



Scholastic **Early Childhood Program**

The *Scholastic Early Childhood Program* (SECP) is a comprehensive, yearlong curriculum for Pre-Kindergarten that provides the most eager learners with a strong foundation in early literacy, language, math, and science skills while encouraging personal and social development. SECP gives early learners exposure to critical skills and experiences they need to form the foundation for their formal education. The program:

- Provides a full-year curriculum covering all the early learning domains
- Balances child-initiated explorations with teacher-directed instruction
- Contains ongoing assessments available in print and CD-ROM
- Integrates professional development via the “12 Teacher Workshop” series
- Features English language support strategies in every lesson
- Offers a rich parent-involvement system

The SECP curriculum actively involves children and allows them to learn through play, hands-on exploration, singing, acting, and participating in other engaging activities. Real-world themes attract children’s attention and make learning relevant to their lives. Books, manipulatives, picture cards, audiocassettes, posters, and CDs provide children with a wide variety of materials that motivate them.

Instructional Content

The systematic, developmentally appropriate SECP language and early literacy curriculum is integrated with mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and physical, personal, and social development. Students are provided with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading in Kindergarten and beyond. The SECP instruction is in both English and Spanish.

Phonological Awareness

- During direct instruction, teachers model phonological awareness and use picture cards to help students rhyme, blend, segment, and manipulate sounds.
- Children reread books, sing songs and rhymes, listen to poems, and work with the sounds and patterns of language.
- Students match pictures to initial sounds through hands-on activities.

Oral Language

- Students sing songs, recite poetry, and play games to increase vocabulary, listening skills, and use of language.
- Children participate in conversations, class discussions, and dramatic play.
- Students listen to them book audiocassette recordings and recount stories.

Print Awareness

- Children are exposed to a variety of print, including fiction and nonfiction books, poems, and song charts, posters, signs, and word lists.
- Students learn the conventions of books through daily modeled readings, and they develop concepts of words, sentences, and punctuation by following along and tracking print.

Alphabet Knowledge

- Teachers explicitly teach students the letters of the alphabet in a planned sequence.
- Students practice writing letters through activities connected to books.
- Children learn letter-sound correspondence, and they attend to letter sounds by sorting and playing games with picture cards.

Instructional Design

The *SECP* is organized around routines based upon best practices in Early Childhood Education. *Welcome to Pre-K* supports teachers in setting-up and managing their classroom, as well as creating a literacy-rich environment. Furthermore, the theme Teacher's Guides provide lessons in English and Spanish, as well as intensive support for ESL students.

Each theme includes many lessons and activities that encourage oral discussion and interaction with print materials. In addition to the collection of fiction and non-fiction literature (Little and Big Books), there are science and letter posters, math cards, and word cards that help provide a literacy-rich environment for the child.

Each daily lesson is structured in the following manner and can be tailored for half-day or full-day preschool programs:

- Circle Time: Teacher-directed, explicit instruction in oral language, phonological awareness, mathematics, and additional vocabulary and concept building across the content areas
- Story Time: Teacher-directed, explicit instruction in language and early literacy skills especially in oral language, phonological awareness, letter and sound knowledge, print awareness, and writing
- Learning Centers and Teacher's Table: Child-directed explorations across the curriculum that focus on the targeted skills and concepts for the week, as well as provide extra practice and reinforcement in previously taught skills and concepts
- Transitions: Teacher-led opportunities that use oral language and thinking skills to develop additional literacy area concepts

Each theme is supported with instruction for preparing the classroom, launching the activities, and wrapping up the topic.

Assessments

Assessments in the *Scholastic Early Childhood Program* (SECP) are administered on a regular basis and embedded in the program. They are designed to determine children's progress and abilities within each domain so that teachers can modify instruction as needed. Teachers use these assessments to differentiate instruction and meet individual student needs.

- Informal Assessment—SECP provides guidance in assessing daily work, portfolio review, and learning over time. Examples include how to use and develop observational records and individual profiles, anecdotal records, oral language checklists, and meaningful portfolios that document progress. *My Guide* provides tips for using Developmental Red Flags to identify potential learning problems and information for communicating informal assessment results with parents.
- Formal Assessment—SECP includes formal assessments for Book and Print Awareness, Phonological Awareness, Letter Knowledge Assessment, and Writing Assessment.
- Checklists for Monitoring the PreKindergarten Curriculum Goals—SECP provides checklists for monitoring Language and Early Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Personal and Social Development, Art, Music, Fine and Gross Motor skills, and Technology. These checklists help teachers to summarize assessment information periodically, and can be used to help plan instructional activities.
- Theme Checklists—track each child's progress every two themes based on objectives targeted for those themes.

Motivation and Engagement

The SECP curriculum actively involves children and allows them to learn through play, hands-on exploration, singing, acting, and participating in other engaging activities. Real-world themes attract children's attention and make learning relevant to their lives. Books, manipulatives, picture cards, audiocassettes, posters, and CDs provide children with a wide variety of materials that motivate them.

During *Circle Time*, activities such as shared reading, singing songs, listening to poetry, and reciting rhymes or chants, help children develop oral language, phonological awareness, and math skills. Activities use songs and other methods for actively involving children in verbal expression. The activities are short and focused to keep children's interest and often use props to increase physical involvement. Phonological Awareness lessons focus specifically on the tasks appropriate for PreKindergarten children.

During *Story Time*, direct instruction in language and literacy helps children begin a love of reading. Through multiple readings of literature, children begin to learn concepts of print, make predictions, increase letter knowledge, explore a variety of genres, engage in literary discussions, and examine new vocabulary. The "Getting Ready" suggestions allow teachers to build background and set a purpose for reading. "Share the Book" provides suggestions for modeling, inviting participation, and connecting the story to children's experiences. Finally, the "Beyond the Book" section provides suggestions for responding, retelling, and connecting to other content-areas. Math activities tie to the stories, and lessons on the Math Concept Cards are referenced for further math exploration.

Through the Learning Centers and Teacher Table, children experience hands-on learning across the content areas, explore open-ended inquiries, and have opportunities to practice skills and concepts independently. Learning Centers are organized to promote children's independent exploration. At the beginning of each week, SECP provides a description of each of the nine learning centers and the materials needed to plan them. The Teacher Table is for small group instruction and teacher modeling of critical skills and language.

Differentiated Instructional Strategies

The SECP provides teachers with specific strategies to reach and teach students with all ability levels, and its multimedia approach accommodates students with different learning styles. The *Welcome to PreKindergarten* Guide contains suggestions for modifying the program for children with visual, hearing, physical, cognitive, and social/emotional challenges. The Guide also specifically identifies ways to modify for multi-age classes with three- and four-year-olds, classes with only three-year-olds, and classes with four-year-old repeaters. *My Guide* provides teachers with information on setting up and maintaining an Inclusive classroom.

Strategies for English-Language Learners

SECP was developed with an eye for Spanish authenticity, both in terms of the program components and content of the Teacher's Guide. The program incorporates traditional Spanish words and was meticulously translated using appropriate language for young children while conforming to the cadence and rhythm of the Spanish language. SECP provides true equity to Spanish-speaking children and teachers with all components available in both languages, ensuring full equity and access to learning and teaching. The side-by-side English and Spanish instruction in the Teacher's Guide is a major program strength.

Letters can be taught as they are found in the program literature or in sequential order by using *Teaching Letters and Sounds/ Como enseñar las letras y los sonidos*. The *Songs and Fingerplays/Canciones y juegos con las manos* bilingual flipbook and CDs, in English and Spanish was developed to support the ten program themes. Songs and fingerplays are woven into daily group instruction in Circle Time, where children are actively involved in verbal expression. Spanish language acquisition is as important as English language acquisition; each song is a traditional Spanish-language song. Spanish-language fingerplays are authentic or carefully translated. All translation maintains the integrity of the fingerplay while using correct Spanish language appropriate for young children.


Home-School Connection

A goal of the SECP is to create multiple paths of family involvement. The program provides teachers with resources to help educate parents about their children's learning and development, as well as early language and cognitive development activities that encourage parents' becoming partners with the school in their children's education. A vital resource of SECP is *Creating Family Partnerships: A Bilingual Guide to Family Involvement*. Information resources are available in English and Spanish and include Letters to Families, Mini-books, and easy-to-use activity ideas for each theme. Also included are resources for Meeting and Greeting Families, Teacher-Family Conferences, Family Meetings, Family Home Projects, and Family Learning Night.

Professional Development

The SECP supports teachers with in-depth background and practices in all areas of child development and learning. The program provides professional development Teacher Workshops and a library of academic readings that are embedded into the curriculum.

- Scholastic Early Childhood Program Implementation Training—This half or full-day training explores in-depth all the components of SECP and how to implement the program as a year-long curriculum. Participants will examine the research base behind the curriculum framework, explore the program components and theme lessons, share ideas for setting up and managing the classroom, examine the formal and informal assessment tools, and review resources for communicating with families.
- My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Professional Development provides an in-depth background on all areas of child development and learning. The most respected names in Early Childhood education and research are included in these handbooks. These resources will help teachers better understand and observe children's behavior from a developmental perspective, develop strong communication with families, and develop assessment strategies that inform curriculum. Topics included are Observation and Assessment, Child Development, Language Acquisition, Early Literacy, Technology, Cross-Curriculum Content Areas, and Embracing Diversity and the Inclusive Classroom.
- Teacher Workshops is a series of twelve cooperative workshop sessions designed to facilitate discussions among teaching teams. Each workshop consists of a four-step plan centered on a research-based article written by a noted expert such as Dr. Susan Neuman, Dr. Stanley Greenspan, Lillian Katz, or Doug Clements. The Teacher Workshops are designed to support teachers' academic knowledge and instructional practices. The Workshops are: Phonological Awareness, Print Knowledge, Literacy and Play, Building Language Through Song, Language and Cultural Heritage, Nonfiction Books, Geometry and Young Children, The Math in Music, Discovery Science, Fostering Responsibility, The Project Approach, and Children with Special Needs.
- Optional Scholastic Early Literacy Seminars engage Early Childhood Educators in the essentials necessary for running language and literacy-rich classrooms. Workshop presenters are early literacy experts with years of classroom and professional development experience. These eight half-day seminars can be customized to meet district needs: Managing Your Classroom and Small Group Instruction; Developing Oral Language; Building Letter Knowledge and Phonological Awareness; Supporting English-Language Learners; Building Content-Area Knowledge; Connecting School and Home; Developing Print Awareness and Writing; and Teaching Each Child.

 For additional information about the *Scholastic Early Childhood Program*, visit: www.scholastic.com/secp.