

SPEAKERS' BRIEF

Support for framing our messages effectively

Prepared for:

- National Early Years Policy Summit - 17-18 June 2025
(hosted by Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children)
- Shaping Futures Symposium – 19 June 2025
(hosted by Families Australia & PeakCare)

Our words, images and stories are powerful tools to build positive change for all Australian children. By using framing evidence, we can shift public understanding, generate helpful narratives and support for better policies, and engage the whole community in our work.

Rationale

The Summit and Symposium recognise that Australia boasts worldclass expertise in early childhood development. They will bring leaders and decision makers together in an unprecedented way to hone our collective policy actions so that we can support every child, in every community, now and into the future.

This document has been compiled as a reminder that strategic framing is a critical component of early years policy. It needs to - not only inform our events, activities and communications - but to also be considered as a policy decision in its own right.

Strategic Framing is the practice of considering how the words we choose can influence the outcomes we want to achieve. By applying a series of principles that have been tested and validated through research, we can frame our communications and 'sing from the same song sheet' to achieve our shared goal of *influencing positive change for all Australian children*.

Through our Framing Initiative, Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership has been working, together with a group of Framing Champions and [FrameWorks Institute](#) to embed framing strategies and recommendations in Queensland.

Below is a summary of some of the framing recommendations, with examples of how you can use these in your work.

Some quick framing reminders and helpful resources

[Order Matters](#) (2-page article)

- Start with values - in Australia it works to lead with child's health and learning; fairness; now and later framing
- Explain causes before mentioning effects
- Consider using an explanatory metaphor and case studies
- Offer effective solutions throughout combined with a sense of urgency to act
- Finish with a pragmatic vision for the future.



[Reframing the Early Years Mini-Toolkit](#)

- Use values early to connect with why these matter
 - Make it about learning and health
 - Flex fairness early
- Explain development, make context part of your story, use work and images
- Clearly define the problem using examples and strategic framing
- Lean into solutions - explain them, deploy data and use examples
- Use now and later framing
- Include parents and carers in solutions.



[Mindsets and helpful frames](#)

There are three unhelpful mindsets we want to avoid triggering in our audiences. We need to:

1. **Widen the lens** to counterbalance **'individualism'**
2. **Balance urgency** with efficacy to counterbalance **'fatalism'**
3. **Highlight collectivism** to counterbalance **'otherism'**

Helpful frames about systems “*Systems are designed by people and can be re-designed*” frame to counter the fatalistic mindset that the system is broken or too complex to fix.

[Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership Framing Checklist](#)

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership have created a framing checklist that summarises much of the framing research that we can use to build support for policies that support children. It covers:



- Mindsets
- Telling the story (order matters)
- Supporting the story (using images & data)
- Talking about the early years (conception to age 5)
- Talking about parenting
- Talking about young people
- Using metaphors



Collaborative Messaging – ready to use

The Framing Champions have been working on some collaborative messaging that uses recommended framing strategies (as above) around universal needs and prevention for children and young people to thrive.

Feel free to use and weave these ideas and phrases in your work:

What children need in their early years to thrive

“Children thrive and develop in environments 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.”

Talking about parents: (in a way that widens the lens beyond the family bubble and avoids blame)

“Children develop and learn when the adults raising them are supported. Raising children can be like navigating a sailboat. When waters get choppy, we all need lighthouses and safe harbour to guide and protect. The choppy waters are like the unbuffered stresses families face such as health problems, not having a stable home, racism, or financial

stress. The lighthouses and safe harbours are like strong communities, advocacy and education services, the early intervention initiatives, high-quality childcare and parenting programs.

Children's development is critical and healthy bodies and brains are built through everyday responsive back and forth relationships with parents and carers. Children thrive when we make sure their parents have what they need to support this all-important development.

Let's design and redesign services and systems that allow families to navigate safely toward clearer horizons, so we all thrive."

The Framing Initiative is jointly led by Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and the Queensland Family and Child Commission in collaboration with the State Library Queensland, Children's Health Queensland, Department of Education, Raising Children Network, together with Queensland agencies and not-for-profit organisations.

The aim of the initiative is to shift how the public - including decision makers, practitioners, parents and caregivers - understand and support 'what matters' and 'what works' for children by enabling broad use of evidence-based framing.

Find out more about the Framing Initiative [here](#). Or to learn more about framing, visit the [Framing for Change Learning Hub](#), developed as a key resource of the Framing Initiative.

