

Examining Language Development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children: Insights from the Hearing Assessment Program - Early Ears (HAPEE)

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The Hearing Assessment Program Early Ears (HAPEE) provides diagnostic hearing assessment and recommendations for follow-up treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are not enrolled in full time school. The program is funded by the Indigenous Services Branch of the Commonwealth Government. Services are delivered through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOS), government clinics, mainstream primary care clinics, early education providers, and Hearing Australia Centres. As part of the clinical protocol, audiologists and Clinical Community Advisors administer the Hearing And Talking Scale (HATS), a tool developed to aid primary health workers to ask the right questions to learn more about a child's listening and yarning skills. The HATS consists of five questions that indicate whether the child's language skills are appropriate for their age. Results can be interpreted as the child's language skills are "on track", "borderline", or "not on track". This presentation will discuss the language performance of children who have been seen as part of the HAPEE program from when the program began in June 2019 until June 2023. Performance will be discussed considering age, hearing and middle ear status.

Biography

Traci Flynn is a Project Lead at Hearing Australia in the First Nations Unit and holds an honorary Senior Lecturer appointment at the University of Newcastle. She was awarded her PhD in 2013 from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Traci's main research area focuses on the auditory, speech, and language development and quality of life in children with hearing impairment.