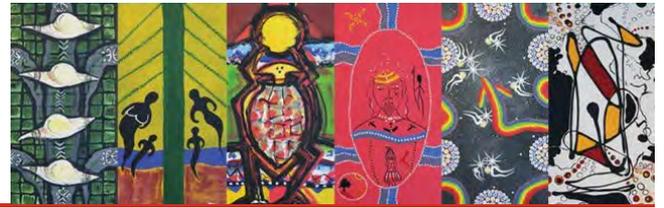


Queensland kindergarten learning guideline

Professional development | Resources



Promoting learning in a range of contexts for Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children

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 the related resource, *Supporting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who speak languages other than English*.

Key messages

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).

Teachers need to understand the features of language so they can intentionally support children to extend language skills.

Language learning is linked to children's social and cultural experiences and provides a starting point for building new learning.

Expanding language use and building a strong sense of cultural identity

"Play, real-life engagements, and routines and transitions are contexts that best suit the learning and development needs of young children — with play as the dominant context in the kindergarten program." (QKLG, p.26). Some examples of ways to support Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children to build their language skills and a strong sense of identity through these learning contexts are listed below.

Play

- Engage in pretend play situations related to family and community experiences that require the use of first language and SAE, such as talking on the telephone, shopping, hunting or fishing.
- Specifically discuss with children which language is the most appropriate to use in a pretend play game related to a real world experience and support them to use this language, e.g. use their first language when role playing a family/community experience and Standard Australian when playing shops or banks (contexts where they would hear people using SAE).
- Play with words (first language and SAE) while using puppets, engaging in role plays, sharing picture books and photographs.

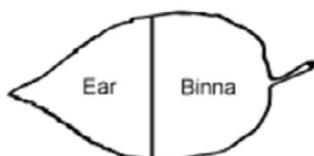


- Participate in games, stories, songs, rhymes and play experiences that require children to use a wider range of first language or SAE. These include descriptive vocabulary and simple everyday words, phrases and sentences, such as words to describe positions, body parts, colour, shape, size and greetings (e.g. good morning); questions and responses (e.g. Where is Kahli? Who can I see? I can see you/her/him).
- Participate in games, dance, movement and play that involves following simple directions and instructions.
- Model ways to discuss children’s creative experiences, representations and feelings using first language and SAE, e.g. to talk about a block construction, discuss ideas for creating props for play or ways to use drawing and painting materials.
- Model ways to use first language and SAE to enter play and social situations, e.g. “Can I have a turn please?” “Let’s go fishing in the boat!”



Real-life engagements

- Model and support children to use their first language (or a traditional language) as they engage in community experiences and with visitors from the community who speak this language.
- Invite local community members to engage with the children using the language of the local community (e.g. “Yarrie Lingo” in Yarrabah) and/or traditional language (e.g. “Yidinji” in Yarrabah) so that children learn the words to name their body parts, names of family members, place names and foods, and experience the language of cultural stories.
- Record and display words used in first language and SAE (and traditional language), e.g. on a language tree – record related words on leaf shapes and attach them to a real tree branch or large drawn image of a tree.



- Model and encourage children to ask questions using first language and SAE.
- Model and support children to answer questions using first language and SAE, e.g. during a group discussion or when planning for play (such as, “What do you want to play today? “I want to play with the blocks.”)
- Create a print-rich environment and engage children in exploring this print in meaningful ways, e.g. when sharing books, discussing pictures, photographs, magazines and local newspapers or using maps and pamphlets. Use first language and SAE as you share and discuss texts.
- Engage children in using numbers in meaningful ways to explore quantities and relationships, e.g. as they cook, compare the size of everyday objects or explore patterns. Use first language and SAE as you share and discuss concepts, ideas and relationships.
- Refer to the words of simple songs that are written on charts as they sing the songs using their first language (and/or a traditional language) and SAE.



- Provide opportunities for speakers of SAE and other languages (e.g. a person who speaks Yidinji, Jirandali, Mandarin or Indian) to visit and discuss and model the differences in these languages, the children’s first language and SAE.
- Record the language (first language and SAE) children use as they talk about what they have drawn/painted. Discuss the words that represent their ideas in their first language and the words that represent the same ideas in SAE.



- Model language (first language and SAE) that can be used to talk about print and texts, e.g. cover, title, word, sentence, picture.
- Model language that can be used to talk about creative processes and responses as children engage with music, artworks, dance, drama and media from their own and other cultures, and use first language and SAE.
- Purposefully select and share finger plays, rhymes and songs so that children can hear the sounds in words in their first language and SAE, learn useful vocabulary and sentence patterns, and explore intonation and rhyme patterns.
- Support children to engage in sustained conversations with people who speak their first language, such as community teachers or visitors. For example, discuss with the community teacher/visitor ways to support a child to build their first language by asking open-ended questions, extending on the child’s ideas, providing useful labels to help them understand unfamiliar concepts

Routines and transitions

- Play transition games, e.g. “five currant buns” and explicitly support children to use SAE to “buy” a bun from the baker.
- Play transition games that support children to become aware of separate sounds in words, such as onset and rime (j – j – j – aidyn) and syllables, e.g. clap the “sound parts” in children’s names (Cha / veesh / a) or familiar animals (croc / o / dile).
- Work with children to prepare to share news/personal experience, so they can practise the language (greetings, words, sentence patterns) they will use.
- Introduce transition games to develop listening skills, including auditory discrimination (which instrument/animal sound can you hear), sound bingo or repeating a sequence of sounds made using their voice/mouth/tongue (click, pop, shhhh).
- Sit with children during meals and purposefully encourage or support them to engage in conversations , e.g. compare items they are eating, talk about favourite snacks/games, share jokes and experiences.
- Provide a visual timetable that children can refer to and talk about when planning their day, discussing what they will do next or after lunch.
- Use visual cues such as photographs to help children remember what is expected when they follow particular routines, safety rules or specific behaviours (e.g. listening behaviours or how to sit in the group time).

- Incorporate routines or programs that are important within the local community, e.g. In Yarrabah, the pre-prep children follow the “Breathe, Cough, Blow & Wash” program to support them to avoid chronic ear infections and related health and learning issues as a result of otitis media.
- During reading or group activities, use sound field amplification systems to ensure any children who use personal listening devices have equal opportunities to hear and engage in the experience.
- Develop and use visual cues to support children’s understanding of verbal instruction, e.g. a hand signal and visual chart to support children to follow the instruction to “stop, look, listen”.



This resource provides some examples of ways to support Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children to build their language skills and a strong sense of identity. Teachers can adapt or add ideas to suit the children and families they work with and their local context.