



Healthy Hearing Starts Early

Stakeholder Toolkit
World Hearing Day 2026

[First Nations Services](#)

 Hearing Australia

About This Toolkit

Download resources at hearing.com.au/healthy-hearing-starts-early-2026

This toolkit has been developed to support peak bodies to share culturally respectful, strengths-based messages about ear and hearing health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

It includes clear messages, ready-to-share content and practical resources that can be adapted across your networks during the Healthy Hearing Starts Early campaign and throughout March in celebration of World Hearing Day (3 March).

Everything has been designed so your organisation can easily share content through your own communication channels, member services and community platforms.

Together, we can help keep little ears strong – supporting children to connect, learn and grow.



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How Peak Bodies Can Use This Toolkit

Peak bodies play an important leadership role across health, education and community sectors. Your voice helps shape practice, priorities and awareness at scale.

This toolkit supports you to: 

- **Share Key Messages**

Include ear and hearing health messaging in newsletters, bulletins, member updates and sector communications.

- **Promote Awareness Across Your Networks**

Share social tiles, videos, posters and key messages through your website, social platforms and member networks.

- **Guide Services to Practical Tools and Training**

Promote culturally responsive tools and professional learning that help staff have confident, respectful conversations with families about ear and hearing health.

- **Encourage Early Action**

Help families and services understand why early ear and hearing checks matter – and how to access free support through local AMS services or Hearing Australia.

- **Strengthen Awareness for World Hearing Day**

Use World Hearing Day 2026 as a moment to highlight the importance of listening, cultural connection and ensuring children are supported early.

Peak bodies can use as much or as little of this toolkit as needed. Content is designed to be practical, adaptable and easy to share.



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Campaign Overview

Purpose of the Campaign

Healthy Hearing Starts Early highlights the vital role strong listening skills play in connection, communication, culture and learning from infancy through the early years.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, ear infections and hearing concerns can affect how they hear speech, stories, song and everyday sounds. When hearing challenges are identified early, children can receive the right support sooner – helping them stay connected to family, culture and learning.

This campaign focuses on:

- Raising awareness about early ear and hearing checks
- Supporting culturally safe pathways to care
- Strengthening local services and community confidence
- Ensuring children have the best possible start to life

We take a strengths-based approach – recognising the resilience, leadership and knowledge within communities.



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Why Early Hearing Matters

Healthy ears and strong listening skills support:

- Hearing speech, stories and song
- Early language and communication development
- Participation in play and learning
- Confidence and connection with family, community and culture

When hearing concerns are identified early, children can receive support before it impacts their development or learning. **Strong hearing supports strong futures.**

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Connection to World Hearing Day 2026

The 2026 World Hearing Day theme:

"From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children – act now so no child is left behind due to ear and hearing problems."

This aligns strongly with our shared commitment to:

- Supporting early identification
- Strengthening culturally responsive care
- Empowering communities
- Ensuring every child can fully participate in learning and culture

World Hearing Day provides an opportunity to elevate awareness across sectors and encourage early action.



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How is Hearing Australia working with community?

Hearing Australia's First Nations Services team walks alongside families, communities, Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS), early learning settings and schools to help keep little ears strong.

First Nations children can access free* hearing checks through their local AMS or Hearing Australia.



Call 1300 253 655

to see if we're visiting your local health or early education service.



Visit hearing.com.au/bookings

to book a hearing appointment at one of 180+ hearing centres.

*The Hearing Assessment Program is funded by the Australian Government. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children not yet attending full-time school (prior to primary school) are eligible to be seen. Services are provided free of charge. A hearing check includes age-appropriate tests of hearing and middle ear function. ^Conditions apply under the Australian Government Hearing Services Program.

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Key Messages & Calls to Action

Core Messages

- Getting children's ears checked regularly from an early age helps them enjoy the sounds of the world.
- We're walking alongside families and communities to keep little ears strong.
- From communities to kindies, every sound tells a story.
- When we listen, we connect – to each other, to learning, to culture and to life.
- Strong hearing supports strong futures.

Calls to Action

Book your child an ear and hearing check at your local AMS or with Hearing Australia.

Call Hearing Australia to yarn about ear and hearing care for your family.



Call 1300 253 655



Visit hearing.com.au



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Campaign Assets

Assets have been developed using a culturally grounded, strengths-based creative approach aligned with First Nations storytelling and community voice.

Download assets at hearing.com.au/healthy-hearing-starts-early-2026

Social Assets

- Editable social tile to promote upcoming visits from Hearing Australia
- Campaign awareness tiles
- Family images and quotes (Mum and bub, community Elders)
- Caption copy (ready to post or adapt)



Video Content

- Campaign videos (captioned versions available)
- Short cut-downs for social use



Print & Downloadable Materials

- Flyers and fact sheets
- Campaign posters (child-focused, community friendly)
- Editable visiting posters for local services



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Join us for a Webinar!

Healthy Hearing Starts Early: Tips and Tricks for Otoscopy and Tympanometry

Date: 31 March Time: 12:00-1:00pm (AEST)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience high rates of ear infections in the early years. Early identification is critical to supporting listening, learning and cultural connection.

This practical webinar is designed for practitioners who want to start or improve their ear examination skills using otoscopy and tympanometry to identify ear health problems early. Whether you're new to these tools or looking to refine your technique, this session will build your confidence and skills needed to provide better ear care in your community.

What You'll Learn:

- Essential setup and positioning techniques for comfortable, effective examinations with otoscopes and tympanometers
- How to interpret otoscopy and tympanometry results
- Troubleshooting common testing issues and adapting to individual client needs
- Referrals and follow-up actions based on otoscopy and tympanometry outcomes

Who Should Attend:

Nurses, GPs, healthcare workers, Aboriginal healthcare workers.

Webinar Format:

Interactive demonstrations relevant to community healthcare settings. There will also be Q&A. All skill levels welcome.

Register here:

www.bit.ly/TipsAndTricksWebinar



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Tools and Resources



These tools support early identification and strengthen conversations in health and early learning settings.

PLUM & HATS

Parent-evaluated Listening and Understanding Measure (PLUM) Hearing and Talking Scale (HATS)

PLUM and **HATS** are practical, strengths-based tools that support conversations with families about a child's listening and communication during everyday activities. They can be used by health & education workers.

Recent research (International Journal of Audiology) shows **PLUM** accurately identifies children who may need urgent specialist ear and hearing care.

Download tools and training: plumandhats.nal.gov.au





Spirit of Sound Storybook

Hearing Australia proudly partnered with Noongar artist Davinder Hart to create Spirit of Sound – a story celebrating culture, connection and the role of sound in children's lives.

The storybook supports conversations about listening, belonging and the importance of hearing from an early age.

Download the e-book: <https://bit.ly/TheSpiritOfSoundE-Book>

Spirit of Sound Educators' Guide

This guide supports early childhood educators to integrate play-based, listening skills into daily practice.

Download the Educators' Guide: <https://bit.ly/TheSpiritofSoundEducatorsGuide>



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Learning Portal – Free Online Training

Hearing Australia offers free, self-paced e-learning modules for early educators and primary school teachers.

Modules cover:

- Cultural determinants of health
- Understanding ear health and hearing
- Prevention and service modifications
- Using PLUM & HATS in partnership with families (early educators)

Learn more:



Call 1300 253 655



www.hearing.com.au/first-nations-services/learning-portal/

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