

Question on Notice

No. 1480

Asked on 16 November 2023

DR C ROWAN ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to the 11 eKindy pods in operation across Queensland—

Will the Minister advise (a) how many children currently engage in the eKindy pod program, (b) what the costs are for families for eKindy and (c) how free kindy will be implemented through the eKindy pod program?

ANSWER:

As at 20 November 2023, there are 39 children registered for the eKindy pod program.

eKindy is an 'at home' kindergarten program for eligible children living in rural and remote areas, travelling or medically unable to attend a local early childhood service, in the year before Prep.

eKindy is a free program delivered through the Brisbane School of Distance Education and is supported by qualified early childhood teachers. Eligible eKindy families also receive a \$750 information, communication and technology subsidy to support the cost of delivering a kindergarten distance education program in the home.

Pods are not a kindergarten program. They are offered in approved state school locations to complement eKindy so that children participating in the distance education program can socialise with their peers at their local state school on a weekly basis during school terms. Pods provide a small number of Queensland families with a facilitated socialisation day, rather than a kindergarten program.

Pods are continuing in 2024 to enable children to socialise with their peers.

eKindy continues to be a vital option for some Queensland families to access a free kindergarten program for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks per year.

The Palaszczuk Government wants every child to have a strong start to their education, which is why kindy is free as of 1 January 2024.

A range of kindergarten options are available for Queensland families to access free kindy, including approved kindergarten programs in long day care and sessional kindergarten services, and eKindy and state delivered kindergarten programs offered in selected state schools.