

Queensland Early Oral Language Partnership



Thrivng Queensland
Kids Partnership

Building strong foundations for every child: a community approach to early oral language



Together we're creating the conditions for optimal 'serve & return'* so Queensland kids thrive.

Early oral language skills build children's health by providing the foundations for social interaction, literacy and learning, participation and wellbeing.

When communities support early oral language – from pregnancy to starting school – we all benefit: family relationships are strengthened, children arrive at school ready to connect and learn, and we lay the foundation for lifelong health and participation.

We can all play a role in building early oral language. The key is lots of high quality 'serve & return' interactions with responsive adults – in all the places that children live, learn, grow and play.

This project aims to bring together existing work – connecting programs, services and people – to support each family and community according to their local needs.

We need coordinated and consistent efforts across ALL aspects and systems related to a child's life. This will boost language, learning and health outcomes for every child and family. And create fairer, healthier, safer communities for all.

WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

**'Serve & return' refers to the positive child-carer interactions – chatting, reading, singing, playing – that build brain architecture*



Image from Alberta Family Wellness Initiative

OUR SYSTEMS

Having programs to support early oral language development in all settings

Connecting existing programs, services & people

Co-designed with communities

PARENTS, CARERS & EVERYONE WORKING WITH CHILDREN...

Supported with the skills & resources to promote early oral language

Responsive caregiving with 'serve & return' interactions

Language-rich environments

Encouragement of child's culture & language

Every INFANT, CHILD, FAMILY & CARER supported to talk, read, play, sing, and able to access services early & as needed

ALL IN COMMUNITY...

Understanding the importance of early oral language

Being more connected within our communities

Feeling a shared commitment to promoting 'serve & return' opportunities for all children

Focus from pregnancy to starting school

Sustained surveillance & intervention to identify & respond to language needs

Evidence-based programs



Phase 1: Getting started (2026)

- Bring together organisations from across the early years system to establish a cross sector coalition led by Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership.
- Map what's already happening to support early oral language - the resources, programs, campaigns, and health checks that we already have - what's working, where are the gaps?
- Plot a 'roadmap' for how Queensland will work together to implement a plan for children's language and literacy. This will link to existing plans, policies and evidence. (Queensland Early Oral Language Roadmap).
- Develop clear ways to measure success and share what we learn. So that best practice early oral language development is available to as many families as possible. (Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research Strategy).
- Identify local communities in Queensland to 'pilot' this work.
- Develop investment proposal for Phase 2.

Phase 2: How this will look in local communities

Local communities know best what their children, families and services need to thrive.

We will initially work in pilot communities to:

- Bring together local people - including from health, education, early learning, libraries, social services, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations - to work together.
- Identify local strengths, resources, gaps and opportunities for improving early oral language.
- Co-design local plans that fit each community's needs, including training, awareness campaigns and practical tools for families and practitioners.
- 'Saturate and stack' communities with the best early oral language activities.
- Use existing 'hubs' based on where children and families already are. This will include libraries as well as playgroups, early learning centres, health and community spaces.
- Increase regular language and development checks, identify gaps in monitoring, and link families to support early - even while waiting for specialist services.
- Share progress, successes and learnings.

Email tqkp@aracy.org.au if you'd like to know more about how to join this growing partnership of Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership, Bowness Foundation, The Ian Potter Foundation, State Library Queensland, Children's Health Queensland, Queensland Department of Education, and universities ...

The Queensland Early Oral Language Partnership aligns with the Bowness Family Foundation's National Commitment to Early Oral Language. Bowness Family Foundation funding is supporting this work.

