

11 February 2026

## Autism Queensland response to Thriving Kids

**While systems may change, AQ has been here for Queensland families for nearly 60 years and that won't change.**

Autism Queensland (AQ) acknowledges the release of the *Thriving Kids* model and advisory report on 3 February 2026 by the Federal Government, led by Health Minister Mark Butler. We recognise this as an important step toward ensuring autistic children and children with developmental differences receive the right support, at the right time, in the places they live, learn and play.

*Thriving Kids* does not represent a new direction for AQ. It affirms the evidence-based, community embedded approach we have advocated and delivered across Queensland for decades.

For almost 60 years, AQ has partnered with autistic people, families, educators and communities to provide early support, build workforce capability and reduce barriers to participation. While systems may change, our commitment to Queensland families does not.

Over the past 18 months, AQ has been actively listening to the autistic community and working alongside the Queensland Government and sector partners to help shape what foundational supports in Queensland should look like. We are pleased to see many of the principles we advocated for reflected in the *Thriving Kids* model, including early access to support without diagnosis, delivery through everyday settings, and a strong focus on workforce capability.

We understand that periods of system change can feel uncertain for families. We want to reassure the community that AQ is here, we are listening, and we will continue to amplify the voices and experiences of autistic people and families as *Thriving Kids* is implemented.

AQ recognises that families are closely watching how these reforms will affect access to support. As *Thriving Kids* is rolled out, it is important that changes are communicated clearly, safeguards are in place, and no child or family is left without appropriate support. AQ will continue to listen and advocate for outcomes that genuinely improve access, equity and participation for Queensland children.

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Across Queensland, AQ already delivers, and is ready to scale, the kinds of supports *Thriving Kids* envisions from trusted early entry points for families, to inclusion support in early childhood services and schools, to practical, community-based help for children with emerging support needs. This work is delivered by experienced, evidence-led teams who are already embedded into local communities.

For *Thriving Kids* to be successfully implemented, it will need to be underpinned by clear and regular communication with families, strong coordination between *Thriving Kids* and the NDIS, sustained investment in a capable workforce and continued commitment to consultation and co-design. Transparent oversight and continuity across systems will be critical to ensure no child or family falls through the gaps.

As Queensland's peak autism body, AQ brings deep system knowledge and on-the-ground experience. As *Thriving Kids* moves from policy to practice, AQ stands ready to support its implementation in Queensland, calmly, professionally and in partnership to help ensure continuity for families, confidence for educators, and most importantly positive outcomes for children.

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