



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Importance of early childhood education for vulnerable children reinforced in State Budget**

It is great to see a key focus of the State Budget will again be on ensuring vulnerable children have access to kindergarten, says Meredith Carter, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria, the peak body for Victoria's kindergartens today.

Responding to the pre-budget announcement of increases in both Early Childhood Intervention Support (ECIS) and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service (KISS) places, Ms Carter said KPV had identified disability support as a priority by in its budget submission this year.

Ms Carter said "Independent research conducted for KPV has shown an average of two children per kindergarten were identified by their centre as having additional support needs. It also indicated that around 15% of their applications for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service (KISS) were not successful.

"The boost in ECIS funding is wonderful. In addition, the boost in KISS places will mean that around 150 extra families whose child has a disability will have less need to worry about where the funding will come from to meet their support needs at kindergarten." Ms Carter said.

"Kindergarten is not fully funded by government in the first place. Yet when their applications for KISS funding are unsuccessful many preschools are faced with having to fund extra support for high needs children themselves," Ms Carter said.

Ms Carter said: "The fact that many do is a tribute to the community spirit of those centres but if they can't afford to do it, a child with developmental delay or disability may miss out on kindergarten altogether unless their family can pay the extra."

She noted that KPV also looks forward to further funded responses to ensure all children receive appropriate support through the Early Childhood Intervention Review now under way by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV) is the peak organisation promoting the voice of parents in quality early childhood education for Victorian children, representing over 1000 centres serving more than 200,000 Victorian children and families each year.**

**Meredith Carter, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria is available for interview on 0400 511 763 or 03 9489 3500.**