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NEXT FOUNDATION BOOSTS INVESTMENT IN TALKING MATTERS CAMPAIGN

NEXT Foundation has announced it is extending its investment in Talking Matters, a campaign promoting the importance of rich language with babies.

The commitment, following 18 months of seed funding in 2016, makes Talking Matters a key part of NEXT's education investment in the First 1000 Days of life.

NEXT chief executive Bill Kermodé says they're delighted to renew support for Talking Matters.

"Talking Matters has made early language in the first 1000 days of life its business," Mr Kermodé says.

"We would love for rich early language to be universally recognised as a fundamental building block for children's education. That will require family-facing organisations, schools, universities, government departments and government policies to understand and reflect the importance of rich early language to education."

Talking Matters director Alison Sutton says the funding for at least two years, will enable Talking Matters to be a significant agent for change at all levels - from families, organisations and communities through to health and education systems and policies.

"It's amazing to have NEXT's support in this way. We're proud that we've been able to get recognition of the importance of the power of quality interaction and talk with children," Ms Sutton says. "Back and forth talk with babies and toddlers literally shapes their brain and has a huge impact on their future life chances."

Alison Sutton says NEXT's support will enable Talking Matters to continue its partnerships and work in three 'action communities' – Tāmaki, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, and Puketāpapa.

Talking Matters will expand successful approaches trialled over the past 18 months, including LENA (Language Environment Analysis). A LENA device counts talk and conversations with children at home and converts that data into feedback for parents. There will also be a national hui in 2019 following on the success of The Power of Talk summit in 2017.

"We will also be showcasing how other communities can kick-start their own action in early language," Ms Sutton says. "If you're interested, join up on our Talking Matters [Facebook page](#) and see the scope of our work and the exciting changes families are reporting."

Ms Sutton says there's a lot of interest from groups outside Auckland and Talking Matters is looking at ways to spread key messages and resources.

For more information and resources, visit the Talking Matters [website](#).

Talking Matters is an initiative of [COMET Auckland](#), an independent charitable trust and Auckland Council CCO for education, skills and training.

NEXT Foundation was launched four years ago and will invest \$100 million over ten years to create a legacy of environmental and education excellence for future generations of New Zealanders. For more information visit www.nextfoundation.org.nz