

STATE BUDGET

2026-27

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PREMIER

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FAST-TRACKING THREE-YEAR-OLD PRESCHOOL ROLLOUT

Nearly 50 long day care services across South Australia will deliver three-year-old preschool ahead of schedule, as the Malinauskas Labor Government accelerates the program through the 2026-27 State Budget.

New services will start early, in July, providing hundreds of additional places for families giving more children access to a teacher-led, play-based learning program sooner than planned, brought forward from January 2027 enrolments.

The mid-year intake is part of a \$624.5 million investment over five years to deliver three-year-old preschool in government and non-government settings, including eight new preschools, 20 new integrated hubs and infrastructure upgrades at dozens of sites.

Across 2027, more than 7,500 three-year-olds will have access to two years of quality preschool as part of the Government's \$1.9 billion Flying Start reforms – the most significant commitment to early childhood education in a generation.

A further 140 sites will commence in January, comprising long day care services and government preschools in metropolitan and regional areas – including around 25 in the state's South East and more than 20 in the Riverland and Murraylands.

The additional sites will join more than 250 Flying Start partner preschools that started delivering three-year-old preschool in January this year.

This means in just the second year of the Government's universal rollout, approximately 440 sites – nearly half of all early learning services in South Australia – will offer three-year-old preschool.

By 2032, every South Australian child will have access to 15 hours a week of three year-old preschool, helping their development during the critical early years and supporting language, social and emotional growth.

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It follows strong interest from the long day care sector during the competitive expression of interest process, with key priority being given to both quality and the ability of a site to deliver a teacher-led program.

Introducing a second year of preschool lays the foundations for children to thrive in their education and is vital to achieving the Government's 20-year goal to reduce the rate of South Australian children who are developmentally vulnerable when they start school.

A complete list of sites offering three-year-old preschool can be found at flyingstart.sa.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Peter Malinauskas

Three-year-old preschool is a vitally important economic and social reform for our state, and we are pleased to be rolling it out ahead of schedule.

Nothing is more important than making sure our kids get the best start in life. Having more children meeting developmental milestones means more opportunity for more young people to meet their potential.

The investments we are delivering will see almost half of all learning services in South Australia will be delivering three-year-old preschool next year.

Quotes attributable to Tom Koutsantonis

We are delivering education opportunities for children from our youngest to our oldest, and fast-tracking three-year-old preschool helps ensure kids get the best start to their learning journey.

Quotes attributable to Lucy Hood

Thousands of families are already benefiting from three-year-old preschool and we are moving at speed to ensure more children have early access to the lifechanging reform.

Partnering with long day services committed to quality early childhood education is enabling support to be fast-tracked and reflects the sector's readiness to deliver.

We are stepping up our investment to give every child the best possible start in life and ensure they have the skills and confidence to be ready to learn on day one of school.

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Quotes attributable to Nido Early School Black Forest Centre Director Cherese Rootman

We're excited to have 16 Nido Early Schools selected to deliver the government approved Flying Start preschool program, bringing the majority of Nido's South Australian services into the partnership.

Kindergarten is a crucial milestone in a child's life, fostering emotional, social, physical and cognitive growth, and research shows that a quality early childhood education sets the stage for improved health, wellbeing, and greater educational and career opportunities in the future.

We are grateful to the South Australian Government for selecting Nido as a partner and for providing additional support and resources.

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