

Scholastic Early Childhood Program

Featuring Clifford



Using With *Building Language for Literacy*

Scholastic has a rich history of publishing high-quality early childhood curriculum programs. In 2000, Scholastic introduced *Building Language for Literacy (BLL)*, a supplemental language program for PreKindergarten classrooms. Authored by Dr. Susan Neuman and Dr. Catherine Snow, the program has been proven effective in increasing children's language development. Results from an independent study revealed that children in the BLL group significantly outperformed children in control and comparison groups on vocabulary acquisition and letter and word identification skills.

Based on the key research findings from *BLL* and the strong nationwide demand for a high-quality comprehensive PreKindergarten program, Scholastic introduced the *Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)* in 2003. The primary goal of *SECP* is to prepare children to enter kindergarten with the academic and social skills they need to succeed. Unlike *BLL*, the new *SECP* is a comprehensive, year-long curriculum.

The comprehensive *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, and personal and social development. Through an integrated curriculum approach, *SECP* immerses children in real-world themes that are arranged to build new understandings in the context of already existing understandings. Using *SECP* as the foundational PreKindergarten program provides teachers with the structure needed to address all subject areas as well as social/emotional development.

Who needs both *SECP* and *BLL*?

Many PreKindergarten classrooms using *SECP* as their foundational program will benefit from using *BLL* as a supplement that provides more intense focus on early language and pre-reading skills. Who will benefit from using both *SECP* and *BLL*?

- 1) Research shows that many students enter Pre-K classrooms already at a language deficit due to limited language exposure and conversational interactions in the home environment. These students will benefit from the language-rich classroom environment that *BLL* helps teachers implement.
- 2) Research also shows that many students enter Pre-K classrooms with limited exposure to print and awareness of written language. To prevent later reading difficulties, these students will benefit from supplementing *SECP* with *BLL*.
- 3) As the population of Spanish speakers and non-native English speakers increases across the U.S., the numbers of Spanish speaking students and English language learners increases in Pre-K classrooms. As a fully bilingual English/Spanish program, *SECP* delivers rich instruction in language and early literacy for Spanish speaking

students. But also, the research on *BLL* proves its efficacy with English language learners. Using the two programs together helps teachers deliver rich language instruction to English language learners, and create a rich classroom environment that benefits all students acquiring English.

- 4) *SECP* offers a yearlong curriculum based on 10 thematic units of three weeks each. Depending on the school calendar, some Pre-K classrooms may wish to extend each thematic unit to four weeks of instruction. For these classrooms, *BLL* is an effective supplement.
- 5) Many classrooms across the U.S. have been successfully implementing *BLL* over the years since its introduction. These *BLL* classrooms and language- and literature-rich, but some teachers (particularly new teachers) may benefit from a more structured daily routine that integrates not only language and early literacy, but also math, science, social studies, the arts, physical development.
- 6) As Pre-K standards increase across the U.S., classrooms that have been using *BLL* may find themselves under pressure to prove their accountability across multiple subject areas. Using *SECP* along with *BLL* helps administrators and teachers be accountable while delivering a high-quality program that works for all students.

Using *SECP* and *BLL* helps educators prepare students for Kindergarten and offer a curriculum that not only puts language and early literacy first, but also addresses learning across all subject areas. Children will exit the Pre-K classroom with the skills necessary for reading and learning success!

How *SECP* and *BLL* Fit Together

SECP is structured around the ten engaging real-world themes listed below. Each unit is designed to encompass three weeks of instruction. *BLL* is structured around places encountered in children’s environments such as “Store” and “Construction Site.” The instructional design of the two programs allow them to complement one another cleanly and easily.

Dr. Catherine Snow of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and program author of *BLL* outlined how the 10 themes in *SECP* accord with 10 of the 12 places in *BLL* as shown below:

<i>SECP</i> Theme Units	<i>BLL</i> Places
Friends and School	<i>Introduce Reggie, Nina, and Leo.</i> ¹
Home and Family	Home (Phase 1)
Inside and Outside Me	Restaurant (Phase 1)
Staying Well, Staying Safe	Firehouse (Phase 1)
Our Community	Store (Phase 1)
Working and Playing Together	Farm (Phase 1)
Make It, Build It	Construction Site (Phase 2)
Let’s Explore	Aquarium (Phase 1)/Museum (Phase 2)
Animals and Where They Live	Zoo (Phase 2)
Everything Changes	Garden (Phase 2)

¹ The three characters in *Building Language for Literacy* should be introduced to children as new friends at the beginning of the year.

For lesson planning and daily structure, we suggest the following schedule:

Activity	Curriculum	Time Allocation
Meet & Greet	<i>Building Language for Literacy</i> • Song & Poem Time	15 minutes
Circle Time	<i>Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)</i> • Circle Time	20-35 minutes
Learning Centers /Choice Time	<i>Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP) and Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Choose at least four Learning Centers from SECP & at least one from Choice Time • Suggest that “Teacher Table” at end of week be one of the Language Arts Choice Times to provide language and literacy extra help to struggling students	45-60 minutes
Outdoor Play	<i>Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Transition Time	
Story Time	<i>Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)</i> • Story Time	30 minutes
Snack/Lunch	<i>Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Transition Time	
Rest Time	<i>Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Transition Time	
Learning Centers /Choice Time	<i>Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP) and Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Choose at least four Learning Centers from SECP & at least one from Choice Time • Suggest that “Teacher Table” at end of week be one of the Language Arts Learning Centers and be used to provide language and literacy extra help to struggling students	45-60 minutes
Story Time	<i>Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Story Time	20 minutes
Saying Goodbye	<i>Building Language for Literacy (BLL)</i> • Transition Time	5 minutes