




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Kindergarten

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.58 am): Last week I was delighted to join the Premier at Lady Gowrie Spring Hill for the launch of the most adorable advertisement you will ever see. I am of course talking about our free kindy campaign. The early years are critical to a child's future, so we want every single family in Queensland to know that the countdown is on for free kindy from January 2024, and who better to spread the message than kindy kids themselves? That is why the ad features real Queensland kindy kids as spokeskids telling grown-ups all about the benefits of kindy and reminding them that it is time to enrol. The campaign is translated into eight other languages. It will be broadcast on targeted media channels like Aboriginal Health Television. We are also taking the message to events like the International Street Fiesta in Toowoomba this weekend.

Backed by an additional investment of \$645 million, free kindy is set to save families up to \$4,600 a year. It will provide real cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders, ensure every child gets a great start and deliver significant investment and support for the early childhood workforce. Under our current Kindy for All program, 14,000 children received free kindy. Our new historic free kindy reform means that more than 50,000 additional children a year will be able to attend for free, including around 8,000 kids a year who could be enrolled in kindy but currently are not.

We want everyone to experience the benefits of a quality kindergarten education in the year before school. Fifteen hours a week for 40 weeks a year makes such a difference, and I know that our teachers and school leaders see the benefits firsthand. One of our experienced principals in the Logan area was telling me recently that previously around 40 per cent of prep kids had been to kindy in that area. With the introduction of Kindy for All making it free for vulnerable and disadvantaged families, that number went up to 100 per cent. Every prep kid had attended kindy, and the difference it made to being school ready was incredible.

The campaign also promotes the new Free Kindy Finder tool, which makes it simple for families to jump online, enter their postcode, find the nearest free kindy and enrol today. That is exactly what I encourage families to do. Do not just take my word for it, take it from the spokeskids: kindy is fun, you make new friends and it helps you learn. The Premier and I had the pleasure of meeting the stars of the ad, and I want to make special mention of Bianca, Endia, Aleka, Giana, Archer and Ashana for being such great kindy advocates and, for a change, a very cute and kind press pack. It is a fantastic campaign, a fantastic initiative and just another way the Palaszczuk government is delivering on the things that matter to Queensland families. We cannot wait for free kindy in 2024.