

What does the State budget include for children and families?

Measures relevant to the child and family services sector

The Victorian State Budget 2023-24 was handed down on Tuesday the 23rd of May, 2023. The Centre has prepared this quick overview of the budget measures that are relevant to your work in the child and family services sector and to the children, young people and families that you support.

Residential Care and child protection

\$548 million to meet demand for residential care placements for children and young people, the biggest single investment in care services in a decade. This includes targeted care packages to help children and young people to live in suitable care arrangements and to prevent entry into residential care. This funding will also provide more therapeutic supports in residential care homes and address child sexual exploitation.

\$140 million to reduce Aboriginal overrepresentation in child protection and family services through culturally appropriate care, led by the Aboriginal community. This funding will also expand the trial of an Aboriginal led investigation team for child protection reports.

\$11 million to continue trials to embed family services in universal settings such as schools, early years services and community health hubs so that vulnerable families can access support where and when they need it.

Early Years

\$1.8 billion in early childhood and Pre-Prep, including funding to further support existing Kinders.

\$48 million to support existing Kinders and toy libraries to purchase equipment, provide additional Bush Kinder programs, and continue existing and create 10 new bilingual Kinders.

\$18 million to strengthen and modernise existing inclusion support for children with disability and additional needs. Funding is provided to strengthen and modernise existing inclusion support for children with disability (including increasing Preschool Field Officer support in growth areas, creating a more consistent assessment approach, and continuing the specialised equipment program).

\$10 million for local councils and eligible providers to improve local kindergarten facilities.

\$3.9 million for an Aboriginal led Early Parenting Centre that's completely dedicated to Aboriginal families and children.

New parents

\$86 million to help parents with their newborn babies, including more access to free Maternal and Child Health services and lactation consultants, additional support for fathers' groups and multicultural communities, a new early parenting center and a center dedicated to Aboriginal families and children. Funding will also support the Baby Bundle program, which is available to all first-time Victorian families. First-time foster and adoptive parents/carers with babies up to three months of age are also eligible to receive a baby bundle.

Young people at risk

\$13 million to offer education programs for young people who are at risk of disengagement from school, including targeted support for African and Pasifika young people.

Justice

\$17 million to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians – implementing a regional hub model for Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services, enhancing Victoria Police's Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program in collaboration with Victorian Aboriginal communities, and investing in Aboriginal Community Justice Panels.

First Nations

\$35 million to support 25 self-determining Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to strengthen workforce capacity to deliver more episodes of care to Aboriginal Victorians and meet Victoria's commitment under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

\$17 million to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians – implementing a regional hub model for Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services, enhancing Victoria Police's Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program in collaboration with Victorian Aboriginal communities, and investing in Aboriginal Community Justice Panels.

Family Violence

\$117 million to continue to support victim survivors of family violence and hold perpetrators to account, including in Aboriginal led services, by delivering perpetrator intervention programs, keeping victim survivors safe in their homes, increasing sexual assault support services and providing specialist family violence legal assistance at court.

Cost of living

\$400 million for another round of the hugely popular Power Saving Bonus, providing another \$250 to households that use the Victorian Energy Compare website to search for the cheapest electricity deal.

Regional Victoria

\$3.8 million to get more disability workers into rural and regional areas.

\$7.5 million to help get more speech pathologists and occupational therapists to regional Victoria.

\$190 million for fairer public transport fares for regional Victorians – capping regional public transport fares at the metro rate to make it easier for families and commuters in regional Victoria to leave the car at home and get around by train and bus.

Health

\$38 million so young people can access health assessments as they enter statutory care within the child protection system.

\$5.3 million for a mobile women's health clinic to improve access for women in regional and remote Victoria to specialised women's health services.

\$10 million to establish nine sexual and reproductive health hubs in addition to the 11 existing hubs and continued funding for the Local Public Health Unit networked hub and spoke primary care model, to provide free or very low-cost clinical services that, when they are available through a GP, are associated with out-of-pocket costs.

\$12 million for research initiatives that will directly benefit women's health, such as an inquiry into women's pain management and early work to establish a Women's Health Research Institute.

\$58 million for 20 new women's health clinics and a dedicated Aboriginal-led women's clinic, to overcome some of the barriers to treatment that women face such as cost, confidentiality, geographical location of services, cultural and communication differences. The clinics will mean women can access specialists – gynecologist, urologist, along with specialist nursing and allied health in one spot, making it easier and faster to get the world-class care women need and deserve.

\$65 million for 10,800 additional laparoscopies to help treat debilitating endometriosis, which affects one in every nine girls and women.

Housing

\$33 million to support around 225 young people with complex needs leaving residential care and other settings. Young people will be supported towards independence with multidisciplinary support and access to housing.

\$9.1 million for the Pathways to Home program to help people with disability make the transition out of hospital beds and into home-like settings equipped to meet their needs. This will free up hospital beds to treat additional patients.

\$68 million to deliver a Housing First response including housing and support services for those rough sleeping and experiencing homelessness, to help get their lives on track.

\$141 million to install air conditioners across more than 40 high-rise public housing towers, keeping homes cool for thousands of Victorians.

Education

\$4.6 million delivery of the Safe Schools program to support LGBTIQ+ students.

\$4.8 million to integrate more therapy animals into the government school community.

\$7.3 million for TAFE transition officers to help students with disability.

Disability

\$5.7 million to deliver I CAN, to support students with autism.

\$1.7 million to help healthcare workers better communicate with people with autism.

\$6.3 million for more extracurricular activities in specialist schools.

\$8.3 million to support the continuation of Disability Liaison Officers to identify and address barriers for people with disability in accessing health services, and continue the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program to support people with disability.

\$25 million to build therapy pools at specialist schools.

\$235 million to support students with disability and their families, including expanding the Outside School Hours Care program.

For further details about the Victorian Budget 2022-23, visit:

<https://www.budget.vic.gov.au/>

Note: Content in this quick guide is largely included verbatim from Budget Paper no. 3.

The Centre will continue to analyse the Budget measures and what they mean for families and our workforce.