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media release

FUNDING LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN OUR KINDERS

Kindergarten children across Victoria will have an opportunity to learn a new language through an new innovative Victorian government program.

Minister for Early Childhood Education Jenny Mikakos is today encouraging kindergarten services to apply for the Victorian Government's \$17.9 million Early Childhood Language Program.

It is the first state-funded language program to be rolled out in preschools and is expected to give about 3,000 children each year over the next four years the opportunity to learn in a language other than English while attending kindergarten.

Kinders are asked to consult with families, staff, and the local community to choose

which language best suits them.

Children will learn in another language for up to three hours per week across 120 kindergartens starting from 2019 and a further 10 kindergartens will become bilingual – where children will benefit from up to half their program being offered in another language.

Learning languages at a young age is shown to have benefits such as increased reading and writing skills, cognitive flexibility, strengthened brain development and improved problem-solving skills.

Services that deliver state-funded kindergarten can submit an expression of interest for the Early Childhood Language Program before 20 August.

The funding will provide additional staff to teach children a new language in partnership with existing staff – at no cost to parents or early childhood services.

Work is underway through the Victorian Government's landmark \$202.1 million Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan to ensure kids are ready for kinder, ready for school and ready for life.

The Victorian Budget 2018/2019 invested a further \$135.9 million toward realising our early childhood vision.

For more information go to
education.vic.gov.au/eclanguages