



Pre-Application Toolkit
Early Reading First
Featuring Scholastic Early Childhood Program™

**SCHOLASTIC
OFFICE OF
EDUCATIONAL
ASSISTANCE**

Scholastic Inc. has prepared this Grant Assistance Toolkit to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and/or public or private organizations or agencies in the development of an *Early Reading First (ERF)* grant program. The Toolkit provides key information in these areas:

- ◆ Funding program information
- ◆ Alignment of the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** to *ERF* grant requirements
- ◆ Grant writing support

Scholastic Early Childhood Program is the research-based reading program featured in this Toolkit.

The **Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)** is a comprehensive Pre-Kindergarten program that is structured around the following pedagogy: curriculum, methodology, and cognitive socialization. The program is based upon the critical principles of best practices in Early Childhood Education, as well as key research findings about the relationship between what is determined by genetic factors and what is shaped by a child's environment and interactions. This research-based foundation addresses the critical areas for a successful high-quality curriculum and environment for young learners. These areas include:

- ◆ Effective curriculum, assessments and evaluations
- ◆ Relevant professional development
- ◆ Strong school/home connections and family support

Using the Toolkit

This Toolkit is designed as a resource to provide information that can be used when completing the pre-application for *ERF* grant funds. It only addresses application requirements that are pertinent to Scholastic products and services and does not cover all *ERF* expectations.

The Toolkit also includes grant writing tips and examples of the types of information needed when applying for a grant. Contact the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) for the official application that has all the requirements and guidelines.

Please note these symbols throughout the Toolkit to help you write your application:

 **Highlights additional support and suggestions for writing your application.**

 **Refers to Scholastic Early Childhood Program features.**

Scholastic's Commitment

Scholastic is committed to the sustainability of quality programs in order to improve teaching and learning. For more information about the products included in this Toolkit, please contact your Scholastic Regional Office.

Far West
800-342-5331

Northeast
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Southeast
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 *Because every grant program is unique, it is important to adapt the language provided in this Toolkit rather than copy it. Your proposal is more likely to be successful if you **customize** your application. Be sure to incorporate specific information about your program's needs, vision, programs, and design when you write your *Early Reading First* application.*

Funding Program Overview: *Early Reading First*

The information in this section of the Toolkit is based on the federal *Guidance for the ERF Program* (March 2003) and the *Fiscal Year 2006 Application for New Grants for the ERF Program* that is available at this website:


<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Purpose of *Early Reading First*

Title I, Part B, Subpart 2 of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* is known as *Early Reading First*. The ultimate goal of the *ERF* is to improve the school readiness of our nation's young children, especially those from low-income families, by providing support for Early Childhood Education programs serving preschool-age children so they may become preschool Centers of Educational Excellence.

Specifically, *Early Reading First* grants will provide funds to:

1. Support local efforts to enhance the early language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research
2. Provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and print-rich environments so that they can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond
3. Use language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research to support the age-appropriate development of:
 - ◆ *Oral language*—vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension
 - ◆ *Phonological awareness*—rhyming, blending, segmenting
 - ◆ *Print awareness*
 - ◆ *Alphabet knowledge*—letter recognition
4. Use screening assessments or other appropriate measures to identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure, and to determine whether those children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success
5. Integrate instructional materials and programs based on scientifically based reading research into existing preschool programs

 **The Scholastic Early Childhood Program** is designed to ensure that children develop language and early reading skills in the four critical areas outlined by ERF including: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabetic knowledge. The central goal of the program is to help guarantee that young children develop the critical skills, knowledge, and life habits necessary to become successful learners, especially in the areas of language and literacy development.

Eligibility


The U.S. Department of Education will award *Early Reading First* grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants, as described below:

1. **School Districts:** One or more Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) identified as being eligible on the list of “Eligible LEAs” that is posted on the US DOE website for the FY 2006 *ERF* program grant competition at:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/eligibility.html>
2. **Public or Private Organizations:** One or more public or private organizations or agencies—including faith-based organizations—located in a community served by an eligible LEA. Unless the public or private organization is a preschool program applying on its own behalf, it must apply on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool-age children, such as a Head Start program, a child care program, a family literacy program such as Even Start, or a lab school or university.
3. **A Collaborative:** One or more of the eligible LEAs, applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.


What Projects Must Do


Early Reading First provides funding and support to turn preschool programs into Centers of Educational Excellence by improving instruction and classroom environments through scientific research-based practices in language, cognition, and early reading.


All *Early Reading First* projects must provide the following activities:

-  **For more information about these activities, as well as research-based approaches and strategies, the *Early Reading First* Guidance is available at:**


<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/legislation.html>


1. **Classroom Environment:** Provide preschool-age children with high-quality oral language and print-rich environments in which to acquire oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
 *The Scholastic Early Childhood Program is a Pre-Kindergarten curriculum that provides a rich environment of print and non-print experiences related to language and literacy development. Children engage in meaningful, fun activities that help them build their awareness of the sounds of language. They are exposed to a variety of print, including fiction and nonfiction trade books, poems, signs, lists, and recipes.*
2. **Professional Development:** Provide professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development that will assist in developing the preschool-age children's:
 - ◆ *Oral language*—expressive and receptive language, including vocabulary development
 - ◆ *Phonological awareness*—rhyming, blending, and segmenting
 - ◆ *Print awareness*
 - ◆ *Alphabet knowledge*—letter recognition


 *Effective, research-based professional development is integrated into the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program**. My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Curriculum Development provides teachers with in-depth background on all areas of child development and learning. The Teacher Workshops book is a series of 12 cooperative workshop sessions designed to facilitate discussions with teaching teams. Each workshop consists of a four-step plan centered on research-based articles written by noted Early Childhood experts.*

 *During optional, half-day Scholastic Early Literacy Seminars, participants learn research-based, best practices for developing students' oral language, phonological awareness, print-awareness, and alphabet knowledge. (Please see www.scholastic.com/ecseminars for more information.)*


3. **Services and Instructional Materials:** Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills.

 *The language and early literacy curriculum of the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** is based upon the National Research Council report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*.*


 ***SECP** includes *Welcome to Pre-Kindergarten: A Guide for Setting Up and Managing Your Classroom*. This Guide is a tool that is based on best practices in Early Childhood Education, and is designed to help teachers organize their classroom and manage their daily routine. Highlights include: *Modifying the program for children with special needs, Grouping Flexibility, Thematic Planning**


 ***SECP** is organized around 10 relevant themes reflecting real-world experiences common in the lives of preschoolers. Each theme comes with a Teacher's Guide organized for preparing and executing the weekly curriculum plans. The instructional framework puts language and literacy first within an integrated curriculum ensuring children achieve readiness in the four core skill areas:*

- ◆ Oral language
- ◆ Phonological awareness
- ◆ Letter and sound knowledge
- ◆ Print awareness


 *Realizing that many of our students are learning English as a second language, **SECP** includes intensive support for ESL students. To support the large and growing Spanish-speaking population, **SECP** provides all materials in both English and Spanish.*

4. **Screening Assessments:** Acquire, provide training in the use of, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success.

 ***Appropriate assessment measures** and progress monitoring resources and strategies are embedded into the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program**. The program contains both print and computer-based informal and formal assessments that can be found in My Guide and the **SECP Teacher's Toolkit CD**.*


 **SECP** provides guidance in three types of informal assessment: *Daily Work, Portfolio Review, and Learning Over Time*. In addition, *My Guide* and the *Teacher's Toolkit* provide examples of the following informal assessments:


- ◆ *Observational records and individuals' profiles*
- ◆ *Information on how to develop anecdotal records*
- ◆ *Oral language checklists*
- ◆ *Information on developing meaningful portfolios that document progress*

 *My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Curriculum Development* also provides formal assessments in the following key areas of early literacy:

- ◆ *Book and print awareness*
- ◆ *Phonological awareness*
- ◆ *Letter knowledge assessment*
- ◆ *Writing assessment*

5. **Integration:** Integrate the above instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's overall programs.

 *The instructional design of the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** allows for both teacher-initiated direct instruction and child-initiated explorations. The central goal of the program is to help guarantee that young children develop the critical skills, knowledge, and life habits to become successful learners, especially in the areas of language and literacy development.*

 **SECP** provides planning flexibility with themes and lessons that adapt easily to classroom needs, as well as grouping flexibility with suggestions and activities for different collaborative settings.

6. **Coordinate with Reading First:** If applicants are located in a school district that receives a subgrant under the *Reading First* program, coordinate their *Early Reading First* activities with the school district's *Reading First* activities to ensure continuity for children between the Pre-Kindergarten program and Kindergarten through Grade 3 reading instruction.

7. **Report Annually:** Submit to the USDOE annual performance reports. Additionally, the annual performance report must report the project's performance against the GPRA indicators using the following two measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the *Early Reading First* program:

- ◆ The percentage of preschool-age children participating in *Early Reading First* programs who achieve significant gains on oral language skills as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III, Receptive
- ◆ The average number of letters that preschool-age children are able to identify as measured by the Upper Case Alphabet Knowledge subtask on the PALS Pre-K assessment

8. **Cooperate with any Evaluation:** Participate fully in any evaluation of the *Early Reading First* program carried out by the USDOE.


Invitational Priorities

The Secretary has established three invitational priorities for the FY 2006 *Early Reading First* program.

1. The Secretary is especially interested in proposals that would use *ERF* funds to support preschool programs that operate full-time, full-year Early Childhood Educational programs, at a minimum of 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, 46 weeks per year, and that serve children for the two consecutive years prior to their entry into Kindergarten.
2. The Secretary is especially interested in projects in which, in all preschool centers supported by *ERF* funds, at least 75% of the children enrolled in the preschool qualify to receive free or reduced-priced lunches; or at least 75% of the children enrolled in the elementary school in the school attendance area in which that center is located qualify to receive free or reduced-price lunches.
3. The third invitational priority is for applicants serving children with limited English proficiency (LEP). The Secretary is especially interested in applicants including a specific plan for the development of English language proficiency for these children from the start of their preschool experience. The English language acquisition plan should, at a minimum,
 - A. Include a description of the approach for the development of a strong language base, which is a necessary precursor for success in the development of pre-literacy and literacy skills for children with limited English proficiency
 - B. Explain the instructional strategies, based on best available valid and reliable research, that the applicant will use to address English language acquisition in a multi-lingual classroom
 - C. Describe how the project will facilitate the children's transition to English proficiency by means such as the use of environmental print in appropriate multiple languages, and hiring bilingual teachers, paraprofessionals, or translators to work in the preschool classroom
 - D. Include intensive professional development for instructors and paraprofessionals on the development of English language proficiency
 - E. Include a timeline that describes benchmarks for the introduction of the development of English language proficiency and the use of measurement tools

 ***Ideally, at least one instructional staff member in each ERF classroom should be dual-language proficient both in a child's first language and in English to facilitate the child's understanding of instruction and transition to English proficiency.***

 ***Applications that address these Invitational Priorities do NOT receive any absolute or competitive preference.***

 *Every SECP lesson provides ESL/ELL strategies to use during Circle Time. These are designed to involve children who are acquiring English in the Oral Language, Math, and Phonological Awareness activities. In addition, each lesson contains an ESL support activity that offers ideas on how to modify lessons during Story Time.*

 *SECP is the only comprehensive Pre-Kindergarten program that provides full equity of instruction in English and Spanish.*

The Secretary encourages applicants to propose comprehensive approaches in designing their *ERF* programs to ensure that preschool-age children will possess the reading readiness skills they will need in school. For example, research shows that the following are important ingredients in young children's acquisition and retention of language, cognitive, and early reading skills:

- ◆ **Intensity of services**—Applicants are encouraged to think about how to increase the *intensity* of the existing preschool education services that focus on language and cognitive development, in addition to increasing the quality of instruction, early learning environments, and professional development.
- ◆ **Building Children's Background Knowledge and Thinking Skills**—Applicants are encouraged to think about how to weave content—for example, science, math, or geography—throughout the preschool program to enrich children's language and early reading skills as well as their background knowledge.

📖 *The SECP curriculum puts the development of language and early literacy first within the integration of these domains: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Physical Development, and Personal and Social Development.*

Competitive Priority NOVICE APPLICANT

Early Reading First pre-applications that are submitted by a *novice applicant* or a *group of novice applicants* will receive five extra points. To receive points under this pre-application competitive priority an applicant must:

1. Qualify as a novice applicant as described below:
2. Check “Yes” in response to the applicable question on the Supplemental Information form accompanying the Application for Federal Assistance Form (SF-424) or on the Application for Federal Assistance Form (SF-424) that the applicant files with its pre-application.

Electronic Submissions: Applicants must check “Yes” in response to Question 2 on the form entitled “Supplemental Information Required for Department of Education” accompanying SF-424, included on ED’s electronic Grants.gov Apply site: <http://www.grants.gov>

Paper Format Submission: (For applicants who qualify for an exception to electronic submission) Applicants must check “Yes” in response to Question 6 on Form ED-424, included in this application package.

A “novice applicant” means any applicant for a grant from USDOE that:

- A. Has never received a grant or subgrant under the program for which it seeks funding,

AND

- B. Has never been a member of a group application, that received a grant under the program for which it seeks funding,

AND

- C. Has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under the program



Questions regarding eligibility for this competitive priority may be submitted to:

Jill.Stewart@ed.gov or by phone to 202-260-2533
Rebecca.Haynes@ed.gov or by phone to 202-260-0968

The Pre-Application Process

Pre-applications for grants under the *Early Reading First* grant program **must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site at <http://www.grants.gov>**, unless the applicant qualifies for an exception to the electronic submission requirement explained in Section C of the application package.

Through the Grants.gov Apply site, applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the pre-application.

The deadline for electronic submission of *Early Reading First* program Pre-Applications is 4:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, February 21, 2006.

Please note that the Grants.gov site works differently than the U.S. Department of Education's e-Application system. To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, ED recommends that you:

1. **REGISTER EARLY**—Grants.gov registration is a one-time process that may take five (5) or more days to complete. Applicants may begin working on their application while completing the registration process.
2. **SUBMIT EARLY**—ED strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the last day to submit applications. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on applications and then process them after they have been fully uploaded.
3. **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK**—Applicants will want to verify that Grants.gov and ED receive their Grants.gov submission timely, and that it is validated successfully.

 ***Please see Section D of the ERF Pre-application package for specific instructions for electronic submission.***

The Pre-Application


Part I of the pre-application

- ◆ Electronic Submission (SF-424): Applicants must complete and electronically submit Form SF-424 with their pre-application narrative, and the form entitled “Supplemental Information Required for Department of Education” available at <http://www.grants.gov>
- ◆ Paper Format Submission (SF-424): Applicants that qualify for an exception to electronic submission must complete and submit SF Form 424. See Section D for specific instructions on completing and submitting Form SF 424.
- ◆ Pre-Application Competitive Priority—Novice Applicants: Applicants submitting an electronic application must check “Yes” in response to Question 2 on the form entitled “Supplemental Information Required for Department of Education Application.” Applicants submitting in paper format must check “Yes” in response to Question 6 on the Application for Federal Education Assistance Form SF-424.
- ◆ Abstract—Applicants must submit a one-page, double-spaced Abstract, briefly describing their proposed project.
- ◆ Title Page
- ◆ Table of Contents

Part II of the pre-application

- ◆ Pre-application Narrative—The 10-page pre-application narrative should respond to the pre-application selection criteria in the order in which they are listed. For electronic submissions, attach the narrative to the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in the Grants.gov application package.

Part III of the pre-application

- ◆ List of names and addresses of existing preschool programs that the proposed *ERF* project would support, including a brief description indicated under Quality of Project Design, Note, Purpose 1
 - ◆ Endnote citations
 - ◆ Applicants that respond to the invitational priority for programs that serve children with limited English proficiency (LEP) may include in the appendices a two-page English language acquisition plan.
-  ***For a complete list of all required forms and information, please consult the pre-application Final Checklist located in Section D of the Early Reading First pre-application package, CFDA No. 84.359A.***

Following a review of the pre-applications, the ED will determine which applicants are invited to submit full applications.


Pre-Application Deadline: February 21, 2006


Early Reading First Criteria


Early Reading First is a federal grant program that is part of the President’s Early Childhood Initiative, “Good Start, Grow Smart.” These grants are designed to help existing Early Childhood Education programs become Centers of Educational Excellence for preschool-age children. Through improvements in the instruction and classroom environment, children will develop the critical language, literacy, and cognitive skills that will prepare them for success in Kindergarten.


Applicants for *ERF* funds must ensure that their program aligns with the following key emergent literacy skills:

- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge

Early Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Early Childhood Program
<p>Oral Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of expressive and receptive language including vocabulary, the contextual use of speech and syntax, and oral comprehension abilities 	<p>Early reading research on oral language development shows that the quality and amount of adult/child discourse is critical. Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP) directly introduces cognitively challenging talk and conversational opportunities through its Circle Time, Story Time, and Learning Centers activities that are centered on thematic investigations.</p> <p><u>Circle Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sing songs, recite poetry, and play games to increase vocabulary, listening skills, and use of language ▪ Participate in conversations and class discussions ▪ Respond to open-ended questions <p><u>Story Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop reading comprehension skills through shared readings ▪ Practice and explore vocabulary and language use through group discussions <p><u>Learning Centers & Teacher Table</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in adult/child conversation during small groups and at the Teacher Table to build oral language. ▪ Recount and interpret stories through dramatic play ▪ Play words games using CD-ROMS ▪ Listen to Big Book audiocassette recordings and recount stories <p>Children work at the Teacher Table while other children are working independently at Learning Centers. Teachers deliver small-group instruction during Circle Time activities, math lessons on the Math Concept Cards, and rereadings of theme books.</p>

Early Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Early Childhood Program
<p>Phonological Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying and making oral rhymes ▪ Identifying and working with syllables in spoken words through segmentation and blending ▪ Identifying and working with “onsets and rimes” ▪ Identifying and working with individual sounds in words 	<p>Early reading research on phonological awareness shows that repetition and interactions with new and familiar songs and poems help children become aware of sounds and their combinations. SECP provides multiple opportunities for both teacher-led and child-initiated activities that develop phonological awareness.</p> <p><u>Circle Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice phonological awareness through modeled lessons ▪ Respond and interact with Phonological Awareness Picture Cards with guidance from teachers ▪ Listen to and sing along with the Songs and Fingerplays CD <p><u>Story Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend to sounds in books with repetitive and rhyming text ▪ Practice phoneme isolation, segmentation, and blending through lessons focused on words and letters from stories they are reading <p><u>Learning Centers & Teacher Table</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore beginning word sounds and match pictures to initial sounds through hands-on activities ▪ Learn letter/sound relationships and learn the connection between how their names sound and how they appear in print ▪ Identify and match words that rhyme
<p>Print Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print 	<p>Throughout SECP, children are exposed to a variety of print. Activities include having teachers and children construct print in a variety of forms and for many different purposes. These activities are designed to help children understand that print carries a message. Through multiple encounters with the provided materials, and the recommended teacher modeling strategies, children develop critical concepts of print that aid the reading and writing process.</p> <p><u>Circle Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create and read class charts related to the content studied ▪ Read and track print on poem charts <p><u>Story Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn the conventions of books through daily modeled readings ▪ Begin to develop a sight word vocabulary through high-frequency word charts ▪ Develop concepts of words, sentences, and punctuation by following along and tracking print <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>

Early Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Early Childhood Program
<p>Print Awareness, Continued</p>	<p><u>Learning Centers & Teacher Table</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Track print while listening to Big Book audiocassette recordings ▪ Begin to understand the connection between reading and writing and obtaining information ▪ Develop book-handling skills in the Reading Corner
<p>Alphabet Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter recognition 	<p>SECP provides multiple means to teach children letter sounds, letter forms, and letter/sound correspondence.</p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p><u>Teaching Letters and Sounds Teacher's Guide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presents systematic and explicit instruction for teaching letter names and formations to be conducted in small groups ▪ Offers strategies and activities for helping children make meaning of the letters <p><u>Teacher Table "ABC & Writing Center"</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides small-group instruction of ABC lessons. <p><u>Teacher's Guides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give teachers guidelines for introducing and reinforcing letter names and formation through multiple approaches: Circle Time (singing and movement), Story Time (letters and sounds in books), and Learning Centers (paint, make letters in sand). <p>Curriculum:</p> <p><u>Circle Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn letter sound relationships ▪ Attend to letter sounds by sorting and playing games with picture cards ▪ Form letters through movement (signing, dancing, walking the letter shape, etc.) <p><u>Story Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn the letters of the alphabet in a planned sequence through explicit lessons ▪ Practice writing letters and words through activities connected to books <p><u>Learning Centers & Teacher Table</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin to recognize letters by creating labels and writing messages ▪ Begin to sign their names on cards


 Please contact your Scholastic representative for Scholastic Early Childhood Program's complete Scope and Sequence.

SECP Alignment to Early Reading First Required Activities


In addition, *Early Reading First* programs must include the following components:

- Classroom Environment
- Professional Development
- Services and Instructional Materials
- Screening Assessments
- Integration

The following chart details how the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** fulfills the above *ERF* required activities.

Early Reading First Activity	 Scholastic Early Childhood Program
<p>Classroom Environment</p> <p>A high-quality oral language and print-rich environment</p>	<p>The SECP is organized around routines based upon best practices in Early Childhood Education. <i>Welcome to Pre-K</i> 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Each daily lesson is structured in the following manner and can be tailored for half-day or full-day preschool programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Circle Time</u>: Teacher-directed, explicit instruction in oral language, phonological awareness, mathematics, and additional vocabulary and concept building across the content areas ▪ <u>Story Time</u>: Teacher-directed, explicit instruction in language and early literacy skills especially in oral language, phonological awareness, letter and sound knowledge, print awareness, and writing ▪ <u>Learning Centers and Teacher’s Table</u>: 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 ▪ <u>Transitions</u>: Teacher-led opportunities that use oral language and thinking skills to develop additional literacy area concepts <p>Each theme is supported with instruction for preparing the classroom, launching the activities, and wrapping up the topic.</p>

Early Reading First Activity	 Scholastic Early Childhood Program
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Professional development that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development</p>	<p>Multiple professional development opportunities and support exist for the Scholastic Early Childhood Program.</p> <p><u><i>My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Professional Development</i></u>, which is integrated into the curriculum, includes a library of professional readings on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation and Assessment ▪ Child Development ▪ Language Acquisition ▪ Early Literacy ▪ Technology ▪ Cross-Curriculum Content Areas ▪ Embracing Diversity ▪ Inclusion in the Classroom <p><u>Integrated Teacher Workshops</u>, a series of 12 cooperative workshop sessions, are based upon the above readings written by experts such as Dr. Susan Neuman, Dr. Stanley Greenspan, and Lillian Katz. (Please e-mail secp@scholastic.com to obtain details on these workshops, which may be eligible in your district for professional development credit hours.)</p> <p><u>Scholastic Early Literacy Seminars</u> is a series of eight, half-day seminars that can be customized to meet district needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 ▪ Teaching Each Child <p><u>In-service day</u> conducted by a Scholastic Reading Specialist is offered free of charge for grantees using the Scholastic Early Childhood Program as part of their curriculum.</p>
<p>Services and Instructional Materials</p> <p>Activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing language, cognitive, and early reading skills</p>	<p>The instructional design of SECP is based upon a model of sociocultural theory that promotes the importance of educators and caregivers providing young children with informed instruction, support, and meaningful activities. The central goal of the program is to help guarantee that young children develop the critical skills, knowledge, and life habits to become successful learners, especially in the areas of language and literacy development.</p> <p> <i>For the Research Foundation of SECP, see page 49.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Welcome to Pre-K Guide</u>: SECP provides this professional guide to help teachers organize their classroom, manage their schedule, and create daily routines. It includes ideas for modifying the program to support all children, including those with visual, hearing, physical, cognitive, and social/emotional challenges <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>

Early Reading First Activity	 Scholastic Early Childhood Program
<p>Services and Instructional Materials—Continued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Theme Teacher Guides</u>: There is a Teacher’s Guide for each of the 10 themes, which is organized by weekly and daily lesson plans. These provide structured activities for Circle Time and Story Time, as well as numerous options for independent exploration in Learning Centers. Tied into each theme is a four-page checklist of very specific skills and behaviors that should be covered in any high-quality Pre-Kindergarten program. ▪ <u>Teacher Tool Kit CD-ROM</u>: This contains all the important administrative tools for the teacher stored in one place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment guidelines and documents ○ Weekly lesson plans, which can be printed or saved on disk ○ Implementation monitoring checklist ○ Parent Letters ○ Certificates for positive reinforcement of good behavior
<p>Screening Assessments</p> <p>Screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success.</p>	<p>SECP provides informal and formal assessment tools in print and on CD-ROM, where individual student data can be stored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Informal Assessment</u>: SECP provides guidance in assessing daily work, portfolio review, and learning over time. Examples include how to use and develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observational records and individuals’ profiles ○ Anecdotal records ○ Oral language checklists ○ Meaningful portfolios that document progress ▪ <u>Formal Assessment</u>: The program includes formal assessments in these key areas of early literacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Book and print awareness ○ Phonological awareness ○ Letter knowledge assessment ○ Writing assessment <p>In addition, there are checklists for monitoring the Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Goals: Language & Early Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Personal & Social Development, Fine Arts, and Physical Development.</p>
<p>Integration</p> <p>The preschool program integrates the instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures described above into the overall Early Childhood Education program offered.</p>	<p>The SECP curriculum model is designed to support children’s development of knowledge, skills, and processes that will help them make sense of themselves and the world around them. The SECP curriculum is thematic, integrated, and rich with culturally relevant materials in both English and, upon request, Spanish.</p>

Customize Your *Early Reading First* Application

This section of the Toolkit provides basic information for those preparing to write an *ERF* grant. It is *not* intended to fully explain every part of the grant application, but it should help you to understand how to organize information within the *ERF* pre-application.

The *Early Reading First* Pre-Application

 **Be sure to obtain the application for *Early Reading First* from the U.S. Department of Education as it contains the official instructions, schedules, and requirements.**

All USDOE forms for the *ERF* pre-application are available at the following web site:


<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Part I of Pre-Application

- I. Electronic Submission (SF-424)
- II. Paper Submission (SF-424)
- III. Pre-Application Competitive Priority—Novice Applicants (if applicable)
- IV. Title Page
- V. Table of Contents--List the contents in this order:
 - I. Abstract
 - II. Pre-application Narrative
 - A. Quality of the Project Design
 - III. Appendices
 - A. Names, addresses, and brief description of preschool programs
 - B. Endnote citations
 - C. English language acquisition plan (if applicable)
- VI. Abstract (one-page, double-spaced)

The *summary* or *abstract* encapsulates all the components of the proposal and gives an overview of the proposed program; it is basically, the program “in a nutshell.” The summary/abstract includes the following information:

- ◆ The audience—Who will the program directly impact?
- ◆ The need/problem—What need will the program address?
- ◆ The educational goals—What does the program strive to ultimately accomplish?
- ◆ The objectives and effectiveness indicators—Who do what by when?
- ◆ The evaluation plan—What are the guiding questions in the evaluation plan?

 **Because the abstract is essentially a summary of the program, you should write it after the grant proposal is completed. It can be summarized from other parts of the proposal.**

Part II of Pre-Application

I. Pre-Application Narrative (10 pages, double-spaced)

The 10-page application narrative should respond to the Pre-Application Selection Criteria in the order in which they are listed. Information that applicants provide in one section of the pre-application may be cross-referenced in another section.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN—0-100 points

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 1: The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2: The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 3: The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 1*:

- ◆ *Full endnote citations, in the appendices, supporting the research basis for the Quality of Project Design narrative.*
- ◆ *An explanation of the extent to which the body of research on which the project is based meets the definition of Scientifically Based Reading Research.*


For *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2*, the *ERF* statute lists the following five purposes for the *Early Reading First Program*; applicants should address these five purposes in the order indicated.

Purpose 1: To integrate such scientific reading research-based instructional materials and literacy activities with existing programs of preschools, child care agencies and programs, Head Start Centers, and family literacy services.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 1*:

- ◆ Specify the existing preschool program(s) that the project proposes to support and improve with *Early Reading First* funds.
- The Secretary recommends that, in the case of center-based programs, applicants generally include no more than a total of five centers in order to ensure that funds are sufficiently concentrated to achieve the program goals.***

(continued)

- ◆ Explain how each existing center selected for the proposal has the capacity and potential to become an *ERF* preschool Center of Educational Excellence. The Secretary believes that such centers are likely to be preschool programs that currently:
 - Have existing, appropriately equipped, preschool classrooms in which the Early Reading First program will be implemented
 - Have high rates of daily attendance for enrolled children
 - Are staffed by teachers, with the qualifications necessary to implement a language and literacy focused project, such as a bachelor's degree
 - Demonstrate a history of low staff turnover
 - Effectively attend to the developmental domains traditionally supported by preschool programs, including social, emotional, and physical; and are ready to implement an added component focused on developing young children's oral language, cognition, early reading skills
 - ◆ Include in the appendices the name(s) and address(es) of the preschool program(s) that the project will support.
-  ***For specific information to include in each of the above criteria, please refer to section D of the ERF pre-application package.***

Purpose 2: To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of:

- a. Recognition, leading to automatic recognition, of letters of the alphabet
- b. Knowledge of letter sounds, the blending of sounds, and the use of increasingly complex vocabulary
- c. An understanding that written language is composed of phonemes and letters each representing one or more speech sounds that in combination make up syllables, words, and sentences
- d. Spoken language, including vocabulary and oral comprehension abilities
- e. Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 2*:

- ◆ Outline the proposed project's goals for improving young children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Outline the curriculum's defined scope and sequence and describe how it is structured, systematic, and aligned to support the development of children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Describe how the curriculum, combined with project procedures and other supports, will ensure that each day teachers know what they are supposed to do in order to support the development of children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge, and the extent to which the curriculum and other project supports will provide teachers with the materials to do it.

(continued)

- ◆ Describe how instruction in new knowledge and skills is explicit and intentional and starts as teacher directed and moves towards more independent activity with the context of whole-group instruction and practice, small-group instruction and practice, and independent practice.
- ◆ Outline the content, or subject matter, that will be provided as the context for improving children's oral language and background knowledge.
- ◆ Detail the amount of time the proposed program will spend developing each child's language, cognition, and early reading skills.



*The **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** is designed to ensure that children develop language and early reading skills in the four critical areas outlined by ERF including: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabetic knowledge. The central goal of the program is to help guarantee that young children develop the critical skills, knowledge, and life habits necessary to become successful learners, especially in the areas of language and literacy development.*



***SECP** is organized around and provides routines based upon best practices in Early Childhood Education. The book, *Welcome to Pre-K*, supports teachers in setting-up and managing their classroom, as well as creating a print-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.*



***SECP** is organized around 10 relevant themes reflecting real-world experiences common in the lives of preschoolers. Each theme comes with a *Teacher's Guide* organized for preparing and executing the weekly curriculum plans. The instructional framework puts language and literacy first within an integrated curriculum ensuring children achieve readiness in the four core skill areas:*

- ◆ Oral language
- ◆ Phonological awareness
- ◆ Letter and sound knowledge
- ◆ Print awareness





***SECP** provides the *Welcome to Pre-K Guide*, which helps teachers organize their classroom, manage their schedule, and create daily routines. Furthermore, there is a *Teacher's Guide* for each of the 10 themes, which is organized by weekly and daily lesson plans. Lesson plans provide structured activities for Circle Time and Story Time, as well as numerous options for independent exploration in Learning Centers.*


Purpose 3: To provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature rich environments, so that children can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.


Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 3:*

- ◆ Outline the proposed project’s goals for improving the language and print richness of the environment.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to enhance the literature and print richness of the environment.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to implement so that the physical environment will provide support for the development of children’s oral language.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to implement so that the physical environment will provide support for the development of children’s background knowledge.

 *The **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** is a Pre-Kindergarten curriculum that provides a rich environment of print and non-print experiences related to language and literacy development. Throughout the program, children engage in meaningful, fun activities that help them build their awareness of the sounds of language. Children are exposed to a variety of print—fiction and nonfiction trade books, poems, printed words of songs, signs, lists, recipes, etc. Children engage in “read aloud” experiences, tracking print while listening to audiocassette recordings as well as activities with alphabet picture cards and word games on CD-ROM.*


 *The instructional design of the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** allows for both teacher-initiated direct instruction and child-initiated explorations. The central goal of the program is to help guarantee that young children develop the critical skills, knowledge, and life habits to become successful learners, especially in the areas of language and literacy development.*


 *Through multiple encounters with the provided materials, and the recommended teacher modeling strategies, children develop critical concepts of print that aid the reading and writing process. Furthermore, all of the above is coupled with conversational opportunities and class discussions which helps deepen the child’s comprehension and increases the child’s vocabulary.*


 *Realizing that many students are learning English as a second language, **SECP** includes intensive support for ESL students. To support the large and growing Spanish-speaking population, **SECP** provides all materials in both English and Spanish.*


Purpose 4: To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 4:*

- ◆ Outline the goals for the project's proposed professional development program.
 - ◆ Describe the content and scope and sequence of the professional development to be provided.
 - ◆ Explain the strategies and materials that will be implemented in the professional development that will ensure that it will be classroom focused and will enhance the implementation of the curricula, materials, and instructional strategies outlined in *Purpose 2*.
 - ◆ Delineate the number of hours, the frequency, and the method of delivery of the professional development for each teacher and the extent to which the professional development will be high-quality, sustained, and intensive.
 - ◆ If teacher mentoring is provided as part of the professional development plan, specify the qualifications of the teacher mentor and explain the link between the teacher mentoring and the professional development delivered in a classroom or workshop setting.
-  **Applicants may cross-reference demographic, information from Purpose 1, regarding the income level of children whose early language, literacy, and prereading development will be enhanced through professional development provided to the teachers.**

 *Professional development for the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** is integrated into the curriculum through the *My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Professional Development*. *My Guide* 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 this guide, a personal library of professional readings written by Early Childhood experts.*


 *In addition, **SECP** provides integrated Teacher Workshops— a series of 12 cooperative workshop sessions designed to facilitate discussions with the Early Childhood teaching team. Each workshop consists of a four-step plan centered on a research-based article written by a noted expert, such as Dr. Susan B. Neuman, Lilian Katz, Dr. Stanley Greenspan, or Doug Clements. Through discussion and an action plan, teachers can develop and integrate new activities into the daily schedule.*


 ***SECP** is organized around and provides routines based upon best practices in Early Childhood Education. The book, *Welcome to Pre-K*, supports teachers in setting up and managing their classroom, as well as, in creating a print-rich environment. Furthermore, the theme-based *Teachers' Guides* provide lessons in English and Spanish, as well as, intensive support for ESL students. Each theme includes a variety of lessons that encourage oral discussion and interaction with print materials.*

Purpose 5: To use screening reading assessments to effectively identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 5*:


- ◆ Specify screening instruments for young children’s oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Specify progress-monitoring instruments for young children’s oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Provide validity and reliability date for specified measures, when it exists.
- ◆ Describe strategies, systems, and professional development activities that will ensure teachers gather high-quality data and will assist teachers with using information gained from screening reading and progress monitoring assessments to improve instruction for individual children.

 **Applicants may cross reference information from Purpose 4 regarding the content of professional development.**

 The **SECP** assessment tools are embedded in the program and included in the *My Guide* and the *Teacher Toolkit*. **SECP** contains the following formal assessments:

- ◆ *Book and Print Awareness*
- ◆ *Phonological Awareness*
- ◆ *Letter Knowledge*
- ◆ *Writing Skills*
- ◆ *Behavior*


In addition, the program includes checklists for monitoring the Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Goals: Language & Early Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Personal & Social Development, Fine Arts, and Physical Development.


 The **SECP** provides embedded informal and formal assessment that allows teachers to observe children on a daily basis, and more formally, semi-annually. The frequent, thorough assessments will enable teachers to identify at-risk children. **SECP** also provides informal assessment techniques and suggestions within the context of learning and instruction, such as:

- ◆ *Daily Work*
- ◆ *Portfolio Review*
- ◆ *Learning Over Time*


For Selection Criterion 1, Factor 3, applicants are encouraged to include the following information:

- ◆ Demonstrate how the proposed project will coordinate with the LEA to prepare students with the foundational language, cognitive, and early reading skills to ensure a successful transition into the LEAs Reading First program, if it has one, or a district's elementary reading program based on scientific research.


 The **SECP** curriculum model is designed to support children's development of knowledge, skills, and processes that will help them make sense of themselves and the world around them. The **SECP** curriculum is thematic, integrated, and rich with culturally relevant materials in both English and, upon request, Spanish.

 The **SECP** curriculum puts the development of language and early literacy first within the integration of the following domains:

- ◆ Mathematics
- ◆ Science
- ◆ Social studies
- ◆ The arts
- ◆ Physical development
- ◆ Personal and social development

 The curriculum goals of the program are organized around real-world themes. Themes include:

- ◆ Friends and School
- ◆ Home and Family
- ◆ Inside and Outside Me
- ◆ Staying Well/Staying Safe
- ◆ Our Community
- ◆ Working and Playing Together
- ◆ Make It/Build It
- ◆ Let's Explore
- ◆ Animals and Where They Live
- ◆ Everything Changes

 At the beginning of each of the theme Teacher's Guides is a four-page checklist of very specific skills and behaviors that should be covered in any high-quality Pre-Kindergarten program. The checklist for each theme indicates which of these skills are covered in that particular theme.

Part III of Pre-Application

I. List of names and addresses of existing preschool programs that the proposed *ERF* project would support. Include the following information in your description:

- ◆ The ages and number of the children being served
- ◆ Demographic and socioeconomic information on those children
- ◆ Information on the types of special needs that any of the children may have
- ◆ The average hours the children attend the program in hours/day, days/week, and months/year
- ◆ Primary funding source(s)
- ◆ The basic instructional program
- ◆ The number of staff and their qualifications

 ***This information may be organized into chart form.***

II. Endnote citations

- ◆ Each reference should include at a minimum the author(s), the title of the book or journal and article, and the date of the publication.

 ***Do NOT include a general reference bibliography; include ONLY endnote citations for those quotations included in the ten-page narrative.***

NOTE: Do not include any enclosures or appendices other than those listed on the "Pre-Application Final Checklist" in Section D of the ERF pre-application package.

Early Childhood Research Citations & Endnote Citations

The ultimate goal of *Early Reading First* is to prevent later reading difficulties. The program is designed to prepare children to enter Kindergarten with the necessary cognitive, early language, and literacy skills for success in school.

Applicants must use *ERF* funds to:

- ◆ Provide preschool-age children with high-quality oral language and print-rich environments in which to acquire oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge
- ◆ Provide professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development that will assist in developing the preschool-age children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge
- ◆ Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills
- ◆ Acquire, provide training in the use of, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success
- ◆ Integrate these instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's overall programs

RESEARCH CITATIONS

Because *Early Reading First* requires an emphasis on instructional materials and professional development grounded in scientific research, applicants are encouraged to include research citations within the narrative sections of their pre-applications. The following quotes can be used when drafting the indicated sections of the pre-application.

 ***Make sure you ONLY include endnote citations for each of the quotations used in your narrative.***

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The number of months that children spend in preschool has been found to be related to achievement test scores in second grade, behavior problems in third grade, and school retention in kindergarten through third grade. Children with more preschool experience had higher achievement scores and fewer behavior problems and were less likely to be required to repeat a grade (*Pianta & McCoy, 1997*).

In order to develop their language capabilities, children need a language and conversation-rich environment. Research demonstrates that the number of words and variety of conversations children hear affect the speed of their language growth (*Snow et al., 1995*).

Studies have firmly established the importance of reading aloud as one of the most important activities for reading success (*Bredekamp, Copple, & Neuman, 2000*). However, simply reading aloud to children does not by itself impact children's reading abilities; dialogue about and beyond the immediate context of the book is critical (*Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001*).

Importantly, studies show that book discussions that focus beyond the immediate context of the book have a greater impact on children's literacy (*Dickinson & Tabors 2001; Snow et al., 1995*).

Overall children learn by talking with adults: during daily routines, storytelling, reading, by relating personal experience, and having complex conversations in which they offer opinions (*Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999*).

Intentional, focused instruction should be based on clearly defined goals and embedded in daily routines (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE 2002). To achieve these goals, teachers need to provide both planned experiences and ones that emerge as an outgrowth of children's interests, offering a balance between teacher-centered and child-initiated activities (*Hohmann & Weikart, 1995*).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"The knowledge and skills of the teacher account for the largest difference in academic achievement than any other single factor. (*Darling-Hammond et al., 1999*). The professional development of teachers has been shown to be integrally related to the overall quality of early childhood programs and thus, the overall effect of those programs in having a positive outcome for children" (*Kontos et al., 1997*).

Well-designed and effective professional development programs are job-embedded, continuous, collaborative, and research-based" (*Epstein, 1993*). Therefore, **SECP** provides integrated Teacher Workshops—a series of 12 cooperative workshop sessions designed to facilitate discussions with the teaching team. Each workshop consists of a four-step plan centered around a research-based article written by a noted expert such as Dr. Susan B. Neuman, Lilian Katz, Dr. Stanley Greenspan, or Doug Clements. Through discussion and an action plan, teachers can develop and integrate new activities into their daily schedule.

SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Approximately 20% of children have difficulty acquiring reading skills, particularly awareness of sound-symbol relationships. These children decode text at a slower rate than average (*Lyon, 1995 and Lyon & Motats, 1997*).

The building blocks of literacy for young children, in addition to oral language development, have been identified as print awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and phonological awareness (*Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999*).

In learning to read, children must unlock the relationships between the sounds they use to say words and the letters of the alphabet (*Juel, 1996; Chall & Popp, 1996; Torgeson, 1998*). Children's ability to discern the sounds in words and link them to alphabetic symbols is a strong predictor of reading success (*Stanovich & Seigel, 1994; Stanovich, 1993; Vellutino, Scanlon, & Sipay et al., 1996*).

SCREENING ASSESSMENTS

The primary role of assessment in early childhood education is to provide insight into the educational experiences that will be the most valuable for individual children (*Burns, 1996; Bodrova & Leong, 1996*).

Teaching and assessment need to be inseparably fused in an ongoing cycle of refinement (*Meisels & Attkins-Burnett, 2000*).

Appropriate assessment and monitoring of children's learning contributes to decision-making about practice, designing programs and planning curricula (*Wiggins, 1998*). To achieve these aims, teachers should use multiple methods of assessment over time, including observation, investigation, and interviews, as well as more formal assessments (*Shepard et al., 1998*).

The primary role of assessment in early childhood education is to provide insight into the educational experiences that will be the most valuable for individual children (*Burns, 1996; Bodrova & Leong, 1996*). Assessment should support and inform instruction (*Shepard, Kagan & Wurtz, 1998*).

Curriculum-embedded forms of assessment allow children to demonstrate their knowledge or skills through active engagement in classroom activities (*Meisels, 1996*).

For all children, it is individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate measures of their strengths, development, progress, and needs that will provide vital information to professionals involved in promoting children's learning (*Stiggins, 2001; McAfee & Leong, 2002*).

INTEGRATION

"A recent comprehensive review of early childhood programs for children from low-income families concludes that preschool programs can produce large effects on IQ during the early childhood years and sizable persistent effects on achievement, grade retention, special education, high school graduation, and socialization" (*Barnett, 1995*).

"Research is beginning to delineate the key experiences and circumstances that will enable children to realize their potential. These include nurturing relationships with caregivers, experiences that encourage social interchange, varied opportunities for expression, appropriate physical activity, cognitive stimulation and challenge, opportunities to explore the environment, and involvement with language, print, and other forms of communication" (*Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000; Denton & West, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001*).

"Children use language for complex and varied purposes. Language and literacy development is not only vital to specific reading skills and overall cognitive development, but recent research reveals that it plays an important role in children's social competencies. For instance, one study has correlated children's literacy with their ability to empathize with others" (*M.Regalado et.al., 2001*).

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Scholastic Early Childhood Program Research Foundation

SECP is based on the educational research reported in the following publications, as well as guidance from our academic authorship team and pilot study.

- ◆ *Beyond Baby Talk: From Sounds to Sentences – A Parent’s Guide to Language Development* (Apel, K. & Masterson, J., 2001)
- ◆ *Eager to Learn, Educating our Preschoolers* (National Research Council, 2000)
- ◆ *From Neurons to Neighborhoods, The Science of Early Childhood Development* (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2000)
- ◆ *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (Neuman, S.B. & Dickinson, D.K., Eds., 2001)
- ◆ *The Young Child and Mathematics* (National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000)
- ◆ *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* (Neuman, S., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S., 2000)
- ◆ *Phonemic Awareness in Young Children* (Adams, M.J., Foorman, B.R., Lundberg, I., and Beeler, T., 1998)
- ◆ *Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments* (National Education Goals Panel, 1998)
- ◆ *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, C.E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P., Eds., 1998)
- ◆ *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children’s Reading Success* (Burns, M.S., Griffin, P., & Snow, C.E. Eds., 1999)
- ◆ *The Scientist in the Crib* (Gopnik, A., Meltzoff, A.N., & Kuhl, P.K., 1999)
- ◆ *The Social World of Children: Learning to Talk* (Hart, B. & Risley, T.R., 1999)

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