

Queensland Early Oral Language Project

Creating the conditions for optimal 'serve & return' so Queensland kids thrive



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

When we work together, we can change early oral language, learning and health outcomes for every child. And create fairer, healthier, safer communities for all.

We will create impact by saturating & stacking services & interventions simultaneously:

- across **time** (prenatal to transition to school)
- across **places** (home, settings, services)
- across **people** (children, families, educators, service providers, community).

OPPORTUNITIES

Language & communication skills provide a lifelong foundation for learning and wellbeing. We need to prioritise this in our policies and practice.

Children's language development responds well to early intervention. We need to increase the uptake of developmental checks and integrated responses.

Abundant 'serve & return' interactions benefit all children. We need to make sure we all understand the part we can play across all settings.

Australia boasts excellent language programs and expertise. We need these to be within reach of all families.

The earlier we support families the better. We need to prioritise oral language development as early as possible during pregnancy.

Poor language development is linked to anti-social behaviour, including crime. When we support language skills we create healthier, safer communities for all.

It's not fair that 1 in 4 children in Queensland starts school not ready. When we address language inequity, we help to solve broader social inequities.

OUR HOW

Work in partnership with community to map their assets, gaps, risk and protective factors, existing services, interventions and needs, and to set priorities and implement evidence-based strategies.

Support families, educators and services to ensure ample 'serve & return' interactions and responsive relationships with children. Explore creative opportunities for 'serve & return' including via talking, reading, stories, songs, dance and play, across all settings.

Start as early as possible when children can't speak yet, but are learning from the language around them. This includes developing primary and secondary prevention strategies and programs to support parents during pregnancy.

Ensure all families have local access to high quality programs and activities (such as First 5 Forever), where they can connect and learn together.

Increase uptake of screening and checks to pick up developmental concerns as early as possible and provide easy-to-navigate and affordable supports. Normalise help-seeking for early oral language development.

Build ongoing connections between service providers, educators and other stakeholders (e.g. partnerships, Communities of Practice).

Engage people from diverse community settings including libraries, sports and recreation clubs, businesses, as well as traditional education and health settings.

Support all workers - particularly in the early years - with ongoing support to embed language development in everyday practice.

Build a common understanding and language of child development using framing science, tested metaphors and the best resources and tools.

Foster community engagement and shared responsibility for every child's language development, with compelling messaging.

OUR IMPACT

This leads to ...

Every family ...
is supported to talk, read, sing, play with their children, and to access services early & as needed

Everyone who works with children ...
has the skills and authority to prioritise early oral language development activities

Our systems ...
are equipped with programs to support early oral language development in all settings, and with services to identify and respond to language needs

Our community ...
is more connected and feels shared commitment to promote early oral language development of all children

We all ...
understand the importance of oral language and how we can play a part by providing serve and return opportunities

And then ...

Every child ...

- experiences high quality 'serve & return' interactions at every opportunity, where they live, learn, grow and play
- develops early oral language skills to form connected relationships, to learn, and to participate fully in the community
- has the opportunity to thrive

