Early literacy and NSW Public Libraries
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Introduction
Early language and literacy experiences help to provide the building blocks needed to support positive long-term literacy outcomes and life chances (Shogh, Wellerstorff, Braganza & McDonald, 2013).

Children’s language and literacy development

Academic success  Professional achievement  National prosperity

The Australian Early Development Index highlights that 22% of Australian children started school in 2012 developmentally vulnerable in one or more of five domains;
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive skills
- Communication skills and general knowledge

English language difficulties were associated with a higher risk of vulnerability in all 5 domains (Australian Government, 2013).

Approach
This project is based on the theory, developed by Halliday (1993), that language development involves

- ‘Learning language,’
- ‘Learning through language, and
- ‘Learning about language.’

(Halliday, 1993).

Stage 1:
- Survey of NSW public libraries about the early literacy programs offered
- Research early literacy competencies and environmental factors that influence long-term academic success

Stage 2
- Collate data from a number of libraries across NSW, using observational and video recordings, surveys, and interviews

As children’s ability to make meaning grows, they learn to use language and other communication modes in ways that reflect and shape 3 key features of the context of communication:

TENOR: The relationships between and attitudes of the people involved

FIELD: The subject matter

MODE: The channel and means of communication

WHO?
WHAT?
HOW?
WHY?

Expected Outcomes/Progress
Supply library staff with tools for evaluating, improving and promoting the early literacy programs that public libraries offer

Enhance library staff’s existing knowledge of early literacy competencies and practices that can support children in achieving these competencies, the building blocks for future literacy learning and academic success

Obtain a stronger understanding of different library settings and the children and families that participate in their early literacy programs based on surveys completed by caregivers

Caregiver survey

References:

Acknowledgements
I am extremely grateful to be a part of the MURI program and I would like to thank all involved, especially my academic sponsor, Dr Emilia Djonov and the MURI team.

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