



Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Dear Educator;

The REL Southeast team at Florida State University would like to thank you for your interest in early childhood language and vocabulary growth. A primary goal of this project is to support teachers as they implement effective language and vocabulary strategies in an effort to reduce the gap between children from higher versus lower socioeconomic status backgrounds and promote academic success for all children.

To welcome you to the project and orient you to our timeline, we are providing your facility with a welcome packet. This packet contains key information that better explains your role in our project. Inside you will find the following information:

***What's Inside My Welcome Packet?***

- Welcome Letter including Benefits and Expectations
- Overview of Instructional Practices
- Timeline of Professional Development Activities
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Expectations for Teacher Implementation of New Instructional Practices
- Testimonials from Past Participants

***Benefits of Participation***

All participating classrooms will receive:

- Access to scientifically-based and scientifically-proven language and vocabulary supplementary lessons.
- **Complete online resources** for teachers to readily learn about and implement the strategies.
- Classrooms using the four instructional strategies are likely to have children who demonstrate strong growth in their language and emergent literacy skills, and who are likely to adjust well to and succeed in both preschool and kindergarten.
  - The instructional strategies include:
    1. **Explicit vocabulary instruction** – a whole group vocabulary lesson to create categories, create networks or use a book to explicitly teach target words.
    2. **Explicit language instruction** – an addition to typical daily center time to teach children more advanced sentence structures.
    3. **Dialogic Reading** – a small group language and vocabulary lesson that uses the book as a prop.
    4. **Incidental language instruction** – efficient moments incorporated into the school day to expose children to rich vocabulary and sophisticated oral language.

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### ***Expectations of Participation***

Administrators and/or directors agree to the following:

- Support teacher implementation of the four language and vocabulary instructional strategies in their classrooms.
- Support teachers' use of frequent small group instruction for Dialogic Reading implementation.
- Allow early childhood education coach to visit, model and observe in the participating classrooms.

Teachers and assistant teachers agree to the following:

- Complete the online self-study including videos for each of the four instructional modules.
- Implement the four language and vocabulary instructional strategies in their classrooms.
- Provide frequent small group instruction as outlined in the recommended schedule documents to be provided.
- Actively engage with an early childhood education coach, including participating in classroom observations and coach modeling of new instructional activities.

Please review all materials and be sure to reach out to us anytime you have any questions. We are here to help. We look forward to a wonderful year and can't wait to work with you and your students.

Sincerely,



[LVEarlyChildhood@fcr.org](mailto:LVEarlyChildhood@fcr.org)

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*Overview of Instructional Practices*

**Module 1:**  
Explicit  
Vocabulary  
Instruction

Focus:  
Vocabulary  
& Word  
Networks

Setting:  
Whole Group

**Module 2:**  
Explicit  
Language  
Instruction

Focus:  
Expressive  
Language

Setting:  
Center Time

**Module 3:**  
Dialogic  
Reading  
Lessons

Focus:  
Vocabulary  
& Expressive  
Language

Setting:  
Daily Small  
Groups

**Module 4:**  
Incidental  
Language  
Instruction

Focus:  
Expressive  
Language

Setting:  
Throughout  
the Day

***Timeline of Professional Development Activities***

We recommend that each instructional strategy be practiced and implemented during a 5-6 week period. Once one instructional strategy has been implemented, the teacher should layer on an additional instructional strategy. This implementation plan will allow teachers to practice one instructional strategy in Fall 2021, one instructional strategy in Winter 2021, and two instructional strategies in Spring 2022.

TRAINING	2021						2022				
	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY
Module 1 of 4 Teacher and Coach <b>Webinar 1</b> Virtual 4 hours		•	•								
Module 1 of 4 Teacher and Coach <b>Webinar 2</b> Virtual 4 hours		•	•								
Module 1 of 4 <i>Coach Only</i> <b>Webinar</b> 2 hours			•								
Module 2 of 4 Teacher and Coach Face-to-Face 5.5 hours					•						
Module 2 of 4 <i>Coach Only</i> Face-to-Face 1.5 hours					•						
Module 3 of 4 Teacher and Coach Face-to-Face 5.5 hours							•				
Module 3 of 4 <i>Coach Only</i> Face-to-Face 1.5 hours							•				
Module 4 of 4 Teacher and Coach Face-to-Face 4 hours									•		
Module 4 of 4 <i>Coach Only</i> Face-to-Face 1.5 hours									•		

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### *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q: How long does the project last?**

A: The project lasts for the 2021-2022 school year.

**Q: Do coaches or teachers get paid to participate?**

A: Eligible coaches and teachers will receive a stipend for full participation in the professional development activities. Private and public preschool providers will receive substitute payments when a participating teacher participates in a training. Teachers will also receive access to the project website with numerous sample lesson plans to download and language and vocabulary instructional support via a specialized coach. Teachers will also receive a project material kit which includes 13 children's books, learning center resources and a classroom poster.

**Q: Who has access to the project website?**

A: All participating teachers and coaches will have access to the project website. The website will be password protected and login information will be provided to participating teachers/coaches at the initial professional development. Login information is also enclosed on a separate sheet in this welcome packet.

**Q: Is the teacher allowed to go through the self-study portion of the project multiple times?**

A: Yes! We strongly encourage the teacher to review the information and materials on the website as much as possible. The website was created to train teachers on the strategies and then continue to serve as a review of the content when and if questions arise.

**Q: My teachers already have a curriculum, does this replace that curriculum?**

A: These strategies are supplemental and can be implemented alongside any curriculum.

**Q: Do teachers have to teach within certain thematic units?**

A: The provided lessons were developed within a habitat theme as exemplars of how to embed language instruction within thematic units. However, an important aspect of the professional development is to instruct teachers on how to create their own lessons using any theme or unit of study. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to use the provided lessons or tailor lessons to their own specific themes.

**Q: How might the lead teacher have to change her current instruction and routine to participate in this project?**

A: There are not mandatory schedule changes required to participate in this project. However, for teachers who implement all the strategies, as is strongly encouraged, there may be some need to make time within the daily or weekly schedule for the teacher and/or assistant to conduct Dialogic Reading lessons with small groups of children.

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**Q: How much time is a teacher expected to spend each day on implementing these strategies?**

A: The four embedded instructional strategies vary in their time allocations. Two of the instructional strategies require no dedicated time: The Explicit Language Instruction takes place during center time and simply enhances the teacher’s interactions with the children while they participate in their normal daily centers. The Incidental Language Instruction simply changes the way teachers engage in conversation with children throughout the day. Two of the strategies require some allocated time: Dialogic Reading is a small group lesson that should last between 10 and 15 minutes. These lessons can be implemented with some or all children in the classroom and ideally should be implemented each day. The Explicit Vocabulary Instruction should take place in whole group lessons and could take a few as 5 minutes or as long as 20 minutes.

**Q: What if the lead teacher doesn’t have an assistant teacher?**

A: A lead teacher is not required to have an assistant teacher for this project. However, an assistant teacher can help make small groups run more smoothly and consistently. Assistant teachers can also learn the strategies to implement alongside the lead teacher or instead of the lead teacher.

**Q: How will the assistant teacher be utilized?**

A: Assistant teachers can learn all the strategies and implement in tandem with the lead teacher. This is the optimal scenario as it provides children with the most robust classroom language support. Alternatively, their role can be to support the lead teacher by helping facilitate the activities. For example, they can work with the remaining children while a lead teacher is conducting a small group lesson.

**Q: How can administrators support successful implementation of these strategies by teachers?**

There are two best ways to support high quality implementation. First, teachers can be encouraged to complete the online self-study content, work collaboratively with their coach, and regularly implement the new strategies in the classroom. Second, administrators can, if feasible, provide an assistant teacher for at least part of each day if one is not already present in the classroom. This will facilitate the teacher conducting small groups on the daily schedule that is highly recommended and will also provide the children with two adults engaging in Incidental Language Instruction throughout the day.

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## ***Expectations for Teacher Implementation of New Instructional Practices***

### ***To Implement Instructional Strategy 1:***

- Introduce whole-group Explicit Vocabulary Instruction lessons twice per week.
  - These lessons will take 5-15 minutes each.
  - These lessons will take place during regularly scheduled Circle Time / Whole Group instruction times.

### ***To Implement Instructional Strategy 2:***

- Introduce Explicit Language Instruction interactions regularly during center time/free play.
  - Explicit Language Instruction involves brief but planned interactions with small-groups or individual children that address expressive language goals following written models provided to teachers.
  - These activities last just 3-5 minutes and take place in specific learning centers (blocks, art, dramatic play, writing, and science/discovery).

### ***To Implement Instructional Strategy 3:***

- Set aside time to conduct frequent small-group (up to 6 children) Dialogic Reading Sessions with children.
  - Each session will take 10-15 minutes.
  - Ideally, sessions will take place daily with all or most children rotating through a small group engaging in Dialogic Reading.
  - Typically, these sessions take place during Center Time and other times of the day when the whole class is not meeting together.

### ***To Implement Instructional Strategy 4:***

- Introduce Incidental Language Instruction interactions throughout the daily routine.
  - Incidental Language Instruction involves maximizing children's benefit from conversations with teachers by enhancing the way teachers interact during daily conversations with specific scaffolding techniques teachers will learn.
  - Plan to implement during routine activities such as transitions, meals, playground, arrival, and departure.

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### *Testimonials*

Thank you again, for taking an interest in early childhood language and vocabulary growth! We thought it may be helpful for you to hear about some past participant's experiences with our project.

*"My teachers and I learned powerful strategies to build language skills for our students. This professional development was carefully designed and well worth the investment of time! We are better teachers and coaches because of our participation. Thank you!" - ELA Instructional Coach*

*"Our PreK teachers truly enjoyed this PD opportunity. It has led to great professional discussions about quality instruction in vocabulary development. The ideas, strategies and materials shared were great examples and resources to put impactful instructional practices that support the standards into our daily teaching. Thank You for this valuable PD!" – PreK Coach*

*"As a coach I was skeptical, wondering how many more ways language and vocabulary could be taught that I had not already seen before. However, FCRR enlightened me and proved not only to me, but to my teachers that not only are there new ways to teach, but shared insights we had never considered before. This project will be an asset to any teacher's toolbox and educate even the most experienced on a fresh perspective." – Client Services Counselor*

*"This training was extremely valuable in emphasizing not only the importance of vocabulary and language instruction, but also in seeing the many opportunities teachers can create to help students develop their language naturally, through the everyday conversations happening in their classrooms. I would encourage every teacher who has the opportunity to participate in this project!" - Academic Coach*

*"Thank you for all your hard work during this project. I am extremely happy that I was chosen to be a part of it. All the webinars were very informative, and I learned a lot. I enjoyed everyone, especially the breakout sessions with all you ladies that I have had the opportunity to engage with through them. I will be using all materials and information I have now added to my resource library and have already been sharing them with my coworkers and peers. Thank you again and continue to keep up the amazing job you are all doing. You are a fabulous team!" – Instructional Coach*

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