



# Scholastic Early Childhood Program™ Product Overview

## **SCHOLASTIC OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

The *Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)* is a comprehensive, yearlong curriculum for Pre-Kindergarten that provides a rich environment of print and non-print experiences to support literacy success. Focusing on the cognitive, language, and literacy development of young learners, *SECP* is based on these key concepts of teaching and learning:

- Effective scientifically research-based curriculum
- Relevant professional development
- Strong family connections and support

### **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. *SECP* meets *Early Reading First* criteria and the *Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*, which were originally developed by the Texas Education Agency and which are supported by other states' standards. The *Scholastic Early Childhood Program* 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 theme 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.

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### **Instructional Design**

**SECP** is organized around routines based on best practices in Early Childhood Education. Daily lessons, detailed in the *Teacher's Guides*, can be tailored for half-day or full-day preschool programs. They are divided into whole-group and small-group instruction:

- Circle Time consists of teacher-directed, explicit instruction in phonological awareness, oral language, mathematics, and additional skills from the content areas.
- Learning Centers and Teacher's Table provide student-directed, hands-on explorations across the curriculum that focus on targeted skills and concepts taught during the week or in prior weeks.
- Story Time is when teachers explicitly teach language and early literacy skills, especially in oral language, phonological awareness, letter and sound knowledge, print awareness, and writing.
- Transitions consist of teacher-led opportunities that use oral language and thinking skills to help develop additional literacy-area concepts.

The **Scholastic Early Childhood Program** is separated into 10 real-world themes, including Friends and School; Home and Family; Staying Well, Staying Safe; and Animals and Where they Live. Each theme contains weekly sub-themes that are explored through Big Books, Little Books, Read Alouds, audiocassettes, content area books, and other materials. Support materials include the *Songs and Fingerplays Book* and *CDs*. Each theme is also supported with instructions for preparing and managing the classroom, launching the activities, and wrapping up the topic.

### **Assessments**

Assessments in **SECP** are administered on a regular basis and embedded in the program. They are designed to identify cognitive development problems and to determine student progress. Teachers use these assessments to differentiate instruction to meet individual student needs.

### **Screening**

Pre-Kindergarten screenings are available in Spanish and English and contain the following formal assessments:

- Book and Print Awareness
- Phonological Awareness
- Letter Knowledge Assessment
- Writing Assessment

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### **Progress Monitoring**

Five theme checklists (one for every two units) help teachers track each student's progress. Teachers also informally assess students during every Circle Time and Story Time lesson and during Learning Center activities. Teachers observe and review daily work, portfolios of recorded work, and students' cumulative learning gains.

*My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Curriculum Development* includes an assessment guide with formal and informal assessment forms for phonological awareness, oral language, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge. In addition, the guide explains and provides details on how to set up and keep anecdotal records and portfolios. The *Teacher Toolkit CD-ROM* provides teachers with electronic tracking and reports of the formal and informal assessments.

### **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 students' 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 and enhance the program.

### **Intervention Strategies**

**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 Kindergarten* guide contains charts on modifying the program for children with visual, hearing, physical, cognitive, and social/emotional challenges. *My Guide* provides teachers with information on setting up and maintaining an inclusive classroom. In addition, materials, instruction, and assessments are provided in both English and Spanish, and every lesson contains ESL/ELL strategies.

### **Home-School Connection**

Fostering family relationships and involvement is an integral part of the **Scholastic Early Childhood Program**. *Creating Family Partnerships* provides resources in Spanish and English, as well as suggestions for meeting and greeting families, teacher-family conferences, family meetings, home projects, and family learning nights. The guide details fun activities for parents to do at home with their children and includes letters that give ideas on how parents can support classroom learning at home.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development is integrated into the curriculum through the *My Guide for Ongoing Assessment and Professional Development*. The *Guide*, with contributions by Early Childhood Education and research experts, gives teachers an in-depth background on all areas of child development and learning. Topics included are embracing diversity, cross-curriculum content areas, language acquisition, and technology.

In addition, **SECP** offers 12 cooperative Teacher Workshops that center around research-based articles written by noted experts, such as Susan B. Neuman and Stanley Greenspan. Workshops help teachers develop and integrate into their daily schedule new activities in the areas of language and cultural heritage, literacy and play, children with special needs, nonfiction books, and other topics.