



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training

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BEST START FOR ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

The NSW Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, said for the first time, every Kindergarten student in all public schools will take part in the *Best Start* literacy and numeracy assessment program.

“Around 62,000 Kindergarten students in NSW will commence school from this week.

“The Best Start program is a \$117.4 million initiative by the NSW Government which allows teachers to assess and diagnose the starting point of a child’s education.”

Ms Firth said the program gives students the best start to their formal education and means teachers can plan their lessons to cater to each child’s level of proficiency.

“Under the Best Start program 2,300 specially trained teachers will start assessing students’ reading and writing, their communication skills and recognition of the sounds and letters of the English language.

“Teachers will also look at students’ early numeracy skills in counting, number recognition and how they work with groups and patterns.

“This is an important platform for the start of a child’s school education and all the research shows that early intervention gets the best results when it comes to improving literacy and numeracy skills.”

Best Start first commenced in 2008 with 434 schools. In 2009, the number of participating schools grew to 1,123.

Ms Firth said under the expansion of the Best Start program, 50 more Reading Recovery teachers will commence work this year and an additional 44 positions will provide expert literacy and numeracy teachers to support schools.

“This year we are really ramping-up our support to students and teachers in this critical area of education,” Ms Firth said.

“We now have over 1000 Reading Recovery teachers who will be on hand to help students struggling with their reading. They are working alongside more than 100 Literacy and Numeracy Leaders who are working with schools to achieve better results.

“We will also boost the Targeted Early Numeracy intervention program, from 265 teachers to 500 this year.

“It’s our strong commitment to literacy and numeracy that places NSW ahead of all other states in spelling, writing and numeracy.”

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