



**English
Language Arts
Guidance**

Introduction

Families, caregivers, and early educators all work together to help children grow and learn. This guidance is intended to be a resource for educators to support and enhance children's learning and development while using the Foundations, Indiana's Early Learning Development Framework. While this is not an exhaustive list, this guidance is meant to serve as a suggestion for practice from birth to age five including the transition into kindergarten. It can be used to support a child's development at different levels of learning and promotes fluid movement between developmental stages. The Foundations are not intended to be a curriculum, but what children should know and be able to do throughout developmental stages. Curricula is content that children should learn and methods to teach the content whereas lesson plans are intended to demonstrate how the content is conveyed to children. This guidance is a resource for educators to use while developing an intentional lesson plan.

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

High quality early experiences help a child become ready for kindergarten and beyond. The Foundations show early educators the developmental progression that typically developing young children should experience as they grow toward kindergarten readiness. In 2014, Indiana's Early Learning Advisory Committee approved the following definition of kindergarten readiness: "In Indiana, we work together so that every child can develop to his or her fullest potential socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively, and academically. Through growth in all of these domains, the child will become a healthy, capable, competent, and powerful learner."

Family Engagement

Research shows that family engagement is a strong predictor of children's development, wellness, educational attainment, and success later in school and life. Children develop in the context of their environments, which includes family, culture, and community. We know that families are their child's primary and most important educator. Early educators can use the Family Engagement sections and the Powerful Practices throughout this guidance for strategies that they can encourage family members to use at home. We encourage early educators and early childhood program administrators to also be aware of local and state supports available to vulnerable populations including (but not limited to): 2-1-1 Hotline, shelters, food pantries, WIC offices, and community centers.

Special Populations

The Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies encourage educators to see children as unique individuals within a family and community and to be sensitive to individual developmental needs. This guidance supports special populations including dual language (DLL), exceptional, and high ability learners; however, many of the recommended strategies are appropriate and beneficial to all children. It's encouraged that educators use a flexible approach when designing curriculum and keep the needs of all children in mind. The use of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone (See Appendix B for additional information).

Additionally, with family/parental consent, we encourage educators to engage and collaborate with other professionals in closely related sectors supporting the child and family to further inform and align services. This could include professionals from education, health, and social services (e.g. First Steps/Early intervention, public schools, therapists, and physicians).



ELA Foundation 1: Communication Process

Early learners develop foundational skills to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes.

ELA1.1: Demonstrate receptive communication

Receptive language is the ability to understand the input of language, words, and gestures. The development of receptive language skills is foundational for literacy. Acquiring receptive language leads to the ability to:

- Verbally and non-verbally respond to sounds, words, and gestures
- Follow one and two step directions
- Engage in conversation
- Answer age-appropriate questions
- Listen for understanding
- Focus on and attend to discussion
- Discover that speech has patterns
- Build vocabulary

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

The ability to understand language is critical to engaging in conversation and deeper learning. Kindergarten students are often required to participate in whole class discussions and to request clarification when needed. Strong listening skills are needed to answer questions reflecting understanding of a text or topic, follow multi-step directions, and follow a conversation through multiple exchanges. Additionally, as students begin to learn to read, a larger vocabulary supports a child's ability to recognize printed words and comprehend the meaning of stories.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Model talking about their day and share their thoughts.
- Ask their child about their day (e.g. "Tell me about your drawing/picture/art from school today!").
- Talk about the daily schedule or routines.
- Try making books a part of their daily routine (e.g. read a bedtime story together).
- Talk frequently with their children starting at birth.

Special Populations¹

Educators can:

- Use gestures and visual cues to aid in understanding the meaning of words.
- Reinforce and review vocabulary that has been taught or discussed.
- Speak with clarity and provide small amounts of information at a time to allow time for processing.
- Give opportunities for the child to repeat given directions to demonstrate understanding of verbal language.

¹ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' receptive communication:

ELA1.1: Demonstrates receptive communication

A young child learns to communicate long before they speak. Creating an environment filled with rich language and vocabulary as well as opportunities to hear language gives the child the ability to listen and respond in various forms. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Recognize a child understands more language than they can express.
- Read a book many times.
- Talk and sing to children, using complex grammar and rich vocabulary when appropriate (e.g. introduce vocabulary as it relates to the environment, on walks, or field trips).
- Engage children in listening activities.
- Pose questions to determine understanding.
- Provide one-on-one, face-to-face verbal and non-verbal interactions to support engaging a child in communication.
- Offer opportunities to engage in two-way conversations with adults and peers.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Talk with infant during and about daily routines and prepare them for transitions (e.g. "I am going to wipe your nose now!")</p> <p>Talk with infant, using their name often in the conversation (e.g. "Sarah, are you hungry?")</p> <p>Verbally respond to infant's vocalizations (e.g. Respond to a infant by saying, "Is that so?" "You don't say?")</p> <p>Point to objects while talking about them</p> <p>Repeat familiar words and gestures that accompany your actions (i.e. play-by-play announcing to their actions and yours)</p> <p>Change tone of voice when reading aloud to show emotion</p>	<p>Talk with child during and about daily routines like meals, personal care, and read alouds (e.g. "It is time brush our teeth." "Today, we are having green beans for lunch.")</p> <p>Talk with child about what you or they are doing. (e.g. "I'm helping Susie clean up the blocks." "You are walking to the playground.")</p> <p>Engage in conversation using simple words, signs and/or gestures</p> <p>Match your facial expressions to the tone of the child's voice</p> <p>Provide and read aloud books with predictable and repeated language</p>	<p>Talk with child during and about daily routines like meals, personal care, and read alouds (e.g. "Before we eat our snack, we will wash our hands.")</p> <p>Repeat and rephrase questions or requests if the child does not understand the first time</p> <p>Pose simple who, what and where questions and provide adequate time for a response (e.g. "Do you know who is visiting you today?" "What can we use to draw this picture?")</p> <p>Give one-step directions (e.g. "Time to go outside! Let's get our coats." or "It's time to pick up all the cars!")</p>	<p>Reinforce child's vocabulary usage (e.g. Child: "There is a dog out there." Adult: "You are right. There is a big, brown dog in our backyard.")</p> <p>Play listening games with children (e.g. <i>I Spy</i>)</p> <p>Use positional words when giving simple directions to a child (e.g. "Put the ball on the shelf.")</p> <p>Model "if then" statements (e.g. "If it is snowing, then we need gloves.")</p> <p>Give simple two step directions (e.g. "Find your crayon box and take it to the table.")</p>	<p>Extend child's vocabulary (e.g. highlight the similarities and differences between words while playing games and reading books)</p> <p>Play more complex listening games (e.g. <i>Simon Says</i>)</p> <p>Provide new, different, varied and diverse experiences that expand vocabulary (e.g. field trips or objects to explore)</p> <p>Give multi-step directions, providing support and/or reminders to assist the child with completion of the task</p>



ELA Foundation 1: Communication Process

Early learners develop foundational skills to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes.

ELA1.2: Demonstrate expressive communication

Expressive communication is the ability to put thoughts into words and sentences in a way that has meaning. Expressive communication refers to how one conveys a message to a communication partner by gesturing, speaking, writing, or signing. Expressive communication includes using body language or vocals and leads to the ability to:

- Develop foundational skills for reading and writing
- Express individual needs, wants and feelings
- Collaborate with others

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Expressive communication develops the skill to complete thoughts and ideas on a related topic while continuously building vocabulary. Kindergarten students participate in collaborative conversations about grade-appropriate topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. Additionally, students will be most successful when they are able to effectively communicate their own needs to their educator, as well as their classmates. It is essential that children arrive in kindergarten able to take advantage of the materials, activities, and interactions in the environment that nourish literacy.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Use descriptive language (e.g. instead of “big” use the word “gigantic”).
- Demonstrate sentence structure and conversational cues by using simple language and complete sentences when talking to their child.
- Model communication skills while playing (e.g. talk/ask questions about what their dolls are doing)
- Repeat incorrect phrases correctly (e.g. child says, “We goed to the store today!” and the parent responds, “Yes! We went to the store today.”).
- Ask their child to predict what will happen next when reading.

Special Populations²

Educators can:

- Provide children with pictures or objects and nonverbal cues that communicate their interests, wants, and/or needs.
- For DLLs, use labels with pictures and words. When possible, include English and small key phrases in their native language to make connections.

² See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' expressive communication:

ELA1.2: Demonstrate expressive communication

All young children begin expressing their needs at birth. Providing learning environments that promote a safe and engaging way for children to express themselves is essential. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Model appropriate verbal and non-verbal communications to expand on a child's thoughts, interests, and vocabulary.
- Support two way communications with children by talking and sharing life experiences and individual interests.
- Encourage and allow children to elaborate on stories and conversations that prompt use of vocabulary by asking questions that require a full answer, and not a simple yes or no.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
Engage infant in back-and-forth vocal play (e.g. imitate and repeat an infant's babbling while using different tones)	Engage child in familiar books, songs, and fingerplays	Engage child in familiar books, songs, and fingerplays and encourage participation with familiar words and phrases	Encourage child to role play or retell familiar portions of a story or experience (may be inaccurate or not in sequence)	Encourage child to role play or retell familiar portions of a story or experience with increased accuracy
Label facial expressions and emotions when talking with infant	Encourage child to identify familiar objects, people, and self by pointing	Encourage child to verbally identify familiar objects, people, and self	Repeat and expand on child's verbal identification of familiar objects, people, and self with increased detail	Encourage child to give detailed descriptions of familiar objects, people, and self
Incorporate familiar and interesting objects and photographs in the environment	Model proper use of pronouns (e.g. you, me, mine, and I)	Model proper use of word tense (e.g. "It snowed yesterday." "I had carrots for lunch.")	Model and support proper use of word tense	Model and support proper use of word tense (e.g. child: "I goed to school yesterday." Educator response: "Yes. You went to school yesterday.")
Model varied pitch, length, and volume of vocalizations to express wants and needs	Repeat and expand on what child says without correcting their speech (e.g. "Cookie" can be expanded back to the child as, "Do you want a cookie?")	Encourage child to label actions with words (e.g. "What are you doing with the paint?")	When reading with child, ask simple questions about the story (e.g. "Why is the bear happy?")	When reading with child, ask them to predict what will happen next in the story
Acknowledge and encourage infant's vocalizations and communicative gestures including early sign language (e.g. during feeding, infant turns their head when they don't want the food on the spoon headed for their mouth.)	Model verbalizing and using sign language to determine wants and needs (e.g. "I see that you want the toy.")	Encourage child to verbalize wants and needs (e.g. asking for help)		



ELA Foundation 1: Communication Process

Early learners develop foundational skills to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes.

ELA1.3: Demonstrate ability to engage in conversations

Conversations are back and forth verbal exchanges between at least two people, where one person starts speaking while the other person is actively listening and then responds to the first person. Two-way conversations are how children communicate their needs, wants, emotions and interests. Respectful two way communications are how children and educators build a mutually trusting relationship.

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Engaging in conversation supports children's development in all areas of learning. Strong foundations in the art of conversations will prepare children to be inquisitive and ask questions, as well as understand the importance of listening attentively to conversation to detect the meaning and purpose of the conversations. This process builds stronger vocabulary and cognitive skills for children to think about what they hear and process their response. Conversations can also help children develop the important skill of self-regulation (i.e. when is it their turn to talk, and when is it their turn to listen). Finally, children are able to attempt to solve problems with other children independently through conversation.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Have frequent conversations with their child and use rich vocabulary while making eye contact and listening actively.
- Ask their child questions that require more than a yes/no response.
- Consider using informal times to talk to their child (i.e. meal times, driving in the car, etc.)
- Problem solve with their child (e.g. "What do you think we should do about...?").
- Use their child's stuffed animals or sock puppets to demonstrate conversations.

Special Populations³

Educators can:

- Model respectful conversations by allowing children time to process and observe how language is used by others (e.g. learning to pause, attentively listening).
- Look for nonverbal cues as when to encourage children to participate in conversations and when to let them observe.

³ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' engagement in conversations:

ELA1.3 Demonstrate ability to engage in conversations

Engaging young children in meaningful conversations begins at birth. Frequent and meaningful conversations impact the development of all learning areas including cognitive, social and language. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Frequently label and point out objects, and build on children's interests to introduce new vocabulary.
- Demonstrate active listening skills by making eye contact and being on the child's level.
- Frequently describe what is happening around them including routines, sounds, objects and other people.
- Give children time to express their thoughts, ideas and interests.
- Ask open ended questions (i.e. questions requiring more than a yes/no answer) and provide time for children to respond before asking additional questions.
- Consistently respond to and repeat children's responses and extend their statements including additional or more complex vocabulary.
- Attend to children's needs and non-verbal cues to model the back and forth flow of conversations, while building children's trust to engage in conversations.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
Engage infant in back-and-forth vocalizations	Be aware of child's nonverbal cues (e.g. head shaking or pointing)	Ask simple open ended questions and allow child time to process and respond	Engage child in conversation on topics of their interest	Give child opportunities to initiate and lead conversations
Model conversation patterns, pausing for verbal or nonverbal responses (e.g. "Do you see the puppy?" Pause for response. Infant smiles or coos. "The puppy has brown ears.")	Respond to nonverbal cues and/or gestures by giving words to actions and extending child's communication attempts (e.g. "I see you are pointing to the milk. Would you like more?")	When asking questions or talking with child, give options for response if needed (e.g. "Would you like to color or paint?")	Model typical conversation patterns	Provide opportunities for child to actively participate in group conversations in an age-appropriate manner (e.g. staying on topic with the conversation)
Model eye contact and other non-verbal conversation skills, while respecting cultural differences	Support peer-to-peer communication by giving words to use during play particularly during conflicts	Support child in taking turns during conversations with peers	Provide materials that encourage conversation (e.g. telephones, puppets)	Provide materials that encourage expanded conversation skills (e.g. puppets, story props, board games)
Play simple back-and-forth games (e.g. Peek-a-Boo, Pat- a- Cake)	Model listening to children without interruption	Sit with children during mealtimes and engage them in meaningful conversations	Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer conversations (e.g. cooperative play experiences like dramatic play area or block area)	Offer support to children when they are solving a problem or conflict through peer-to-peer communication
	Sit with children during mealtimes and engage them in meaningful conversations		Sit with children during mealtimes and engage them in meaningful conversations	Sit with children during mealtimes and engage them in meaningful conversations



ELA Foundation 2: Early Reading

Early learners develop foundational skills in understanding alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, concepts of print, and comprehension.

ELA2.1: Demonstrate awareness of alphabet

Awareness of the alphabet is the ability to understand that the alphabet is made up of different letters and to distinguish those letters from numbers or other symbols. The development of awareness of the alphabet leads to:

- Foundational skills for reading and writing
- Foundational skills for phonological awareness

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Alphabet awareness is vital when looking ahead to kindergarten. If a child already has a good grasp of the makeup of uppercase and lowercase letters, then they will be successful in starting to read early in kindergarten. Having this awareness of the alphabet allows a child to begin making word families and may also allow them to start writing their thoughts during writing time in kindergarten. Kindergarteners will also need to differentiate letters from numerals, understanding that the purpose of letters is quite different than the purpose of numerals. Additionally, a child with alphabet awareness will have an easier time learning about letter sounds and word spellings, as they begin to develop other early reading skills.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Create their own simple literacy corner/area at home with books, pencils, and paper.
- Make letters at home out of playdough, string, or sticks.
- Point out print to their children during their regular routines (e.g. “Can you find a sign with the first letter in your name?”) or go on a letter hunt with their child.
- Talk about the alphabet (e.g. “I am using the letters of the alphabet to write this letter”).

Special Populations⁴

Educators can:

- Use texture letters such as playdough, felt, or magnets to support in how the letters are made.
- Encourage children to trace letters as they say them using various mediums (e.g. using a salt tray). This allows them to feel the parts of the letter.

⁴ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' awareness of the alphabet:

ELA2.1 Demonstrate awareness of alphabet

Educators are encouraged to introduce the alphabet in meaningful ways as it relates to children's everyday experiences within the environment. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Create an environment filled with print materials to increase their skills for alphabet awareness.
- Use materials across all interest areas that are geared toward letters (e.g. using magnetic letters, letters in the sensory table, sandpaper letters to trace in the art area, and letters on blocks in the block area).
- Add print to the environment to encourage the child to find letters that they can recognize.
- Provide daily opportunities for children to interact with various books, magazines, menus, and charts in order to become aware of the different letters that make up the alphabet.
- Encourage children to manipulate letters and to become familiar with them.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Frequently engage infant in books by reading, looking at pictures, and providing opportunities to handle books on their own</p> <p>Consistently provide infant with board or cloth books (that can be cleaned and mouthed) with a variety of real pictures and textures</p>	<p>Point to pictures, words, letters, symbols, and labels while engaging with books</p> <p>Consistently provide child with board or cloth books (that can be cleaned and mouthed) with a variety of real pictures and textures</p>	<p>Display and point out each child's name throughout the environment</p> <p>Intentionally incorporate letters, words, and common symbols in the environment</p>	<p>Use songs and rhymes to increase name awareness</p> <p>Write, display, and point out child's name often</p> <p>Provide many types of reading materials, including informational, poetry, alphabet, counting, and wordless picture books</p> <p>Offer opportunities to create letters out of different materials (e.g., pipe cleaners, playdough, yarn etc.)</p> <p>Create space in interest areas where children can make letters with paint, sand, shaving cream, etc.</p>	<p>Model and support using letters for meaning (e.g. writing an agenda for the day or making a card)</p> <p>Assist child in identifying their own first name in print</p> <p>When reading to a child, point out upper and lower case letters</p> <p>Read books that also have numerals, and talk about the distinctions between numerals and letters</p>



ELA Foundation 2: Early Reading

Early learners develop foundational skills in understanding alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, concepts of print, and comprehension.

ELA2.2: Demonstrate phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is a broad skill that includes the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes in spoken words. The most difficult of these and last to develop is called phonemic awareness. This skill lets kids focus on individual sounds (phonemes) in a word. It allows children to separate a word into the sounds that make it up, as well as blend single sounds into words. Finally, it also incorporates the ability to add, remove or substitute new sounds in words. Children who have demonstrate phonological awareness are able to identify and make oral rhymes, clap out the number of syllables in a word, and recognize initial sounds.

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Phonological awareness is key when kindergarten students begin to read. The basic skills in reading include rhyming, segmenting, blending, and recognizing similarities and differences in onsets (initial sounds) and rimes (ending sounds). A strong sense of phonological awareness, particularly the ability to divide words into individual sounds and blend these sounds together, is a predictor of future reading ability. When beginning to read, kindergartners will be most successful when they are able to segment to the number of phonemes they hear in words and combine these to identify unknown words.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Read books that are rich in rhyming words.
- Play a rhyming game (e.g. “What words sound alike . . . cat, bat or cat, pop?”).
- Clap out syllables of their child’s name (Han-nah = clap, clap), as well as other familiar names and objects.
- Use “robot talk” for blending syllables. Say, “Ap - ple” with pauses at each syllable. Ask child what word was said in robot talk.
- Use “robot talk” for blending Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) words. Say “/d/ - /o/ - /g/”. Ask child what word they heard in robot talk.

Special Populations⁵

Educators can:

- Provide children with visuals and manipulatives of letters when asking them to segment or blend words, identify onset or rime, or identifying when words rhyme. (e.g. Show the child the letter C, followed by a picture of a cat). Similarly, educators can show pictures for rhyming (e.g. “Which word does not rhyme: dish - dog - fish?” while showing pictures of each object).

⁵ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' phonological awareness:

ELA.2.2 Demonstrate phonological awareness

Children need opportunities to develop phonological awareness in many ways in order to be successful readers. Phonological awareness skills can be developed through a number of activities. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Break words down into syllables (e.g. “ba-by”).
- Be aware of onset and rimes (e.g. “Dog starts with d. What other words start that sound duh-duh? Do any of our friends’ names start with that sound?”, Spoken rhyme recognition - “Do these words rhyme: dish – fish?”, “Which word does not rhyme: dish – dog -- fish?” , “What is a word that rhymes with *dish*?”
- Segment and blend sounds (e.g. “Sky: /s/ /k/ /y/” or Replace/sk/ with /b/ to create the word “by”).
- Use alliteration (e.g. ball, boy, bat, by, baby) to help children identify the onset or beginning sounds of words.
- Focus on beginning sounds “What is the beginning sound you hear in pencil?” “/p/”.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Frequently talk to infant, describe surroundings and experiences throughout the day</p> <p>Explain environmental sounds to infant (e.g. “Oh! That was loud. The door slammed shut.”)</p> <p>Consistently provide infant with board or cloth books (that can be cleaned and mouthed) with a variety of real pictures and textures</p> <p>Speak to infant using a simplified, sing-song form of language characterized by repetition, simple sentence structure, and expressive voice</p>	<p>Acknowledge when sounds are similar or different (e.g. loud vs. quiet noises, animal sounds)</p> <p>Read books and sing songs that repeat sounds and encourage child to join in</p> <p>Consistently provide child with board or cloth books (that can be cleaned and mouthed) with a variety of real pictures and textures</p>	<p>Acknowledge and encourage participation in sound play (e.g. rhyming games and creating nonsense words)</p> <p>Read books and sing songs that repeat sounds and encourage child to actively participate (e.g. pause periodically for child to complete familiar phrases)</p> <p>Provide child with books that have interesting language, rhythm, and sounds</p>	<p>Expose child to letter sounds in the environment (e.g. songs, fingerplays, interest area labels)</p> <p>Model sound play to help child begin to discriminate sounds</p> <p>Offer opportunities for child to engage in reading books, singing songs and doing finger plays that repeat sounds, have rhymes and manipulate sounds (e.g. <i>I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas</i>)</p>	<p>When reading to a child, call attention to letters and the sounds they make</p> <p>Encourage participation in sound discrimination</p> <p>Offer opportunities for child to engage in reading books, singing songs and doing finger plays that repeat sounds, have rhymes and manipulate sounds (e.g. encourage child to create silly songs and listen to and experiment with nonsense words)</p>



ELA Foundation 2: Early Reading

Early learners develop foundational skills in understanding alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, concepts of print, and comprehension.

ELA2.3: Demonstrate awareness and understanding of concepts of print

Concepts of print is the ability to demonstrate awareness and understanding of the function of print. The development of concepts of print leads to the ability to:

- Understand how print is read
- Demonstrate how print is read
- Understand that print carries meaning

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Strong readers understand and demonstrate that print is read from left to right, and top to bottom. Students in kindergarten will be able to recognize that written words are made up of sequences of letters. Kindergarteners will be able to recognize that words are combined to form sentences. They will be able to identify and name all capital, and lowercase letters of the alphabet. Students will begin to read emergent reader texts.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Visit their public library as a family.
- Talk to their child about what they are reading and why (e.g. "I am reading the directions on this box to know how to make this cake.").
- Read to their children at home and ask their children questions while reading (e.g. "What do you think will happen?").
- Take advantage of neighborhood locations they frequent and point out words (e.g. "Here is the cheese we want. This is the word 'cheese' on the package.").
- Consider using magnetic capital and lowercase letters on the fridge or a cookie sheet message board (e.g. their name, "I love you!" "See you later").

Special Populations⁶

Educators can:

- Allow print to be in different textures, sounds, interesting vocabulary, and in different languages.

⁶ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' awareness and understanding of concepts of print:

ELA2.3 Demonstrate awareness and understanding of concepts of print

A young child shows interest in different types of print at a very young age. Creating an environment that is rich in print materials and providing endless opportunity will give the child the ability to engage and understand print concept. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Label the environment in a variety of ways using pictures and words that are familiar to children (e.g. their names).
- Rotate books in the environment.
- Provide daily access to books for individual use.
- Model how print is read.
- Give ample opportunity for children to encounter different types of print.
- Provide opportunities for children to look at print independently, one-on-one, and in a whole group setting.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Consistently provide infant with board or cloth books (that can be cleaned and mouthed) with a variety of real pictures and textures</p> <p>Model how print is read (e.g. how book is held and pages are turned)</p> <p>Draw awareness to what you are reading and writing during the day (e.g. "I am writing down what you ate for lunch.")</p>	<p>Consistently provide child with board or cloth books (that can be cleaned and mouthed) with a variety of real pictures and textures</p> <p>Model how print is read (e.g. how book is held and pages are turned)</p> <p>Draw awareness to what you are reading and writing during the day (e.g. "I am writing down what you ate for lunch.")</p>	<p>Provide child with books that have interesting language, rhythms, and sounds</p> <p>Model how print is read (e.g. left to right, top to bottom) by following along with your finger as you read</p> <p>Display and point out each child's name in a variety of places for a variety of purposes in the environment</p> <p>Draw awareness to what you are reading and writing during the day (e.g. "I am writing down what you ate for lunch.")</p>	<p>Engage child in reading books that have interesting language, rhythm, and sounds (e.g. pointing to print as it's read)</p> <p>Model how print is read (e.g. talk about front cover, spine, author, illustrator)</p> <p>Track words in a book from left to right, top to bottom, and page to page when reading to child individually</p>	<p>Engage child in reading books that have interesting language, rhythm, and sounds (e.g. pointing to print as it's read)</p> <p>Encourage child to talk about and demonstrate how print is read (e.g. left to right, top to bottom, front cover, spine, author, illustrator)</p>



ELA Foundation 2: Early Reading

Early learners develop foundational skills in understanding alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, concepts of print, and comprehension.

ELA2.4: Demonstrate comprehension

The ability to **comprehend** text allows readers to absorb, analyze, and make sense of what they are reading. As the child grows, so does their language and vocabulary, and they can become more engaged in books through talking about illustrations, answering questions about the story, role playing their favorite book, and retelling their favorite story.

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Comprehension is a key skill when kindergarten students learn to read. In kindergarten, students will need to be able to:

- Understand and respond to questions about a text
- Describe the plot
- Make predictions about what will happen next
- Make connections to their own experiences
- Develop an alternate ending
- Retell familiar stories
- Construct their own stories

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Read books selected by their child together and ask questions about what is happening in the book.
- Ask their child to retell stories in their own words.
- Provide a reading area for their child.
- Listen to their child lead a picture walk of the book or make up a new ending.
- Visit the public library for storytelling events.
- Give books as gifts.
- Create a book for or with their child and include familiar people and experiences.
- Share culturally-diverse books or books in their native language with their child's program.

Special Populations ⁷

Educators can:

- Give children the opportunity to preview new vocabulary with picture cards that may or may not have labels.
- Provide story pictures for summary and sequencing.
- For DLL, share a book in their native language to build community within the environment.

⁷ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' comprehension:

ELA2.4 Demonstrate comprehension

Learning to read begins at birth. Sharing books with a child lays the foundation for a life-long appreciation of reading through the understanding of text. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Create environments that promote reading.
- Give children the opportunity to preview new vocabulary.
- Retell stories with pictures and other manipulatives (e.g. puppets or flannel boards).
- Provide picture summaries of events for children to verbalize.
- Connect information from story to life experiences.
- Engage children in conversation about books.
- Ask families to share culturally-diverse books or books in their native language with the program.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Frequently engage infant in books (e.g. while reading call attention to parts of the story such as, "Oh! The cat stepped in blueberries.")</p> <p>Engage infant in back-and-forth vocal play (i.e. serve and return)</p> <p>Label facial expressions and emotions when talking with infant</p>	<p>Frequently read and reread familiar books with predictable and repeated language</p> <p>While reading to a child, ask simple open-ended questions about books (e.g. "What do you think will happen?")</p> <p>Engage in one-on-one reading with child</p>	<p>Frequently read and reread familiar books and encourage child to engage with the predictable and repeated language</p> <p>While reading to child, ask simple questions about books</p> <p>Engage in one-on-one reading with child</p>	<p>Encourage child to role play or retell familiar portions of a story or experience (may be inaccurate or not in sequence)</p> <p>During and after reading a book, ask child who, what, when, where and why questions about the story</p> <p>Support child's interest in reading (e.g. rotate books according to child's interest, have books that are connected to learning experience such as engineering books in the block center)</p>	<p>Encourage child to role play or retell familiar portions of a story or experience with increased accuracy</p> <p>During or after reading a book, ask child to recall portions of the story and answer comprehension questions about the story</p> <p>Support child's interest in reading (e.g. rotate books according to child's interest, have books that are connected to specific learning experiences such as engineering books in the block center)</p>



ELA Foundation 3: Early Writing

Early learners develop foundational skills in mechanics of writing, ability to tell a story, and write for a variety of purposes.

ELA3.1: Demonstrate mechanics of writing

Writing requires us to engage physically, cognitively and emotionally to convey our thought process on paper. The beginning stages of emergent writing are the experiences that children have with many art materials. Children learn that the random marks on paper have meaning, and then they learn how to control and create symbols that have meaning. Children gain knowledge of and interest in writing as they are continually exposed to print and writing in their environment.

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Kindergarten students learn that writing has meaning and then decipher that letters have sounds and letters make words including their name. They then begin to link letters to other objects and feelings. They go from labeling one word objects to simple sentences that have meaning. Kindergarten students will understand how to form most uppercase and lowercase letters, as well as the proper spacing of the letters in words. The complexity of writing continues as they begin to focus on what they are writing, as well as the audience and subject they are writing about.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Provide opportunities for their child to work with playdough, scribble, draw and create.
- Provide various writing materials in the home (e.g. markers, pencils, crayons, or chalk).
- Take time to write a letter to someone or model journaling alongside their child using a variety of mediums.
- Work with their child to create books using stapled sheets of paper.
- Engage their child in making lists of tasks or items needed from the store.
- Incorporate writing in pretend play (e.g. write out food order when playing restaurant or make a grocery list when playing grocery store).

Special Populations⁸

Educators can:

- Provide materials to meet their individual needs including larger or smaller crayons, pencils, or stamps. Offering a variety of pencil grips is an additional support to meet individual needs.

⁸ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' writing:

ELA3.1 Demonstrate mechanics of writing

Writing through the early years is a complex skill that children must have plenty of opportunity to explore. Educators facilitate writing experiences by creating environments that foster a child's independent ability to explore and write freely throughout the environment. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Create environments that encourage writing.
- Provide a variety of materials for children to hold, grasp, pinch and manipulate in order to develop fine motor skills.
- Model writing and talk with children about the meaning of their writing.
- Provide children with many opportunities to see their name in print.
- Create daily individual and group opportunities for children to participate in a variety of writing activities.
- Label and model writing.
- Label and write for children and dictate their work as children recite it.
- Encourage children to write as part of play experiences with writing tools available for children to explore in all areas of the environment.
- Ensure that children's writing is valued and respected by adults.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Expose and offer opportunities for infant to explore a variety of writing materials (e.g. thick crayons and paint)</p> <p>Give infant the opportunity to grasp and manipulate objects</p>	<p>Expose and offer opportunities for child to explore a variety of writing materials (e.g. thick crayons and paint)</p> <p>Demonstrate drawing and writing as a way to communicate (e.g. simple labels of child's work as dictated by the child)</p> <p>Provide many activities that foster fine motor skills (e.g. fingerplays, use of tools, and playdough)</p>	<p>Expose and offer opportunities for child to explore a variety of writing materials</p> <p>Demonstrate writing as a way to communicate (e.g. write down what child says about their work)</p> <p>Provide daily play opportunities for child to write at their developmental level (e.g. have writing materials connected to learning experiences throughout the environment)</p> <p>Provide many activities that foster fine motor skills (e.g. fingerplays, use of tools, and playdough)</p>	<p>Encourage child to use a variety of traditional and non-traditional writing materials</p> <p>Demonstrate writing as a way to communicate (e.g. write daily schedule during class meeting)</p> <p>Provide daily play opportunities for child to write at their developmental level (e.g. have writing materials connected to learning experiences throughout the environment)</p> <p>Provide many activities that foster fine motor skills (e.g. lacing beads, proper pencil grip)</p>	<p>Encourage child to use a variety of traditional and non-traditional writing materials</p> <p>Demonstrate writing as a way to communicate (e.g. educator writes story as children tell it)</p> <p>Provide daily play opportunities for child to write at their developmental level (e.g. have writing materials connected to learning experiences throughout the environment)</p> <p>Provide many activities that foster fine motor skills (e.g. lacing beads, proper pencil grip)</p>



ELA Foundation 3: Early Writing

Early learners develop foundational skills in mechanics of writing, ability to tell a story, and write for a variety of purposes.

ELA3.2: Demonstrate ability to communicate a story

Communicating a story is the ability to respond to a story and verbalize understanding. This instills a love of language in children and motivates them to read. Communicating a story leads to the ability to:

- Demonstrate drawing and writing as a way to communicate stories
- Engage in genuine and meaningful communication
- Discuss topics that are of interest to them
- Hold conversations with adults and peers in both small and large groups

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Kindergarten students are expected to write for specific purposes and audiences. Students use words and pictures to develop a main idea and provide some information about a topic. A simple idea of writing about their family's day at the park is the beginning of a story. Storytelling also improves listening skills, which can be critical to success in kindergarten. The pure pleasure children experience while listening to stories helps them to associate listening with enjoyment.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Ask their child to tell them about their art, writing, etc.
- After reading a story, ask their child to tell or draw their favorite part of the story.
- Make books with their child using various instruments (markers, crayons, pencils, etc). As they create, ask questions (e.g. "What is going to happen next?").
- Ask their child to rewrite/retell the ending of one of their favorite stories.

Special Populations⁹

Educators can:

- Recognize and respond to children's use of drawings or symbols to engage in conversation, or when responding to a story.
- Consider using a speech to text device to visually demonstrate understanding. A child may be able to verbalize more logically than writing.
- For DLL, respond in their native language when possible and allow time for child to process and respond during conversation.

⁹ See Appendices A&B for additional information on how to support Special Populations

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' ability to communicate a story:

ELA3.2 Demonstrate ability to communicate story

A young child learns to communicate a story in many different ways. An infant can vocalize and communicate gestures in response to a story. Older children can engage in genuine conversations about reading. Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Design environments to encourage child's natural development of communication skills.
- Frequently engage child in books.
- Provide opportunities for child to use pictures, letters, and symbols to share ideas.
- Frequently engage children in conversation.
- Respond to the child's vocalization and communicative gestures.
- Allow child to use letters, numbers, and symbols without the expectation of accuracy.
- Display and point out environmental print all around child (signs, labels, logos).
- Prompt child to talk about their writing (picture(s), scribbling, letter approximations, etc.) and take dictation.
- Observe child's interest during play and prompt meaningful conversations around the topic.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
Attend to and encourage infant's vocalizations and communicative gestures	Repeat and expand on what the child says	Engage in genuine and meaningful conversations with child (e.g. prompting conversations about child's family or interests)	Engage in genuine and meaningful conversations with child (e.g. prompt child to tell more)	Engage in genuine and meaningful conversations with child (e.g. encourage detailed description of familiar objects or activities)
Frequently engage infant in books	Model verbalizing and using simple signs to express wants and needs	Demonstrate writing as a way to communicate (e.g. write down what child says about their work)	Demonstrate writing as a way to communicate (e.g. write down what the child says about their work)	Demonstrate writing as a way to communicate (e.g. educator writes story as children tell it)
Change the tone of voice when reading aloud to show emotion and excitement	Frequently engage child in books (i.e. allow children to touch books, turn pages, etc.)	Connect conversations with child to previous experiences (e.g. what the child did at home that weekend, the experiences at school from earlier in the day, a book or story that was read/told, etc.)	Provide opportunities for child to use pictures, letters, and symbols to communicate a story (e.g. felt boards)	Provide opportunities for child to use pictures, letters, and symbols to share an idea (e.g. writing letters to peers)
	Demonstrate drawing and writing as a way to communicate (e.g. simple labels of child's work as dictated by the child)		Provide children opportunities to write creatively using inventive spelling	Provide children opportunities to write creatively using inventive spelling
			Consider a class journaling project where an item travels between home and school	Consider a class journaling project where an item travels between home and school

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Appendix A - Supporting Dual Language Learners

Who are Dual Language Learners?

Dual Language Learners (DLL) are children, birth to five years old, who are developing their home language(s) while also developing English. Indiana has a formal process to identify children once they enter kindergarten, which includes the use of a Home Language Survey (HLS) and an English language proficiency assessment. In order to meet the learning needs of DLLs, educators should learn about the language(s) the children speak by conducting interviews with the family and focus on providing rich language activities for children to build their skills in all languages.

How can I support Dual Language Learners' language development?

All children, birth to five years, are language learners; some children just happen to be learning more than one language. Children who are learning English as an additional language are the fastest growing population in the country, making it essential that educators know how to meet their unique language needs as well. Much of the language used in early learning environments is new for all children, both native English speakers and DLLs alike. Many of the same supports that are effective for developing skills in the first language will transfer to children acquiring multiple languages, such as visuals, modeling, manipulatives, and peer-support. However, educators of DLLs must focus on providing varied and supported opportunities for children to process and produce language across all content and developmental areas to ensure learning is meaningful while the children are developing English. DLLs may follow an altered trajectory on the developmental continuum. "Specific consideration should be given to the nature of early language and cognitive development, family and community-based sociocultural contexts for language learning, and the psycholinguistic nature of second language development in preschoolers who are still developing the foundational structures and rules of language" (WIDA, 2014).

What resources are available to help teachers of Dual Language Learners?

Indiana has adopted the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards (E-ELD). These standards are to be used in conjunction with the Foundations. As a result, DLLs develop the social and academic language needed to access and be successful in early childhood environments. The WIDA E-ELD Standards require educators to focus on the language DLLs need to process and produce to meet the Foundations. As shown in the graphics below, educators must ensure children learn the language of each developmental area in order to learn the core concepts.

Using the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards

The WIDA E-ELD Standards represent the language of overarching developmental domains that Dual Language Learners need to use with peers, educators, and curricula within the preschool setting. The E-ELD Standards are designed to be used in conjunction with the Foundations to ensure Dual Language Learners are provided necessary language support to make learning meaningful while developing English. The connections document can be found here: <https://wida.wisc.edu/resources/connection-indiana-early-learning-foundations>

Additional resources can be found by clicking on the "Download Library" at www.wida.us

Appendix B - Supporting Exceptional Learners

Children enter early childhood programs with diverse learning and developmental needs. Each child has unique characteristics that may help or hinder the ability to learn. It is the role of the program and educators to provide a learning environment where every child can be successful.

Early childhood environments should be inclusive ones where children with disabilities and developmental delays enjoy learning experiences alongside their typically developing peers. In 2015, the United States Department of Education along with the United States Department of Health and Human Services issued a draft policy statement on the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs.

“The Departments define inclusion in early childhood programs as including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers, without disabilities, holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their cognitive, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional development; friendship with peers; and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities from those with the mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities.”

The Foundations were designed for all children. The content within this developmental framework provides the breadth of information from which to create goals and experiences that will help children reach their highest potential while capturing their interests and building on what they already know. Educators must emphasize and celebrate all children’s accomplishments and focus on what children can do.

To differentiate instruction is to recognize children’s varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning and interest, and to react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process of teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same group. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each child’s growth and individual success by meeting the individual needs of each child in the learning process. Differentiation should be used to engage all learners. In order for early educators to differentiate instruction they must first understand the developmental goals a child needs to obtain. This understanding should be used to develop lesson plans and learning experiences that help the child meet the goals.

Educators may need to adapt or modify classroom environments, interactions, and/or materials and equipment to help children with disabilities fully participate.

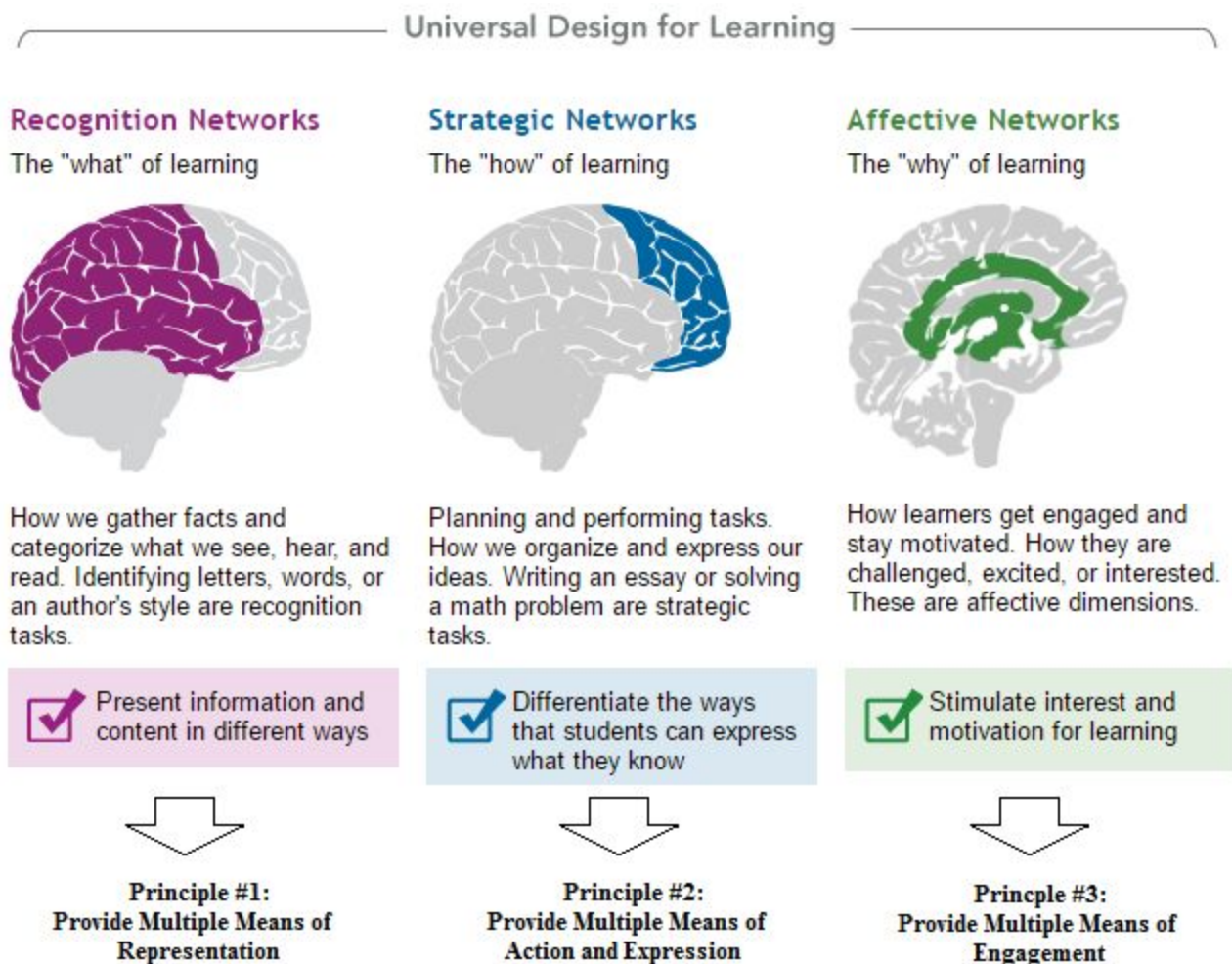
Universal Design for Learning

When using the Foundations in developing curriculum, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can be utilized to give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone. It is not a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

UDL is a theoretical framework developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) to guide the development of curricula that are flexible and supportive of all children. The concept of UDL was inspired by the universal design movement in building architecture. This movement calls for the design of structures that

anticipate the needs of individuals with disabilities and how to accommodate these needs from the outset. Although universally designed structures are more usable by individuals with disabilities, they offer unforeseen benefits for all users. Curb cuts, for example, serve their intended use of facilitating the travel of those in wheelchairs, but they are also beneficial to people using strollers, young children, and even the average walker. The process of designing for individuals with disabilities has led to improved usability for everyone.

UDL calls for the design of curricula with the needs of all children in mind, so that methods, materials, and assessments are usable by all. Traditional curricula present a host of barriers that limit children's access to information and learning. A UDL curriculum is designed to be innately flexible, enriched with multiple media so that alternatives can be accessed whenever appropriate. A UDL curriculum takes on the burden of adaptation rather than leaving it up to the child to adapt. It minimizes barriers and maximizes access to both information and learning.



(Figure 1)

The UDL framework guides the development of adaptable curricula by means of three principles (Figure 1 and 2). The three UDL principles call for flexibility in relation to three essential facets of learning, each one orchestrated by a distinct set of networks in the brain. UDL recognizes four essential teaching methods for each facet of learning (Figure 1 and 2).

Universal Design for Learning

Principle 1: to support recognition learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation

To support diverse recognition networks:

- Provide multiple examples
- Highlight critical features
- Provide multiple media and formats
- Support background context

Principle 2: to support strategic learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of expression and apprenticeship

To support diverse strategic networks:

- Provide flexible models of skilled performance
- Provide opportunities to practice with supports
- Provide ongoing, relevant feedback
- Offer flexible opportunities for demonstrating skill

Principle 3: to support affective learning, provide multiple, flexible options for engagement

To support diverse affective networks:

- Offer choices of content and tools
- Offer adjustable levels of challenge
- Offer choices of rewards
- Offer choices of learning context

(Figure 2)

Source: <http://www.udlcenter.org> Hall, T., Strangman, N., & Meyer, A. (2011). Differentiated Instruction and Implications for UDL Implementations.

Additional Resources

The Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC's) identify the core knowledge and competencies needed by professionals who work with infants, children and youth. The CKC's are an essential component of Indiana's comprehensive statewide professional development system.

https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/2016_INCKC.pdf

The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices were developed to provide guidance to educators and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promote the development of young children, birth through five years of age, who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities.

<https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/tgv6GUXhVo>

The **WIDA Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Standards** were specifically developed to help support the unique language needs of DLLs, ages 2.5–5.5 years, who are in the process of learning more than one language prior to kindergarten entry. The connection between the WIDA Standards and Indiana Early Learning Foundations may be helpful to educators.

<https://wida.wisc.edu/resources/connection-indiana-early-learning-foundations>

Literacy Specific Resources

IDOE Early Literacy Modules

- Module 1 - Reading Aloud to Young Children
- Module 2 - Intentional Instruction: The Interactive Read-Aloud Process
- Module 3 - Dialogic Reading: A Systematic Shared Reading Experience

<https://www.doe.in.gov/earlylearning/early-literacy-resources>

The **IDOE Literacy Framework** is a resource for K-12 Educators translate academic standards into high quality instruction. Early educators may find helpful as they look to differentiate instruction.

<https://www.doe.in.gov/literacy/framework>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has several resources and articles available for educators and to share with families.

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/literacy>

Zero to Three has resources and articles related to the development of children under the age of three.

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-learning/early-literacy>

Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness and Phonics: What You Need to Know

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/reading-issues/phonological-awareness-phonemic-awareness-and-phonics-what-you-need-to-know>

Family Engagement

Brighter Futures Indiana is a resource to support families in understanding and enhancing a child's learning at home and while in care. This resource was created through a partnership between The FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning and Early Learning Indiana. This can be shared with families for even more strategies on how they can support their child's development at home.

<http://brighterfuturesindiana.org/> On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrighterFuturesIndiana/>

The **Indiana Early Childhood Family Engagement Toolkit** is intended to support programs along a journey toward new heights of engagement.

<http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Family-Engagement-Toolkit-1.pdf>

The **WFYI Bright By Text Service** is for parents and adults who care for young children newborn through age 5. When parents register for the service using their child's birthdate, direct text messages will provide developmentally appropriate information, activities, and more from trusted national and local resources.

<https://www.wfyi.org/bright>

Community Resources

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide many supports and professional development for early education programs. The list of Resource and Referral Agencies can be found here:

<https://partnershipsforearlylearners.org/about/your-child-care-resource-referral-agency/>

We encourage educators to contact their **local library** for developmentally appropriate book suggestions and other resources. Please see the Public Library Directory to locate the nearest public library:

<https://www.in.gov/library/pldirectory.htm>