

RAISING YOUR CHILDREN WITH LINGO

A Guide for Parents

2025



SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE
CENTRE

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on your decision to learn an Aboriginal language.

Your efforts indicate a genuine desire to connect with Indigenous traditions, knowledge and community values.

And remember that language learning is a dynamic process. Seek opportunities to incorporate language into your daily life. Encourage your family, friends and workmates to share your journey.

Be proud of each new word you learn and practice them wherever you can.

My expectation of a good Australia is when white people would be proud to speak an Aboriginal language - Charles Perkins 1989

Baugull Wanyi – with thanks

Warmest regards,

Rory O'Connor
CEO



WHY REVIVE LANGUAGE?

The Importance of Aboriginal Languages

Reviving Aboriginal languages among your descendants is of utmost importance for several compelling reasons

1 Cultural Preservation

Aboriginal languages are integral to the cultural identity and heritage of Indigenous communities. Language serves as a vessel for transmitting traditions, customs, knowledge, and stories across generations. Reviving and maintaining Aboriginal languages ensures that cultural practices, values, and worldviews are preserved and passed on to future generations.

2 Sense of Belonging and Identity

Language plays a crucial role in shaping one's sense of identity and belonging. For Aboriginal communities, their languages are deeply intertwined with their personal and collective identities. By revitalizing Aboriginal languages, descendants can strengthen their connection to their ancestors, their community, and their land. Language allows individuals to express their unique perspectives, maintain social bonds, and foster a sense of pride in their cultural heritage.

3 Healing and Well-being

The loss of Aboriginal languages has had profound impacts on Indigenous communities. Language loss often stems from colonization, forced assimilation, and historical trauma. Reviving Aboriginal languages contributes to healing and reconciliation processes by empowering individuals and communities to reclaim their cultural autonomy and assert their right to language and self-expression. Language revitalization can enhance emotional well-being, strengthen community resilience, and promote a sense of empowerment and self-determination.

4 Knowledge Preservation

Aboriginal languages carry within them a vast wealth of traditional knowledge, including ecological knowledge, medicinal practices, storytelling, and spiritual beliefs. Reviving these languages for the preservation and revitalization of this invaluable knowledge, which is essential for understanding and managing the environment, fostering sustainable practices, and preserving unique cultural practices and wisdom.



5 Linguistic Diversity

Aboriginal languages are an essential part of the world's linguistic diversity. Each language represents a unique system of communication and thought, offering distinct ways of understanding and interacting with the world. Language diversity enriches human experience, contributes to the global heritage of knowledge, and fosters appreciation for the immense linguistic and cultural diversity of humanity.

6 Reclaiming Indigenous Rights

Language revitalization is closely tied to Indigenous rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to maintain, revitalize, and develop their languages. Reviving Aboriginal languages helps to assert and reclaim these rights, fostering self-determination, cultural autonomy, and recognition of Indigenous sovereignty.



Reviving Aboriginal languages among their descendants is an act of cultural resilience, empowerment, and pride. It promotes intergenerational healing, strengthens cultural identity, and contributes to the richness and diversity of the global human experience. It is a profound and essential step toward recognizing and honouring the invaluable contributions of Aboriginal communities to our shared humanity.

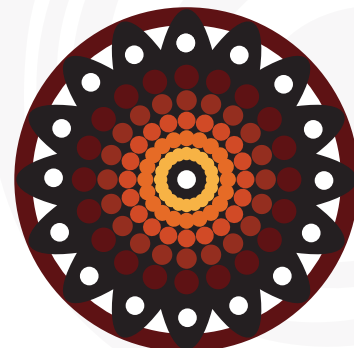


BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM

Being bilingual has numerous cognitive benefits that can positively impact individuals throughout their lives. Here are some of the cognitive advantages associated with bilingualism:

1 **Enhanced Executive Function**

Bilingual individuals often demonstrate improved executive function, which refers to a set of cognitive processes responsible for goal-directed behaviour, problem-solving, and self-control. Bilinguals tend to exhibit better attention control, task-switching abilities, and conflict resolution skills, as they constantly navigate between two languages and manage language choice.



2 **Improved Cognitive Flexibility**

Bilingualism promotes cognitive flexibility, the ability to adapt and switch between different tasks or mental frameworks. Switching between languages and mentally juggling two linguistic systems requires flexibility in thinking, enabling bilingual individuals to adapt to changing circumstances more easily.

3 **Heightened Attention and Focus**

Bilinguals often display enhanced attention and selective focus, which are essential cognitive skills for filtering out irrelevant information and maintaining attention on relevant stimuli. Bilingual language processing involves inhibiting one language while using the other, which can strengthen attentional control mechanisms.

4 **Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills**

Bilingualism can foster creative and efficient problem-solving abilities. The experience of navigating between languages and different linguistic structures promotes divergent thinking and the ability to find alternative solutions to problems.

5 **Improved Memory Function**

Bilingual individuals exhibit improved memory skills compared to monolinguals. Bilingualism requires constant monitoring, accessing, and recalling information from two languages, thereby exercising memory systems more frequently and leading to potential memory benefits.

6 **Delayed Cognitive Decline**

Bilingualism has been linked to a delayed onset of age-related cognitive decline and neurodegenerative disorders such as dementia. Bilingual individuals may experience symptoms of cognitive decline later in life, on average, compared to monolingual individuals.

7 **Enhanced Metalinguistic Awareness**

Bilingualism nurtures metalinguistic awareness-the ability to think about language and understand its components, rules, and structures. Bilingual individuals often possess a heightened awareness of language, grammar, syntax, and semantics, facilitating language learning and literacy skills.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES VS ENGLISH

Let's take a moment to learn about the general differences between English and Aboriginal Australian languages in a simplified manner. Understanding these differences can help us appreciate the uniqueness of Aboriginal languages and the importance of preserving them. English and Aboriginal Australian languages are different in several ways:

1 Sounds and Words

Aboriginal languages have sounds that may not exist in English, such as clicks. The vocabulary of Aboriginal languages often reflects the natural environment and includes words specific to local plants, animals, and natural phenomena. English, being a global language, has a wide range of words covering many subjects.

2 Grammar and Structure

Aboriginal languages have their own grammar rules and structures, including different ways of forming words and sentences. They may have complex systems for organizing nouns, verbs, and other parts of speech. English, in comparison, has simpler grammar rules.

3 Cultural Importance

Aboriginal Australian languages are deeply connected to the cultural identity of Indigenous communities. They carry stories, knowledge, and traditions that have been passed down through generations. These languages help strengthen cultural bonds and a sense of belonging within the community. English, on the other hand, is used more widely for communication beyond specific cultural groups.

4 History and Endangerment

English arrived in Australia through colonization and had a significant impact on Aboriginal languages. Many Aboriginal languages have faced a decline in speakers and are now endangered. Efforts are being made to revitalize and preserve these languages as an important part of cultural heritage.



It is essential to recognise and support the preservation of Aboriginal languages. By doing so, we help honour Indigenous culture, maintain linguistic diversity, and promote a deeper understanding of the unique heritage of Aboriginal communities.



THINGS YOU CAN DO!

- 1 Consistent Language Exposure**
Ensure that your children have consistent exposure to your language. Spend dedicated time with them where you exclusively communicate in your language. This could be during regular visits, playdates, or designated language-learning sessions.
- 2 Create Language-rich Environment**
Surround them with resources that promote the use of your language. Provide books, music, movies, and games in your language. Label objects around the house in both English and your language, encouraging them to learn and associate words in both languages.
- 3 Use Multilingual Activities**
Incorporate fun activities that naturally integrate language learning. Engage in storytelling, singing songs, playing games, or cooking traditional meals together, all while using your language. This helps create positive associations and reinforces language skills.
- 4 Cultural Experiences**
Introduce your niece and nephew to aspects of your culture and traditions. Celebrate cultural festivals, share stories, teach them about history, and involve them in cultural activities. This not only deepens their connection to the language but also enhances their cultural understanding.
- 5 Bilingual Materials**
Utilise bilingual materials or resources that support language learning in both English and your language. This could include dual-language books, apps, websites, or language learning programs designed for children.
- 6 Language Exchange**
If possible, connect your children with native speakers of your language. Arrange playdates or language exchange opportunities with other families or children who speak your language. This can provide additional language exposure and opportunities for them to practice with peers.
- 7 Emphasize Language Value**
Help them understand the importance and value of being bilingual. Highlight the benefits of knowing multiple languages, such as enhanced communication skills, cultural understanding, and expanded opportunities in the future.
- 8 Patience and Encouragement**
Support their language learning journey with patience, encouragement, and positive reinforcement. Make the language-learning experience enjoyable and rewarding, praising their efforts and progress.



Remember that language acquisition takes time, so consistency, regular practice, and a supportive environment are key to helping your children become fluent in language!

PHRASES

HOME

Here is a list of common phrases that are often used around the home

Good morning!

How was your day?

Did you sleep well?

Please pass the (item).

Thank you.

Could you help me, please?

It's time for breakfast/lunch/dinner.

Can you set the table?

Have you finished your homework?

Let's clean up.

Time for bed.

Don't forget to brush your teeth.

Did you wash your hands?

Can you grab the (item) from the cupboard?

Can you turn off the lights, please?

Would you like something to drink?

Is there anything you need?

Did you finish your chores/work?

Can you put your toys away?

I love you.



OUT & ABOUT

Here is a list of common phrases for while you're out and about with the children

Hold my hand, please.

Stay close to me.

Look both ways before crossing the street.

Be careful on the stairs.

Stay with the group.

Keep your seatbelt on.

Don't run off.

Watch your step.

Stay in sight.

Hold onto the shopping cart.

Keep your voice down.

Wait your turn.

Say "please" and "thank you."

Don't touch!.

Mind your manners.

Keep your belongings close.

Look out for each other.

Stay in the designated area.

Stick together.

Be polite to others.

