Kit the Koala Yarning Card 1
Starting the conversation

Hi, I'm Kit... I like kicking the footy and playing with my friends. I live with my Aunty Koala, who's really smart, and teaches me everything I need to know about living well.

People say that if you have FASD, then you look different ... but that's not true. Most people with FASD are like me, and I look alright, ay? Probably too good looking!



Kit starts by telling us who he is. Kit shares what he enjoys and the people who care for him. This reminds us that children are more than a diagnosis. Conversations begin with relationships, strengths and everyday life before moving into discussions about FASD.

When Kit talks about FASD, he does so in an open and matter-of-fact way. FASD is part of his story, but it does not define who he is.

Kit's story shows:

- Children do not all think, learn or cope in the same way, and that is okay.
- Differences in how a child's brain works are not something that needs to be fixed.
- Understanding these differences can help us adapt our expectations and provide support in ways that work for the child.

You might say: "Let's watch a short part where Kit talks about himself first."

Yarning with families

- Did anything stand out to you about the way Kit introduced himself?
- Was there anything in Kit's story that reminded you of your child?
- What are some of your child's strengths, interests or favourite things to do?

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Kit the Koala Yarning Card 2
When families are unsure



Sometimes you may be working with a family who is at the "wondering" stage, when something doesn't quite add up, but they are not sure they are ready to explore it further.

Kit's story can help you start these conversations gently. It creates space for curiosity and reflection, without needing families to have all the answers straight away.

Kit's story shows that:

- Sometimes concerns are first raised by a teacher, doctor or other professional, and families may not have noticed the same things or understood them in the same way.
- Families may need time and space to make sense of new information or concerns about their child.
- Understanding often develops over time through conversation, reflection and shared learning.
- Our role is not to rush families towards answers, but to listen, walk alongside them and create space for questions.

You might say:
"A lot of families feel unsure about this at first. Let's watch this part together and have a yarn."

Yarning with families

- What's made you start wondering?
- What worries come up when you think about exploring this further?
- What matters most for your child and family right now?

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Kit the Koala Yarning Card 3
Sitting with the conversation

When talking about FASD feels heavy

Sometimes conversations about FASD bring up shame, fear, sadness and worry. This may be especially true when families have experienced judgement, loss or trauma in the past.

In this part of the story, Coco gently encourages Aunty Koala to think about an assessment for Kit. Rather than moving quickly towards solutions, the conversation makes space for Aunty Koala's concerns and feelings.

Kit's story shows that:

- Families may need time to sit with new information before deciding what feels right for them.
- Feelings of shame, fear, sadness and worry can make these conversations difficult.
- Deep listening means paying attention to what is being said, and what is not being said, without rushing to provide answers.
- Trust grows when we allow silence, give families time to reflect, and listen with patience and respect.



You might say:
"There's no rush - you can also watch this at home when you're ready".

Reflection points*

- Sit with families and go at their pace
- Encourage families to take their time and yarn with their support people
- Let families know that you are there to help, when they feel ready

*this is a time for listening rather than yarning

Kit the Koala Yarning Card 4

All about assessment

Sometimes you may be supporting a family who has questions about assessment, or who feels unsure about what it involves. Assessment can bring up a lot of emotions, including pressure, uncertainty and worry about what might happen next.

In this part of the story, Kit and Aunty Koala meet with a psychologist who explains the assessment process and how they will work together.

Kit's story shows that:

- Assessment is something done with families, not to them
- Families may have had previous experiences with services and practitioners that influence how they feel about assessment. Taking time to build trust is an important part of the process
- Families might want to visit a service or meet the people involved before deciding what feels right for them
- The purpose of assessment is to better understand a child's strengths, support needs and what helps them do well.





Assessment might involve:

- visiting a specialist clinic and meeting with different practitioners who work together as a team
- working with local services, such as a GP, paediatrician, psychologist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, school supports or Aboriginal health services.

Both pathways can help build a shared understanding of a child's strengths, support needs and what helps them thrive.

You might say:
"Let's see what Kit's assessment looks like."

Yarning with families

- How does it feel to think about an assessment?
- What worries come up when you hear assessment language?
- What would you like to understand better about your child?

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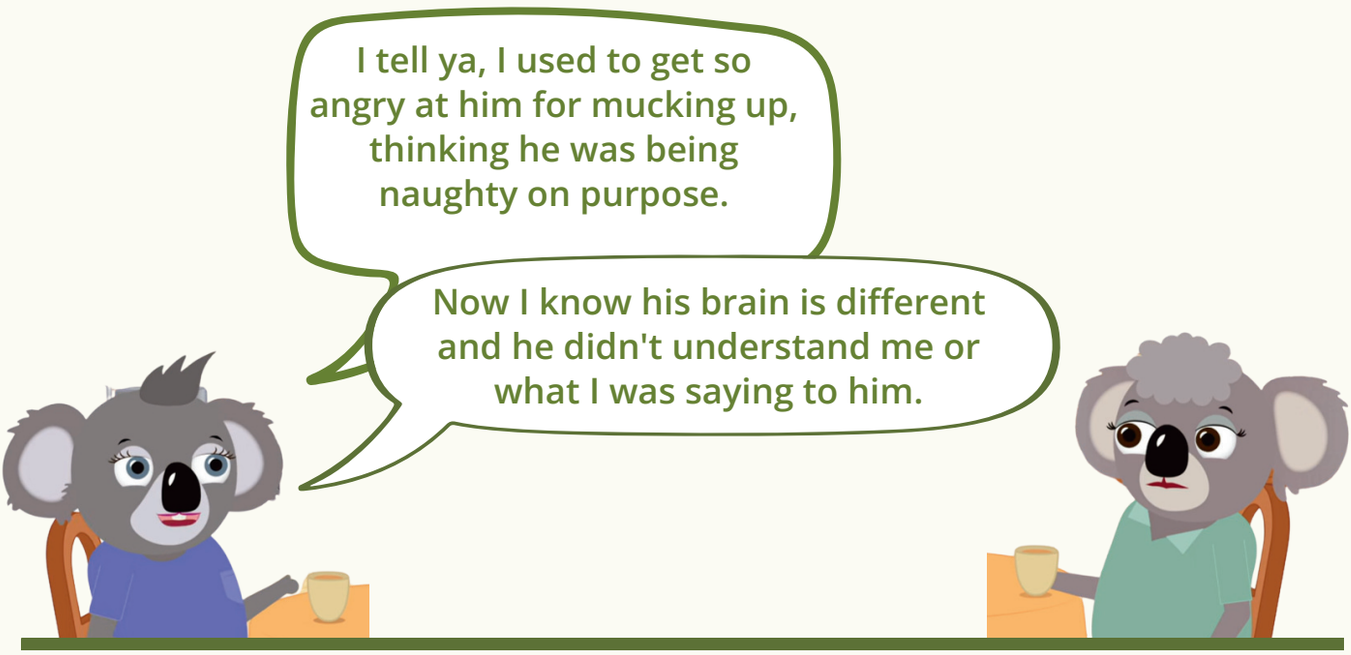
Kit the Koala Yarning Card 5
After a diagnosis



Reading reports

A diagnosis can bring a mix of emotions. For some families, it can answer long-held questions and help make sense of a child's experiences. For others, it can feel overwhelming, particularly when they are reading reports filled with unfamiliar or clinical language.

Diagnostic reports often focus on a child's difficulties or impairments. While this information can help identify the supports a child may need, it can sometimes make it harder to see the whole child.

Kit's story shows that:

- A diagnosis is one way of understanding a child. It does not define who they are.
- Taking time to explain the language clinicians use can help families make sense of the report.
- Naming a child's strengths and support needs can help families access the right supports.
- A diagnosis can help families advocate for their child and access the supports they need.
- Understanding how a child's brain works can help the people around them adapt their expectations and provide support in ways that work for the child.

You might say:
“Let’s listen to how Coco talks about learning her boy has FASD."

Yarning with families

- What came up for you when you heard Coco talk about Bart's diagnosis?
- What do you think might feel helpful about getting results for your child? What might feel hard?
- Who would you want beside you when you heard the results?

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Kit the Koala Yarning Card 6
Talking about FASD with children



Sometimes families are unsure about how to talk with children about a neurodevelopmental assessment. They may worry about saying the wrong thing, causing distress, or making their child feel different.

In this part of the story, Aunty Koala talks with Kit about assessment in a calm and respectful way that invites him into the conversation.

Kit's story shows that:

- Assessment can be explained as a way of better understanding a child and what helps them live well.
- Children benefit from being included in conversations about assessment and diagnosis in ways that match their age and understanding.
- Asking for a child's views and consent, where appropriate, can help them feel safe, respected and involved.
- Talking about FASD in an open and matter-of-fact way can help reduce shame and support children to understand themselves, recognise their strengths and make sense of their experiences.

Children often need to hear:

- "There's nothing wrong with you."
- "You're not bad and you're not in trouble."
- "Your brain works differently."
- "The grown-ups around you are learning how to support you better."

Families can sometimes worry about talking with their child about FASD. Kit's story reminds us that FASD is nothing to be ashamed of, and that having words to describe experiences can help children better understand themselves and feel confident in who they are.



You might say:
“Let’s watch how Aunty Koala talks with Kit about assessment.”

Yarning with families

- What stood out to you about the way Aunty Koala talked with Kit?
- What would you want your child to understand about assessment or diagnosis?
- How do you think your child would like to be included in these conversations?

SCAN ME!