

Enriching educational practice through the Observe, Reflect, Improve Children's Learning (ORICL) tool for infant-toddler educators

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INTRODUCTIONS – THE ORICL PROJECT TEAM



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What we know from the literature

Increasing numbers of children under 3-years attend formal early childhood services (FDC, LDC)

Regulatory requirements for educator qualifications are lower for children under 3
ECEC qualifications lack specialised content on infants and toddlers

Educators working with have limited access to professional development that supports their capacity to provide a high-quality program for children <3

NQS ratings are lower for [QA1: Educational Program and Practice](#) :
Program learning opportunities, Assessment and planning cycle, and Critical Reflection

Existing measures of quality focus on the overall experience of groups of children rather than on individual children's learning experiences

Truth, Voice, Place

Children's experiences of quality are deeply personal and vary according to who is present on the day—both adults and peers—and the interactions that unfold between them

ORICL directs educators' attention towards children's individual experiences within particular contexts (places); as well as towards the individual child with their peers and educators

Based on what we know
from the literature

Purpose

ORICL addresses the urgent need for specialist knowledge of, and skills for supporting infants' and toddlers' engagement in learning

ORICL is a professional learning resource for educators that aims to improve quality in education and care programs for children from birth to two-years

Unique approach

ORICL considers the unique contextual factors in the ECEC setting that impact each child's development, learning and wellbeing

Unlike other tools it does not assess quality at the group or room level

Rather, it supports individualised observation and reflection on a child's experiences, actions and interactions

It also highlights the responses of peers and educators to the child's actions

Designing the ORICL Tool

With stakeholder input and advice, we co-designed a tool 'by the field, for the field' to build educator capacity to

Observe,

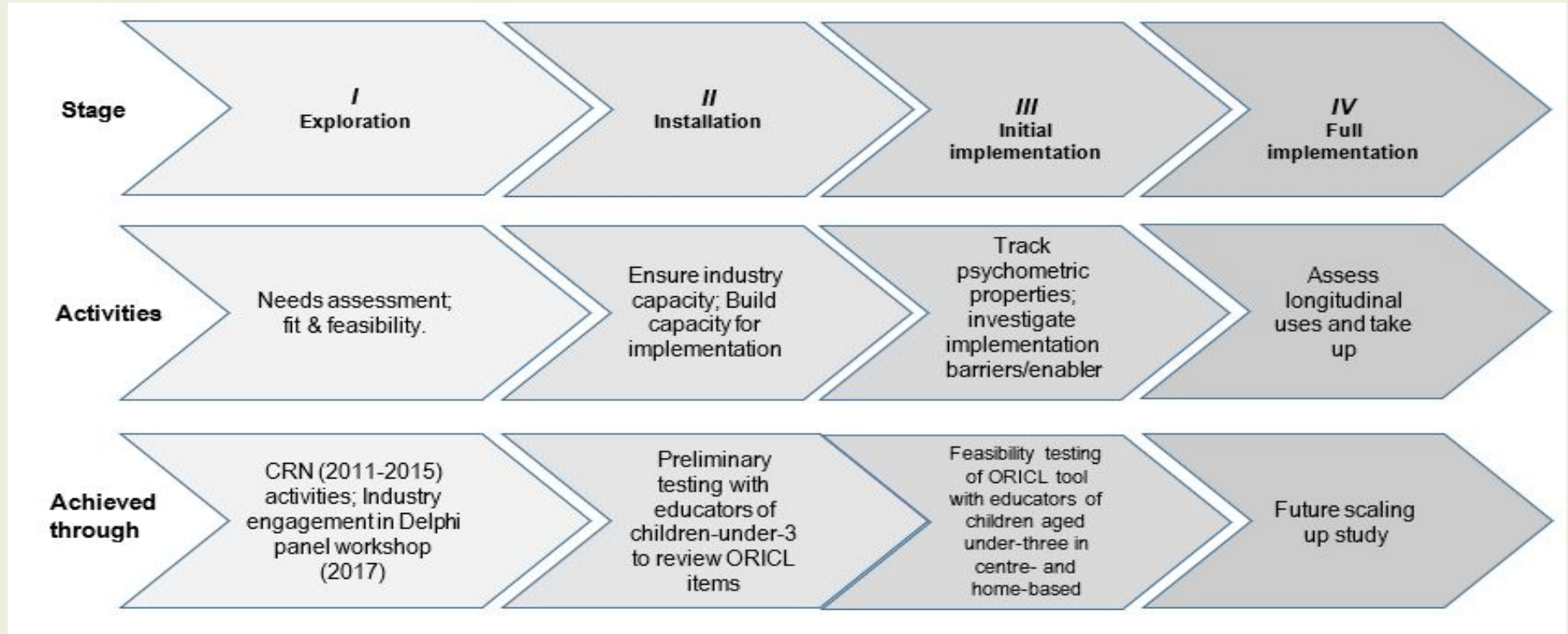
Reflect
on, and

Improve

Children's

Learning

Stage-based Principles of Implementation Science



Note. This figure was adapted from Metz et al., 2015.

Stage 1 and Stage 2: The first draft

ORICL provides a series of stimulus items that were designed to prompt educators' observations of a child's interactions and experiences. These were grouped under six domains aligned with the EYLF and the 2021-22 EYLF Update

- Identity, Connectedness with others, Emotional and Physical Wellbeing, Constructing Knowledge, and Communication
- The aim is to generate a comprehensive record that educators can use to guide their reflections on the child's learning, development and wellbeing, and inform collaborative planning

Within each domain, the items prompt educators to consider the child's experiences in terms of:

- The child's own **efforts, actions, interactions and initiatives**.
- The **acknowledgement and support** shown by educators and other children in response to the child's efforts/actions and initiatives.
- The **opportunities, offerings and invitations** made by educators and other children to the child.
- The **surprising or unexpected happenings** that provoke other reflections on the child's experiences.
- Each stimulus item includes examples that support educators' observations, and a space where educators can add comments

Example ORICL Items

DOMAIN 2: CONNECTEDNESS WITH OTHERS

CON01 When this child is engaged in play, this child's peers ***respond with interest***
(e.g., look, watch, approach, follow, imitate, join in)

N/O	Not Yet	Rarely	Sometimes	Always		
		1	2	3	4	5

CON02 When another child or group of children is near this child or engaged in something this child notices, this child ***shows interest in the other children***
(e.g., looks, watches, approaches, follows, imitates, joins in)

N/O	Not Yet	Rarely	Sometimes	Always		
		1	2	3	4	5

Pilot testing of paper version (August 2018 – February 2019)

12 ECEC services (5 family day care; 7 long day care)

Across 4 states

Cities, inner and outer regional

21 Educators used ORICL to observe 1 to 5 children

66 children (7 to 33 months; M = 20.7 months)

Follow-up interviews with educators

Some of our qualitative findings

The ORICL:

Contributed to educators' understanding of infants' and toddlers' learning, development and wellbeing

Contributed to educators' critical reflection

Helped educators to notice interactions

Influenced documentation and planning

Helped educators communicate their practices

Some of our quantitative findings

Educators were able to observe and rate the 117 stimulus items

Only one problematic item needed to be removed for next study

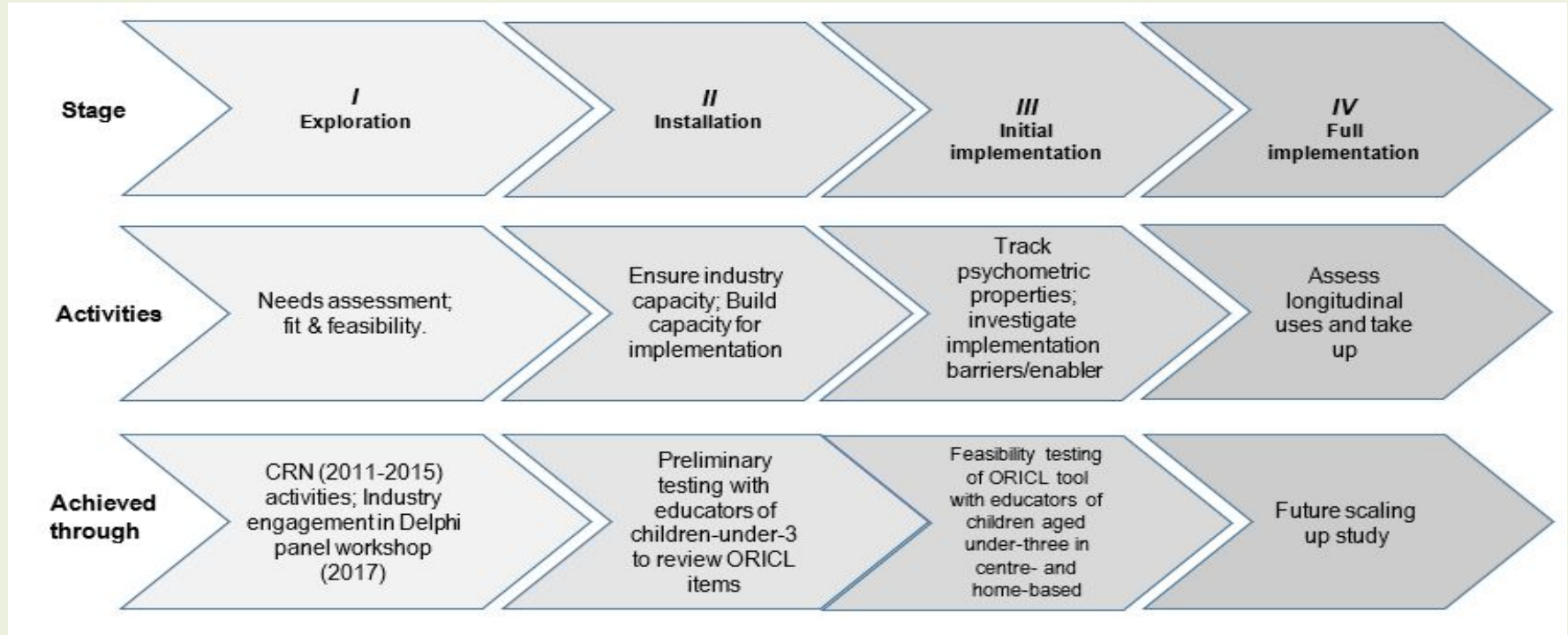
Educators generally used the full range of response options (not yet, rarely to always)

Internal reliability of each of the six domains was high

Domain scores inter-correlated as expected, and also with child age, but not gender

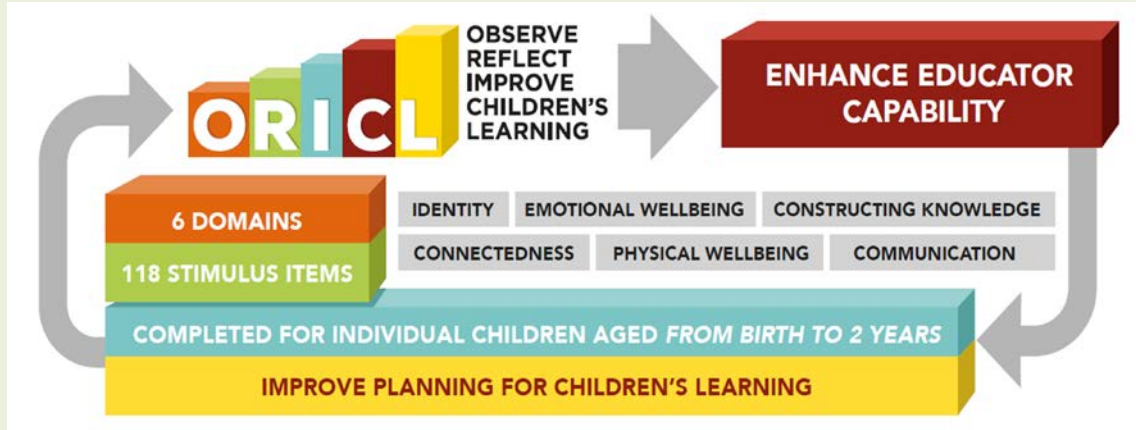
Child-, peer- and educator- related items also held together well

Stage-based Principles of Implementation Science



Note. This figure was adapted from Metz et al., 2015.

Developing an ORICL website and online access to the tool



Pilot of the digital ORICL tool in LDC and FDC

Room leaders, Lead educators, and educators in six services in metropolitan and regional NSW and QLD participated. Educators held certificate III, diploma, degree qualifications and 2 – 22 years' experience with infants. Focus children ranged from age 3 to 26 months.

Educator feedback was gathered through individual 'check-in' calls and structured interviews after completion of ORICL records for 1 to 4 focus children.

Snapshot of the Digital ORICL Tool: 117 items

The ORICL tool has 117 questions across six domains – that focus on the CHILD's experiences, initiatives, actions and interactions, the EDUCATOR/S responses to the child, and the child's PEER/S responses to the child's initiatives and actions

The ORICL questions ask educators to rate what they observe. Most questions have examples to guide educators in their choice of response. They simply click on the most appropriate rating.

ID04 This child identifies and demonstrates their *preference for, and knowledge of, familiar people.*

📌 (e.g., by looking at, reaching up, moving closer, pointing, gazing or pointing to familiar faces (including in photos) or, identifying their own family members in a group of family members, or seeking out and/or naming familiar peers and educators)

Not Yet

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

No opportunity to observe

Skip for now

Snapshot of the Digital ORICL Tool

For each question educators are also able to add photos and observations, from short jottings to longer formal observations. These are automatically date-stamped.



The screenshot displays a user interface for the Digital ORICL tool. On the left, there is a photo of Woody and Buzz Lightyear. To the right of the photo, the text 'Woody2.jpg' is displayed, followed by a green 'Edit' button with a pencil icon. Below the photo and caption, the text 'ID04Comments Comments or Notes relating to this question' is visible. At the bottom, a comment box contains a date-stamped observation: '-- Thu Feb 16 2023 15:39:03 GMT+1100 (Australian Eastern Daylight Time) -- Woody smiles and babbles when his favourite educator enters the room each morning. He really enjoys pointing to the photos of his friends on the wall and attempts to name them.'

Snapshot of the Digital ORICL Tool : 6 DOMAINS

The Navigation and Summary bar allows educators to move from one set of questions to another. The ticks automatically show which questions they have already completed.

This ORICL is in relation to child: Woody ..

▼ [Navigation and Summary_v.](#)

- [Instructions](#)
- 1: Identity (ID01-ID03 ✓) (ID04-ID08 ✓) (ID09-ID10) (ID11-ID15) (ID16-ID18) (ID19-ID21) (ID22-ID24)
- 2: Connectedness (CON01-CON03) (CON04-CON05) (CON06-CON10) (CON11-CON12 ✓) (CON13-CON16)
- 3A: Emotional (EM01-EM02 ✓) (EM03-EM06) (EM07-EM11 ✓) (EM12-EM16) (EM17-EM19)
- 3B: Physical (PH01-PH04 ✓) (PH05-PH08) (PH09-PH12) (PH13-PH16) (PH17-PH20) (PH21-PH22) (PH23-PH25 ✓)
- 4: Knowledge (CK01-CK05 ✓) (CK06-CK08) (CK09-CK13) (CK14-CK16) (CK17-CK18)
- 5: Communication (CO01-CO04 ✓) (CO05-CO08) (CO09-CO10) (CO11-CO12) (CO13-CO16)

Pilot feedback from educators

“The ORICL tool is extremely useful because when I’ve read the question and reflected – this has made me write it down. When I write it down, I notice it more and try to strive for their goals.”

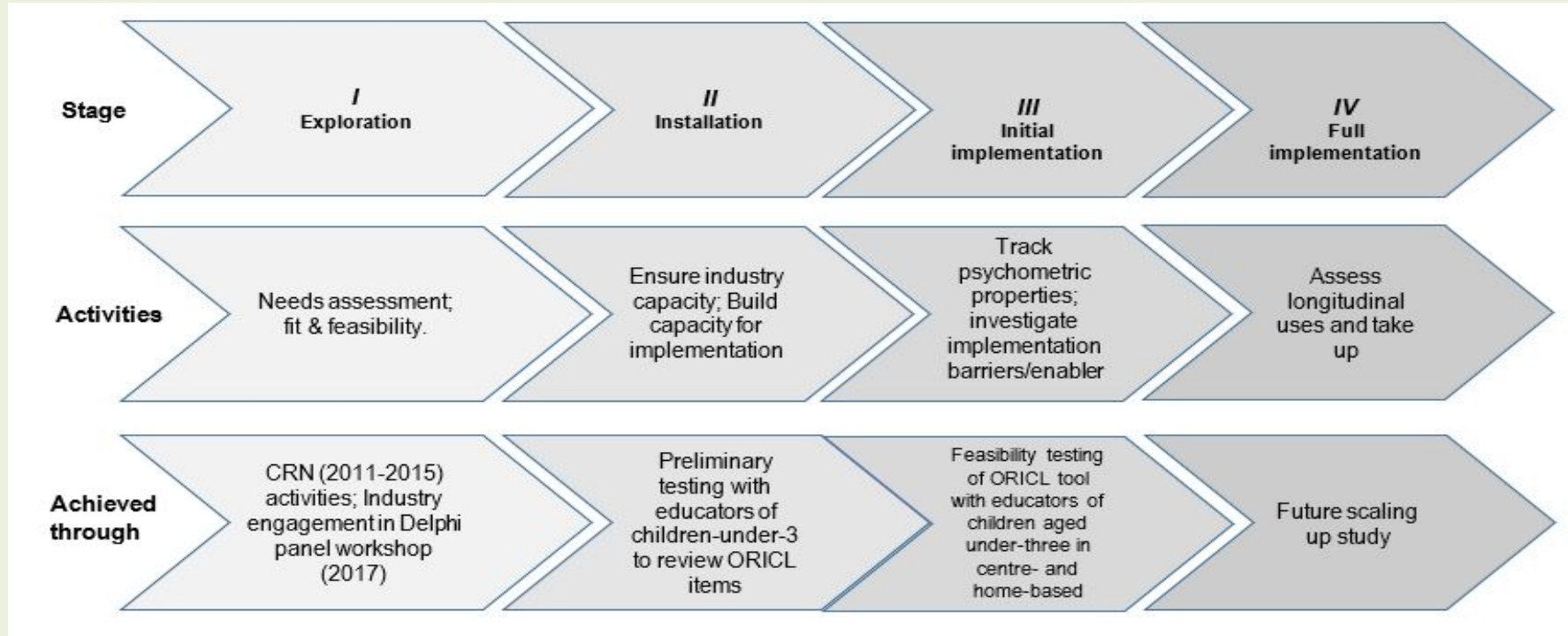
“A lot of things in ORICL made me think in a different way. You kind of get stuck in tunnel vision when you are doing observations, the wording made me think about it differently.”

“It allows me to have a view of the child as a whole – when I answer the questions it’s ‘oh yeah, that’s very important as well!”

“As a developmental summary and reflection tool it’s great. Reflections are hard for a lot of educators – they find them difficult – it gives you prompts on what to look at.”

“It does have a lot about us and how we’re responding to the child, so it’s great for overall reflections on ourselves as well as on how our goals for the child are going.”

Stage-based Principles of Implementation Science



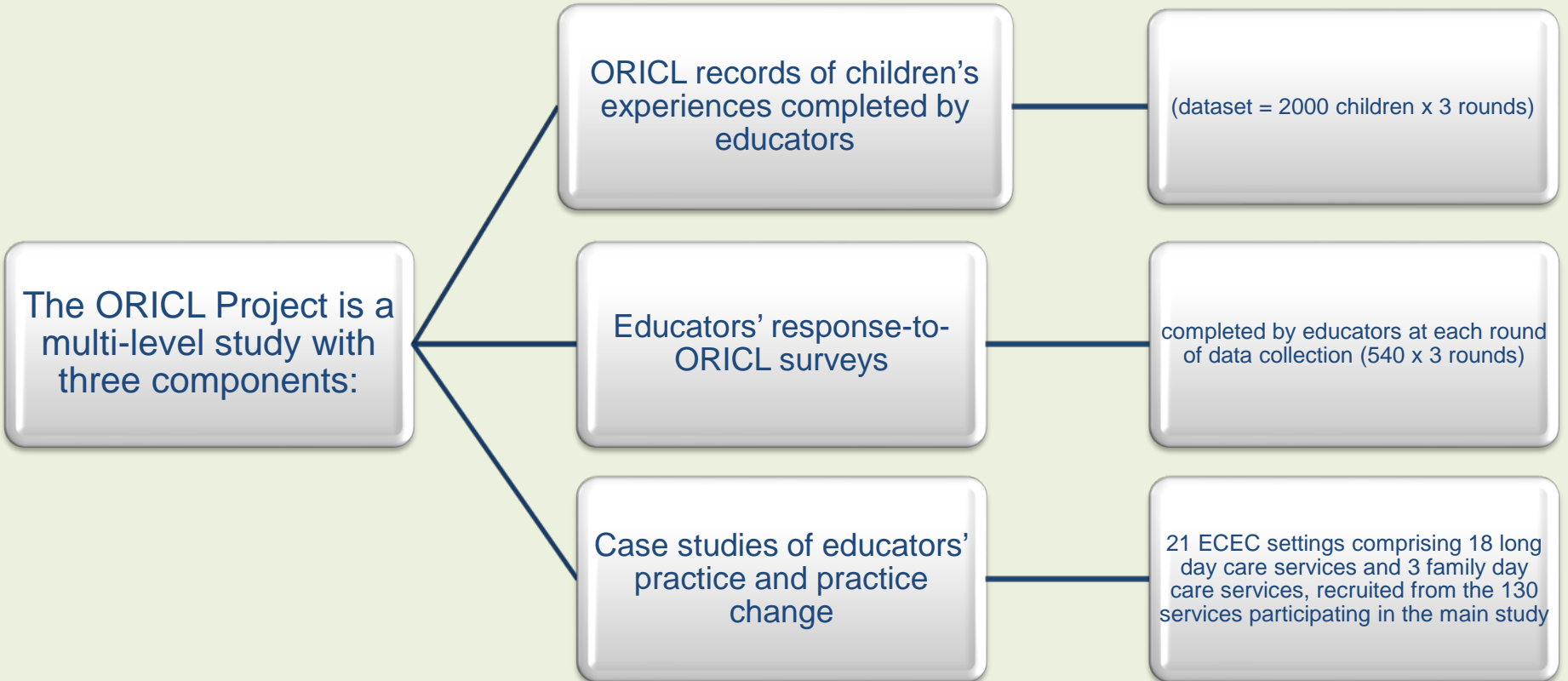
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2023-2026 ORICL ARC Linkage Project (Slide 1 of 4)

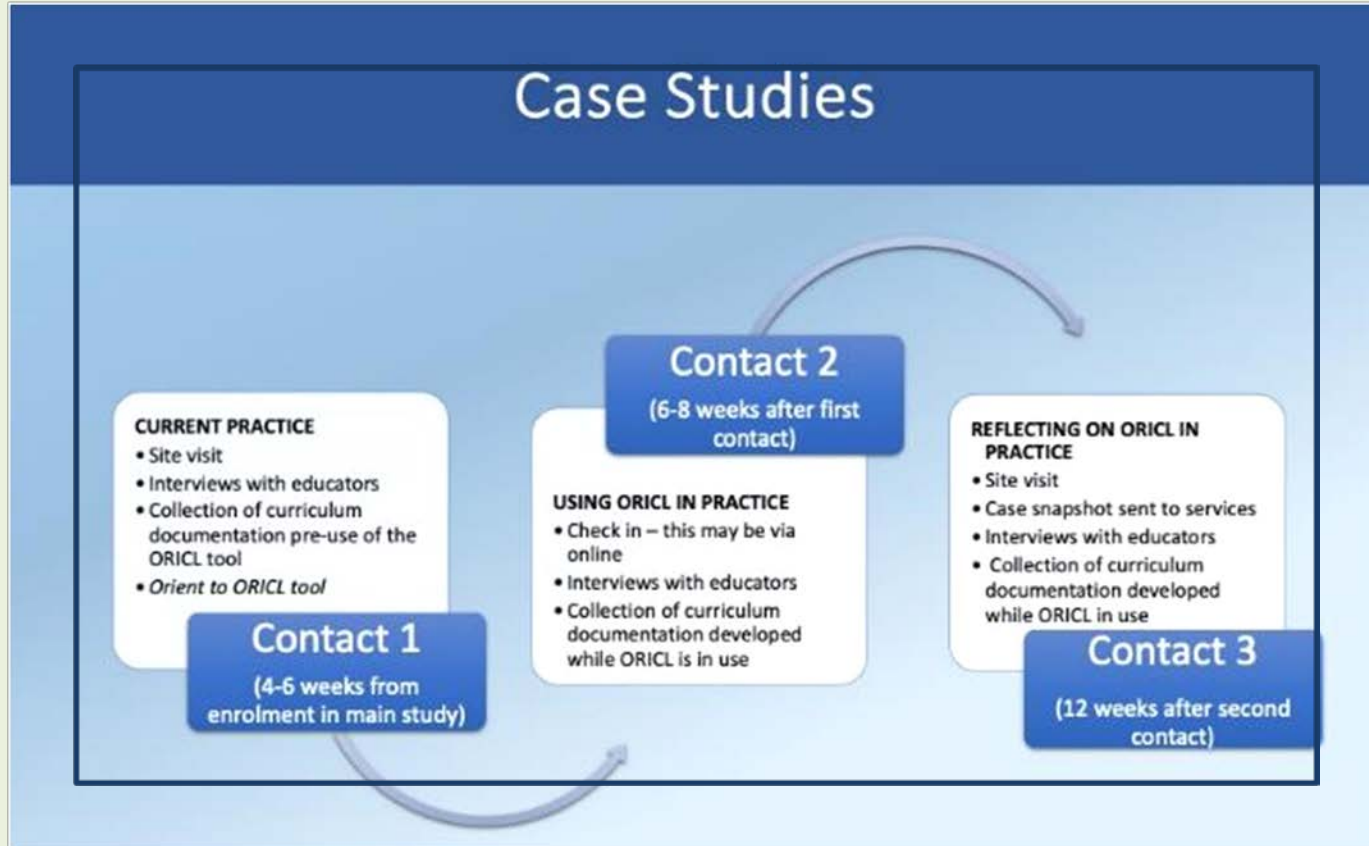
Funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) with in-kind and cash support from 11 not-for-profit Partner Organisations, this large-scale project will:

- Evaluate the effectiveness, acceptability and social validity of the ORICL tool, focusing on: educator reflection; change in quality of pedagogical practice, children's interactions, learning experiences, and educators' communication with families
- Utilise repeated records to generate new analytical insights as to how the ORICL items are used by educators over time, and how educators' reporting of children's experiences changes over time
- Lay the groundwork for wide uptake of ORICL as a professional learning for infant-toddler educators to facilitate enhanced educational, quality learning experiences for very young children

2023-2026 ORICL ARC Linkage Project (Slide 2 of 4)



2023-2026 ORICL ARC Linkage Project (Slide 3 of 4)



2023-2026 ORICL ARC Linkage Project (Slide 4 of 4)

To evaluate ORICL through change in the quality of educators' pedagogical practice

The ARC will: co-design a process and set of evaluation criteria for assessing educator practice, through analysis of educator-provided artefacts (e.g., planning cycle; documentation of children's learning experiences; communication with families)

the Pedagogical Documentation Assessment Tool (P-DAT) .

- step 1 literature review and workshop with Partner Organisation representatives
- step 2 generate statements of purpose, principles, content, and design ideas for P-DAT
- step 3 test level of agreement with these statements via an online survey
- step 4 analyse responses and workshop P-DAT with Partner Organisation representatives
- step 5 apply P-DAT to examples of educator-provided artefacts

The ORICL ARC Linkage is supported by 11 NFP Partner Organisations



For more information go to: <https://oricl.org/>



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CHILDREN'S
LEARNING

Home

ORICL Tool

Research

People

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Educator login



Two papers published reporting on the pilot study and findings

Elwick, S., Wong, S., Harrison, L., Williams, K.E., McFarland, L., Dealtry, L., & Janus, M. (2023). Feasibility and potential benefits of the Observe, Reflect, Improve, Children's Learning (ORICL) tool: Perspectives of infant-toddler educators.

Australasian Journal of Early Childhood. DOI: [10.1177/18369391231186169](https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391231186169) Open Access link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/18369391231186169>

Williams, K., Janus, M., Harrison, L., Wong, S., Elwick, S., & McFarland, L. (2023). Feasibility and initial psychometric properties of the Observe, Reflect, Improve Children's Learning (ORICL) tool for early childhood services: A tool for building capacity in infant and toddler educators. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*. DOI: 10.1177/18369391231194374 Open Access link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/18369391231194374>