

Preschool educators to get \$8.8m funding boost [NZ] ^[1]

Author: New Zealand Herald

Source: New Zealand Herald

Format: Article

Publication Date: 11 Oct 2004

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Early childhood education centres will receive an extra \$8.8 million this financial year, Prime Minister Helen Clark and Education Minister Trevor Mallard have announced.

The additional funding will help to create an extra 290 places for children in licensed and chartered early childhood centres.

"This funding is a significant way to increase participation in quality early childhood services, especially amongst children from low socio-economic, rural, and isolated communities," the Prime Minister said.

She said the discretionary grant was in addition to the \$451 million the Government would spend on early childhood education services in the 2004/05 financial year.

Mr Mallard said as a result of the grant scheme, an extra 5706 children have taken part in early childhood education since 1999.

"Research shows that regular and high-quality early childhood education makes a noticeable and positive impact on a student's educational success later on."

The discretionary grants scheme was one way to give more children the chance to gain from the benefits of quality early childhood education, Mr Mallard said.

In the 2004 Budget, the Government committed an extra \$365 million over four years.

Included in the Budget was the discretionary grants scheme, worth \$8.8 million each year.

This funds the capital cost of maintaining places for children in community-based early childhood centres.

Early childhood education services include playcentres, home-based care providers, kohanga reo, education and care services, kindergartens, licence-exempt playgroups and the Correspondence School.

- reprinted from the New Zealand Herald

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