

# ORICL

Observe, Reflect, Improve Children's Learning - A tool for educators of children under 3 years.



**This document summarises the aims and findings of the ORICL Pilot Project 2017 - 2019, and describes the next steps for in-field development of the ORICL tool 2022-2025.**

## BACKGROUND

Substantial learning and development occurs in the first three years of a child's life, with early childhood education and care (ECEC) experiences playing a significant role for many children. However, studies show that the quality of ECEC is often lower in these early years compared to 3-5-year-old settings. Qualification expectations of educators are also lower, and a lack of specialised content for infants and toddlers has been noted in preservice training and curriculum. It is crucial to support educators' capacity to understand the learning capabilities of very young children, and to reflect on and adjust their planning and practices accordingly.

# AIMS

ORICL is a new tool co-developed with the field, for the field, and trialled in long day care and family day care services to understand its potential to document individual children's experiences within ECEC, and to enhance educator knowledge and practice. Unlike other tools the ORICL does not assess quality at the group or room level. The ORICL is unique in supporting individualised observation and reflection on children's experiences. Educators are encouraged to observe not just children's own actions, but those of educators and peers in response to children. ORICL aligns with Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

## Key Findings

The stakeholder co-design panel endorsed the purpose, development and design processes, content, usability, and potential benefit of the ORICL tool.

The 117 ORICL items across 5 domains (identity, belonging and culture; connectedness with others; emotional and physical wellbeing, constructing knowledge and understandings; communication) worked well when trialled in the field.

### Educators reported that ORICL:

- Contributed to their understanding of children's learning / development
- Contributed to their critical reflection on children's learning
- Helped them to see interactions (between educators and children; and children and their peers)
- Contributed to educators' programming cycle (documentation, planning, practice)
- Helped them to communicate their practices with colleagues and parents

"I feel like when completing the ORICL, you are really thinking about the child's emotional and social wellbeing and skills and abilities - it prompts you to think about how to support development".

**SUPPORT**

"One child was dropping his playdough on the floor and I told him not to do it but then I realised he was using his shoe to make a print on the playdough. I thought of the ORICL and realised the child is exploring".

**QUALITY**

"It makes you critically reflect for the educator questions - with the educator questions, I looked at it from the perspective of our room and all educators and how we all interact with the children".

**SKILL**

# THE STUDY

## Pilot Study Methodology (2017 - 2019)

### Co-design phases included:

- Review of international measures of quality for home- and centre-based infant-toddler education and care
- Delphi panel – two rounds with stakeholders, practitioners, and providers of infant-toddler programs to develop, refine, and produce ORICL

### Pilot testing of ORICL in the field involved:

- 12 ECEC services (5 family day care; 7 long day care)
- Across 4 states in Australia and involving cities, inner, and outer regional areas
- 21 educators each used ORICL to observe 1 to 5 children
- 66 children aged 7 to 33 months, average age 20.7 months

Follow-up interviews and surveys about the experience using ORICL were conducted with educators.

## Future Directions (2022 - 2025)

ORICL appears acceptable and useful to the field with strong potential to stimulate enhanced practice with children aged under 3 years. Our planned study will use a large and more diverse sample to evaluate the utility and effectiveness of ORICL, using implementation science approaches to understand barriers and enablers of its uptake in terms of professional learning for educators.

### We will:

- Invite a large number of early childhood educators across settings to participate and complete the ORICL at multiple time points for several children (with parental permission)

### To understand whether ORICL does stimulate the kinds of practice changes we expect it will:

- Some educators will engage in interviews about ORICL and their practice
- Some parents will engage in interviews about ORICL and its uses
- We will review educator planning and documentation artefacts before and after educators have used ORICL

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