

## Strong ears, strong futures – Resources to help teachers combat hearing problems

Schools and teachers have an important role to play when it comes to improving the ear health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which is why the *Care for Kids' Ears* campaign has produced a range of resources designed specifically for teachers, and why educator, Corey Grech, jumped at the chance to become a *Care for Kids' Ears* ambassador.

Working as an Aboriginal Education Assistant on the Central Coast of New South Wales, Grech has witnessed first-hand the impacts of poor ear health on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

"I work at a pre-school and spend a lot of time with kids aged three to five, and one thing I find is you repeat yourself all day, and often these ear problems can go unnoticed until the students themselves realise they've got a problem, which is way too late," explains Grech.

An important focus of the *Care for Kids' Ears* resources for teachers relates to educating teachers about the signs and symptoms of Otitis Media, allowing teachers to identify when a student might be struggling with an ear health issue. The resources provide practical guidelines on how best to teach in a classroom where students may be struggling with limited hearing, and importantly, also raise awareness about the wider health contexts related to Otitis Media in Indigenous communities' education.

As well as educating teachers on the symptoms of Otitis Media, the *Care for Kids' Ears* resources



Corey teaches the importance of ear health to his students using the *Care for Kids' Ears* Storybook

also provide tools to help teachers get their students thinking and talking about the importance of good ear health. These resources include activity booklets, posters and a talking book.

Grech says he has already noticed a positive impact on his students' awareness of better ear health after introducing them to some of the *Care for Kids' Ears* teaching resources. He believes that raising awareness on Otitis Media, both in the home and in the classroom, is a key element in building stronger futures for Indigenous youth.

"I believe not just in the importance of physical

health, but also the importance of mental health, and if you can't hear somebody when you're trying to learn that is going to mess with your mental health. You're going to be a frustrated person, and that's no place for learning."

*The Care for Kids' Ears* resources for Parents and Carers, Early Childhood and Community Groups, Teachers and Health Professionals can be downloaded or ordered from the *Care for Kids' Ears* website:

[www.careforkidsears.health.gov.au/](http://www.careforkidsears.health.gov.au/)



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