"Research shows that the earlier children are supported, the greater their chance of reaching their potential.

"This investment will build on the significant investment our Government has made since 1999, with a 113 per cent increase in funding to early childhood intervention services since that time."

The \$29 million funding package in the 2008-09 State Budget includes:

- **\$23.9 million** over four years for 1000 extra Early Childhood Intervention Services places created over two years involving special education, therapy and counselling, as well as support in kindergarten and childcare and transition to school;
- **\$3.3 million** over four years for additional Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service (KISS) placements – specific support to help children with very high and complex needs to participate in a mainstream kindergarten program, by providing additional support staff, modifications to the kindergarten or specialised equipment; and
- **\$1.8 million** for an Early Childhood Specialist workforce strategy to provide incentives to practitioners in the early intervention area to upgrade their qualifications to post graduate level in early childhood intervention studies, providing increased support for children with complex needs.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to invest in early intervention in response to the increased need to support families who have children with a developmental delay or disability," Ms Morand said.