

**talking  
matters**

**Kōrerotia mai!**

Growing thinkers,  
talkers and readers



# Shining a light on the power of Talk for babies & bigger kids

WeCAN Network, November 8 2017





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Ko te reo te kakahu o te hinengaro, te huarahi ki te Ao Turoa  
Language is the cloak cast by our thoughts  
that create pathways into the world

Sir James Henare

# Language is powerful

Oral language underpins  
**thinking and learning.**

It's needed to communicate  
ideas, build relationships,  
think independently,  
participate in learning

And is the **foundation**  
**for literacy**

**Your  
TALK  
*nourishes  
me***



# Why talking early matters



The **first 3 years** are critical to wiring up a child's brain for life – 700 neural pathways a second!

Pathways for learning made in the early years impact on life chances

Learning, thinking, knowledge and self-expression **rely on talk**

**Everybody talks to their baby, but some talk makes a bigger difference than others**



# Not everyone has the same language experience

Some children start school able to use **6,000 words**.

Other five year olds are starting school with **3,000 fewer words** in their language tool box than other kids.





Treasuring  
TALK

**What's the impact of that  
difference?**

Kōrerotia  
**MAI**

# If people don't talk with me, I may...

- Struggle to **express myself**
- Have limited relationship skills, **be less confident**
- Hold **fewer concepts and ideas**
- Have withdrawal or disengaged **behaviour issues**
- **Be more at risk** of unemployment & low adult literacy, poorer mental health and encounters with the justice system

**75%**  
of students with  
low  
**LITERACY**  
at age 8

have  
low  
**LITERACY**  
at age 16

**24%**  
Auckland children  
start high school  
below the  
**READING**  
standard





# What makes a difference?

Quality interaction and back and forth talk

# Everyday talk can make a big difference

Meet  
Sefa



Meet  
Ana



# Everyday talk makes a difference

Sefa  
hears 70 words in  
5 minutes, on  
10 topics  
– lots of ideas to  
light up his brain

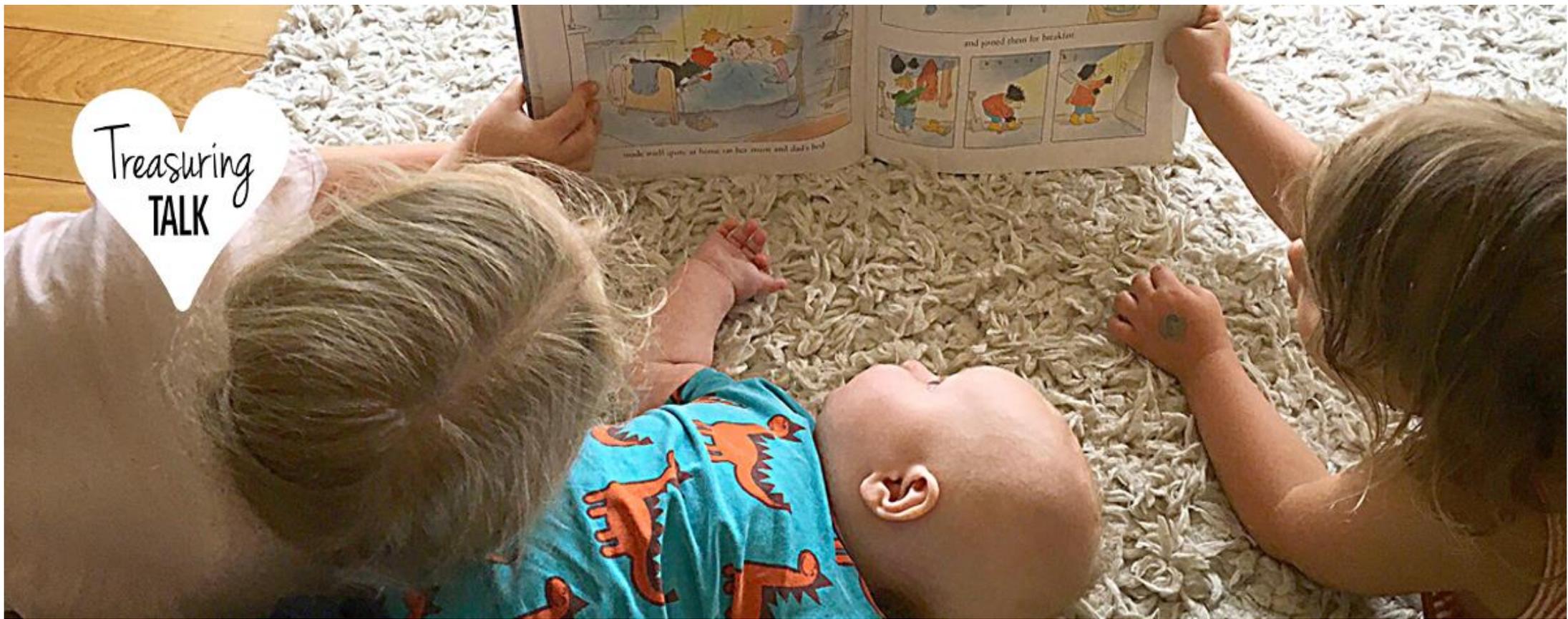


**Nana says:** “It’s cold . I think we need to put on a sweatshirt. I’ve just put mine on. You like it don’t you! It’s fluffy and soft. Let’s look for your sweatshirt Sefa, to keep you nice and warm. Here’s your red one. Arms up. Over your head. Oh you got stuck. Let’s pull it down. Now you are warm. Cuddles will keep you toasty and warm too. A big squeeze from Nana Hey look at the birds out the window. They’re eating worms.”



Ana  
hears  
about 7 words in  
5 minutes, on 2  
topics - **not  
many words and  
concepts**

**Nana says:** “Sit up. Arms up. Now you’re warm”  
“Look at the birds out the window”  
*...and then 4 minutes of silence*



**What makes a difference? The quality and quantity of talk a baby experiences**

**Talk more. Talk differently. Its never too early (or late)**

# Share info with whānau/aiga

- **Babies are wired to learn** - they learn **before** they are born
- Babies learn and communicate **before they talk**
- 80% brain growth has happened **by age 3**
- Babies brains grow at **700 neural pathways a second**
- Babies can only learn what an older person explains to them
- **Talk about**

Chatting  
switches on the  
**'WIRING'**  
in their  
brains

**2** words  
together at age 2  
**1000** fluent  
spoken words  
by age 4

Talking more and talking differently  
is simple, free and easy

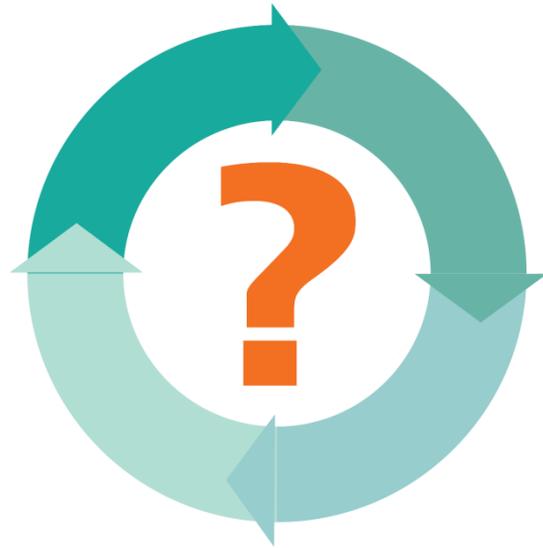
Talking more  
with children  
makes a difference....



# Model behaviours that make a difference

- Talk, sing, read & tell stories – these everyday things literally **grow baby's brain and their life long abilities to learn**
- Talking is good: **conversational turns** are better
- Show families that bilingual learning for babies grows their brains. “Use your **home language**; it's a **gift** for your children”
- Encourage reading “If you want success for your kids: **Read with them every day. We can help you do this**’
- **Encourage scribbling, drawing and writing – children learn that writing is thinking written down.**
- Let them see you & parents reading and writing

What would a  
'language rich'  
service look like from  
your point of view?



It's never too  
early to play, talk,  
read and sing .



# Would a family see these things.....



- Singing & storytelling in different languages,
- Playing, making and shaping , with lots of talk
- Every child has an extended talk every day with someone interested
- Children encouraged to take turns; adults notice and responding, often down at eye level
- New words gifted to stretch child's understanding
- Adults offering new words and concepts as they work with families and kids
- Children drawing & writing, books around and in use
- Staff confident to observe and talk about language to children and parents
- Strategies to grow the confidence and skills of family & whānau

# Want to join in the Talking Matters campaign?



- Join the **Network**
- <http://www.talkingmatters.org.nz/page/network/>
- Follow us on **Facebook TalkingMattersNZ**
- Watch out for **practitioner hui in 2018**



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**Kōrerotia mai!**

An cross sector collaboration so  
more children have the language they need  
for the start they deserve

[www.talkingmatters.org.nz](http://www.talkingmatters.org.nz)