

WORDS GROW MINDS

Campaign Guide for Services

Co-ordinating practice to provide consistent parent and caregiver messages across the early years sector.

raising
literacy
AUSTRALIA

WORDS
GROW
MINDS



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Using this guide

The guide has been developed to support services in embedding the campaign into their settings and programs to promote and role model the key messages with the families they work with and support.

It aims to provide services, professionals and practitioners with a deep knowledge of the campaign's key messages and a thorough understanding of the different ways they can align and consistently communicate the campaign through their interactions with families.

A variety of strategies are outlined, to support organisations and services in adopting and promoting the call to action – 'talk, play, read and sing with your baby' which will assist in embedding the campaign into existing programs, and complement the significant initiatives services currently work on, to collectively support the progress of children in the 0-3 age group.

SECTION 1: Understanding the campaign: Background

In June 2021, the South Australian Early Learning Strategy was launched. The Minister for Education announced that the Department for Education (the Department) would be partnering with and providing seed funding to Raising Literacy Australia to develop a coalition of services (now known as the Early Years Taskforce).

During 2021, Raising Literacy Australia engaged with a wide range of early years organisations across South Australia and formed the Early Years Taskforce.

The Early Years Taskforce is a coalition of South Australian organisations providing services across early education, health and wellbeing, to children aged 0-3. The main objective of the Taskforce is to increase coordination among services and consistency of early childhood development messaging, to help parents and caregivers in their role as first teachers.

The Early Years Taskforce is charged with improving early childhood developmental outcomes for South Australian children. Members include government and non-government services working with young children and their families. To view the full list of members, visit wordsgrowminds.org.au

Taskforce members are working to improve developmental outcomes by:

- Increasing collaboration across services
- Forming clear and consistent messaging for parents and caregivers on the importance of brain development in the early years
- Showing families simple things they can do to literally grow babies' and young children's brains.

A pilot campaign was launched in October 2022 and was trialled successfully with families and early years services in Mount Gambier and Whyalla. Evaluation results showed **a significant increase in parent and carer awareness about the importance of early childhood development and positive interactions in their child's first three years.**

The Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care made a total of 43 recommendations, five of which intend to reach and support more families in a child's first three years of life.

The statewide implementation of Words Grow Minds has been accepted by the government as one of these five. The government will improve information available to families about the importance of quality interactions for early childhood brain development through the campaign.

Why we need a parent messaging campaign

It is now well-understood how brain development in the early years can set trajectories for learning and development throughout a child's lifetime, and that brain development is at its most critical phase during the first three years - so it is essential that the importance of early brain development is consistently communicated and promoted to parents.

There is agreement that, within the early years sector for the age range of 0-3, there is currently no national, coordinated approach to early childhood development messaging and there is a lack of essential framework/s in place to consistently deliver the messaging to families.

Research shows that nurturing, positive early interactions build brain development and the foundations for all the later learning and successes, but are parents aware of this important information? Do parents and caregivers know about the direct correlation between using words in positive interactions and brain growth? Are they aware that every time they talk, play, read and sing with their child they are supporting their child's development and that the early years is

the right time to do it, with up to 85% of a baby's brain developing in the first three years? Do parents and caregivers know that the impact of early experience has a greater influence on development than heredity?

During parent focus groups, there were parents across the regional locations that expressed being unsure about how to engage with babies in the first year.

Most parents in the Port Augusta/Whyalla group agreed there is a lack of information about how to engage meaningfully with babies and wanted more information on this. While some metropolitan Adelaide families felt that they had access to information they were sometimes unsure if they were doing the right thing at the right time. We know that parents are struggling to navigate an overwhelming early years system with current early years parent messaging showing a lack of coordination, cohesion and consistency.

A parent messaging campaign can deliver key early childhood development messages in a range of accessible and meaningful ways, to support parents to best support their child's development.

When the ad plays again the next time it gets more stuck in your head about what things you need to be doing. Little reminders are good because you get so busy and then you hear it the in the car and you do it because you've had that fresh reminder.

Parent of a 3-year-old, Mount Gambier

“Increase the quality and quantity of interactions between child and caregiver to have an immediate, profound and scalable impact that improves outcomes for children.”

(Inside Early Talk, 2021)

What is the AEDC?

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a population measure of how young children are developing across Australia which commenced in 2009. Every three years the Australian Government undertakes a census of all children in their first year of full-time schooling. It measures children’s development across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competencies, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based), communication skills and general knowledge.

This information is used to identify communities where families and children may require extra support and to help shape the future and wellbeing of Australian children. It provides evidence to support policy, planning and action for health, education and community support. The AEDC can assist governments to develop flexible approaches to policy and planning that address the evolving needs of children and families in the future.

www.aedc.gov.au/

What the AEDC data is telling us

Until quite recently, policy makers focused their dollars and attention for children on education, usually starting around age five, but evidence shows five years old is too late. The first 3 years, before most children enter formal education, are most critical. This is when brain, physical, language, social, emotional and cognitive development occurs at its fastest rate and foundations are laid for life.

By the time children are in school the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) proves that gaps between advantaged children and disadvantaged children are already enormous. In South Australia, 23.8% of children (nearly 1 in 4) are not reaching their

developmental potential by the time they start school. This is higher than the national average (1 in 5). This number has increased since 2009, compared with those in most other jurisdictions where vulnerability has decreased.

(AEDC Community Story: Early Learning Strategy in South Australia 2022)

It’s evident that South Australia needs to urgently support children’s development, by implementing a range of initiatives including consistently and clearly communicating early childhood development information to parents to support them in their role as their child’s first teacher, starting from birth.

WORDS GROW MINDS

Words Grow Minds is a South Australian early years campaign that talks to parents, carers and the community to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood development and positive engagement with children in the first three years. The campaign is to be delivered in communities and across a range of early years services and platforms, with supporting parent and child resources to underpin the campaign's call to action, 'Talk with your baby, play with your baby, read with your baby and sing with your baby'.

The Words Grow Minds campaign recognises that while everyone wants the best for their little ones, sometimes it's hard to know what they need. This campaign gets straight to the heart of how parents and caregivers can help babies and young children thrive - it's as simple as talking, playing, reading and singing together from birth.

The campaign is based on current neuroscience evidence about early brain development and the positive impact early engagement has on a child's development in their first three years, and over their lifetime. It has been developed with extensive consultation and input from South Australian early years services, health professionals, early childhood academics and state government departments.

Taskforce members have regularly met to develop, design and distil key early childhood development messages, based on an evidence-base of research and best practice.

This information and a supporting brief were presented to three advertising agencies through a competitive process. Two campaigns were shortlisted and put to focus groups covering families and service providers from metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia.

The Words Grow Minds campaign was selected as it clearly resonated most strongly with both families and service providers and stood out as encouraging more positive engagement with young children.

The campaign was piloted and tested within South Australian communities to obtain feedback for improvements and modifications, to ensure the campaign is understood and actively taken up by both families and services.

The Words Grow Minds Campaign seeks to achieve the Early Years Taskforce's goal to:

Increase awareness of the importance of early childhood development and positive engagement with babies and young children in the first three years.

Sharing the important key messages of the Words Grow Minds campaign with parents and carers empowers us all to acknowledge that early, nurturing and positive interactions build brain development and the foundations for all the later learning and life successes. Together, we hope to improve developmental outcomes for all South Australian children.

SECTION 2: Translating early years neuroscience into accessible language for parents

As professionals and practitioners, we can best help children and families by understanding the latest research on early childhood development and the developing brain.

‘Research shows the most important ingredient in building the brain is the quality of children’s relationships with their parents and carers’

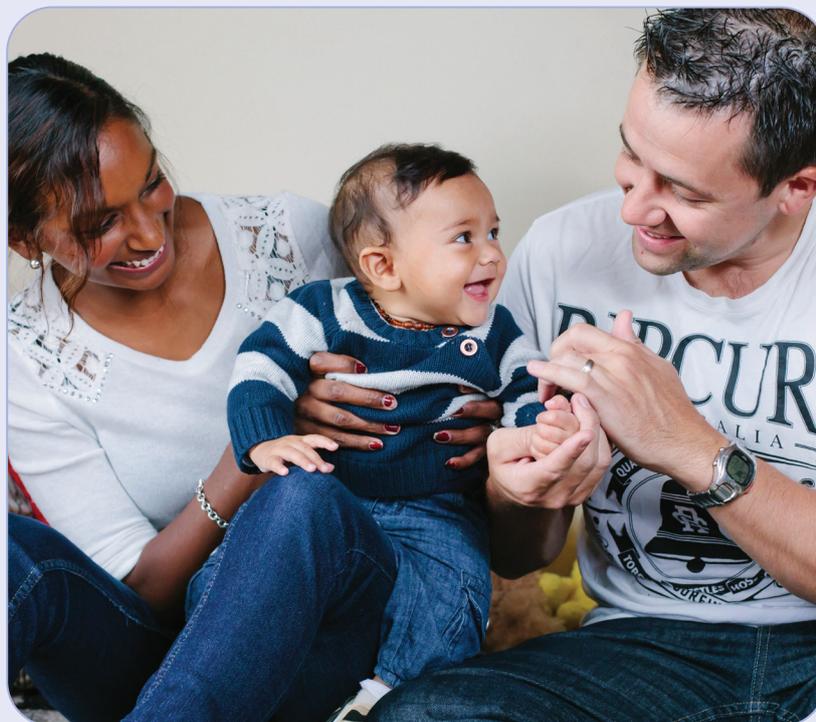
(Early Learning Strategy, pg 6).

So how do we make neuroscience evidence that is complicated and can be concerning, accessible to all families - without adding to the guilt many parents already feel?

Neuroscience highlights the importance of the early years for the development of the whole child.

According to Harvard University’s Center of the Developing Child, there are key concepts, formed over many decades of neuroscience and behavioural research, which demonstrate why child development, specifically the first five years, supports and contributes to a flourishing and sustainable society.

The Words Grow Minds campaign translates neuroscience evidence and early childhood development research into clear and accessible language for parents and caregivers. It emphasises the importance of brain development in the first three years and highlights how parental engagement can aid this development.



Facts to know and share

Fact: Brains are built over time, from the bottom up.

The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. Early experiences affect the quality of that architecture by establishing either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all the learning, health and behaviour that follow. In the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second. After this period of rapid proliferation, connections are reduced through a process called pruning, so that brain circuits become more efficient. Sensory pathways like those for basic vision and hearing are the first to develop, followed by early language skills and higher cognitive functions. Connections proliferate and prune in a prescribed order, with later, more complex brain circuits building upon earlier, simpler circuits.

SIMPLIFY & SHARE: It doesn't take technology or fancy toys. Starting as early as possible, babies need real people to engage them in positive experiences to grow and strengthen their brains.

How would you say it? Add your messages here:

Fact: The interactive influences of genes and experiences shape the developing brain.

Scientists now know a major ingredient in this developmental process is the "serve and return" relationship between children and their parents and other caregivers in the family or community. Young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, and gestures, and adults respond with the same kind of vocalising and gesturing back at them. In the absence of such responses—or if the responses are unreliable or inappropriate - the brain's architecture does not form as expected, which can lead to disparities in learning and behaviour.

SIMPLIFY & SHARE: When talking or playing with a baby or young child it really helps to be face to face. This is especially important for back and forth interactions and improves communication and bonding when we talk, play, read and sing.

How would you say it? Add your messages here:

Fact: The brain's capacity for change decreases with age.

The brain is most flexible, or "plastic," early in life to accommodate a wide range of environments and interactions, but as the maturing brain becomes more specialised to assume more complex functions, it is less capable of reorganising and adapting to new or unexpected challenges. For example, by the first year, the parts of the brain that differentiate sound are becoming specialised to the language the baby has been exposed to; at the same time, the brain is already starting to lose the ability to recognise different sounds found in other languages. Although the "windows" for language learning and other skills remain open, these brain circuits become increasingly difficult to alter over time. Early plasticity means it's easier and more effective to influence a baby's developing brain architecture than to rewire parts of its circuitry in the adult years.

SIMPLIFY & SHARE: By 9 months of age a baby's brain is already tuned in to the sounds of the language heard around it. So encourage families to speak in their home or first language. Exposing young babies to words and sounds helps them begin to hear and say the words they will use for life. Baby's brains are capable of learning more than one language, and in the early years their home language is best.

How would you say it? Add your messages here:

Fact: Cognitive, emotional, and social capacities are inextricably intertwined throughout the life course.

The brain is a highly interrelated organ, and its multiple functions operate in a richly coordinated fashion. Emotional wellbeing and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development. The emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community.

SIMPLIFY & SHARE: Babies are learning now, so don't wait for preschool or school! They aren't just learning how to talk, they are learning social and emotional skills, learning about themselves and the world around them. So it's vitally important that all of us aim to provide regular positive experiences for babies and toddlers, which will support their development now and over their lifetime.

How would you say it? Add your messages here:

The Words Grow Minds campaign provides an overarching platform to consolidate, simplify and clearly communicate this important neuroscience information to parents:

"Talk, play, read and sing. Words help build your baby's brain, physically changing the way it grows. With up to 85% of brain development occurring in the first three years, it's important we interact and engage early on."

SECTION 3: Campaign overview

Coordinating practice for improved child outcomes

Clear evidence exists that supports what ‘early engagement’ can do. A unified approach across all relevant sectors (health, early childhood, education, community services, allied health, libraries, etc), with a focus on supporting parents and carers with children aged 0-3 is essential to the success of the *Early Learning Strategy 2021-2031: All young children thriving and learning.*, and increasing the proportion of South Australian children developmentally on track.

Children’s learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when practitioners, parents and early years services all work in partnership and coordinate to deliver consistent early childhood development information and support to families.

The agreed messaging of the Words Grow Minds campaign supports the work of all services and organisations across South Australia. Whether a family visits a library, playgroup, outreach service, CAFHS centre, childcare centre or parent group they will receive the same key messages, delivered in a consistent manner. By all sectors being consistent and delivering the same key early childhood messages across services, this will

create familiarity and trust for parents/carers about the information they receive. Together we can collectively and intentionally aim to improve the proportion of children developmentally on track by the time they start school.

As practitioners and educators, regardless of what service and program we deliver, we all strive for common outcomes for children and families - for children to have the best start in life.

We all share a common vision:

For all children to have the opportunity to receive the best possible start in life; to grow, be healthy and develop in a safe and nurturing environment, so they can reach their full potential.

We all agree:

Supporting parents, carers and families to positively engage with their child from birth and in their early years supports better outcomes for children, now and in the future.

Let’s share a common goal:

Collaborate and provide consistent and clear parent/caregiver messaging to increase awareness about the importance of early childhood development and positive engagement in the early years, to improve child outcomes.

Team discussion

How can you provide families with information about other services and programs?

Words Grow Minds: Resources and materials

With animated characters, a catchy song (sure to get stuck in your head!) and resources for families, parents and caregivers can easily connect with the campaign. Not only designed to entertain little ones, it will also engage parents and carers with its memorable message.

The combination of a simple but effective message of Words Grow Minds with a strong call to action and supporting resources - will increase awareness and motivate parents to consciously think about the importance of the early years, and how they engage with their babies and toddlers to support their children's overall development.

Campaign elements

The campaign will include:

- Print advertisements
- Animated television advertisements
- Radio advertisement
- Song
- Posters
- Billboards
- Tram Wrap
- Website
- Social media templates



Words Grow Minds - Resource Pack

Providing books and play activities to parents and caregivers, to use at home with their children, has been shown to increase engagement. When parents have access to books and play activities, they have an opportunity to observe firsthand their child's level of interaction and this reinforces how important engaging with their baby is, and often how enjoyable and rewarding it can be. This can become a powerful incentive to engage more often and to learn more about ways to interact.

The resource pack includes:

- Conversation Cards
- Picture book - Jump and Shout, written by Mike Dumbleton and illustrated by Peter Carnavas
- Jump and Shout - Activity Card: Make Your Own Binoculars
- Black and white buggy book - Sing With Me
- Biodough and Playdough Mat
- Parent and Caregiver Information Booklet with Nursery Rhymes



Find out more at
wordsgrowminds.org.au

A deep dive into
each call to action!



TALK

Talking to your baby is widely considered one of the most important things a parent can do with their young child. Nevertheless, research has shown lots of variation in how much families are speaking with their child in the early years. A famous study from the US found evidence to suggest that parents from professional backgrounds spoke 30 million more words on average to their child by age four, compared to parents who were on welfare. This coined the term the '30 million word gap' and has gained widespread attention. More recent research out of Australia has shown that the socio-economic word gap emerges as early as 18 months old, highlighting the need for messaging around the importance of talking to be made clear to parents as early as possible.

Even more important than simply talking at your baby, is the idea of simple back-and-forth conversation with your child. In the research world, this is often referred to as conversational turns. While very young children may not be talking themselves yet, the conversational turn is still just as important. Providing the child with an opportunity to respond with any speech-like sound - such as an infant's coos or a toddler's made-up word - is crucial for a range of later outcomes. To date, it has been shown that conversational turns are important for brain structure and function, reading skills, socioemotional development, language development, and IQ scores in middle school.

Here are some ideas to help encourage parents and carers to talk more with their baby and toddler:

- Each time you get one back-and-forth exchange with your child, try to make it two.
- Talk about what you are doing and thinking - turn daily routines into opportunities for talk.
- Avoid too much screen time when your child is not interacting with anyone.
- Look and Label - use a variety of books to look at and label objects to build vocabulary.

- Talk during play and respond to the things your child show interest in, "you like pushing the car...vroom, vroom!"

Encourage families to engage in talk using the Words Grow Minds pack by role modelling the following:

- Use the conversation cards in group time.
- Organise a 'Walk and Talk' around the neighbourhood or at a park.
- Explore story telling.
- Talk about the pictures, shapes, numbers and colours in books.
- Use the Jump and Shout Activity Card to prompt talking and name different objects.



PLAY

Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to the processes of human development. It provides the mechanism for children to explore the world around them and develop and practice skills. It is essential for physical, emotional, cognitive and educational development, and acquiring social and behavioural skills. It's the natural way a child learns and is crucial to building pathways or connecting 'neurons' in the brain.

Play is a generic term for a variety of activities which are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and may be freely chosen by the child. The activities may involve equipment or they may not, be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, be performed in a group or on one's own, have an end product or not, or be light hearted or very serious.

Young children's development is enhanced by 'doing'. It's the doing that matters to a child and contributes to their learning. It is not the product to take home that is important. For example, playing in the sandpit may involve feeling different textures and mixing water to make sand stick together. This is known as "Process vs Product".



It is the right of each child to have an equal opportunity to play; free from discrimination on the grounds of disability, culture, special needs, poverty, gender, social or environmental restraints.

Here are some ideas to help encourage parents and carers to play with their baby and toddler:

- Set up a special area for young babies to explore and practice gross motor skills such as sitting up, rolling and crawling, add a reading or musical space to provide great opportunities for learning.
- Follow children's lead and rotate toys often according to their interests. Give children time to play alone, and also with friends and with family.
- Invite friends to play. Babies and toddlers can practice skills such as turn-taking, language and communication and how to enter and exit play situations safely when they play with others.
- Provide children opportunity to repeat and practice developing skills in play, so they can master them.
- Talk with children in play about what they have played with and ask thought-provoking questions.
- Play as a family. Read books, sing and dance to favourite music, tell stories, go on a train ride, visit places like the beach, park, forest, museum and zoo.
- Use travel time to sing songs, retell stories or play simple games.

Encourage families to engage in play using the Words Grow Minds pack by role modelling the following:

- Use the conversation cards to prompt play ideas and activities.
- As you read Jump and Shout, do the actions together. Use the Activity Card and make your own binoculars and see what you can spy!
- Encourage children to get creative with the playdough! Roll, stretch, squish, and make with the playdough. Add shapes, figurines or nature items to extend the play.

READ

It's never too early to read with babies, so always encourage families and carers to read aloud with babies from birth. Not only does reading aloud build close and nurturing relationships, it can stimulate brain growth and encourage language skills. We now know that children whose parents read to them every day when they are very young learn to speak, read and write more easily.

Sharing children's books can be lots of fun, as well as provide opportunities to explore a wide range of new words and experiences. Books are a wonderful tool for creating positive moments, for making connections, learning about communication, expressing emotions and hearing sounds and words as part of learning to speak themselves. Looking at pictures and listening to different stories encourages babies and young children to use their imagination and learn about the world around them. Importantly, it also sets children on a path to develop a lifelong appreciation and love of reading.

It can be common for parents or family members to lack confidence with reading or using books, however, there are ways of supporting them to engage their baby with books.

Here are some ideas to help encourage parents and carers to share books and read with their baby and toddler:

- You don't have to read the words. Talk about the pictures – point and describe what you see.
- Hold your baby or position yourself close, so your baby can see your face and the book.
- Use your home language to read or tell stories.
- Keep books near babies and toddlers so they can touch and play with them.
- Older babies love other children so they enjoy simple books with faces of babies, toddlers and older children.
- Babies do not need any screen time. Babies learn how to talk by engaging with a caring adult who regularly talks and reads with them.
- Include books with rhyme, rhythm and lots of repetition.

- Use different voices and facial expressions, change the tone as you read – be playful and have fun!
- Visit the library and borrow baby and children's books. Many libraries have Story Time or Baby Time sessions which are free and a great way to learn tips about different ways to read stories.

Encourage families to engage in read using the Words Grow Minds pack by role modelling:

- Read the Jump and Shout picture book.
- Visit a local park and have a picnic. Take one of the books to share while there.
- Visit the local library and organise to join in on a free baby or toddler session.
- Anywhere story time! Read or sing with the Sing With Me buggy book – in the trolley, at the park, in the pram, or on a cushion.



SING

“Every environment where children are interacting with adults matters and presents opportunities for rich engagements and relationships. Early interactions are foundational to all the later learning and life successes that follow”

(Inside Early Talk, LENA, 2021)

Singing is a gentle way to bond with babies while sharing favourite songs. Listening to music and singing also helps babies and toddlers to learn to regulate their emotions and supports their auditory processing or hearing sense, which helps them gather information about their world.

A good mix of well-known traditional songs and other favourite trending tunes helps babies develop a love of music and build their speech and language. Songs are a great way to have fun together and teach simple words. Toddlers have a burst of language at around 15-24 months, where they begin to learn and use many new words every day, and songs easily engage toddlers and have an important role to play in their development.

Here are some ideas to help encourage parents and carers to sing with their baby and toddler:

- Don't worry if you can't sing in tune, or can't remember the words. Your baby needs to hear your voice and they won't mind if you are making up the words!
- Babies thrive on human interaction, so singing is an easy way to have fun together that builds strong bonds.
- You may notice your baby watching your face closely when singing. They are learning how you make sounds and words, and will soon start copying you.
- When we sing we slow down our speech so babies can hear the parts of the words. This helps them hear the sounds in our speech while having fun singing and enjoying music.
- Lullabies are calming and restful to help babies feel comforted and ready for sleep.
- Sing anywhere! Sing with your baby while eating, bathing, walking or driving.

Encourage families to sing with the Words Grow Minds pack by role modelling the following:

- Sing the songs in the Sing With Me Buggy Book.
- Enjoy singing with Nursery Rhymes for Every Day, including the QR code to listen online.
- Rhyming helps us remember words, and songs have lots of rhythm and rhyme.
- Explore simple musical instruments such as shakers, tambourines, a small drum or maracas.
- Try a variety of music and songs from around the world.



Relating the campaign to your service and programs

Think about your service and the programs you offer. Record the ways you can incorporate the campaign, engage families and communicate and/or role model the key message and call to action.

KEY MESSAGE: **Words Grow Minds**

We can communicate and role model this by:

CALL TO ACTION: **Talk**

We can communicate and role model this by:

CALL TO ACTION: **Play**

We can communicate and role model this by:

CALL TO ACTION: **Read**

We can communicate and role model this by:

CALL TO ACTION: **Sing**

We can communicate and role model this by:

SECTION 4: Engaging families

Delivering the campaign within your service

The success of this campaign relies heavily on how consistently it is delivered across organisations and sectors. The more families see and hear the messaging, the more impact and effectiveness it will have. Words Grow Minds is designed to align, underpin and strengthen the work you are already doing with children and families.

The aim is to incorporate the key messages and calls to action into your existing programs. Build on parents' knowledge and explain why it's important to talk, play, read and sing and how this helps early brain development. Show fun and different ways to use words in positive interactions, as they talk, read, sing and play with their baby and toddler.

We want every parent across South Australia to know how important it is to talk, play, read and sing with their child

Follow these simple steps to communicate the campaign to the families you work with.

STEP 1: MAKE IT VISIBLE

- Access the Words Grow Minds - Social Media and Promotion Kit by visiting the Professionals page on wordsgrowminds.org.au.
- Follow the Words Grow Minds social media schedule to post or share campaign tips, early childhood research and fun play ideas on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, your website, etc.
- Use the email signature banner to show that your organisation supports the Words Grow Minds campaign.
- Display the Words Grow Minds posters around your service in areas that families utilise - entrances, play spaces, nappy change areas.
- Display, post or write about how your service promotes and practices 'Talk, Play, Read and Sing' on social media and in newsletters for families regularly - aim for once a fortnight or month.
- Promote the campaign wherever you can! Make it visible at your events such as pop-ups, festivals, network meetings etc.



Access the Words Grow Minds Social Media and Promotion Kit to spread the key messages.

STEP 2: KEEP IT CONSISTENT

- ❑ Follow the campaign calendar and take a deep dive into the calls to action! Use your existing programs to specifically focus on each action, one at time - talk, play, read and sing, and build on parents' knowledge and increase confidence.
- ❑ Become familiar with the campaign. Play the video, sing the song and talk to families about the key messages and calls to actions.
- ❑ Sing the Words Grow Minds song during your group time with families. Have it playing when they arrive or depart your session. Display the lyrics, so families can join in with singing.
- ❑ Use the conversation cards to guide discussions and role model the key messages with parents - this may be in a group time or during one on one conversations.
- ❑ Share Words Grow Minds updates through social media channels/newsletters.
- ❑ Direct families to the Words Grow Minds website and Facebook to find out more about the campaign.



STEP 3: LINK TO COMMUNITY

- ❑ During conversations and group times, role model fun and engaging ways to use the pack resources and encourage families to use them at home. Invite families to share with each other what they are noticing when they interact with their baby.
- ❑ Celebrate engaging in the early years. Encourage families to share photos on your social media (encourage using the hashtag) of how they are using the resources and what they are noticing - or have a real life photo board in your service or program.
- ❑ Make an effort to connect with other services. Some of the best ideas come from collaboration, and when families see that different services are working together and delivering the same information it will reinforce the key campaign messages and build trust.
- ❑ Access the available Words Grow Minds Community Activation Grants to deliver the key messages to your local families in innovative, collaborative and inclusive ways, such as community events or implementing new programs.
- ❑ Invite your local librarian, CaFHS nurse, speech pathologist, or other providers to talk to parents about their child's development and link them with other services that suit their needs.

Partner with other services to increase awareness, offer a range of experiences, extend learning and build community connections.

SECTION 5: Link To Community

Community Activation Events

Every outing in the community is an opportunity for little ones to learn about the world around us.

Community Activation is a type of community engagement that is based on a community-centered approach. The goal is to empower the community, so it can self-mobilise, self-organise, and determine the best way to reach its own goals.

Words Grow Minds is proud to lead, sponsor and promote events and activities in the community, in partnership with SA early years services, that families can attend and enjoy.

LED BY WORDS GROW MINDS

Words Grow Minds will lead a series of fun and interactive community events, to be held across South Australia to activate the key messages and call to actions.

Each event will shine a spotlight on one of the calls to action - Talk, Play, Read and Sing. Whether it is ball games, stories, group singing or walk and talks, every event will provide families with the opportunity to spend time and interact with their baby or toddler and will reinforce the importance of early childhood development.

Keep updated with the campaign calendar and by visiting the Community Events page on wordsgrowminds.org.au.

LED BY SA ORGANISATIONS

Does your organisation have an upcoming event for families and young children? Let us know! Words Grow Minds would love to collaborate and bring along our banners, giveaways and promotional materials. Words Grow Minds will be spreading the campaign message at community events and showing their support!

A few events to look forward to include:

- Playgroup in the Bush - Playgroup SA
- Playgroup at the Zoo - Playgroup SA
- Nature Play SA Forest Festival



LED BY LOCAL AMBASSADORS

Libraries Board of South Australia

The Libraries Board of South Australia is committed to improving early literacy outcomes for South Australian families. The Board is supporting the activation of the Words Grow Minds campaign by providing \$100,000 worth of grants to SA's public libraries to collaborate with local early years service providers and to share campaign messages with local families. Grants available will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

Local Collaboration Grant

Grants totaling \$60,000 from Words Grow Minds will open in the new financial year for South Australian early years service providers.

The amount available will range from \$1,500 - \$5,000 and will be specifically for collaborative events associated with the Words Grow Minds campaign.

Stay updated with the grants process by visiting the Professionals page on wordsgrowminds.org.au.

New experiences
and precious
memories
can help build the
foundations for
future learning.



SECTION 6: Words Grow Minds Professional Learning

MASTER PRACTITIONER COURSE

Words Grow Minds supports service providers to encourage families to talk, play, read and sing with their little ones every day.

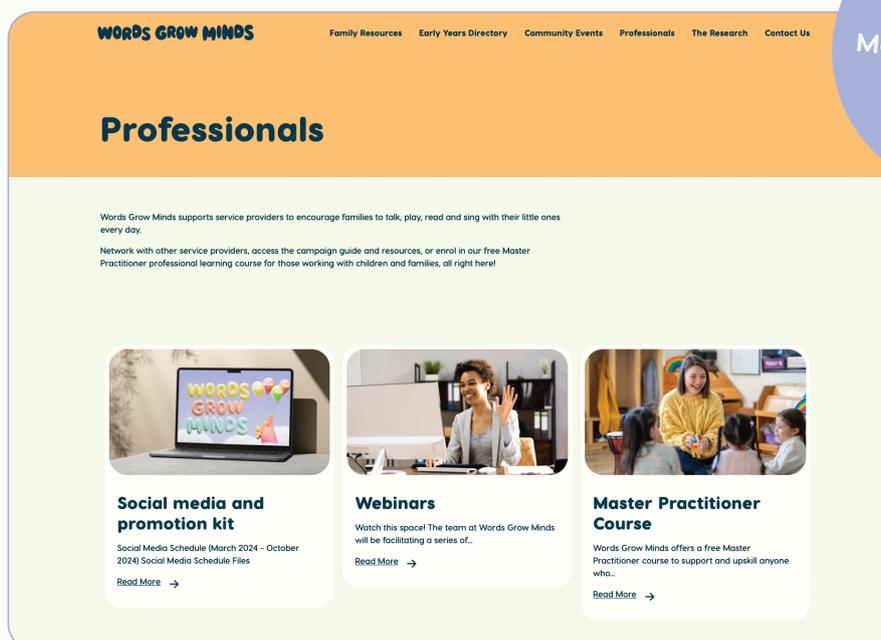
Enrol in our free Master Practitioner professional learning course for those working with young children and families.

In this series of fun and engaging modules, you'll learn how these simple interactions - words - literally grow children's brains in the critical early years.

At the end of each module you will be able to integrate what you learned into your daily practice with children from birth to five. Dip into individual modules and receive a certificate of completion per module or complete the course to gain a Master Practitioner Certificate.

The online Master Practitioner Professional Learning Package divided into 8 modules and encompassing the following:

- Words Grow Minds
- Early Childhood Development & Context
- First Nations Perspectives
- Talk
- Play
- Read
- Sing
- Reflective Practice for Impact



WEBINARS

The team at Words Grow Minds are facilitating a series of free webinars to complement the Master Practitioner professional learning modules.

Early childhood practitioners and specialists will present live to share their knowledge and insights about early childhood development and positive interactions in the early years.

Webinar attendance is open to everyone. Attendance is not compulsory for the completion of the Master Practitioner course, nor do you have to complete modules to access the webinars, however you will certainly benefit from being familiar with the module content before attending the webinar. Stay up to date with webinar information via the Professionals page on wordsgrowminds.org.au.

Our range of webinars include:

- All About Early Childhood
- First Nations Perspectives
- Talk
- Play
- Read
- Sing
- Reflective Practice for Impact

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WEBINARS		
MONTH	MODULE	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS
March 2024	Official Launch	
April 2024	All About Early Childhood	Novita - Penny Miller/Amelia Edwards Australian Association for Infant Mental Health
July 2024	First Nations Perspective	Office for the Early Years, Department for Education - Tina Quitadamo
August 2024	Talk	Autism SA - Emily McVeigh Community Language Schools SA
September 2024	Play	Grow Paediatric Therapy - Renee Stewart Nature Play SA
October 2024	Read	Little Book Press - Aly O'Brien Raising Literacy Australia - Ali Durham
November 2024	Sing	Connecting The Dots In Music - Emily Gann
February 2025	Reflective Practice for Impact	Positive Minds Australia - Madhavi Nawana Parker

WORDS GROW MINDS

Campaign Calendar 2024

Part 1

Part 2 will be released on the Professionals page on wordsgrowminds.org.au

MARCH - WGM LAUNCH	
12 March	Official Launch
12 – 30 March	Social Media Post 1 - Campaign Launch
APRIL - TALK	
11 April	Webinar - All About Early Childhood
2 – 16 April	Social Media Post 2 - Why Talk?
23 April – 5 May	Social Media Post 3 - Spot The Colour Activity
MAY - PLAY	
2 – 16 May	Social Media Post 4 - Why Play?
17 May – 30-May	Social Media Post 5 - Toy Picnic Activity
JUNE - READ	
2 – 16 June	Social Media Post 4 - Why Play?
17 – 30 June	Social Media Post 7 - Let them Choose The Book Activity
JULY - SING	
3 – July	Webinar - First Nations Perspective
2 – 16 July	Social Media Post 8 - Why Sing?
17 – 30 July	Social Media Post 9 - Sing... and Stop Activity



AUGUST - TALK

28 – August	Webinar - Talk
2 – 16 August	Social Media Post 10 - Talk Research
17 – 30 August	Social Media Post 11 - What's Inside The Fridge? Activity

SEPTEMBER - PLAY

26 – September	Webinar - Play
2 – 16 September	Social Media Post 12 - Play Research
17 – 30 September	Social Media Post 13 - Tummy Time Activity

OCTOBER - READ

29 – October	Webinar - Read
2 – 16 October	Social Media Post 14 - Read Research
17 – 30 October	Social Media Post 15 - Explore Your Voice Activity

NOVEMBER - SING

28 – November	Webinar - Sing
2 – 16 November	Social Media Post 16 - Sing Research
17 – 30 November	Social Media Post 17 - Rhyme Time

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Notes

WORDS GROW MINDS

TALK. PLAY. READ. SING.

With up to 85% of a baby's brain development occurring in the first three years, it's important we interact and engage early on.

Learn more at
wordsgrowminds.org.au