

Tuesday, 18 June 2019

## **BUDGET DELIVERS FOR THE STATE'S LITTLEST LEARNERS**

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is continuing to ensure every child across the State has access to a top-quality start to their education, with the 2019-20 NSW Budget including the largest ever investment in early childhood education.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet today handed down the \$526.7 million early childhood learning budget, which includes the continuation of the Start Strong program to support preschool education in community preschools and long day care centres across the State.

“Since the NSW Government introduced the Start Strong program in 2016, we have seen average daily fees decrease by 25 per cent for parents, and participation rates for 600 hour enrolments soar by more than 40 per cent,” Mr Perrottet said.

“We are seeing significant improvements in the education standards of children entering kindergarten, which proves how important it is for us to continue to focus on ensuring every child, no matter where they live or their circumstances, has access to a top-quality early childhood education.”

Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning Sarah Mitchell said the Budget also includes an additional \$20 million over the next four years for new and existing preschools to build, renovate or extend their facilities to cater for increasing enrolments across the State.

“In the 2018-19 Budget, the NSW Government committed \$42.1 million in Capital Works Grants funding over the next four years, and earlier this year, we boosted this by \$20 million,” Ms Mitchell said.

“By investing in the expansion and establishment of more early childhood services, this means more parents will have access to a preschool education for their children, which is fantastic for families – particularly in regional parts of NSW where flexibility and choice is key.”

The NSW Government’s Start Strong program includes a suite of initiatives aimed at making life easier for hardworking NSW families, as well as improving educational outcomes for the State’s youngsters. Some of these programs include:

- The Quality Learning Environments program, which aims to enhance the physical or educational learning environments at community preschools and not-for-profit long day care centres through minor capital works, infrastructure and specialised educational programs;
- Community Grants, which are being used by community preschools and not-for-profit long day care centres to increase the number of Aboriginal and disadvantaged children participating in early childhood education; and,
- Start Strong Pathways, which provides programs and initiatives that support the early learning needs of young children by linking with preschool programs and providing families with a pathway into early childhood education.



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For more information on the NSW Government's Start Strong program, visit the Department of Education website.

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