

Instructions to get you started

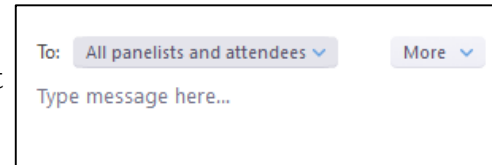
Step 1: Connect via Zoom



Click on audio settings and change to a different audio option in the list if you cannot hear any sound

Click on the 'Chat' icon to open the 'Chat' box where you can:

- Read what others are writing in the chat box
- Write a message and click 'Send' (make sure you send it to 'All panelists and attendees')



Click on 'Leave Meeting' to exit the webinar

Step 2: Test it out! In the Zoom 'Chat' box send a message that includes your:

- Name
- Role
- Organisation
- Location
- The age of children that you work with

Step 3: Open Padlet in a new browser window on your computer or mobile device to get ready for a later activity

https://padlet.com/s_houen1/stars_wishes_activity

Important note!

This webinar and your comments in the chat box will be recorded

No sound on your Zoom connection?

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Webinar ID: 321 189 786



Oral language in the Early Years

Strategies for promoting rich conversations with
children 2-5 years



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CREATE CHANGE

Welcome!

Aims of this session

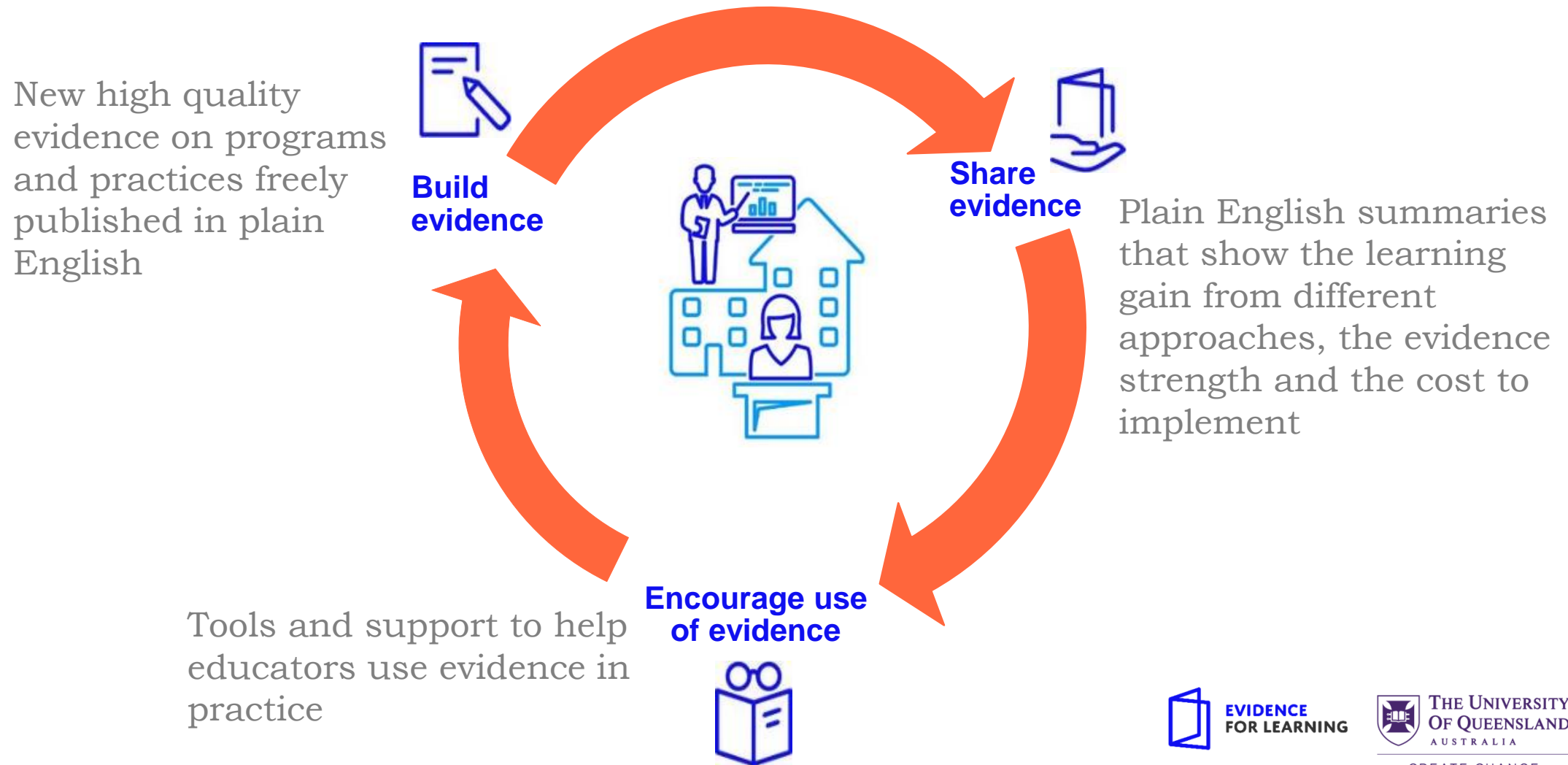
- Learn about some of the research on the importance of oral language development
- Evidence-informed strategies to support the development of oral language in 2 to 5 year olds

Agenda

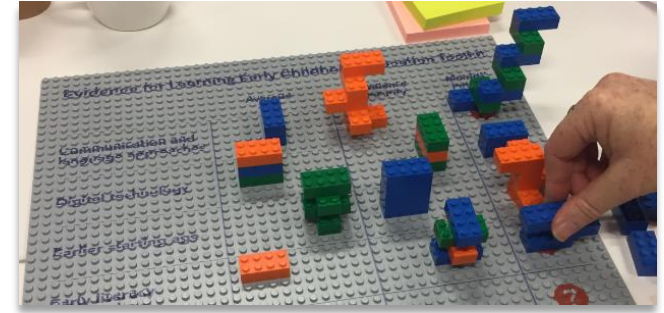
- Welcome and introductions (10 mins)
- Why oral language? An introduction to the research (10 mins)
- Practice tips and examples (35 mins)
- Questions and feedback (remainder)



Evidence for Learning



Why oral language?



Sort by Name ▾	Average cost –	Evidence security –	Months' impact –
Communication and language approaches	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+6
Digital technology	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+4
Earlier starting age	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+6

evidenceforlearning.org.au/the-toolkits/



What is oral language?

Receptive Language

knowledge and understanding of words



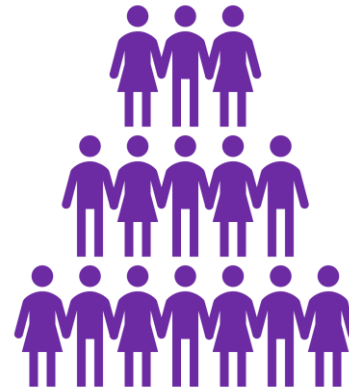
Expressive language

use of words and construction of communications



Oral language acquisition – why it is important

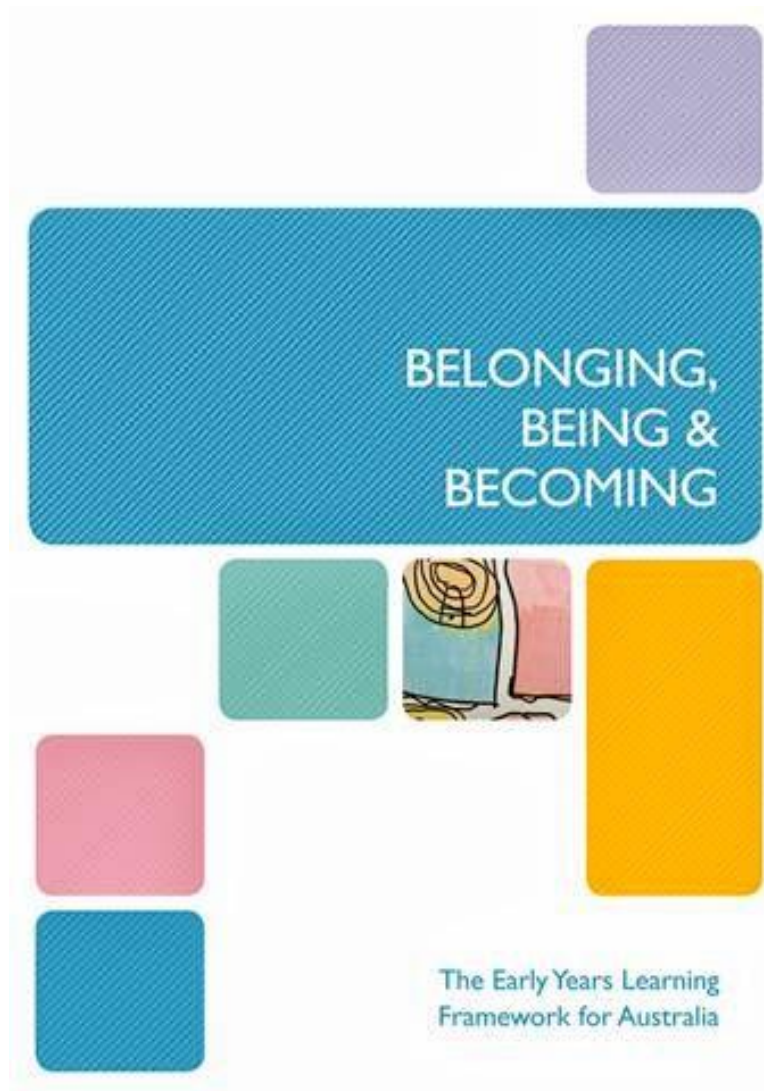
- Platform to communicate effectively
- Predicts children's success in formal classroom settings and life trajectories more broadly
(Girad, 2015; Law, 2000; Snowling, 2015)



Language Development

1. Development follows a recognisable path
2. The timing of development differs for each child
3. Development is influenced by the environment





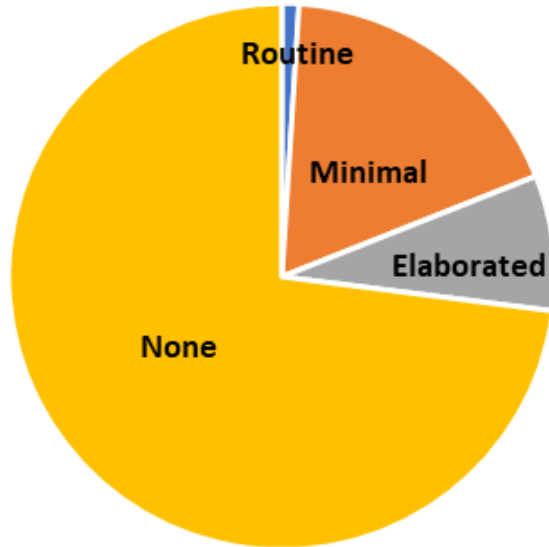
EYLF: Outcome 5 children are effective communicators

- From birth children **communicate with others using gestures, sounds, language and assisted communication**. They are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to **exchange ideas, thoughts, questions and feelings**, and to use a range of tools and media, including music, dance and drama, to **express themselves, connect with others and extend their learning**. (p. 38)
- Literacy incorporates **a range of modes of communication** including music, movement, dance, story telling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as **talking, listening**, viewing, reading and writing. (p. 38)



Making moments matter...

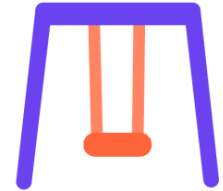
Observed typical educator-child interactions



Story book reading



Eating times



Outdoor play



Whole group times



Small group times



Music and movement times



Indoor play



On arrival at the service



On departure from the service



Activity 1:

Barriers and opportunities to making moments matter



Take a few minutes to think about:

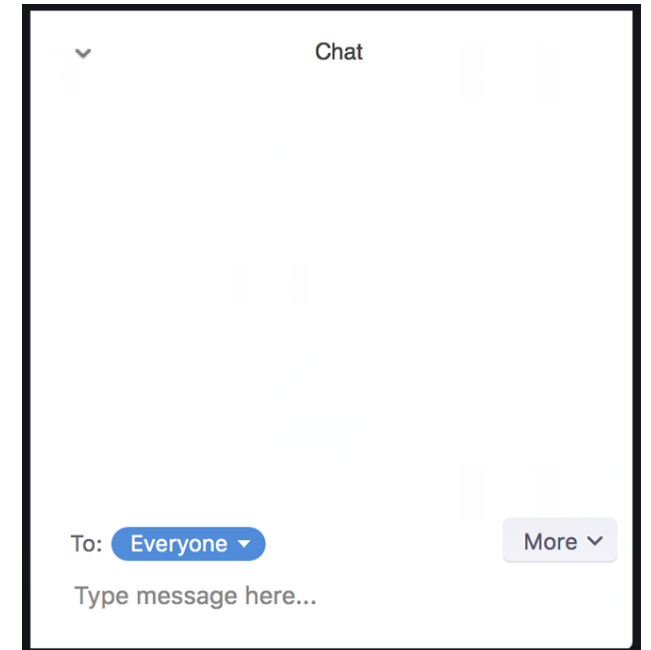
- a) **Barriers** that prevent you from engaging in extended conversations with children
- b) **Opportunities** that you have to engage in extended conversations with children



Using the Zoom chat box:

Share:

1 **Barrier**
1 **Opportunity**

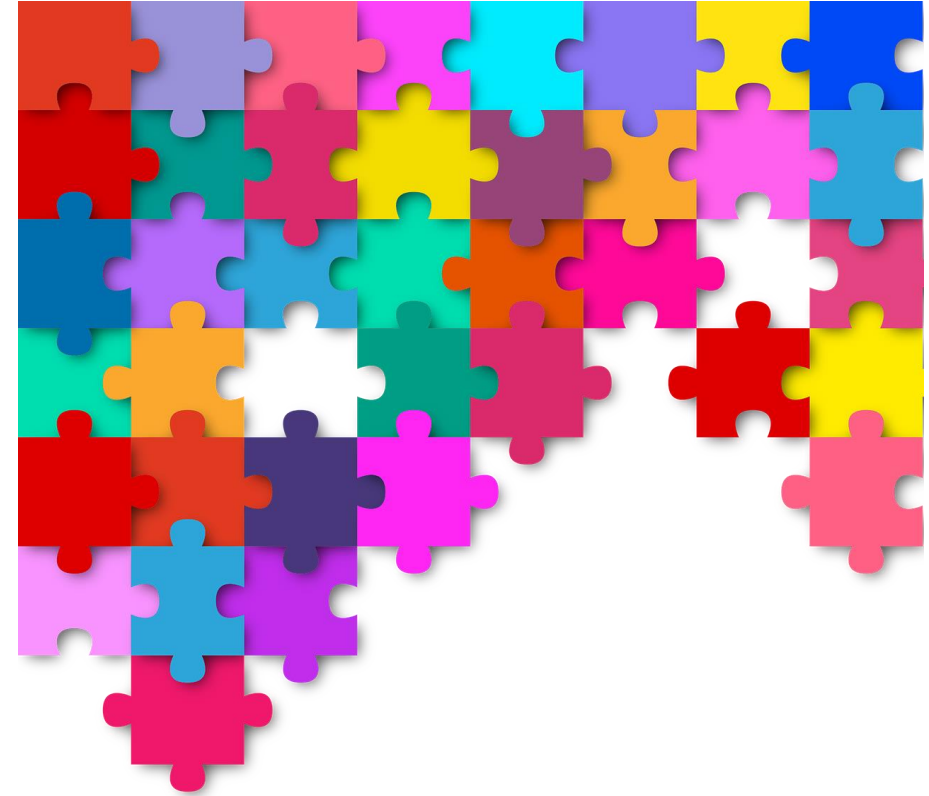


Systematic literature review

Review Question:

What is the current evidence for programs and strategies that support educators to foster rich conversations, including sustained shared thinking and dialogic interactions with young children, aged 2-5 years, in ECEC settings?

- Australasian research
- Studies within ECEC
- Focused on children 2-5 Years



Practice tips and examples



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Supporting rich conversations involve:

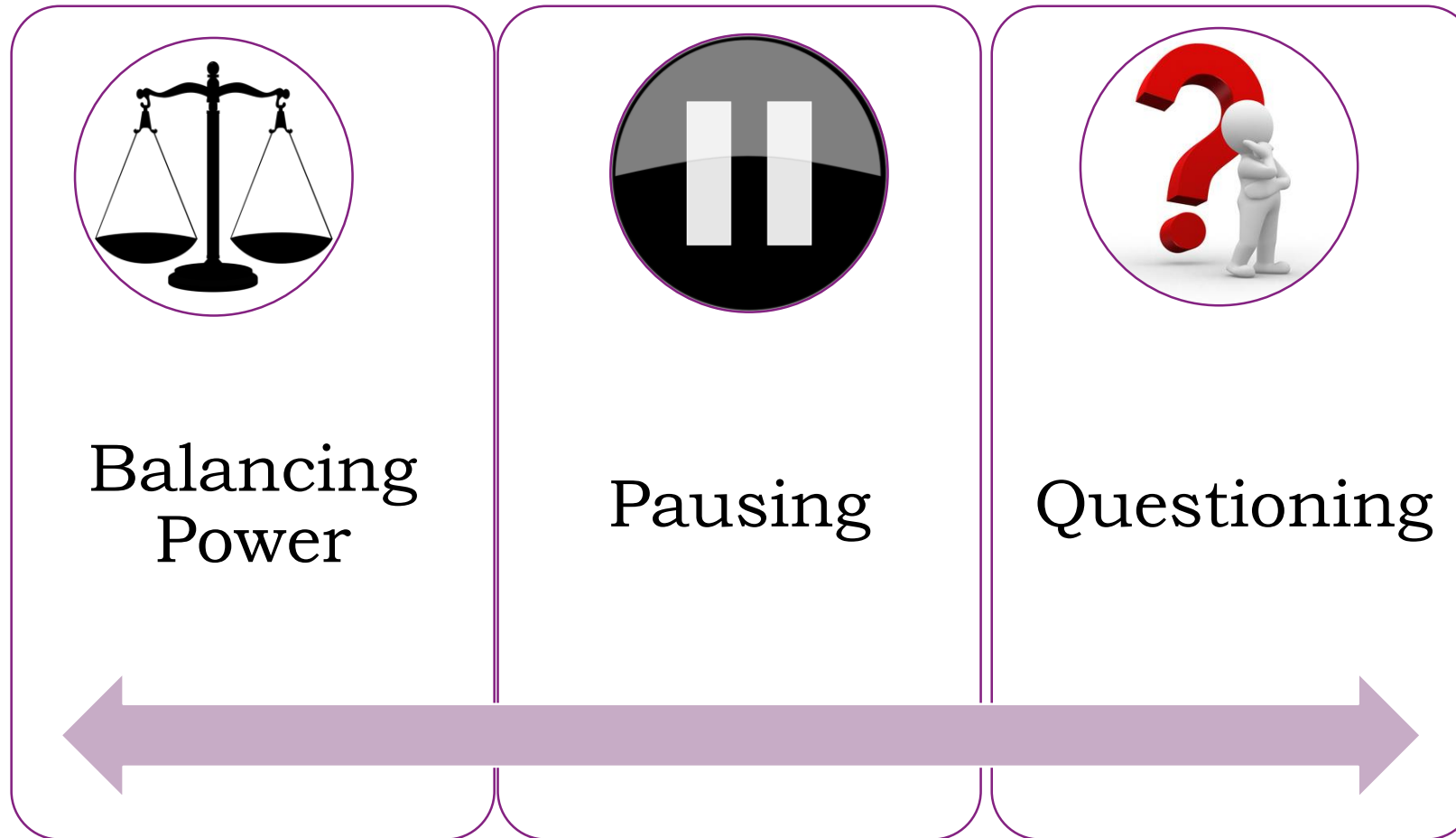


Creating
spaces for
children's
talk

Keeping
conversations
going



Creating spaces for children's talk





Balancing Act

- **Did you know?:**

- Interactions in traditional classroom contexts typically follow an **IRE** pattern (Mehan, 1979):

Initiation (e.g. Educator – “How many legs does a spider have?”) (1st turn)

Response (e.g. Child – “Um, I think they have 8.”) (2nd turn)

Evaluation (e.g. Educator – “Yes, you’re right.”) (3rd turn)

In these interactions:

- Adults typically take up 2 out of 3 talking turns (Edwards-Groves, 2014)
- Adults are positioned as the ‘experts’ or knowledge holders who ‘judge’ children’s responses as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’





Pausing

- **Slows** down the interaction
- Provides a child with time to **think**, to **process**, and **construct** a response
- Allow other children to **initiate turns** to talk
- Enables educators to **plan** their follow-up moves in **response** to a child's talk

Practice Tip:

Play with pausing in your interactions with children.

- Vary the lengths of time (e.g. 3-5 seconds, 5-10 seconds)
- Use your knowledge of individual children to intentionally select the length of pauses. (Some children may not need a long pause, whereas others may need much longer)





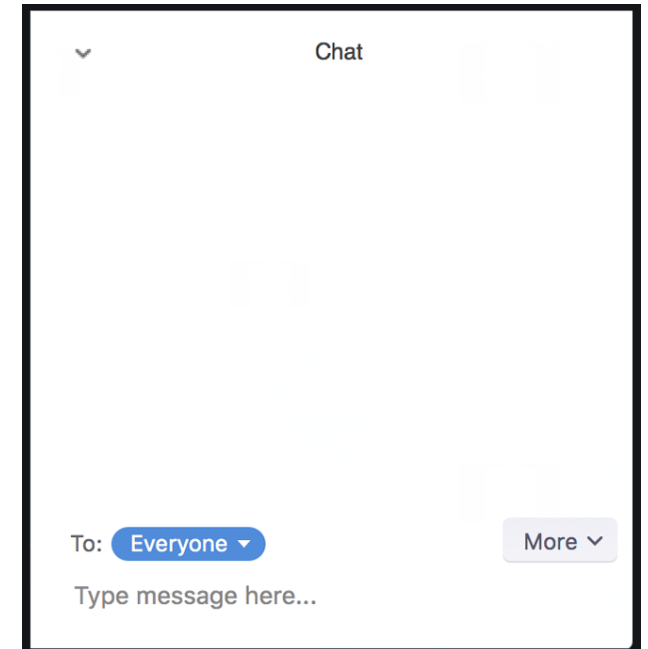
Activity 2: Brainstorm

What do we know about questions?



1 minute

Use the Zoom chat box to create a list of what we know about questions



Questioning



- **94.5%** of questions asked were closed (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008)
- **Main Question types:**
 - Yes/no questions - eg. Are trees green?
 - Wh questions - Who, what, where, when, why, (how)
- **Test Questions** (McHoul, 1978; Searle, 1969).
- Children as **young as 2** can differentiate between a test and authentic question (Grosse & Tomasello, 2012)





“I wonder...” questions

Extract 4 – 06082012_2.07–2.30 (Houen et al. 2016b)

Participants:

LIS – Teacher

Men – Child

157 LIS: what's tha:t. ((points at antennae and gazes = at Mena))

158 (1.6)

159 LIS:=> > ^I wonder what< that ^is.

160 (.6)

161 Men: ey::es. ((gazes at Lisa))

162 (.6)

163 LIS: ^ey:es! ¿ =

164 = do you think it might be eye:s.

165 (2.2) ((all gaze at screen))

166 Ror: an:tennaes_ ((looking at Lisa))

167 (.4)

168 LIS: > you think it might be< ^antennaes ^Rory. =

‘WH’
Question

1.6 second
silence

‘I wonder..’
question

Example 1

Acknowledgements:

- a) Queensland University of Technology for providing Sandy Houen with a university supported scholarship to conduct this research
- b) The larger project, “Interacting with knowledge, interacting with people: Web searching in early childhood” was funded by the Australian Research Council (DP110104227)





“I wonder...” questions cont’d

Extract 2 (06082012 5:17-5:44)

336 Com: ((pictures loads completely))
337 ((Participants look at the enlarged image of the selected hairy caterpillar))
338 LIS: <now we can see it up close_
339 (.3) ((hand on trackpad))
340 oooooohhhhhhh my goodness.
341 ((looks at children))
342 (1.8)
343 LIS: very hairy==>I wonder what< kind of ka- butterfly it would
344 turn into.
345 (.5)
346 Ror: a hairy one=
347 Ror: = because [it's a] <ha- hairy: caterpillar_
348 LIS: [°a hair°-]
349 LIS: so do you think hairy caterpillars turn into hairy butterflies,
350 ???: no::
351 LIS: 'what would their 'cocoons, 'look like.

Example 2

‘I wonder..’
question

Response +
justification of
idea

‘WH’ Question

Houen, S., S. Danby, A. Farrell, and K. Thorpe. 2016b.

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Can we simply pause and ask
open ended or ‘I wonder ...’
questions to promote rich
conversations with children ?

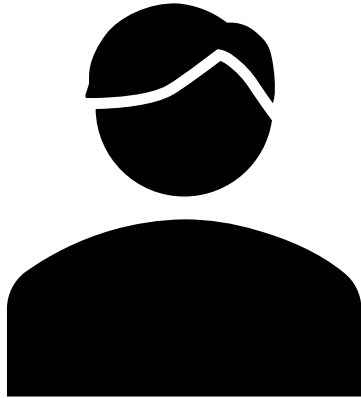




Categorising questions: Closed or open?

Example 1:

“Is the sun white?”

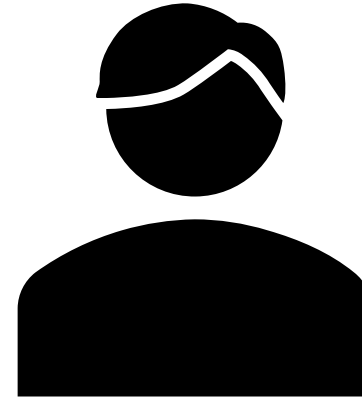


“yes”

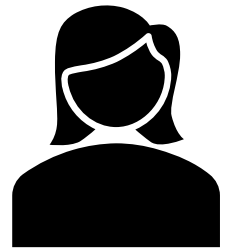


Example 2:

“Is the sun white?”



“Sometimes it looks yellow, sometimes it looks red and I’ve even seen it look orange.”

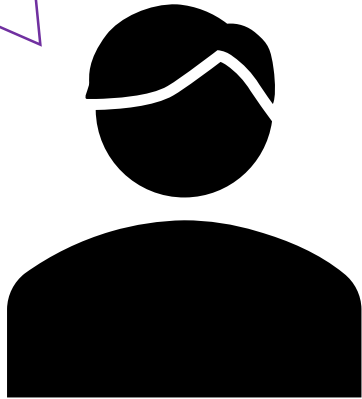




Categorising questions?

(1st turn)

“What is up in the sky?”



Educator

(2nd turn)

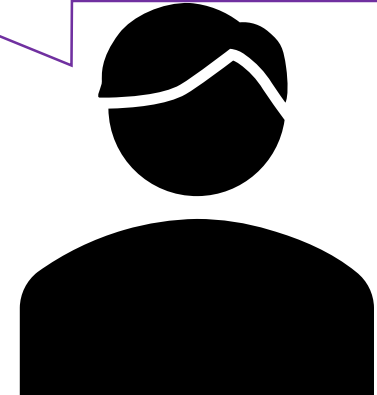
“Clouds”



Child

(3rd turn)

“Actually, I was thinking plane?”



Educator

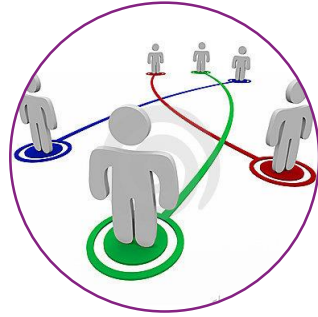
Potentially open question...

Child responds...

Reveals question was closed...



Keeping conversations going

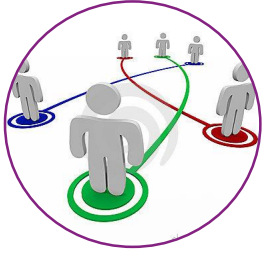


Personal
Connections



Responding
to children's
talk





Personal connections

The 'Reminiscing Approach'

Reece, Gunn, Bateman & Carr, (2019)



Educators prompt a child to use their memory to tell a story about an experience:

Encourages a child to talk more and produce more complex talk

The 'Book Reading Approach'

Reece, Gunn, Bateman & Carr, (2019)

Educators read a child's learning story as if it were a book:



★ Exposes a child to more complex speech

Second Stories

Bateman, Danby, & Howard, 2013



Offered after a first story is given.

A second story builds onto the first story through a personal connection or similar experience

Pivots

Bateman, Danby, & Howard, 2013

Pivots connect an immediate event to a personal experience



Responding to children's talk

Your response can

close down

or

promote

shared conversations



Activity 3:

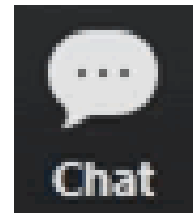
Dad and baby's rich conversation






<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yn8j4XRxSck>

Analyse the video footage.

Using the chat box, enter one or two of the **strategies** that we have discussed today that you can see in the video?



 Chat

To: Everyone  More 

Type message here...

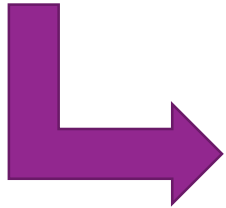


Activity 4: Two stars and a wish



Take a few minutes to think about how you:

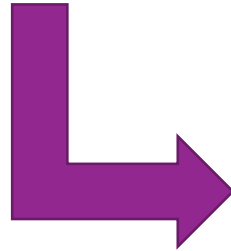
- a) create space for children's talk
- b) keep conversations going with children



Type into the web browser on your phone, ipad or pc:

https://padlet.com/s_houen1/stars_wishes_activity

- 1) Think of **two** things you do really well (stars) ☆
- 2) Think of **one** thing you would like improve (wish) ☆





A toolbox of strategies – Not a recipe

Pausing

Balancing Power

Personal
Connections

Questioning

Position children with
knowledge:
What are your thoughts?
What's the problem?

Position educators
without knowledge:
"I wonder ..." statements

Responding

Resources are online

EVIDENCE FOR LEARNING About The Toolkits Learning Impact Fund Guidance Reports Evidence Informed Educators

Home / The Toolkits / Early Childhood Education Toolkit

All Approaches - Full Toolkit

All 12 approaches in the Early Childhood Education Toolkit are listed here. You can filter by average cost, evidence security or months' impact. Then select an approach to explore further.

Sort by Name ▾ Average cost ▾ Evidence security ▾

Communication and language approaches	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒
Digital technology	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒

Supporting Rich Conversations with Children aged 2-5 years in Early Childhood Education and Care within Australasian Studies

Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR)
17 September 2019

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA
CREATE CHANGE



Creating spaces for children's talk

Oral language is the way children communicate the discoveries. Educators can support and enhance communication with children about ideas and experiences. This tip sheet provides evidence-informed strategies to childhood education and care settings for children.

Make moments matter

Opportunities to create spaces for children's talk can occur at any time during the day. It's about the quality of the moments.

Story book

read

Keeping the conversation going

When a child is an active participant in shared, extended opportunities to talk, their talk is more complex, and oral language use is embedded across the day to educator's work. This tip sheet provides educators with and extend conversations with children aged 2-5 years.

Make it personal

Children will contribute more to conversations if their own experiences, interests, and personal connections to current events by:

- Creating space and time to link conversations to their own experiences.
- Following their lead to identify and incorporate their interests.

Research provides examples of strategies that can support personalising conversations.

See and speak: Learning stories and photographs are used as the focus of conversations. Two strategies to promote children's talk include the 'Reminiscing Approach' and the 'Book Reading Approach'.

- The 'Reminiscing Approach'**
 - Educators prompt the child to use their memory to tell a story about the experience.
 - Encourages a child to talk more and produce more complex talk.

The 'Book Reading Approach'

- Educators read the learning story as if it were a story book.
- Exposes a child to more complex speech from the educator.

Varying your approaches enables a child to have opportunity to talk more and also to hear more complex speech.

Experiment with linking

- Experiment with both the 'Reminiscing Approach' and the 'Book Reading Approach' when talking with children about their learning stories.
- Take a sequence of photos from the start to the end of projects, so that children can revisit and provide a commentary on the experience with others.
- Find out about children's lives outside of the service. Talk with parents about family experiences and

Curious About Questions?

Oral language is embedded across the Early Years Learning Framework and is central to educator's work. Asking questions is a common approach to prompting children's talk and participation in conversations, however not all questions are equal. This tip sheet explains question qualities and describes what you can do when the questions you ask are 'tricky' for children aged 2-5 years.

Question qualities

Questions can be closed- or open-ended. Closed-ended questions require a child to produce a narrow response or an answer that the educator is looking for. Open-ended questions invite a range of answers and usually prompt a longer conversation. Regardless of the type of question, educator's responses are pivotal in sustaining rich back and forth interactions.

Research has shown that educators use three main question types in their interactions with children:

Yes/no questions

- e.g. "Is it autumn?"
- Typically result in yes/no responses rather than extended talk.

Wh questions (who, what, where, when, why or How)

- e.g. "What season is it now?" or "When do you know about autumn?"
- Can result in one word or longer turns at talk.
- Are often used to 'test' knowledge.

"I wonder..." questions

- e.g. "I wonder what happens outside when it's autumn?"
- Work to invite, rather than expect, a response.
- Educators are positioned as curious.
- Educators are less likely to judge answers as right or wrong.

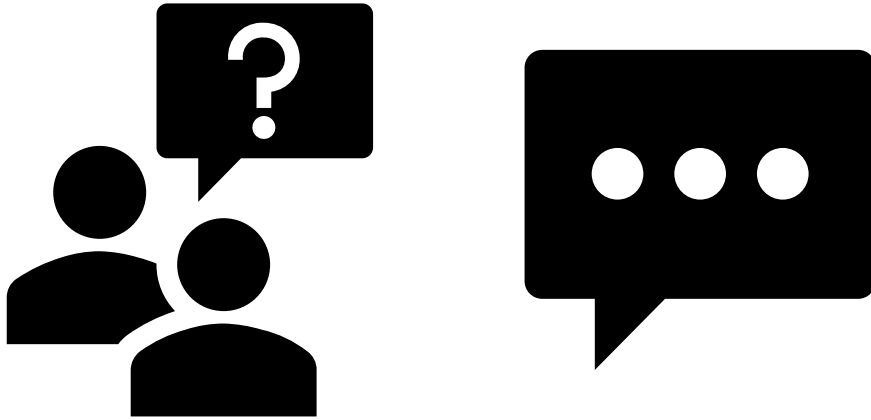
Experiment with questions

- Ask genuine questions (those that you don't know the answer to)
- Try using statements instead of questions: instead of "What's that?", try "Wow look at the ... (eg. hairy caterpillar on the tree!)" and pause to wait for a response.
- Value children's questions by using their questions as a focus for the next turn at talk.
- Experiment with using 'open-ended' questions when reading to children (eg. "What do you think might happen next?")
- Try to repeat or modify the question, or alternatively provide a hint, instead of answering your own question.
- Try an 'I wonder...' question, instead of using a 'Wh question'.

evidenceforlearning.org.au/early-childhood-education/



Questions, comments, contact



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Webinar feedback survey

Please copy the following link to complete a feedback survey:

<https://survey.app.uq.edu.au/Webinar-Evaluation-Survey.aspx>

Thank You

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