

STATE LIBRARY QUEENSLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

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Everyday moments to boost child brain development in Queensland-first pilot

Five Queensland councils will pilot a landmark initiative designed to turn everyday moments and activities into opportunities to support young children's brain development.

Led by State Library of Queensland in partnership with the Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) at the University of Queensland and with the support of the Queensland Kids Partnership, the *Together We Grow* initiative will bring neuroscience and practical early childhood learning together to help families and communities support children's development through everyday interactions.

The initiative is backed by a \$2 million investment from The Ian Potter Foundation, the largest Early Childhood Development grant awarded by the Foundation, with additional funding provided by The John Villiers Trust.

Together We Grow recognises the unique role local governments play in supporting families through the everyday services and spaces they provide, including libraries, parks, playgrounds, pools, community centres and events.

The pilot will explore how these settings can support children's development and connection from the earliest years. It will begin in the Blackall-Tambo, Brisbane, Cassowary Coast, Ipswich and Rockhampton local government areas, with the pilot laying the foundation for broader implementation across Queensland councils and communities throughout Australia.

The initiative builds on more than a decade of First 5 Forever, combining the reach of councils and public libraries with QBI's world-leading neuroscience research and the expertise of the Queensland Kids Partnership.

Quotes from the Minister for Education and the Arts John-Paul Langbroek:

"The generous support of The Ian Potter Foundation and The John Villiers Trust, building on the Crisafulli Government's annual \$5 million investment in First 5 Forever, will help give young Queenslanders the best possible start in life, no matter where they live.

"Ensuring Queenslanders of all ages can access enriching arts experiences is a key priority of our Queensland's Time to Shine strategy, and the *Together We Grow* pilot will help deliver on this by fostering a love of language, learning and stories in everyday places and spaces for our youngest Queenslanders."

Quotes from Acting State Librarian and CEO Scott Martin:

"Libraries are uniquely placed to turn game-changing research into practical support for families because of their trusted relationships within local communities.

"The Ian Potter Foundation's funding recognises State Library's leadership in early literacy through First 5 Forever and our commitment to finding new ways to support families across Queensland through the trusted network of public libraries.

"By bringing together public libraries and the world-leading expertise of the Queensland Brain Institute, we are equipping families with practical tools that can make a real difference to children's language and brain development during those important early years."

Quotes from CEO of the Ian Potter Foundation Paul Conroy:

"A major strength of *Together We Grow* program is its focus on parents, carers and communities as agents of change. Rather than relying solely on service delivery from institutions, this pilot seeks to build capability across entire communities.

"It empowers people to recognise that the everyday moments spent talking, reading, singing and playing with children are not small moments at all. They are the building blocks of healthy development, learning and connection.

"We often hear the saying, '*It takes a village to raise a child.*' This initiative recognises that wisdom and puts it into practice. It will help equip the village with the knowledge, confidence and tools to support children's development together."

Media enquiries

media@slq.qld.gov.au

(07) 3840 7897

Interviews available on request.