



State Budget 2008

2C FROM THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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YOUNG FAMILIES THE WINNERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD BOOST

Victorian children and families are big winners in the Brumby Labor Government's **\$49.9 million** early childhood package which is part of the 2008-09 State Budget's \$179.2 million boost for mothers, babies and early years.

Children and Early Childhood Development Minister Maxine Morand said the early childhood package included **\$16.5 million** over four years to monitor and regulate family day care and outside-school-hours care, giving parents greater assurance and young children better education and care.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to help young Victorian families get the best possible start in life," Ms Morand said.

"This \$16.5 million funding announced today in the 2008-09 State Budget will underpin the Brumby Labor Government's new Children's Services Bill which will regulate family day care and outside school hours care for the first time.

"We are providing parents with greater confidence in these forms of childcare by enforcing minimum safety and developmental standards and doubling penalties for centres that commit safety breaches.

"New staff will be employed to help administer the Act, including licensing, monitoring and supporting the 84 family day care centres, which have more than 3000 family day carers, and 900 outside-school-hours care services."

Ms Morand said capital grants up to \$1000 will be provided to services to ensure compliance with the new Act.

"This funding builds on **\$10.5 million** over five years announced earlier this year to ensure children are ready for school once they complete kindergarten," Ms Morand said.

"Children moving from kindergarten to school will have new Transition Statements, so their parents and new schools can track their development and interests, as well as noting learning difficulties, disabilities or developmental delays to help plan individual support programs.

"The funding will also support the development of the Victorian Early Learning and Development Framework."

Other 2008-09 initiatives funded under this \$49.9 million early years package are:

- **\$2.6 million** to refurbish and renovate existing kindergartens on selected sites within school Regeneration Projects, including the construction of an early years centre on the new Broadmeadows Primary School site;

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- **\$5.2 million** over four years to provide free kindergarten programs of up to five hours a week for three-year-olds known to child protection services;
- **\$15.1 million** over four years for disadvantaged families to promote home learning and improved access to supported playgroups for disadvantaged families, delivering playgroups to up to 2000 disadvantaged families.

Ms Morand said the \$49.9 million early childhood package came on top of other funding for young Victorian families in the 2008-09 State Budget, including:

- \$29 million to create 1000 Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS) places to support children with a disability or developmental delay and additional Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS) placements;
- \$54.9 million for expanded maternal and child health services would help mothers, babies, pregnant women and families across the state.

“The Brumby Labor Government understands the value parents place on early childhood development and is taking action to address the challenge of providing the best quality early childhood services for Victorian families,” Ms Morand said.

“Over the last three years, our Government has spent \$439 million on initiatives to help children get the best start in life, including the funding of 95 new children’s centres which combine a range of early children’s services.”

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