



Office of Early Learning

Literacy Instruction Standards

Pre-Kindergarten

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
ENGAGEMENT.....	3
READING MATERIALS & PRINT AWARENESS.....	4
ORAL LANGUAGE & VOCABULARY	5
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS.....	6
PHONICS.....	7
FLUENCY	8
COMPREHENSION: DISCUSSION	9
COMPREHENSION: STRATEGY INSTRUCTION	10
COMPREHENSION: KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING.....	11
WRITING.....	12
SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION	13
OBSERVATION & ASSESSMENT.....	14
CONTACT INFORMATION	15

DRAFT

Introduction

In October 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as the instructional methods necessary for meeting the expectations of Section V of SB387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS for Preschool reflect the level of expectation for teaching early language and literacy to be used within core instruction.

The LIS for Preschool serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction with research-informed practices. The LIS for Preschool, when used with the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development 2013*, define the quality of early language and literacy teaching and learning. The LIS for Preschool are anchored by:

- Engagement
- Reading Materials & Print Awareness
- Oral Language and Vocabulary
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Writing
- Small Group
- Observation & Assessment

The LIS for Preschool provide guidance to early childhood educators on essential, evidence-based early language and literacy practices that lead to improved literacy outcomes. It is widely recognized that early language and literacy skills developed during the preschool years build the foundation for later literacy success and can mitigate disparities in achievement. The LIS for Preschool are designed to build consistency in effective classroom practices across the state that are grounded in both developmentally appropriate practice and the latest research in the Science of Reading. The LIS for Preschool are written as core practices that teachers will intentionally integrate into their daily instructional plan. Children require opportunities to engage in high-quality early literacy experiences **every day**.

These practices are expected to be incorporated into the various structures, activities, and routines of the preschool day and through a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated experiences. The LIS for Preschool do not support an isolated instructional block for “English Language Arts” or “Literacy” and are not specific to any particular approach, program, or curriculum. Practitioners create opportunities to integrate these core practices with high-quality instructional activities that support whole-child development.

Please note that this framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices. Practices included in this framework are representative of methods that have the strongest research support and are appropriate for young children. Additionally, new literacy research could alter and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

Engagement

Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students participate in reading, writing, and oral language activities

The teacher provides intentional opportunities to foster literacy engagement as children participate in reading, writing and oral language activities by:

- modeling and scaffolding children’s engagement in literacy related activities throughout the learning environment and across daily routines.
- incorporating meaningful and authentic literacy experiences within the context of play.



Reading Materials & Print Awareness

Intentional opportunities for students to access and use literacy materials and print throughout the learning environment

The teacher provides ample literacy-related materials and print throughout the learning environment and across daily routines by:

- selecting and including
 - texts of various types and genres.
 - meaningful environmental print.
 - items for writing.
 - materials to incorporate literacy into play.
- intentionally engaging, modeling, and scaffolding children's use of the provided literacy-related materials and print.
- incorporating and interacting with environmental print that is
 - meaningful to children and functionally used.
 - co-created with children and is inclusive of their print.
 - posted at eye-level.
- purposefully including and functionally using children's printed names.

Oral Language & Vocabulary

Intentional and meaningful conversations with students, providing context and vocabulary that builds upon students' existing knowledge and word usage

The teacher engages children in intentional and meaningful conversations by:

- utilizing play-based interactions with scaffolding through talking, singing, and interacting with children throughout the day, during routines and play.
- embedding language interactions intentionally throughout daily routines.
- decontextualizing language through conversations about the past and the future.
- rephrasing and extending the child's words, asking clarifying questions, modeling more complex vocabulary or sentence structure, and asking open-ended questions.

“The quality of children’s early experiences influences their language and literacy and, therefore, their lifelong outcomes. Adults foster young children’s developing language when they talk, sing, read, and interact with them throughout the day, during routines, and during play. Early childhood educators need to model, facilitate, and use language all day long.”

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators

Phonological Awareness

Intentional and systematic opportunities for students to identify and play with sounds of spoken language

The teacher provides intentional and systematic oral language activities, which progress from recognition, to matching, and then to production by:

- allowing children to explore and play with
 - words.
 - rhymes.
 - syllables including, segmentation, and blending.
 - first sounds.



DRAFT

Phonics

Intentional and systematic instruction in letter names, letter shapes, and letter sound relationships

The teacher plans and provides systematic, intentional, and explicit instruction in letter names, letter shapes, and letter-sound relationships by:

- using the developmental sequence and stages of letter knowledge acquisition to inform, scaffold, and individualize instruction.
- considering the various characteristics of letters to inform the selection of target letters, instructional methodologies, and pace of instruction.
- utilizing a multi-component approach in letter knowledge instruction, where at minimum, the letter name, letter shape, and letter sound are taught together.

Fluency

Intentional opportunities for students to hear models of fluent reading through interactive read-aloud routines

The teacher utilizes read aloud experiences to promote fluent reading by:

- modeling appropriate pace and accuracy.
- demonstrating expression that mimics the characters or content in the selected text.
- engaging children in repeated readings of familiar texts.



DRAFT

Comprehension: Discussion

Intentional opportunities for students to construct meaning through interactive read-aloud routines

The teacher utilizes read aloud routines to support literacy development by:

- planning for opportunities to embed instruction on print concepts, phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and comprehension.
- teaching new vocabulary intentionally selected from read aloud texts.
- engaging children in oral discussion while the text is read.

“Children’s language skills expand because of what they learn from having adults read books to and with them.”

LETRS for Early Childhood

Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

Intentional opportunities for students to gain exposure and experience with various texts to support comprehension through interactive read aloud routines

The teacher implements read aloud routines to support children by:

- targeting identified skills where children need additional practice.
- capitalizing on the use of repeated readings of a familiar text so students can more effectively manage their cognitive load/cognitive demands.
- engaging children in oral discussion while the text is read.



DRAFT

Comprehension: Knowledge-building

Intentional opportunities for students to build connections to prior experiences and ideas through interactive read aloud routines

The teacher implements read aloud routines to develop content knowledge by:

- selecting texts across disciplines.
- capitalizing on expressed student interests.
- selecting texts that children cannot read independently, allowing them to learn from the content before being able to read it themselves.
- exposing children to higher level, content related vocabulary.
- engaging children in oral discussion while the text is read.

DRAFT

Writing

Intentional opportunities for students to engage in written expression on meaningful topics

The teacher provides multiple opportunities each day for children to observe and engage in meaningful writing activities by:

- using knowledge of the developmental sequence and stages of writing to inform, scaffold, and individualize instruction.
- integrating writing into natural classroom routines and throughout all learning centers.
- providing authentic experiences to incorporate instruction and practice in writing their own name.
- modeling and engaging children in writing experiences that are intentional, individualized, and include
 - correct writing examples.
 - generating what to write.
 - transcribing ideas to paper (or other writing surfaces/materials).
 - identifying sounds in words.
 - matching letters to sounds.
 - appropriate letter formation/mechanics.
 - correct pencil grip.



DRAFT

Small Group Instruction

Intentional efforts to personalized small group instruction, integrating guided play experiences, that targets students' needs in early literacy skills utilizing formative assessment during daily classroom routines

The teacher utilizes small group instruction to target specific needs in early literacy by:

- providing personalized instruction for skill-based learning with groups of 2-4 children.
- integrating guided play experiences into literacy instruction.
- engaging children in developmentally appropriate practice of letter naming, letter sounds, phonemic awareness, initial sound knowledge and sound-focused activities.
- assessing progress formatively during instruction to guide decisions about next steps.
- using conversations and open-ended questions to foster oral language skills.



Observation & Assessment

Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills

The teacher uses a variety of observation and formative assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by:

- intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative learning tasks to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use.
- using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction across over time.

The teacher organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by:

- providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards.
- analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes.
- providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis.
- collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed.
- collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support.
- providing small group intervention sessions for students who need more intensive support, working with a specialist as needed

Contact Information

Amy Rhyne

Director for Office of Early Learning
Amy.Rhyne@dpi.nc.gov
(984) 236-2744

Jenni Wilkinson

Early Literacy Consultant
Jenni.Wilkinson@dpi.nc.gov

Holly Lee

Early Learning Consultant
Holly.Lee@dpi.nc.gov

Dr. Donna Albaugh

Early Learning Consultant
Donna.Albaugh@dpi.nc.gov

Sarah Morrison

Early Learning Consultant
Sarah.Morrison@dpi.nc.gov



Literacy Instruction Standards are a critical component of the North Carolina Read • Lead • Succeed program.