



STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

**CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
STRATEGY
2024-28**

INTRODUCTION

The State Library of Queensland is committed to Queensland children and families and supporting public libraries in their vital role promoting children's wellbeing and championing childhood. Libraries are rich learning environments that provide opportunities for children, young people, families, carers, and educators to explore, imagine, and understand the world around them.

Under this Strategy, State Library defines children as being under eighteen years of age and recognises that families come in many different forms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

State Library of Queensland acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their continuing connection to the land and waterways and as custodians of stories. Ways of being and knowing have been shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for millennia. We are inspired by and acknowledge all we can learn from these traditions in our work with children and families now and for future generations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Rights of the Child – Our work is grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through our programs and partnerships, we uphold these rights including the right to play, create, learn and participate. We are committed to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Valuing Children's Voices – We recognise the importance of collecting, caring for, listening to and amplifying children's voices. We acknowledge their contribution to our shared understanding and experience of the world and view their stories as central to Queensland's cultural and documentary memory.

Enriching Experiences and Spaces – Our commitment to children and families includes the provision of high-quality child-centred spaces, including The Corner, State Library's dedicated space for children and families, and through programs that foster self-expression, exploration and learning while also supporting the needs and interests of families, carers and educators. These programs are designed and delivered in collaboration with diverse partners to reflect the rich diversity of Queensland communities.

Statewide Early-years Impact – Critical to reaching Queensland families is our partnership with local government to deliver First 5 Forever, a place-based family-centred program delivered in over 325 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres across the state. First 5 Forever supports each family on their child's journey through the first 5 years of life in safe, child-focused spaces, providing free playful experiences and rich resources. Library spaces, programs and partnerships allow families to embrace everyday moments to talk, read, sing, and play, building a strong foundation for their child's learning, growth, and wellbeing.

Driving Innovation – As a library of influence, our onsite, online and regional programs and partnerships drive innovation and realise our ambition for Queensland families to live in child-friendly communities around the State.

OBJECTIVES

1. Offer rich and dynamic engagement that values diversity, equity, and inclusion

Attract new audiences and maintain relationships through a **diverse offering** of programs that acknowledge different ways of being, knowing and learning.

- Design and deliver programs in collaboration with partners that reflect the diversity of Queensland communities including First Nations, multicultural, multilingual, LBGTIQA+, and people of different abilities.
- Provide spaces and programs that are playful, creative, and offer diverse avenues for self-expression, **discovery, participation, and learning**.
- Connect children, families, carers and educators to resources and each other to learn, be inspired and build community connections.
- **Build inclusive digital experiences** that support confident engagement with new media and technologies offering meaningful opportunities for skill building, self-expression, and creativity.
- Promote **literacy, storytelling, and lifelong learning** through experiences and resources that cultivate truth-telling, empowering children to be open to discovery, participation and continuous learning.

2. Build trust and empower children, families, carers, and educators

Spaces, collections, and programs are easy to access and deliver high quality, relevant, and age-appropriate experiences.

- Design **safe and purposeful spaces** and programs that prioritise children's agency and empower children of all abilities to direct their engagement and learn through play.
- Offer safe and enriching experiences that support both children and adults, recognising the role of significant adults in enriching children's experiences.
- Connect families, carers and educators to meaningful resources and collections through **digital and physical experiences that enable and inspire** them to support children's learning, growth, and wellbeing.
- Support staff to understand, respect, and enact the rights of children.

3. Intentionally collect, listen to, and share children's voices

Collections, programs and policies recognise the important perspectives of children and respect their rights to contribute and participate in cultural life.

- Provide platforms for children to make and create as a vehicle to share their ideas and perspectives.
- Respect children's capability to contribute to decision making processes that affect them and seek and consider their perspectives.
- Intentionally collect children's voices to contribute to the **trusted record of Queensland** and where meaningful embed these collections in program and space design and delivery.
- Showcase children's voices through exhibitions in our spaces and by **sharing knowledge and stories through our collections**, programs and online spaces.

4. Research, evaluate and partner to strengthen impact and reach

Build enduring, collaborative engagements and partnerships to strengthen the delivery of programs for children and collectively advocate for their rights.

- Partner with local government to support public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres to provide rich learning environments and experiences for children, young people, families, carers, and educators.
- Work with diverse partners to drive program innovation, reach and impact, and advocate for children and families.
- Maintain and consult advisory groups to ensure that our programs are delivered in alignment with the principles of this strategy.
- Undertake research and program evaluation to inform continuous improvement.
- Foster programs and partnerships that create opportunities to contribute to Heritage collections.

IMAGES

RIGHT: Various State Library children and young people's programs. Photos by Joe Ruckli.

BACKGROUND: (Detail) Maggie Cheadle, Family and me, 2016. Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Image no 7116-0014-0068

COVER: (Detail) Roy Hui, Self Portrait, 2020. Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Image no 7116-0003-0087



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