

Media Release

Jenny Mikakos MLC
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SHIFTING THE FOCUS TO ABILITY FOR TOTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A highly effective tool used to support young children with additional needs is being offered to Victorian kindergartens right across the state from today.

Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, officially launched the Early Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (Early ABLES) assessment tool at the Harbour Child and Family Centre in Docklands today.

The resource enables early childhood educators to develop specific learning programs that build on the individual skills and abilities of children aged two to five with disabilities and developmental delays.

Early ABLES not only enables educators to provide specialised support to children with additional needs and also focuses on a child's learning potential, emphasising their strengths and abilities.

Research shows that learning outcomes for young children have a dramatic effect on their ongoing educational achievement, and that earlier is better when it comes to providing support to children with additional needs.

The new resources will also help smooth the transition to school by improving how information is shared between early childhood educators, families and schools.

Early ABLES now complements the ABLES tool which is available for school-age children. The tool has been developed in conjunction with the University of Melbourne. It adds to the resources available to early childhood professionals, supporting them to assess and progress children's learning over time.

The expansion follows a successful pilot last year, which included the Harbour Child and Family Centre. Training available for educators using the Early ABLES assessment tool will include webinars, online training modules and information kits.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

"We know early intervention is very important when it comes to supporting children with additional learning needs – it's the earlier, the better."

"This tool gives our educators and teachers a full picture of a child's strengths and abilities, putting the focus on what each child can do, and what can be learnt next."

"We're making Victoria the Education State and that starts with supporting every child in their early years."

Quotes attributable to University of Melbourne Professor Barry McGaw AO

"Supporting educators in their quest to optimise the potential of all learners is an important mission of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and it's really gratifying to see the school's vision embodied in the Early ABLES resources that build on almost a decade of research and development."

Quotes attributed to Gowrie Victoria CEO Andrew Hume

"Gowrie Victoria is honoured to be a part of this important project that will assist educators and families."

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