

2025-26 Incentives Programs Guide for Employers

The Victorian Government offers financial incentives to attract early childhood teachers and educators to take up roles in funded kindergarten programs in Victoria. Incentives are offered through the 2025-26 Early Childhood Teacher Incentives Program and 2025-26 Targeted Educator Incentives Program.

This guide provides information to help early childhood services and providers understand and use incentives to help meet their recruitment needs.

Individual Incentives and Educator Individual Incentives

Incentives available for eligible teachers and educators working outside the Victorian early childhood education sector, taking up roles at any service delivering, or planning to deliver a funded kindergarten program.

Location Incentives and Educator Location Incentives

Incentives available for eligible teachers and educators taking up roles at select services delivering a funded kindergarten program, critical to the delivery of the Best Start, Best Life reforms.

For more information on eligibility please visit the department's [website](#).

Services pre-approved to offer Location Incentives and/or Educator Location Incentives

The Department of Education (the department) pre-approves select services to advertise using Location Incentives and/or Educator Location Incentives, under the Early Childhood Teacher Incentives Program and Targeted Educator Incentives Program.

The process for pre-approving a service usually includes:

- Using data and other evidence (including information collected from [Early Childhood Improvement Branches](#)) to identify services for pre-approval.
- Notifying the relevant provider via email that one or more of their services has been pre-approved to advertise using a Location Incentive and/or Educator Location Incentive.

This communication identifies the specific Location Incentive Tier (e.g. Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3) that a service is pre-approved to offer.

Note: services and providers do not need to respond to the department to accept pre-approval to advertise using a Location Incentive and/or Educator Location Incentive.

Obligations for pre-approved services

Once pre-approved to advertise using a Location Incentive and/or Educator Location Incentive, services must:

- Be delivering a funded kindergarten program (Three-Year-Old, Four-Year-Old, Pre-Prep or a funded mixed-aged kindergarten program).

Refer to [Additional obligations for unfunded services](#) for information about a service's obligations if they become unfunded, and the circumstances under which an unfunded service may be pre-approved for a Location Incentive.

- Read the 2025-26 Early Childhood Teacher Incentives Program Guidelines and/or 2025-26 Targeted Educator Incentives Program Guidelines on the department's [website](#), to understand program settings and eligibility requirements.
- Advertise roles with Location Incentives and/or Educator Location Incentives on [the Early Childhood Jobs website](#), and tag the advertisements by selecting the relevant option from the 'DE Location Incentive' drop down menu.
- Clearly communicate to candidates that they must meet eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines to receive the incentive and provide them with a copy of the relevant guidelines.
- Once a candidate has been appointed, advise them to [apply online](#) for the incentive within 60 days of accepting the role.

*Refer to the below information for additional obligations including '[Supporting incentive recipients](#)'.

Additional obligations for unfunded services

A service **may** be pre-approved to offer a Location Incentive if it is planning to deliver a funded kindergarten program (Three-Year-Old, Four-Year-Old, Pre-Prep, and mix-aged funded kindergarten program) and needs to recruit an early childhood teacher to secure its funding status.

The same obligations apply for an unfunded service that is pre-approved to offer a Location Incentive, and for a service that is already pre-approved to offer a Location Incentive and loses its funding status.

In such circumstances, the service must:

- Advise the relevant [Early Childhood Improvement Branch](#) if it loses its funding after pre-approval.
- Prepare a funding application in consultation with the Early Childhood Improvement Branch before advertising using the incentive.
- Inform candidates that the Location Incentive will only be awarded if the funding application is approved.

The incentives programs are available to support funded kindergarten programs. As such, only services delivering a funded kindergarten program will be pre-approved to offer Educator Location Incentives.

If a service is pre-approved to offer an Educator Location Incentive and loses its funding status, it must:

- Stop advertising using the incentive and contact the department's relevant [Early Childhood Improvement Branch](#) regarding next steps.
- If it has already secured an educator using the incentive – advise the educator that the incentive depends on the service's funding status and ask them to contact BUSY At Work for further advice.

Advertising Individual Incentives and Educator Individual Incentives

All Victorian services that are delivering a funded kindergarten program can include Individual Incentives and Educator Individual Incentives in their advertisements.

Advertisements should clearly communicate that candidates must meet the programs' eligibility requirements to receive the incentive.

The [Recruitment Kit](#) contains examples of how Individual Incentives and Educator Individual Incentives can be mentioned in job advertisements.

Assisting staff to submit incentive applications

Incentive applications are submitted [online](#) by the applicant, not by the employer. As part of the application, applicants will require supporting documents from their employer.

This includes a completed Employer Declaration Form. This form needs to be completed for all applications, regardless of the type of incentive being applied for.

There are two types of Employer Declaration Forms: the *Early Childhood Teacher Incentives Program* form and *Targeted Educator Incentives Program* form. Copies of these forms are provided at the end of this guide for convenience.

Note: the Employer Declaration Form is an important document as it confirms an incentive applicant's service and role. This confirmation is used to administer payments once an incentive has been awarded (refer to the below section for more information).

Supporting incentive recipients

Once a candidate has been appointed and been awarded an incentive, it is essential to support the candidate in their new role to encourage them to stay. This support can include providing mentorship, facilitating professional development opportunities, and ensuring they have the resources needed to succeed.

As explained in the 2025-26 Early Childhood Teacher Incentives Program Guidelines and 2025-26 Targeted Educator Incentives Program Guidelines on the department's [website](#), incentives are paid in the form of milestones and incentive recipients must provide evidence to receive each milestone payment.

The specific evidence required to receive milestone payments is detailed in the Incentive Recipient Agreement, which is a legal document that every incentive applicant must sign to be awarded an incentive.

In general, the evidence must show that a recipient is still working in the same role at the same service, as identified in the completed Employer Declaration form that was submitted as part of the application process.

Note: changes to a recipient's role or service can impact their eligibility for an incentive and may even result in them losing the incentive. This is especially important for Location Incentive and Educator Location Incentive recipients because their incentive is tied to a specific service and cannot be transferred between services.

Services and providers are strongly encouraged to consider how changes to employment conditions may impact an incentive recipient's eligibility (e.g., reducing hours to be less than 20 per week for a Tier 3 Location Incentive recipient).

If a change to employment conditions is unavoidable, services and providers are encouraged to give the incentive recipient adequate forewarning and encourage them to contact BUSY At Work (the program administrator) to discuss their options.

Further information

For more information about the incentives programs (including eligibility requirements, application processes, milestone payments etc.), please read the guidelines for each incentives program on the department's [website](#).

If services and providers need support to plan staffing needs for next year, they should speak with the department's [Early Childhood Improvement Branch](#) in their area.

If staff have any questions about the incentives programs (including eligibility requirements and the application process), the service should encourage them to contact BUSY At Work at EC.Financial.Support@education.vic.gov.au or 1300 161 396.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

EMPLOYER DECLARATION

To be signed by an authorised representative of the early childhood teacher's employer. This form can be completed in hard copy or electronically.

Name of teacher	
Service name	
Service ID	
Service address	

Declaration – authorised representative of employer

I confirm that _____ is filling a vacant role as an early childhood teacher in a funded Three-Year-Old / Mixed-Age / Pre-Prep / Four-Year-Old (*circle response*) kindergarten program at the above-mentioned service.

If the application is for a Tier 3 (\$50,000) Location Incentive: I confirm that the role is for a minimum of 20 hours of employment per week.

Signed

[dd/mm/yyyy]

Name of employer representative	
Position	
Phone number	
Email address	
Employer name and address (if different to service)	

TARGETED EDUCATOR INCENTIVES PROGRAM

EMPLOYER DECLARATION

To be signed by an authorised representative of the educator's employer.
This form can be completed in hard copy or electronically.

Name of educator	
Service name	
Service ID	
Service address	

Declaration – authorised representative of employer

I confirm that _____ is filling a vacant role as an educator in a funded
Three-Year-Old / Mixed-Age / Pre-Prep / Four-Year-Old (*circle response*) kindergarten
program at the above-mentioned service.

Signed

[dd/mm/yyyy]

Name of employer representative	
Position	
Phone number	
Email address	
Employer name and address (if different to service)	