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Investment in Out-of-Home care a welcome announcement for children, families and services

Community Child Care Association (CCC) congratulates the Andrews Labor Government on its recent announcement for children in out-of-home care (OOHC).

Participation in high quality early childhood services makes a significant difference to all children's lives, and especially those who are vulnerable (*Preschool – Two Years are Better Than One* policy paper). While children in OOHC are among the most vulnerable in our community, many are not accessing key early childhood services.

Executive Director of CCC, Julie Price praises the Labor Government on their boost to the OOHC sector. *'This injection will support some of our most vulnerable children in accessing high quality education and care in the most critical period of a child's life'* said Ms. Price.

There are currently 10,300 children and young people living in OOHC in Victoria at any one time (*Australian Productivity Commission Report 2018*), these funds are a welcome relief which will support the Early Childhood Agreement for Children in OOHC to reach their vision where *'all young children in OOHC in Victoria are supported to reach their potential...'*

The Andrew's Labor Government have committed to:

- A \$3.4 million expansion of the LOOKOUT program to help children in out-of-home care access quality kinder programs and effectively transition to school
- As of Monday 8th October 2018, appointing 13 new early childhood advisers to begin working with local governments, kindergartens and maternal and child health nurses to better support children in out-of-home care before they start school
- Working with the child protection workforce to enroll children in kinder programs, and with kinders and schools to support children transition to school
- A further \$570,000 for the Early Start Kindergarten program
- 600 pre-purchased kinder places will be made available next year for families and children known to child protection, families from refugee and Koori backgrounds or concession card holders
- More than \$1.7 million in grants to be provided to 52 local councils to help them introduce or improve central enrolment schemes, making it easier for parents to apply for a local kinder place.

'We are currently working to understand and address the barriers for children and families accessing high quality education and care services, we are excited about this boost and how it will improve the lives of these children' said Ms. Price.

For further comment:

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