



Transforming State Systems
to Improve Outcomes for
Children with Disabilities

Supporting Practice Guide Implementation: *Preparing Young Children for School,* Language and Literacy Recommendations

Research to Practice Spotlight Series: Session 2

Jill Pentimonti, PhD (University of Notre Dame)

Laura Berry Kuchle, PhD, and Lauren Artzi, PhD (NCSI)

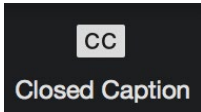
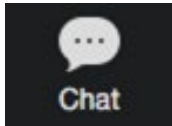
February 2024

Thank you for joining us today!

While we wait to start, feel free to share what brings you to this event and any questions you may have.



Zoom Logistics



- Microphones and videos are off for this event.
- Look for the flashing orange alert, which will take you to the chat box when it is active.
- Closed captions are available.
- This webinar is being recorded.

Agenda

- Welcome and Overview
- Introduction to the Practice Guide
- Review of Language and Literacy Recommendations
 - Discussion: Questions and State Education Agency (SEA) Considerations
- Shared Book Reading Example
 - Discussion: Questions and SEA Considerations
- Closing and Additional Resources

Welcome and Introduction to NCSI

The National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) supports states to transform systems to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.



Series Overview: Purpose

- Unpack key evidence-based practices to promote learning for students with disabilities and others struggling to learn reading and math.
- Share considerations for SEAs and local education agencies (LEAs) to support educators with implementation.
- <https://ncsi.wested.org/research-to-practice-webinar-series/>

Special Thanks to **ecta** Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

- As our partner in this space bridging early childhood and K–12, ECTA supported planning and dissemination for this session.
 - Look to the chat for resources!
- We will conduct joint follow-up conversations through ECTA's Sturdy Bridge Community of Practice and other NCSI activities.

Introducing the Handout



Transforming State Systems to Improve Outcomes
for Children with Disabilities

Note-Taking Guide

Supporting Practice Guide Implementation: *Preparing Young Children for School*, Language and Literacy Recommendations

During the webinar, note key takeaways from each section (what), connections or implications for your role (so what), and key actions you might take (now what). Also, determine whether there are questions you would like to put in the chat for discussion during the webinar.

Recommendation	Key Takeaways (What?)	Connections to Make (So What?)	Actions to Take (Now What?)
5. Intentionally Plan Activities to Build Children's Vocabulary and Language	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Early Childhood to Elementary Connection

Early Childhood



"Boat.
/b/"

Provides the foundation for later school success

Kindergarten



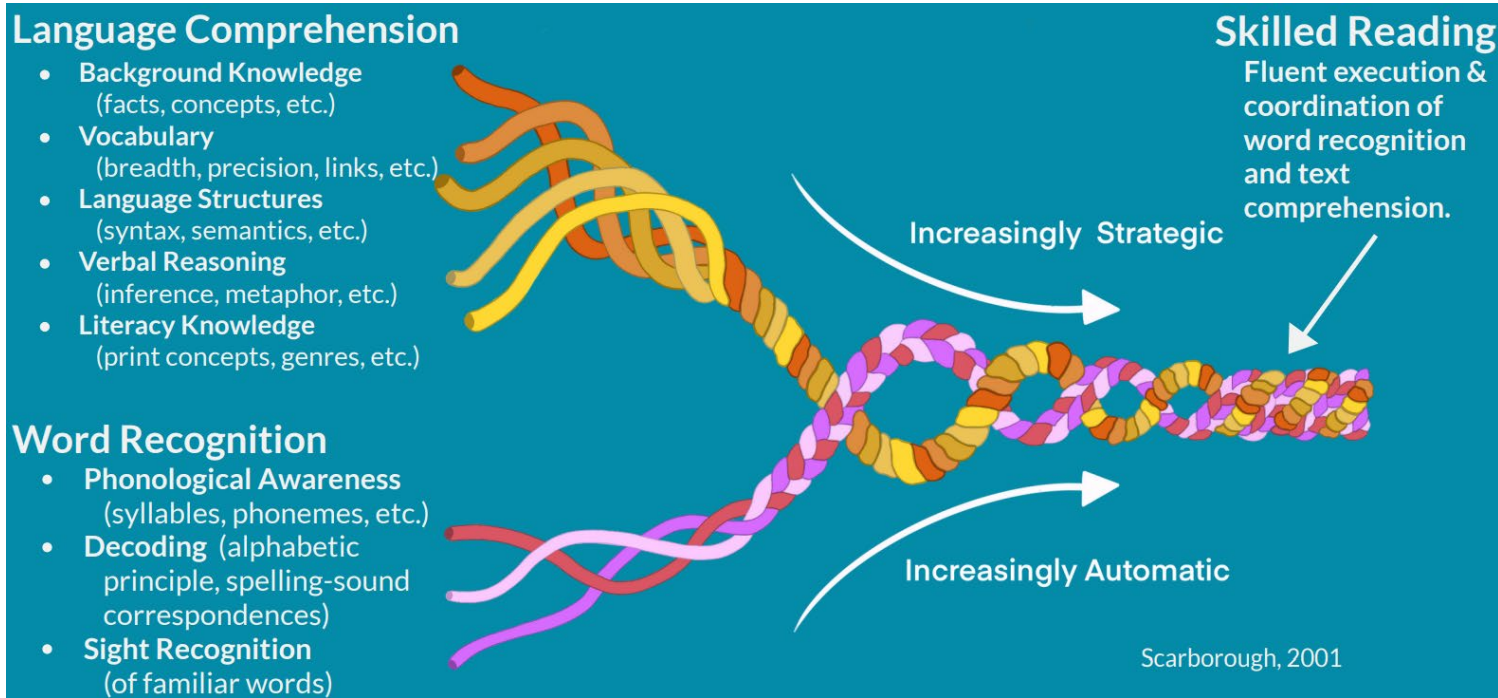
Emphasis on the kindergarten year as being a "sturdy bridge"

Early Elementary



Strong foundational literacy skills promote skills in grade-level reading by Grade 3

Topical Importance



Language Comprehension + Word Recognition = Skilled and Fluent Reading

Meet Jill Pentimonti, PhD

- Executive Director of Research Advancement, University of Notre Dame
- Practice Guide Panel Member



SEA Considerations for Supporting Local Implementation

- How can SEAs support early childhood programs in reviewing, selecting, and implementing early literacy programs?
- What are special considerations for intervention at the early childhood level?

Guiding Questions

- What questions do you have about the recommendations, intervention example, or how SEAs can support implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?



What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide

Preparing Young Children for School

Vocabulary, Letters, and Shared Book Reading

Margaret Burchinal
Panel Chair
University of Virginia

Jorge Gonzalez
Panelist
University of Houston

Jill Pentimonti
Panelist
University of Notre Dame

Elizabeth Schlesinger-Devlin
Panelist
Purdue University

What Works Clearinghouse (<https://whatworks.ed.gov/>)

The screenshot displays the homepage of the What Works Clearinghouse. At the top left, the logo reads "IES WWC What Works Clearinghouse" with a "MENU" button. A search bar at the top right contains the text "Search" and a "Go" button. Below the header is a green banner with the text "Select topics to Find What Works based on the evidence". The main content area features a grid of 12 topic categories, each with an icon and a label: Literacy (book icon), Mathematics (math symbols icon), Science (flask icon), Behavior (person icon), Children and Youth with Disabilities (heart with hand icon), English Learners (globe with EL icon), Teacher Excellence (teacher at board icon), Charter Schools (school building icon), Early Childhood (Pre-K) (ABC blocks icon), K-12 Kindergarten to 12th Grade (K-12 text icon), Path to Graduation (graduation cap icon), and Postsecondary (classroom building icon). At the bottom, four colored boxes provide descriptions for different types of resources: Practice Guides (purple box), Intervention Reports (maroon box), Reviews of Individual Studies (green box), and Data From Study Reviews (dark blue box).

IES WWC What Works Clearinghouse

Select topics to **Find What Works** based on the evidence

- Literacy**
- Mathematics**
- Science**
- Behavior**
- Children and Youth with Disabilities**
- English Learners**
- Teacher Excellence**
- Charter Schools**
- Early Childhood (Pre-K)**
- K-12 Kindergarten to 12th Grade**
- Path to Graduation**
- Postsecondary**

Practice Guides: evidence-based recommendations for educators to improve student outcomes.

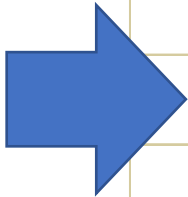
Intervention Reports: summaries of findings of the highest-quality research on a given intervention or practice in education.

Reviews of Individual Studies: summaries of individual studies that have been reviewed by the WWC.

Data From Study Reviews: downloadable data from WWC study reviews.

Recommendations and Corresponding Levels of Evidence

Practice Recommendation	Level of Evidence		
	Minimal	Moderate	Strong
1. Regularly provide intentional, engaging instruction and practice focused on social-emotional skills.			✓
2. Strengthen children's executive function skills using specific games and activities.		✓	
3. Provide intentional instruction to build children's understanding of mathematical ideas and skills.			✓
4. Engage children in conversations about mathematical ideas and support them in using mathematical language.		✓	
5. Intentionally plan activities to build children's vocabulary and language.			✓
6. Build children's knowledge of letters and sounds.			✓
7. Use shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world.			✓



Overarching Themes

- **The importance of intentional instruction:** Teachers should set up lessons to intentionally help children learn a skill or concept.
- **The importance of interaction and conversation:** Children can learn more from conversing with the teacher.
- **The importance of lessons building sequentially:** New learning should proceed in a deliberate and systematic order, from easy to more difficult skills and concepts.



Overarching Themes (continued)

- **The importance of scheduling time for intentional learning:** Develop a schedule in which intentional instruction time is devoted to social-emotional learning, executive function, mathematics, and literacy.
- **The importance of recognizing everyone's backgrounds and experiences:** Preschools should reflect and value the cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds of the children, teachers, and community.





Recommendation 5: *Intentionally plan activities to build children's vocabulary and language.*

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How-to Step 1: Choose 3–5 unique words to focus on each week and include review of those words in other weeks.

How-to Step 2: Introduce the words and their meanings.

How-to Step 3: Choose activities and materials that will offer children opportunities to practice using the target vocabulary words.

How-to Step 4: Engage in interactive conversations with children to reinforce or solidify understanding of vocabulary words.

How-to Step 1: *Choose 3–5 unique words to focus on each week and include review of those words in other weeks.*

- Look for words that will be useful to know because they occur frequently in books, conversations, or other academic contexts—even words that seem advanced, such as *illustrator*, *author*, *title*, *discuss*, and *similar*.
- Choose a group of words that relate to a topic or belong in a category. When possible, choose a topic the children are interested in.



How-to Step 1: *Choose 3–5 unique words to focus on each week and include review of those words in other weeks (continued).*

- At the beginning of the year, choose words that are easy to depict in pictures or are easy to demonstrate.
- Over time, add in abstract language that is harder to depict in pictures, including abstract nouns and verbs, prepositions, glue words, or other words typically used in school that are not easy to visualize.



What Are Glue Words?

Glue words, also referred to as high-frequency words, are some of the most common and essential words in the English language.

They are the foundation of academic language and are often difficult to depict in pictures. When children don't know the meaning of glue words, sentences can be difficult to understand.

Some common glue words include the following: *in, on, the, was, for, that, said, a, if, of, to, there, will, be, what, get, go, like, think, some, new, make, much, every, should, just, and, is, this, from, with, have, an, by, it, asked.*



How-to Step 2: *Introduce the words and their meanings.*

- Spend time directly discussing the word and what it means.
- Begin by explaining the meaning of the vocabulary word, using words children already know.
- If using a book to introduce words, point to the relevant picture in the book and present a simple meaning that relates to what is happening in the book.



How-to Step 2: *Introduce the words and their meanings (continued).*

- In later book readings and experiences to which the word relates, pause to engage children in a conversation about the word and provide additional practice with its meaning.
- Ask children to share something related to the word or think about when they experienced the word.





Example: *Teacher teaches a word and gradually asks children to do more with the word.*



How-to Step 3: *Choose activities and materials that will offer children opportunities to practice using the target vocabulary words.*

- Children need multiple opportunities to think about and practice the words they are learning.
- Set up opportunities for the words to come up in children's play.
- Consider leading children in acting out the word, possibly using figurines, puppets, or other props.



How-to Step 3: *Choose activities and materials that will offer children opportunities to practice using the target vocabulary words (continued).*

- As children interact with the activities and materials, look for ways to incorporate conversation about the target vocabulary.
- When possible, extend the conversation about the vocabulary word by asking children follow-up questions.





Example: *A child acts out the word **emerge**, by emerging from a tunnel.*



How-to Step 4: *Engage in interactive conversations with children to reinforce or solidify understanding of vocabulary words.*

- Look for ways throughout the day to reintroduce the target vocabulary words into conversations with children to provide additional opportunities for children to hear and use the words.
- Use questions strategically to prompt children to respond using the words they have learned.
- Add additional words into conversations when appropriate.
- Choose words that are relevant to the children, their lives, cultural backgrounds, and what is happening during the preschool day.





Example: *Teacher facilitates a conversation about additional vocabulary.*



Things to Think About

- *“I was told to teach only vocabulary words that appear in books or to look for books that include the vocabulary words I want to teach.”*
 - Vocabulary can also be introduced in other ways, such as using and defining descriptive words in response to something a child has said.
 - For example, if the child says, “I have a truck,” respond with “You have a big, red truck. Is it heavy? Or light?” Let the child respond and then provide a simple explanation of heavy and an example of something that is heavy and something that is not. Ask the child to think about what else is heavy.



Things to Think About

- “*I am not very comfortable engaging in conversations with children when they play. I want to let them play.*”
 - One way to engage children is to observe something they are doing well and then add in adjectives to expose them to more vocabulary.
 - For example, if a child is filling a pot with mud, say, “I see you filling the big pot with mud.” The child might say, “I am making soup.” The teacher could talk with the child about the *ingredients* they are including in the soup or how long the soup will need to *boil* before it will be ready to eat.





Recommendation 6: *Build children's knowledge of letters and sounds.*

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How-to Step 1: Initially focus on listening for sounds in words.

How-to Step 2: Intentionally introduce a new letter and its sound.

How-to Step 3: Use materials and activities that allow children to practice identifying letters and their corresponding sounds.

How-to Step 4: Include print throughout the classroom to provide additional opportunities to discuss letters and their sounds.

How-to Step 1: *Initially focus on listening for sounds in words.*

- Point out words are made up of sounds like /b/ and -ike in *bike* and /b/ and -all in *ball*.
- Tell children to listen for words that share the same beginning or end sound in a song, book, or poem with an alliteration or with words that rhyme. For example, have them clap when they hear words that end with -at.



How-to Step 2: *Intentionally introduce a new letter and its sound.*

- Start with letters and sounds children are familiar with and add on other letters and sounds from there.
- Clearly explain the letter name and the sound the letter makes. Show children how to write the target letter.
- For letters that have more than one sound, explain that some letters make more than one sound, and tell children the sounds.



How-to Step 3: *Use materials and activities that allow children to practice identifying letters and their corresponding sounds.*

- Children need multiple and repeated exposures to letters and the sounds they make.
- Carefully choose activities and materials that can be used during small-group or whole-class activities or centers throughout the week to provide children with practice identifying and discussing the target letter and sound.
- Be sure to include previously learned letters for children to review.
- Games can be a fun way to review letters that were previously learned.





Example: *Some activities that can be used to discuss letters*



How-to Step 4: *Include print throughout the classroom to provide additional opportunities to discuss letters and their sounds.*

- Making print a regular part of the classroom will not only help familiarize children with letters but will provide multiple opportunities for teachers to discuss letters and the sounds they make.
 - Use labels throughout the classroom.
 - Use children's names throughout the classroom.
 - Write out the daily schedule.
 - Bring print materials into dramatic play.
 - Set up a reading library or quiet space for children to explore print independently.



Things to Think About

- *“I don’t know what letters or sounds to teach, when to move on, or when to backtrack and spend more time on a letter or sound.”*
 - Set aside time each week to discuss letters and their sounds with each child. Keep track of each child’s letter knowledge by jotting down what they grasped and what they need to work on.
- *“My children don’t seem very excited about letters/sounds.”*
 - Link the letter to the children in some way. Plan activities that will engage children.





Recommendation 7: *Use shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world.*

Recommendation 7: *Use shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world.*

How-to Step 1: Select a variety of informational and narrative books that are appropriate for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds.

How-to Step 2: Prior to the lesson, plan the purpose for reading the book and determine when to discuss certain topics with children.

How-to Step 3: Prepare children for listening to and discussing the content of the book before reading the book aloud.

How-to Step 4: Engage in conversations with the children while reading the book.

How-to Step 5: Align literacy activities with the focus of the shared book reading.

How-to Step 1: *Select a variety of informational and narrative books that are appropriate for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds.*

- Choose books that touch on topics of interest to children or that relate to something they may have experienced, such as books about making friends with a new child who just moved to their block or playing make-believe.



How-to Step 1: *Select a variety of informational and narrative books that are appropriate for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (continued).*

- Ensure that children regularly see people like themselves in the books that are read, as well as people from other cultures.
- Choose books that align with the focus of the literacy lesson for the day or week, such as books with print features or books that include words with the target letter, or books that have interesting or large print.



How-to Step 1: *Select a variety of informational and narrative books that are appropriate for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (continued).*

- Consider reading informational books that cover topics relevant to the material recently read about in narrative books.

Informational books are nonfiction or expository books that inform the reader about a specific topic and include accurate facts.

Narrative books are written accounts of a connected series of events. They can include fiction, such as novels and short stories, as well as nonfiction, such as memoirs, biographies, and news stories.

How-to Step 2: *Prior to the lesson, plan the purpose for reading the book and determine when to discuss certain topics with children.*

- Plan a different focus for each time a book is read.
- Review the book ahead of time to determine when to pause to discuss
 - vocabulary;
 - print features like font changes, speech bubbles, or letters; or
 - questions or prompts related to the content of the book.



How-to Step 2: *Prior to the lesson, plan the purpose for reading the book and determine when to discuss certain topics with children (continued).*

- Write what to point out or what to ask on sticky notes and place them on the book.
- Ensure that the stopping points during reading are spread out enough so as not to interfere with the children's understanding of the book.





Example: *Three readings of the same book for different purposes*

- **Time 1:** Read the entire book so that children can hear the whole story or all the content.
- **Time 2:** Point out and discuss vocabulary, letters, and other interesting parts of print, such as the table of contents.
- **Time 3:** Review some letters and vocabulary and engage in a conversation or an activity based on the topic of the book.



Example: *Four readings of the same book for different purposes*



How-to Step 3: *Prepare children for listening to and discussing the content of the book before reading the book aloud.*

- When children know something about the topic of the book, they can accurately connect the information in the book to something they know, have heard about, or have experienced.
- Start by asking children what they already know about the topic of the book.
- Discuss connections between what they know and what the book is about.
- Invite children to share their thoughts about the topic.



How-to Step 3: *Prepare children for listening to and discussing the content of the book before reading the book aloud (continued).*

- When children do not have enough knowledge, present information that might help familiarize them with the topic and engage them in a multiturn conversation to prepare children to better understand what the book is about.



How-to Step 4: *Engage in conversations with the children while reading the book.*

- While reading, stop periodically at the stopping points determined in Step 2 to encourage children to discuss a word, a letter, or an interesting picture.
- Ask questions that encourage multiword answers and multiturn conversations.
- Ask children to justify their answers.
- When children have a question about the book, walk them through looking back in the book to find the answer.



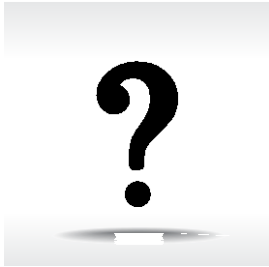
How-to Step 4: *Engage in conversations with the children while reading the book (continued).*

- If children can answer simpler questions, begin asking increasingly complex questions. Teachers can ask children questions that encourage children to
 - use vocabulary words or
 - make connections about what happened in the book.
- Teachers might include questions that ask
 - why a character did something,
 - what the character might be feeling,
 - what might happen next, or
 - what experiences the children have that are similar.





Example:
*Questions that
increase in
complexity*



How-to Step 5: *Align literacy activities with the focus of the shared book reading.*

- Interactive small-group activities provide children opportunities to use or rehearse what they learned from the book.
- When the focus is discussing the content of the book, set up activities related to understanding the story or the information presented in the book.
- Consider using puppets, figurines, or role-play to act out a story.



How-to Step 5: *Align literacy activities with the focus of the shared book reading (continued).*

- After reading a book multiple times, leave the book in the classroom library or at a center aligned with the content of the book.
 - This allows children to look through the book independently and say what they remember about the story.



Things to Think About

- *“Some of my children can’t answer questions about the book.”*
- *“My children don’t seem to understand what I read to them.”*
- *“My children have such a hard time sitting through an entire book.”*
- *“I can’t find any books that depict people like the children in my classroom. The books don’t include experiences relevant to their lives.”*

Questions and Reflections



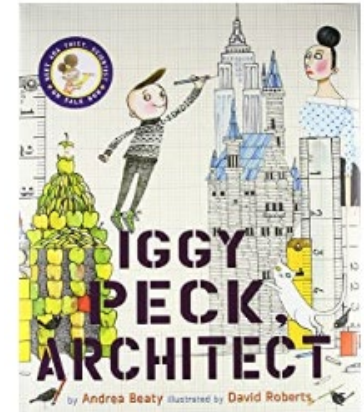
- What questions do you have about the practice guide recommendations or how SEAs can support implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?

TeacherRead



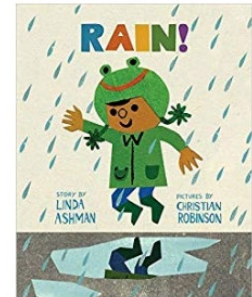
What Is TeacherRead?

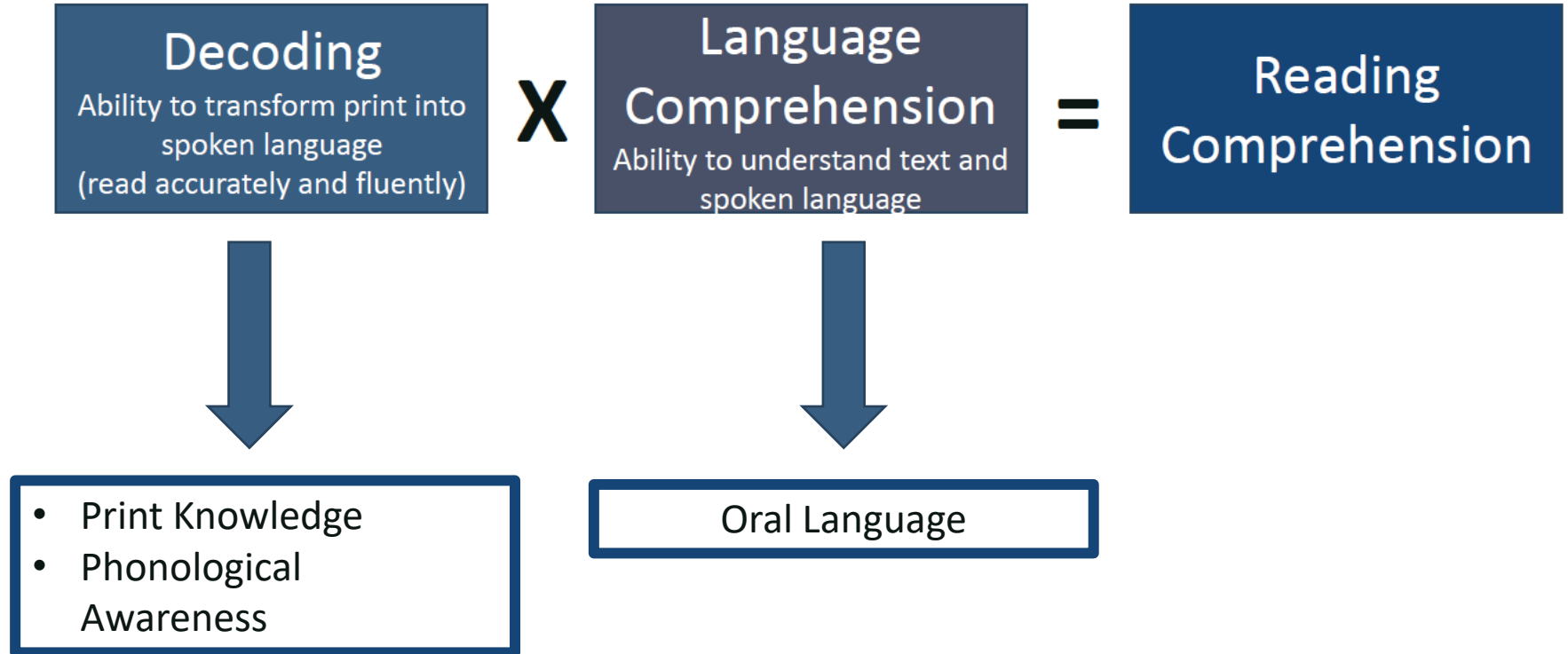
A targeted **shared book reading** instructional program designed to support the development of children's *language* and *literacy* skills in pre-K



TeacherRead

- Promotes **interactive** instructional approaches that have been shown to be the most effective for teaching these skills in pre-K
- We hypothesize that teachers and other adults can make simple adjustments to general book reading practices to promote
 - conversations with young children to expand their *oral language skills*,
 - draw attention to *concepts of print*, and
 - draw attention to the *sounds of letters and words*.



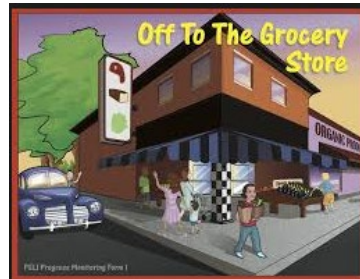


Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, DHHS. (2010). Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel (NA). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/product/346>

Tiered Nature to TeacherRead

- Children selected for the study based on criterion scores on the Preschool Early Literacy Indicators
- Goal is to provide more intensive learning opportunities for struggling learners who constitute the target group



TeacherRead Professional Development



Title & Author		My Five Senses by Ailiki								
Unit	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Book	1			2			3			
Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday					
Before Reading										
Print Knowledge										
Title/Author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the title and author while pointing to each word as you read. Draw children's attention to the front cover and the spine of the book. 									
Page Order and Print Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point out the beginning words and the ending words of the book. <i>This is where I start reading and this is where I stop reading.</i> Let's look at the front cover again. I see a boy and I see arrows. What do the arrows point to? Help students name each body part. 									
During Reading										
Oral Language										
Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P. 5 This little boy uses his eyes to (____). - If children answer correctly, say: <i>That's right! This little boy uses his eyes to see. What does the little boy use his eyes to do?</i> - If children answer incorrectly, say: <i>Let's try that again. What does the boy use his eyes to do?</i> Continue with the PEER sequence. 									
Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P. 5 What can you see with your eyes? Say: <i>That's right, you can see (____) with your eyes.</i> Ask other children: <i>What can you see with your eyes?</i> ★ Try these prompts with the other senses. 									
After Reading										
Oral Language										
Recall	Show children the front cover of the book. Ask students, <i>What body part helps us _____ (see, touch, taste, hear, and smell)?</i>									
Distancing	Ask children to talk about how they use each of their five senses.									

Book Reading Lesson Guide

- Provides guidance for teachers during each TeacherRead lesson
- Includes tips before, during, and after the book reading
- Lists instructional targets
- Provides suggested language to address targets

TeacherRead

Lesson Overview & Book Information

Before Reading

During Reading

After Reading

Title & Author	Friendshape by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld								
Unit	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Book	1			2			3		
Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday				

Before Reading

Print Knowledge	
Title/Author	• Ask the children to read the title and author of the book. Ask if that is the right place to start reading the story.
Page Order	• Show children the last page of the book. Ask if that is the right place to start reading the story.
Word Identification	• Go to the first page and point to "friends." Turn the pages of the book and ask children to look for the word "friends" on a few of the pages.

Three Instructional Targets: PK, OL, PA

During Reading

Phonological Awareness	
Blending and Segmenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the page that says, "Friendshape," tell children that you are going to stretch the word "friendshape," slowly saying each part of the word: friend-shape. Ask children to stretch the word with you, clapping once for each part as you say it. Ask children to put the word back together by saying it fast: friendshape. * Try these prompts several times as you read.

"Burst" = Prompt Repetition

Oral Language

Open-Ended Questions	• After reading the page that says, "Friends are a gift...", say: Tell me how these friendshapes can be nice to each other. Tell me what they can do. Tell me what they can say.
Distancing	• On that same page, ask children to talk about a time when they had a friend who was sad or hurt.

Prompts

After Reading

Oral Language	
Distancing	• Ask children to talk about their favorite shapes and colors.

TeacherRead: Study in NYC's Pre-K for All



- Aim: To test the short-term effects of the targeted instructional program in pre-K
- Results: Exposure to TeacherRead had positive impacts on teachers' shared book-reading practices and children's language and literacy outcomes.
- Takeaways:
 - Encourage frequent, interactive shared book reading sessions in early childhood classrooms.
 - Provide opportunities for professional learning related to best practices for shared reading.
 - Ensure early childhood classrooms are well resourced with high-quality children's books (e.g., narrative, informational, multicultural).



Acknowledgments



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Partnering institutions:



Questions and Reflections



- What questions do you have about this program or how SEAs can support implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?

Other Resources to Support Early Literacy Instruction and Intervention



Transforming State Systems to Improve Outcomes
for Children with Disabilities

Supporting Resources

This is a companion resource to the February 2024 webinar, **Supporting Practice Guide Implementation: *Preparing Young Children for School, Language and Literacy Recommendations***, the second in the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) Research to Practice Spotlight Series (<https://ncsi.wested.org/research-to-practice-webinar-series/>). The following open-access materials support the selection and implementation of evidence-based early literacy instruction and intervention programs or strategies. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list but a sample of resources that may help expand and apply what you learned from the webinar.

What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides

The webinar overviewed the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, [*Preparing Young Children for School*](#). Practice guides include recommendations for educators and schools based on research, practitioner experience, and expert opinions. For other literacy-related practice guides, see the [WWC Practice Guides page](#).

More to Come!

- Future webinars will address additional topics and practice guides.
- Stay updated with the NCSI newsletter:
<https://ncsi.wested.org/subscribe-ncsi-news/>

Evaluation Link



https://meadowscenter.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5oGjLBfhOBoF_aU6

Other Questions?



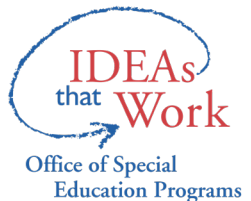
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Thank you

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Project Officer: Perry Williams (October 2019)

WestEd is the lead organization for NCSI. For more information about the work of WestEd, NCSI, and their partners, please visit <https://ncsi.wested.org> and <https://www.wested.org>.



NCSI includes staff from the OSEP-funded Parent Training and Information Center and Regional Parent TA Centers and the OESE-funded Statewide Family Engagement Centers.