

Oral language is best supported by:

- ⇒ Talking with every child every day!
- ⇒ Daily use of playful and engaging ways for children to hear and practice both PY and English such as:
 - stories, action songs, singing & listening games.
 - poems, chants and nursery rhymes are used for practising the rhythms of English.
 - clapping musical patterns or using musical instruments to tap the rhythm in songs and clap out patterns such as children's names.
 - playing rhyming games such as *Wibbly Wobbly Woo, a donkey sat on you*, and using visuals to support the understanding of rhyme, such as matching pictures that rhyme.
- ⇒ Using puppets, drama and dramatic play to provide a non-threatening environment for experimenting with and practicing language. For example, story-tables for practicing language; acting out a favourite story; setting up a shop or clinic in the home corner.
- ⇒ Routines that are carefully planned for practicing and repeating language. Daily rituals and routines are used as rich opportunities for intentional oral language teaching, scaffolding and building on concrete experiences eg, using fingerplays or songs in transition times.
- ⇒ Extensive use of visual cues in the environment to support children's English language understanding and development eg, photos or pictures of routines, schedules, emotions, picture books.
- ⇒ Using a variety of ways to engage with telling and reading stories such as fairy-tales (eg, 3 Little Pigs), local Anangu stories (using story-wires), story tables, DVDs, puppet shows, storytelling with props, acting out a story, creating a story at the playdough table, or while painting or drawing.
- ⇒ Providing additional 'wait time' giving the child an opportunity to comprehend what has been said or asked and formulate a response.
- ⇒ AEWs are the PY role model supporting children's vocabulary and complexity in structure of language. Piranpa teachers are the English role models and speak clearly. For example, AEW reads a story to children in PY followed by Piranpa teacher reading the story in English. Both Piranpa teachers and AEWs actively seek to build children's conversational skills by focussing on 'back and forth' interactions.
- ⇒ Providing many opportunities for children to regularly experience and practice social English eg greetings and manners in English language situations.



- ⇒ Focussing on what children mean, not the way they say it. Children must be encouraged to take risks: they need to feel confident about contributing to conversations. Attempted approximations are accepted and completed eg,
Child: *We went Fregon to disco.*
Teacher: *Yes, that's right, we went to Fregon for a disco.*
- ⇒ Using meaningful chunks of language at the children's level. Repetition is important, but within a meaningful context and with language that makes sense to the child and is interesting. Regular repetition of English words and phrases – teach it until they talk it back to you.
- ⇒ Using children's interests to motivate oral language. Provoke children's fascination and curiosity with objects that are relevant and interesting to talk about.
- ⇒ Explicit, directional language that describes what is expected in children's behaviour (eg, "Put the scraps in the bowl" rather than "Don't do that") and consistent follow-through so that children link language and action.
- ⇒ Excursions, bush trips and outings enable children to use oral language in a variety of circumstances. They also stimulate children's imagination and provide children the opportunity to further develop ideas and concepts eg, *Walk and Talks* through community
- ⇒ Supporting children's listening by getting close, letting children see your face while you are talking, reducing background noise, and using the sound field system when reading a story to the group. Talk less but more intentionally. Children can't sustain the listening in English.
- ⇒ Talking about talking and explicitly teach children to notice the differences and connections between languages eg, teacher saying speech sounds correctly and explicitly showing a child how to make a sound with their mouth such as 'f'.
- ⇒ Intentionally planning the vocabulary children will be exposed to through the experiences that are planned, and then ensuring children have the opportunity to hear and use the vocabulary. Teach it until they talk it back to you.

Oral language is least supported by:

- ⇒ Decontextualised learning such as templates, worksheets or black-line masters that lack challenge, interest or stimulate little language
- ⇒ Large group rote learning or long periods of waiting in a group situation
- ⇒ Yelling/calling across the room to children
- ⇒ Talking too much or talking 'at' rather than in interaction with children
- ⇒ 'Performing' language – expecting a child to answer a question, or asking a child to use English out of context eg, "Count to 10"
- ⇒ Code-mixing (putting Pitjantjatjara words in English sentences) - this confuses children's language development in each language
- ⇒ Phonics programs – children are too young
- ⇒ Focussing questions on discrete skills and knowledge such as naming colours, shapes letters and numbers
- ⇒ Not interacting with or talking with babies and children. Remember, they are learning all the time!

DECD Anangu Lands Partnership 2017

Oral Language Agreement

Early Childhood

This document provides guidance on specific pedagogical practices that support the development of home language and the learning of English for children in Playgroups, Preschools & in transition to School.

Our children need to learn about the two cultures, Piranpa and Anangu. We want Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara language supported. It is very important that books in their own language be read to the children and their songs to be sung. They can also watch DVDs of their traditional dances so they will learn about their culture.

PYEC Philosophy Statement for Early Childhood 2012



Families are First Teachers

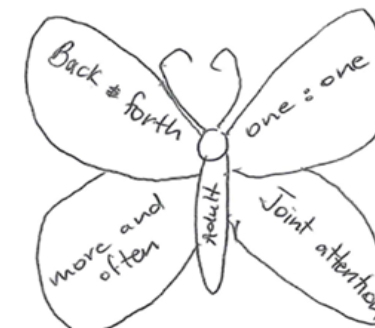
What happens in first 3 years of a child's life is critical in developing language (home language and English). Children who experience lots of rich language interactions on a daily basis in the early years have greater success in later years. All Playgroups use FaFT and the 3a approach to support oral language.

Playgroup educators make language a priority each time they interact with children to support children's oral language learning and include:

- ⇒ **Enriched caregiving in all routines of the day**
- ⇒ **Conversational reading every day, for every child**
- ⇒ **Learning games every day, for every child.**

Educators in both Playgroups and Preschools enact the following principles of the 3a language priority throughout their everyday interactions with children:

- ⇒ **Adult Role—Anangu pulka**
- ⇒ **Joint Attention—Tjitjingku munu Anangunku tjungunku nyanganyi**
- ⇒ **Back & Forth—Ngapartji ngapartji**
- ⇒ **One-to-one—Anangu pulka tijtji munu**
- ⇒ **More and Often—Tjuta arangu palyani**



From birth children communicate with others using gestures, sounds and language. Oral language forms the basis for children's successful literacy development and is a key capability in learning. Children's use of their home language/s underpins their sense of identity and their conceptual development. They have the right to be continuing users of their home language as well as to develop competency in Standard Australian English. Young children learn language through meaningful, hands-on experiences and in relationship with others, through conversation, music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading, writing and digital media.

Adapted from Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early years Learning Framework

What are the common expectations in our Playgroups & Preschools?

Teachers in the Anangu Lands Partnership:

⇒ **Create learning environments** that invite children to use language as often as possible in a variety of circumstances, using the design elements outlined in *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children*. Teachers regularly review how children are engaging in the learning environment to ensure maximum opportunities for listening, speaking, conversation and language development.

⇒ **Develop children's oral language through play**, enabling teachers to discover the language skills children already have and to observe language development in the widest possible contexts. Teachers are intentional in their engagement in children's play, looking for and maximising opportunities for teaching, modelling, scaffolding and extending children's oral language. Play allows children opportunities to demonstrate what they know; build language together; explore new ways of representing meanings using language; and, control aspects of their learning.

⇒ **Intentionally plan for and construct learning experiences** that promote speaking and language development in an holistic manner using the *Planning Cycle*. Consider the following aspects: planning the environment and routines that maximise oral language and conversation; providing daily opportunities for singing, music, story reading/telling, and games; providing open-ended experiences that engage children in exploration, discovery, critical thinking and shared conversations. These planned opportunities create the need for learners to communicate meaningfully and to solve problems.

⇒ **Develop culturally competent pedagogies** in partnership with AEWs, that respect Anangu ways of knowing and communicating. Culturally respectful services give children a sense of belonging that enables them to confidently use their home language while learning English through meaningful experiences and quality interactions.

⇒ **View children as competent and hold high expectations** for each child's learning of language. Therefore planning is based upon what each child knows, understands and can do, and honours children's prior learning and language development. All pedagogical practices reflect a strength based view of the child. Teachers expect preschool children to respond verbally and scaffold increasingly complex responses eg words, phrases, sentences.

⇒ **Understand the holistic nature of oral language development** within the broader context of literacy. They provide opportunities for and respond to children's use of verbal and non-verbal attempts to communicate throughout the day, capitalising on teachable moments.

⇒ **Document and assess children's oral language development** using *The Yakka Tracker* as well as other documentation (for example, written observations, reflections, photos and videos, learning stories, floorbooks). Teachers use this information for planning and formative/summative assessment. Where there are concerns about a child's oral language development, teachers complete the *Preschool Access Profile* and contact the *Speech Pathologist* for a pre-referral conversation.



The child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts, a hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking.

Loris Malaguzzi, cited in Rinaldi 2013



REFERENCES

- *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children* – Jessica DeViney. Gryphon House, 2010
- *The Yakka Tracker* (Early Years Communication Audit Tool) – DECD, 2014
- *NT Preschool Curriculum*—NT Government, 2016
- *3a Abecedarian Approach Australia Practitioner Manual*—University of Melbourne, 2015
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*—Commonwealth of Australia, 2009
- *Re-Imagining Childhood: the inspiration of Reggio Emilia education principles in SA*—Carla Rinaldi, 2013

Top 5 teaching tips

working with Anangu children as language learners

1. HOME LANGUAGE

Anangu children come to playgroup and preschool with a home language (usually Pitjantjatjara and/or Yangkuntjatjara - PY) and are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EALD). Being strong language users in their first language is the foundation for acquiring Standard Australian English. Often receptive language is further developed than expressive language (ie a child can understand more than s/he can say).



2. HEARING LOSS

Conductive hearing loss has adverse effects on language development, usually in the way of a delay. 80% of children across the Lands are affected by Otitis Media (OM), a middle ear disease. This results in a fluctuating Conductive Hearing Loss. Often babies experience their first bout of OM as young as 3 weeks old. Since different sounds have different frequencies, children can miss high frequency sounds (such as f, s and th). Playgroup and Preschool staff actively work with families and health organisations to have children's ears and hearing checked regularly and as a matter of priority.

4. LEARNING NEW SOUNDS

There are differences in sounds between PY and English:
PY sounds not found in English – j, ŋ, r, t, ng (at the beginning of words)
English sounds not found in PY – f, h, s, v, z (among others).
It may be a challenge for children learning English to make the new sounds. Teachers need to be good English speaking models.

3. BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS!

Anangu culture is a strong oral culture and access to books and written stories is extremely limited in communities (outside of school). Children often come to playgroup or preschool with limited exposure to books, therefore providing many, many storybook experiences is fundamental and a key part of literacy development.

5. LEARNING ENGLISH

Children learn English vocabulary through repetition in songs, rhymes, stories and games. They practice using English through play and conversations. In preschools this is the basis for phonological awareness, focussing on rhyme, syllabification (segmenting words) and recognising initial sounds of words. Teaching phonics and phonics programs are not developmentally appropriate for preschool aged children.