

Tuesday, 22 June 2021

## **FREE PRESCHOOL TO STAY**

Free preschool is now a staple for NSW families with funding confirmed in the 2021-22 NSW Budget for community and mobile preschools today.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning Sarah Mitchell today announced that the new Start Strong Free Preschool program will commence from January 2022.

The new program replaces the current COVID-19 free preschool program, which will conclude at the end of this year, meaning that there will be continuous cost of living support for parents and carers.

Mr Perrottet said the support for families and children has been a priority for the NSW Government over the last two years, with a commitment to removing a layer of financial pressure for many families.

“One of the first things we did in response to COVID-19 was to make preschool free, removing a layer of financial pressure for many families,” Mr Perrottet said.

“The program supported countless jobs, and kept children learning and engaged during some of their most important years.

“I’m delighted that we can continue funding these crucial years in a child’s development while easing the cost of living pressures for families,” Mr Perrottet said.

Ms Mitchell said that early childhood education is an important part of development and preparation, especially in those critical two years before school.

“This is a \$150 million investment in the future, as we know the first 2,000 days of a child’s life are crucial and those who experience the benefits of early childhood education grow up to lead happier, healthier and more productive lives,” Ms Mitchell said.

“Families will save up to \$4,000 per year per child in preschool fees, easing cost of living pressures and helping with the balance of work and family life.

“We are committed to families and this budget includes \$725 million direct investment into Early Childhood Education helping parents support their children during some of their most important years.

Up to 740 community and mobile preschools will benefit from this important investment. Department of Education preschools will also be supported to continue offering free preschool.

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