

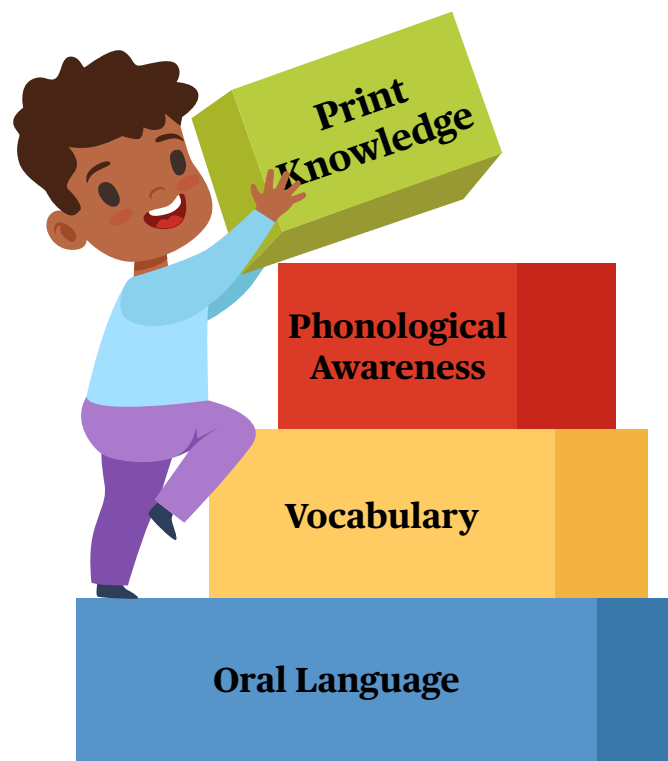
At-A-Glance Resource for Preschool Teachers

Instructional Practices for Teaching Emergent Literacy at the Preschool Level

Young children vary greatly in their emergent literacy skills in preschool. Children with strong foundational language and literacy skills are more likely to become skillful readers. Children begin developing these skills from birth through interactions, conversations, experiences, and relationships with caring adults. Preschool teachers continue that learning by focusing on emergent literacy skills and by using effective instructional practices every day.

This at-a-glance resource is designed to be a visual reminder for teachers about the four key building blocks of emergent literacy. It includes key evidence-based instructional practices featured in the [Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy \(PLC-EL\)](#) materials that can be intentionally embedded throughout the program day.

To learn more about the strategies that support children's emergent literacy development, click on the building block below or print each page and post them in your classroom.



Learn More

This infographic is part of the South Carolina *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy* partnership. Learn more about the partnership [here](#).

Instructional Practices for Teaching Emergent Literacy at the Preschool Level

Print Knowledge

When planning *what* to teach, teach letter names, letter sounds, and concepts of print.



Teach all 26 letter names and sounds over the program year.



Consider focusing on a few new letters per week, and revisit previously taught letters often.



Teach concepts of print, such as parts of a book, reading left to right, different print symbols, and that words convey meaning.

When planning *how* to teach print knowledge, embed these effective strategies throughout the day:

Small-Group Explicit Instruction	Print Referencing During Read-Alouds	Reinforce Learning Through Practice and Play
<p>In small groups, teach letter names and sounds using a routine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Do (teacher explains and models) We Do (teacher provides guided practice with scaffolding) You Do (children engage in independent practice and review) 	<p>Focus children’s attention on the print that is being read aloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly comment on text Ask questions about text Point to text Track text 	<p>Intentionally plan activities to reinforce concepts taught during explicit instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate letter shapes, letter manipulatives, and writing materials into learning centers Plan letter learning games Use daily routines to reinforce concepts Take advantage of teachable moments

At the preschool level, **explicit instruction** can be short, frequent, playful, and connected to knowledge-building themes. **Scaffold** instruction by providing supports and **differentiate** by matching instruction to each child’s needs.

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Instructional Practices for Teaching Emergent Literacy at the Preschool Level

Phonological Awareness (PA)

When planning *what* to teach, teach children to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken language along the PA continuum: **Word Level** (sunshine), **Syllable Level** (pic-nic), **Onset-Rime Level** (/m/ /ap/), **Phoneme Level** (/s/ /u/ /n/).

Blending

(putting together compound words, syllables, or phonemes)

Dog (pause) House = Doghouse

Segmenting

(breaking apart compound words, syllables, or phonemes)

Paper = Pa-per

Deleting

(removing part of a compound word, a syllable, or phoneme)

Pencil, without cil = Pen

When planning *how* to teach phonological awareness, embed these effective strategies throughout the day:

Use the PA Continuum to Inform Instruction	Small-Group Explicit Instruction	Embed PA Throughout the Day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand where each child is on the PA continuum (word, syllable, onset-rime, phoneme) Differentiate instruction so all children experience progress and opportunities for mastery of PA skills 	<p>Form small, same-ability level groups to focus on specific PA levels and tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide numerous opportunities for children to learn a new, specific skill and to review skills previously taught Use picture cards and puzzle pieces with commonly known words as prompts Engage in an instructional routine such as I Do, We Do, You Do to teach specific tasks within PA levels 	<p>Provide ongoing implicit and incidental opportunities for practice and review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implicit instruction is a planned activity that reinforces prior learning taught during explicit instruction, such as a game Incidental instruction takes place in unplanned, teachable moments to reinforce learning and can be done at any time, such as during transitions

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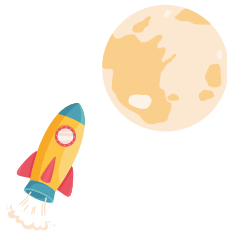
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Vocabulary

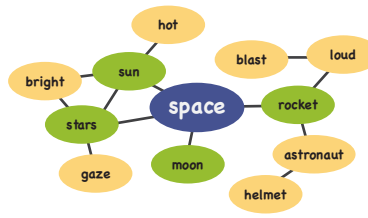
When planning *what* to teach, be intentional about word selection.



Start with a theme or meaningful topic to teach concepts and words to build children’s knowledge.



Determine concepts that relate to the theme or topic that children will learn.



Build a network of words related to the theme or topic and include varied parts of speech, frequently encountered words, and word families.



Plan activities and read books related to the theme.

When planning *how* to teach vocabulary, embed these effective strategies throughout the day:

Dialogic Reading	Explicit Instruction for Specific Words	Play-Based Interactions with Teacher Guidance
<p>In small groups, enhance vocabulary and oral language through repeated, interactive book readings by using the book as a prop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach new words • Ask open-ended questions and expand child responses • Discuss narrative, concepts, and personal connections 	<p>Intentionally design and deliver instruction for new words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include activities that help children understand the word’s meaning • Use an instructional routine (create a child-friendly definition, provide opportunities for children to say the word, and engage children in active responses) 	<p>Enhance the learning environment with specific props or activities that relate to your theme or topic and network of words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with children while they direct their play • Ask questions that invite extended responses, provide meaningful feedback, use more sophisticated words, define words, and make connections • Use wait time effectively to allow children to think about words they hear and want to say

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Oral Language

When planning *what* to teach, prioritize frequent language interactions where children have opportunities to hear, experience, and practice.



Conversation

When two or more people talk with each other to share ideas and information.



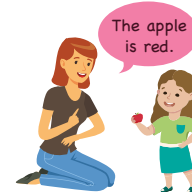
Listening Comprehension

The ability to understand spoken language.



Pragmatics

What we say, how we say it, and our body language.



Sentence Structure/Syntax

Set of rules about how to put words together to make phrases and sentences.

When planning *how* to teach oral language, embed these effective strategies throughout the day:

Model Language During Interactions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recasts: Repeat a child’s utterance with the correct syntax • Expansions: Repeat a child’s utterance with a few additional words and/or slightly more advanced sentence structure 		
Play-Based Interactions with Teacher Scaffolding	Explicit Instruction for Specific Words	Play-Based Interactions with Teacher Guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children’s language development during their play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed short opportunities throughout the day for children to practice using language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended and thought-provoking questions, engage in active listening, and employ ample wait time
Encourage Decontextualized Language	Peer-to-Peer Language Interactions	Interactive Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage opportunities for children to describe or explain past or future events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan opportunities for children to talk with each other and foster social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a book, plan discussion questions, provide opportunities for children to talk, and extend conversations

At the preschool level, **explicit instruction** can be short, frequent, playful, and connected to knowledge-building themes. **Scaffold** instruction by providing supports and **differentiate** by matching instruction to each child’s needs.

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