



SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The Brumby Government is investing \$20.3 million over four years to support in the following initiatives to support Victoria's most disadvantaged and vulnerable children:

\$15.1 Million for Home Learning Programs to Assist Disadvantaged Families with Young Children

Up to 2000 vulnerable families will benefit from home-based programs that help set up a positive learning environment for children.

Home Learning programs encourage parents to read to children from an early age and also link parents to adult literacy programs, where they are needed.

Disadvantaged families across 13 local government areas will also have access to supported playgroups. The local council areas are Brimbank, Cardinia, Central Goldfields, Darebin, Greater Dandenong, Melton, Mildura, Moorabool, Mornington, Nillumbik, Wyndham, Bass Coast and South Gippsland. These areas were selected in order to ensure that supported playgroups are extended to all municipalities with Best Start Partnerships.

It is essential that new parents, particularly those who are disadvantaged or isolated, have a support network in their community where their children can learn with other children.

The playgroups also connect families to local services, such as maternal and child health centres and kindergartens.

\$5.2 Million for Free Kindergarten Programs for Vulnerable Children

Access to high-quality kindergarten programs allow children to get a good start in life, with research showing that children who attend kinder lead happier and more successful adult lives. This initiative will provide free kindergarten programs of up to five hours a week for three-year-old children known to child protection services.

Kindergarten programs, led by qualified early childhood teachers will assist children to develop skills and learn through socially enriched learning programs.

The program is expected to begin 2009–10 and to be expanded over the following two years.