

Framing the message in Australia about the importance of the first 1000 days

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Introduction

What is strategic framing?

Why it's important to use strategic framing in communications

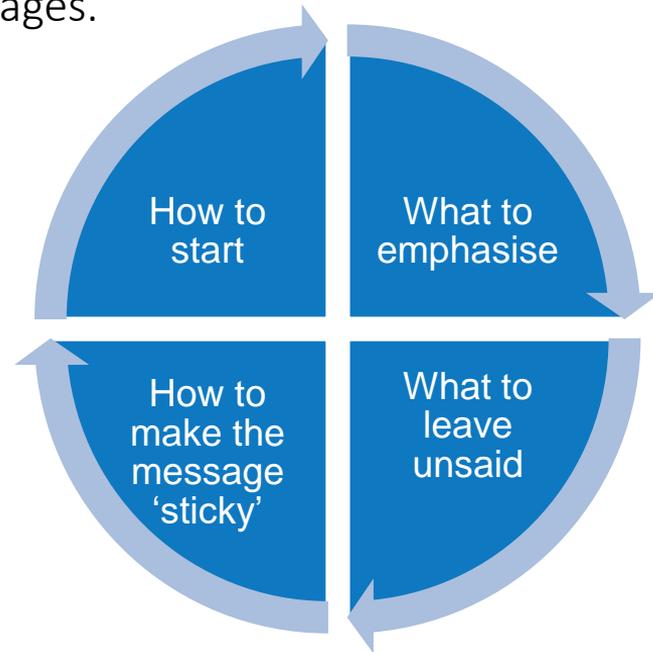
How strategic framing can be used to bridge gaps between what experts know and what the public understands

What the implications are for messaging about the first 1000 days



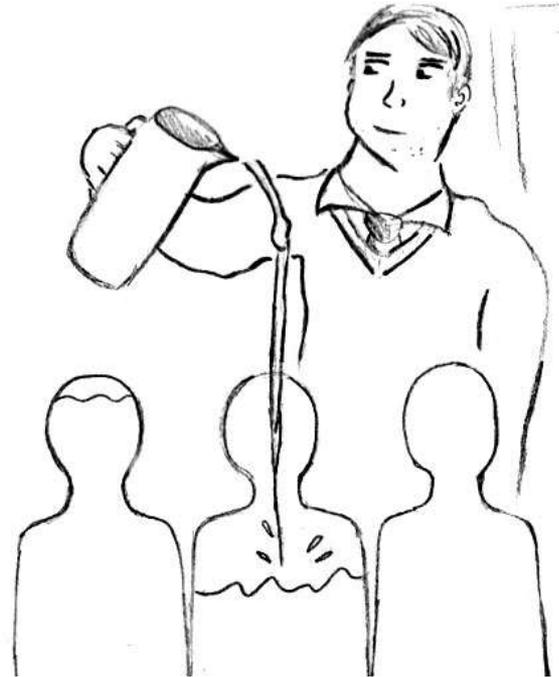
What is strategic framing?

- Making informed choices with a clear goal in mind, to increase the likelihood your audience will engage with your messages.



Why is strategic framing necessary?

- People are not 'empty vessels'
 - They have pre-existing beliefs, values, ideas and experiences
- While we know the science, we are not necessarily skilled at making the science accessible
- Communication is risky when you don't start where your audience is at



When values collide



We are talking about 0-4 year olds. Quality education...what's wrong with letting kids be kids?



Common sense dictates that you don't need a PhD to look after a baby, just a bit of enthusiasm and experience.



We didn't want our children to be taught quantum mechanics. We wanted an environment where they would be safe...and cared for.

Finding out what's in the swamp

1. What is early childhood about?
2. *What* develops?
3. *How* do children develop?
4. What threatens development?
5. How do we improve early childhood outcomes?



The Australian Swamp



The 11 elements of strategic framing

1. Context
2. Explanatory chains
3. Values
4. Messengers
5. Narrative
6. Numbers (or social math)
7. Order
8. Solutions
9. Tone
10. Explanatory metaphors
11. Visuals



Values

Return on investment/**collective future prosperity** ✓

Investing in children increases everyone's welfare.

Others:

- Australia is the land of **opportunity for all/a fair go**
- Australians are a **can-do nation of problem solvers**
- Investing in children develops the **leaders of the future**
- Investing in children will lead to **gender equity/women's workforce participation**
- Investing in children's programs will build **community strength**

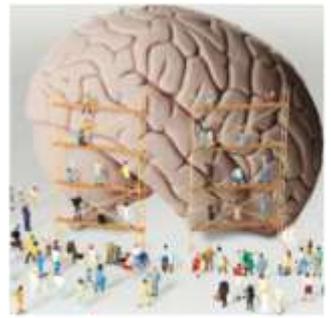


Explanatory metaphors



Brain Architecture

A metaphor for sensitive periods of development (early years and adolescence)



The story you're telling:

"The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood."



Explanatory metaphors

METAPHOR



Amplifier

A metaphor to explain the function and importance of child care centres



The story you're telling:

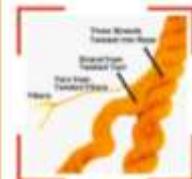
"Like an amplifier takes an incoming signal and makes it stronger and clearer, quality child development centres can help Australia's children reach their full potential."

METAPHOR



Weaving Skills Ropes

A metaphor for: the integrated nature of skills, including social-emotional-cognitive



The story you're telling:

"Learning is about the brain weaving skills together to form strong skill ropes."

METAPHOR



Levelness

A metaphor for child mental health



The story you're telling:

"Just as the levelness of a table is what makes it functional, the mental health of children is what enables them to function well in all areas of life."

METAPHOR



Outcomes Scale

A metaphor for social determinants of wellbeing, and resilience as outcome



The story you're telling:

"A positive child outcome is like a scale that is tipped toward one side. It can be influenced by counterbalancing weights and by adjusting the balance point."

METAPHOR



Three Types of Stress (Toxic Stress)

A metaphor to explain how adverse experiences can influence biology and development



The story you're telling:

"Chronic, severe stressors can cause a response that is toxic to the developing brain and has long-term effects on health and wellness. Supportive relationships can serve as a buffer against a toxic stress response."

METAPHOR



Serve and Return

A metaphor for responsive interactions between children and adults



The story you're telling:

"Stress are built through back-and-forth interaction, much like a game of tennis, ping pong, or volleyball. Healthy development occurs when young children 'serve' through babbling, gestures, or words, and adults 'return' by getting in sync with the child."

Recap

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Strong Foundations

- ARACY
- Bupa Australia
- The Bupa Health Foundation
- Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (MCRI) led by the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH)
- PwC Australia



New evidence

- Plasticity is a double-edged sword
- The foetus 'predicts' and adapts to its environment based on cues from the mother
- The health and wellbeing of parents and grandparents can have an intergenerational impact on the foetus
- Our bodies have not evolved to keep up with the changes in our modern lifestyles
- Advances in hygiene and other factors are changing our microbiome



Advocacy and action



Policy

Practice

Parenting



Contacts and resources

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Strong Foundations project (Getting it Right in the First 1000 Days)

<https://www.aracy.org.au/the-nest-in-action/first-1000-days>

Strategic framing resources

http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/publications-resources/Strategic_communication_tools/



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A world leader
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The Centre for Community Child Health is a department of The Royal Children's Hospital and a research group of Murdoch Childrens Research Institute.