Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s language learning using the Continua

This resource was developed in collaboration with Denise Cedric (Indigenous pre-prep teacher, Yarrabah State School) and Di Hoy (Indigenous support teacher). It builds on to the related resource, Supporting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who speak languages other than English. (Available at: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/12974.html > Professional Topics > Inclusion & Diversity.)

It provides examples of how a teacher can use the QKLG Learning and development areas to identify significant learnings that are most relevant to the children in their kindergarten group and community context. It also shows how a teacher can add to the advice in the guideline by identifying family and community priorities for children’s learning.

Key messages

1. It is important to value Aboriginal children’s and Torres Strait Islander children’s first languages while also building their skills for using Standard Australian English (SAE).
2. Teachers need to understand the features of language so they can intentionally support children to extend language skills.
3. Language learning is linked to children’s social and cultural experiences and provides a starting point for building new learning.

Using the Continua to expand children’s language learning

The Continua of learning and development is a companion document to the Queensland kindergarten learning guideline. It supports teachers to make informed judgments about a child’s learning and development. It also provides collections of descriptions of learning behaviours to help teachers make judgments about learning that are consistent with those of other teachers. The descriptions were contributed by teachers as examples, and teachers are encouraged to add their own examples (Continua, p.3).

This resource illustrates how a teacher may add examples of descriptions of learning that are specific to their local context, to the “Communicating: Language” continuum (see Figure 1). These additional observable behaviours are used with the examples published in the Continua when making judgments about a child’s learning progress.
Space is provided for teachers to add examples of observable behaviours in each phase of learning.
Additional examples of descriptions of learning

The following examples of observable behaviours would assist a teacher to make judgments about a child’s learning progress in relation to exploring and expanding ways to use their first language/s and Standard Australian English as an additional language.