

How we talk about the early years matters

A Call to Action

from the **Queensland Early Years Framing Champions**

As advocates for the wellbeing and development of Queensland's youngest children, we - the Queensland Early Years Framing Champions - recognise the transformative power of framing in fostering understanding, collaboration, and action.

Our words, images, and stories are powerful tools to drive positive change for every child in every community.

By leveraging framing evidence, we can shift public understanding, create constructive narratives, build support for better policies, and engage the whole community in our work. In Australia, we have empirically tested framing strategies for the early years, which we are now using in our spheres of influence.

Six strategies for framing the early years*

- #1 Connect with why early years matter by starting with values around children's health and wellbeing, and fairness
- #2 Explain development, make context part of your story, use words and images
- #3 Clearly define the problem using examples and strategic framing
- #4 Lean into solutions—explain them, deploy data, and use examples
- #5 Use 'now and later' framing
- #6 Include parents in solutions

In this example below, we have used these six framing strategies to more effectively communicate the importance of the early years. We encourage you to use this narrative in your work so that together we effectively communicate about the early years:

"Children thrive and develop in communities that allow them to explore, connect, and be heard. The time from conception to five years of age lays the foundation for health and well-being. As children grow, they engage with and respond to their surroundings, actively shaping and reshaping their environment through their interactions, building vital skills through back-and-forth interactions with the adults in their lives. Access to these enriching experiences is pivotal during this time.

Right now, not every child has access to the same opportunities or the supports they need, and this causes children to suffer. We can work together to support parents and provide environments that give them time and space to express themselves to help develop these abilities.

The places children live, learn and play, shape them. We can all help to build the foundations for children to thrive. Every family in every community benefit when we provide quality health care; clean water, air and green spaces; nutritious food options; support for parents; and safe places to play and make friends.

Investing in neighbourhoods, prenatal support, playgroups, libraries, and <insert your area of interest/ advocacy> will positively impact children, families, and contribute to stronger, more vibrant communities across Queensland."

No matter where you work, we invite you to join us in engaging, communicating, and using framing to drive the shift needed for the early years in Australia. By incorporating these narrative strategies, we can better support the policy changes required.

We urge the Summit to prioritise and integrate narrative change strategies into its outcomes.

We call on you all to join us in championing early years messaging that transforms mindsets.

Tom Allsop, CEO PeakCare

Pam Barker, CEO Brisbane Youth Service

Penny Creamer, CEO Play Matters Australia

Louise Denoon, Executive Director, Community Partnerships, State Library Queensland

Anne Edwards, Executive Director – Operations Queensland Family and Child Commission

Michael Hogan, Executive Convenor Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

Dr Katrina Lines, CEO Act for Kids

Derek McCormack, Director Raising Children Network

Sarah Mitchell, Director Office for Youth Qld Department of Housing and Public Works

Rob Ryan, CEO Parenting Research Centre

Prof Jeanine Young, School of Health University of the Sunshine Coast



The Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) Framing for Change Champions Group is supported by the TQKP Strategic Framing Initiative, jointly led by Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC). To find out more about the initiative – and framing generally – visit the Framing for Change Learning Hub.



*The six framing strategies are from the **Reframing the Early Years Mini-Toolkit Developed for Early Years Framing Champions** (FrameWorks Institute 2024)