Preparing Young Children for School

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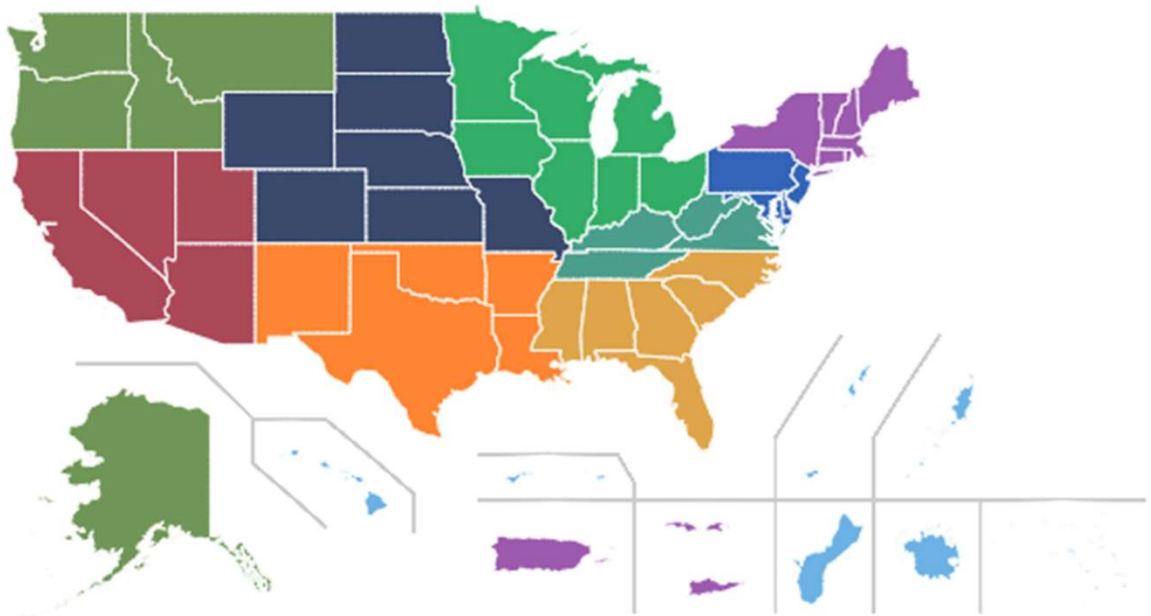
IES : REL Regional Educational Laboratory Program ☰ MENU Search Go



The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program

The ten RELs partner with educators and policymakers nationwide. REL work is change-oriented, supporting meaningful local, regional, or state decisions about education policies, programs, and practices designed to improve learner outcomes. Learn more about the REL Program.

REL SOUTHEAST

Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Southeast has many resources and research findings concerning early learning.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/region/southeast

Resources

- Preparing Young Children for School
- Effectiveness of Early Literacy Instruction

Preparing Young Children for School

- REL Southeast recently shared a resource in What Works Clearinghouse -
  - https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/30
- Practice guide combines research to create seven recommendations to increase school readiness
- 5 of the 7 have strong evidence correlated to student literacy achievement and helping prepare young children to benefit from the learning opportunities they will encounter in school

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

Recommendations by Effect Size

1. Intentionally build understanding of math ideas and skills
2. Tied - Intentionally build vocab and language; build knowledge of letters and sounds
3. Conversations about math and support to use mathematical language
4. Use shared reading to develop language, print features, and understanding of the world
5. Instruction on SEL
6. Use games to improve Executive Functioning skills

Effectiveness of Early Literacy Instruction

Includes an information on 20 years of research in teaching language and literacy.

Report

https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2021084

Effectiveness of Early Literacy Instruction: Summary of 20 Years of Research
Southeast
At Florida State University
REL 2021–084
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
A Publication of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance at IES

Domains Reviewed in the Study

Important Early Literacy Domains:

- Language
  - Vocabulary, Listening Comprehension, Syntax, Narrative Understanding and Production, Composite Language
- Phonological awareness
  - Awareness of larger spoken units like syllables and rhyming words
- Print knowledge
  - Letter Knowledge, Concepts About Print (directionality, differences between letters and words, upper and lower case, punctuation)
- Decoding
  - There is a predictable relationship between phonemes and graphemes
- Early writing
  - Letter Writing, Name Writing, Spelling, Written Expression

Infographic

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/southeast/pdf/What_does_20_years_of_research_say_about_teaching_language_and_literacy_in_preschool.pdf

What are the Implications?

Teachers should:

- Read stories and provide opportunities for students to find the main idea, connect to their lives, draw inferences beyond the text, make predictions, recall or retell the story
- Introduce new vocabulary
- Use small groups to intervene with language
- Move away from programs that solely teach language and replace with practices like interactive book reading
- Model, extend, recast, ask open ended questions, or play interactive games to support expressive language development

What are the Implications?

Teachers should support phonological awareness by:

- Using an intervention that includes a combination of exercises like identification, matching, blending, counting, segmentation, or production
- Asking students to identify initial or terminal phonemes

Teachers should support print knowledge by:

- Teaching letter names and sounds
- Directing students' attention to print by explicitly commenting on, asking questions about, pointing to, and tracking text being read

What are the Implications?

Teachers should support decoding by:

- Devoting most of their attention on phonological awareness and print knowledge instruction to lead to improved decoding skills
- Emphasizing the relation between individual sounds in spoken language and the letter we use to represent them in written language

Teachers should support writing by:

- Having students write taught letters and words
- Inviting students to write their name

Fact Sheet

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/southeast/pdf/Effectiveness_of_Early%20Literacy_Instruction-Summary_of_20_Years_of_Research.pdf

IES Institute of Education Sciences

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

Effectiveness of Early Literacy Instruction: Summary of 20 Years of Research

Children entering kindergarten vary greatly in their language and literacy skills. Therefore, up-to-date information about evidence-based practices is essential for early childhood educators as they support preschool children's language and literacy development. To address this issue, the Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast conducted a systematic review covering research from 1997 to 2017 using a review process modeled after the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) methodology. The systematic review identified rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of early childhood curricula, lesson packages, instructional practices, and technology programs that aim to improve students' performance in **language**, **phonological awareness**, **print knowledge**, **decoding**, and **early writing**. Please go to the glossary section for more information of terms in bold.

This fact sheet draws on the systematic review and explains the methodology and key findings for early childhood educators and policy makers. Click here to view the report and related files.

Eight Steps of Systematic Review

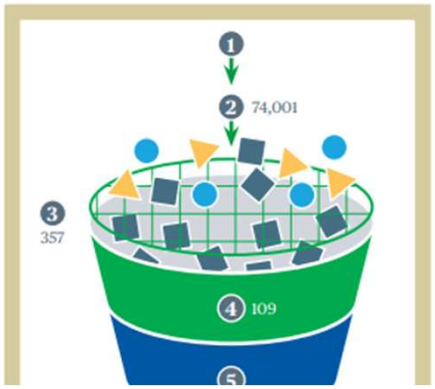
1. Establish review protocol
The review protocol includes the focus of the review, key definitions, eligibility criteria, and the process of literature review, screening, and full-text review.

2. Literature search using keywords
The research team identified **74,001** related studies using a comprehensive list of keywords.

3. Sift and select eligible studies
After removing irrelevant and duplicate studies, **357** studies were identified to meet eligibility according to the review protocol.

4. Assess the quality of eligible studies
The research team used a review process modeled after the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) methodology to assess the quality and strength of eligible studies. Based on the review process, **109** studies were determined to be high-quality experimental, quasi-experimental, or single case design studies.

5. Extract data from high-quality studies
Within the 109 studies, **132** interventions were evaluated. The implementation characteristics (for example, group size) and instructional features of each intervention were coded to summarize the similarities and



Questions?