# Meeting Children's Early Literacy Needs

**August 30–31, 2021**

# From Research to Practice: Early Childhood Education and Literacy Development

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**Meeting Children's Early Literacy Needs**

# Early Childhood Education (ECE)



Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash.

Defining early childhood education

Whole-child development and school success

Why the early childhood years matter: The science of learning and development

Racial equity: Inequalities at the start of life

# Early Literacy Development



Photo by Catherine Hammond on Unsplash.

Developmental stages

Oral language and literacy

Early literacy research

Classroom strategies

Supporting early literacy

# What is early childhood education (ECE)?



Photo by Larry Craton on Unsplash.

- Ages of human development
- What does early childhood education and literacy development mean to you?

Jamboard Activity

- Type of programs
  - Education and care programs
  - Home visitation and parent support programs
  - Family income and support programs
  - Child abuse prevention and early intervention services

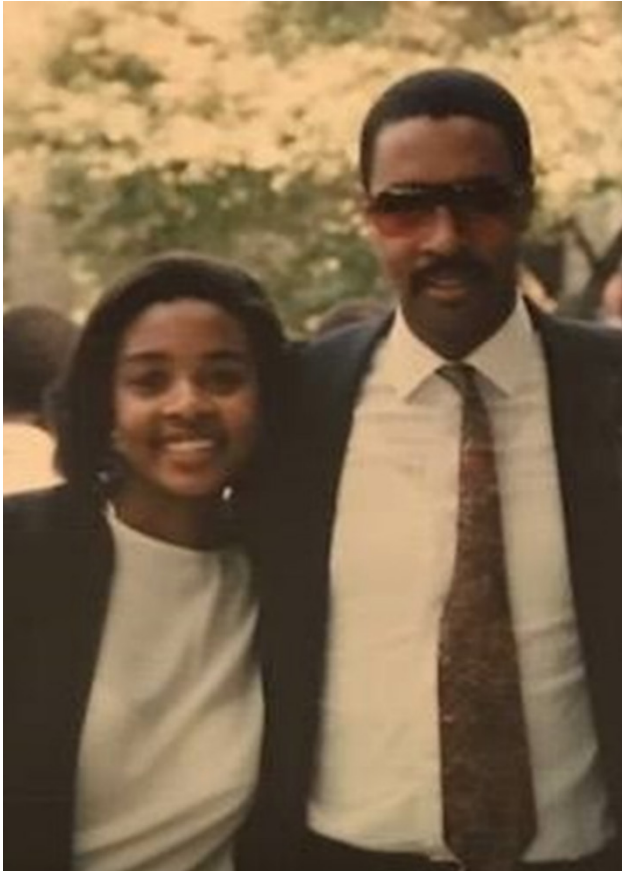# Whole-Child Development and School Success



Photo credit: Author's personal photo collection.

## Academic skills

- School readiness
- Success by third grade
- High school and college graduation

## Social and emotional competencies

- Behavior regulation
- Peer relations

## Physical well-being and motor skills

## Life satisfaction, engagement, and success

- Security and financial stability
- Resilient, empathetic, and happy
- Opportunity to thrive

## Supporting early literacy

# What matters for whole-child development?

- Love

- Nutrition

- Safety

- Stimulation

- Resources

- Stability

- Positive attachments

- Learning opportunities

- Healthcare

- Secure relationships

- Strong families

- Supportive communities

- Supportive schools

- Attentive adults

- Improved policies and programs

- Other

# The Story of Human Potential

The relationship between **nature** (our genes, biology, and physiological systems) and **nurture** (our physical and social environments) is complex.

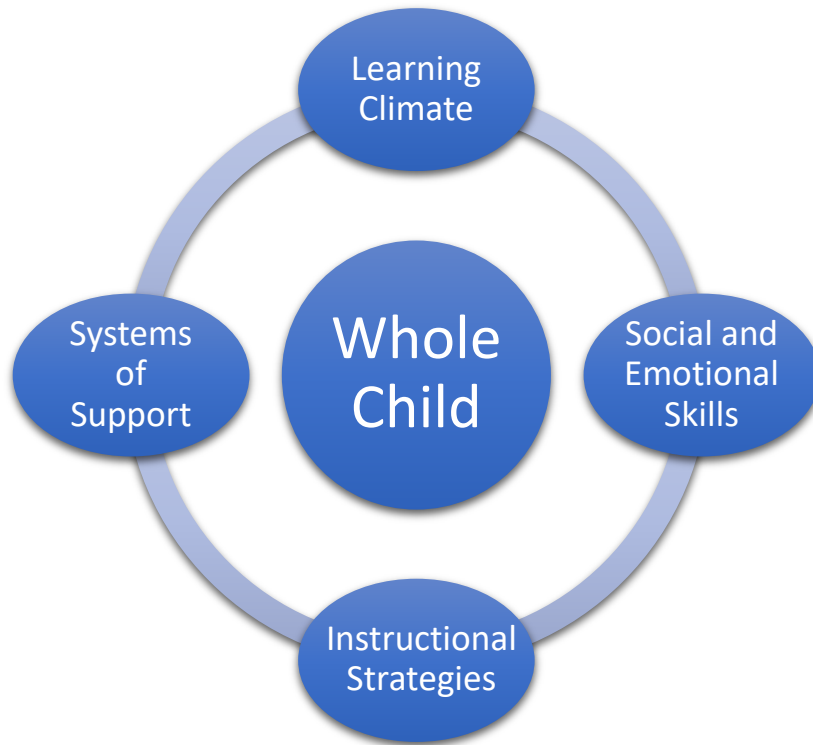Nature and nurture factors can vary across time and place and among individuals.

Starts at conception, expands prenatally, and explodes at birth through the early childhood years.

Photo by Chayene Rafaela on Unsplash.

# What matters for whole-child development?



Modified with permission from Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children. (2021). *Design principles for schools: Putting the science of learning and development into action* (Figure 1.1. Guiding principles for equitable whole child design, p. ix). https://eb0b6ac7-8d5b-43ca-82bf-5fa89e49b5cb.usrfiles.com/ugd/eb0b6a_042c6c82a88144249223ca80bc9c2919.pdf
Photo by Aditya Romansa on Unsplash.

# Brain Development: Why It Matters

Brain development occurs rapidly in the early years of life.

Neural circuits are wired in a bottom-up sequence.

Pruning occurs for circuits not used or developed.

Early life experiences impact early brain development.

The capacity for change decreases with age.

Photo by Alex Hockett on Unsplash



**Meeting Children's Early Literacy Needs**

Poll: At age 3, brain size is what percentage an adult brain?

- 3%
- 15%
- 30%
- 50%
- 80%

Photo by Jakob Owens on Unsplash

# Brain and Child Development Is Rapid



**Age: 1 day**



**Age: 3 years**

*Photo credit: Author's personal photo collection.*

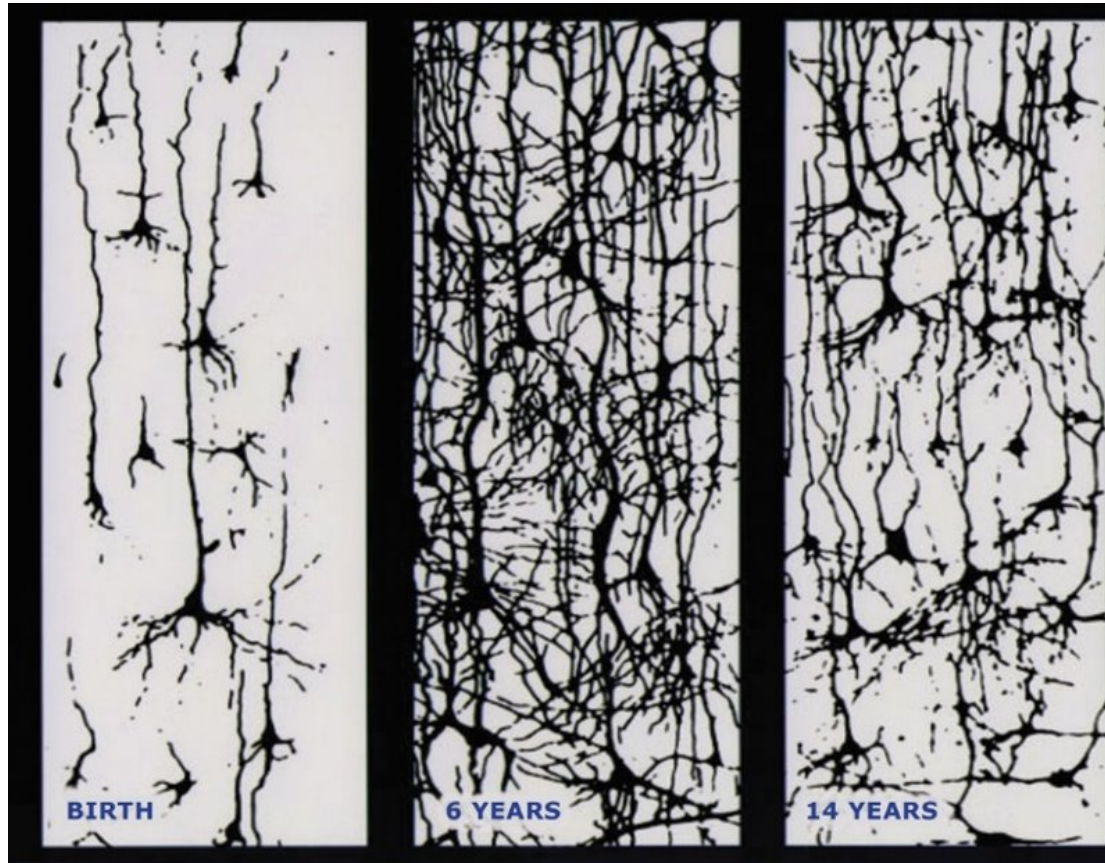# Seven-Hundred Synapses Are Formed Per Second in the Early Years of Life



Image source with permission from: Center for the Developing Child from Corel, JL. 1959. The postnatal development of the human vertebral cortex. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1959.

# Early Brain Development: Why It Matters

- The brain develops rapidly.

- Neural circuits are wired in a bottom-up sequence.

- Pruning occurs for circuits not used or developed.

- Early life experiences impact brain development.

- The capacity for change decreases with age.

# Attachment and Relationships: Why They Matter

- Serve-and-return processes

- Influential early relational patterns



Photo credit: Author's personal photo collection.

# Video: Serve and Return for Early Literacy and Overall Child Development



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_5u8-QSh6A

# Sensitive Periods in Early Brain Development

**0–3 Preschool Years**

- Vision
- Hearing
- Emotional control
- Habitual responses
- Language
- Symbols

**3–6 Preschool Years**

- Language
- Numbers
- Peer social skills

# Racial Equity: Inequalities at the Start of Life

- Children, especially historically marginalized due to their race, need a fair opportunity to thrive by creating conditions where they can be successful.

- Not all children have equal chances to experience supportive interactions and enriching environments.

- Disparities stemming from inequalities in life circumstances emerge early in life.



*Source: Christina Noel (https://www.christinanoelphotography.net/) Black Lives Matter Protest, Chicago IL. Used with permission.*

# Alignment in Education and Services: Why It Matters



Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash.
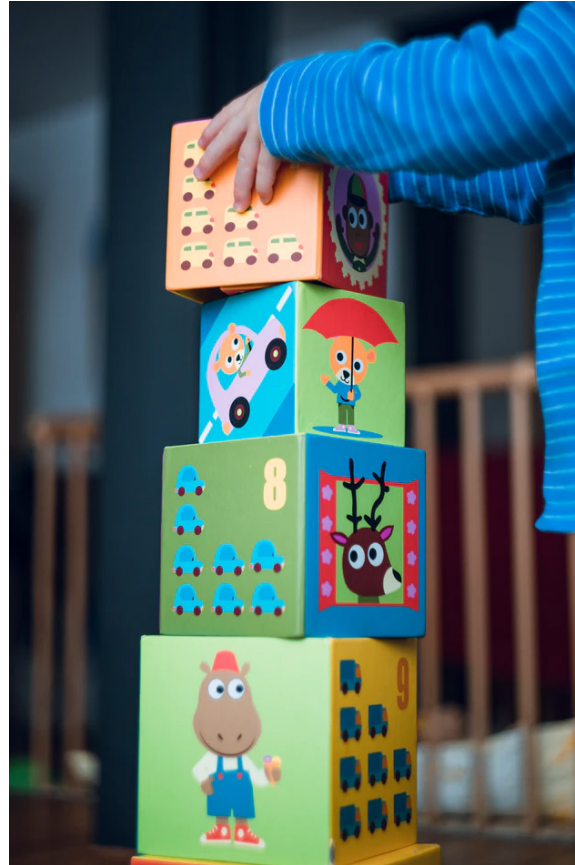
# Early Literacy Development



Photo by Stephen Andrews on Unsplash.

# Five Stages of Literacy Development

| Stage 1 | Emergent/Early Literacy (ages 4–6: foundational skills start early) |
| Stage 2 | Alphabetic Fluency (ages 6–7) |
| Stage 3 | Words and Patterns (ages 7–9) |
| Stage 4 | Intermediate Reading (ages 9–11) |
| Stage 5 | Advanced Reading (ages 11–14) |
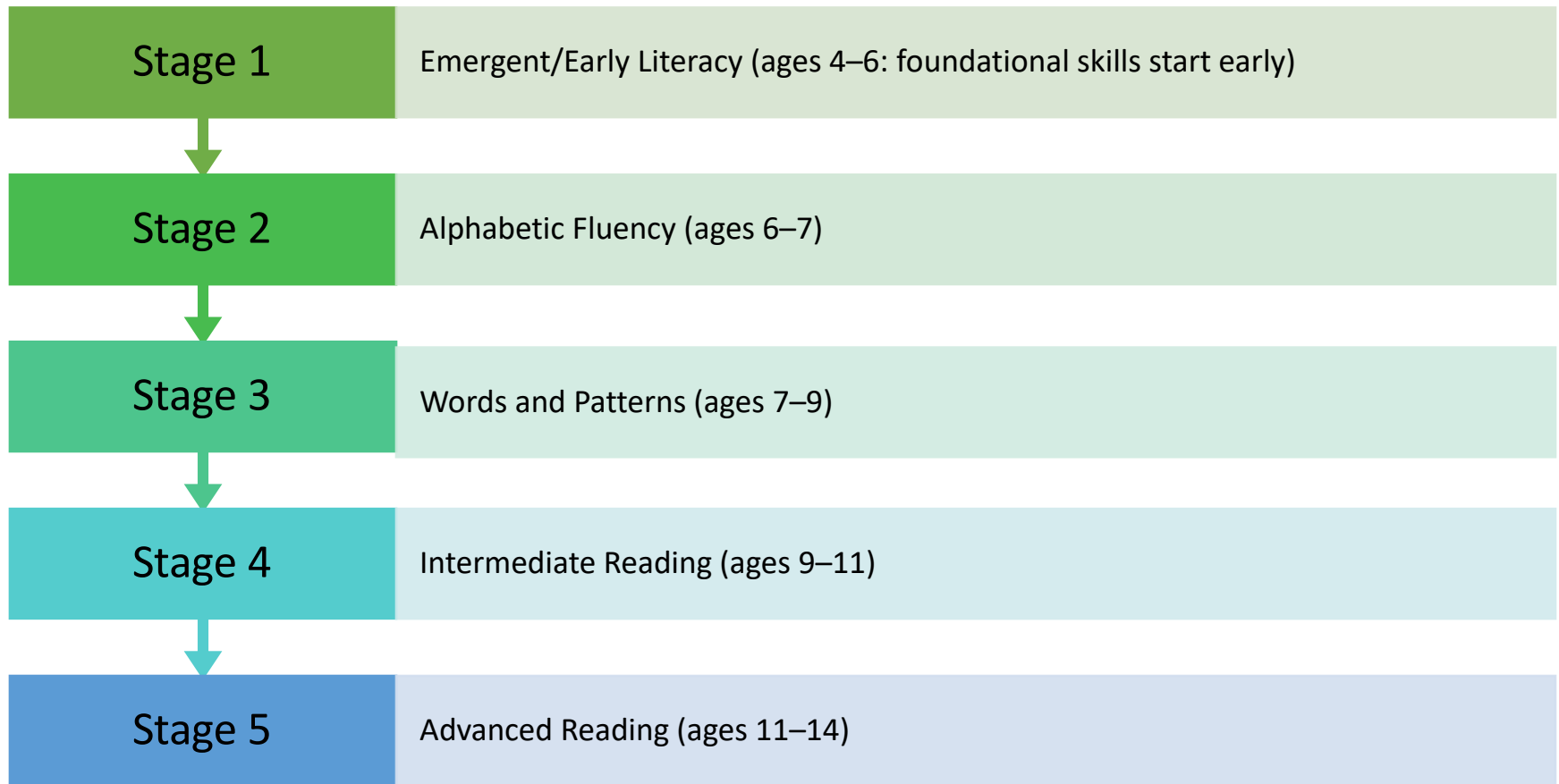
# Key Principles of Early Language Development

An Important Foundation for Literacy

# Oral Language and Literacy

Children's oral language develops through **quantity** and **quality** of language interactions. Family and caregivers can support oral language through:

**Using varied vocabulary/ syntax**

**Recasts**

**Expansions**

**Questions**

# Using Varied Vocabulary and Syntax

I want to play cars.

That sounds like a great idea. Let's take a look to see what we have. I found a car that is used to transport people on land. I see you have an airplane that is used to transport people in the air. Can you find something to transport people in the water?



Photo by Sandy Millar on Unsplash

# Expansions

Soap makes bubbles.

That's right. When we wash dishes, we use soap and water to clean the the dishes. When we mix soap and water, it makes bubbles.

Photo by CDC on Unsplash

# Recast



Bear no like tea.

Your teddy bear does not like tea. Ok, then, would he like to drink some milk?

Photo by Nathan Dumlao on Unsplash

# Questions

**Bloom's Taxonomy**

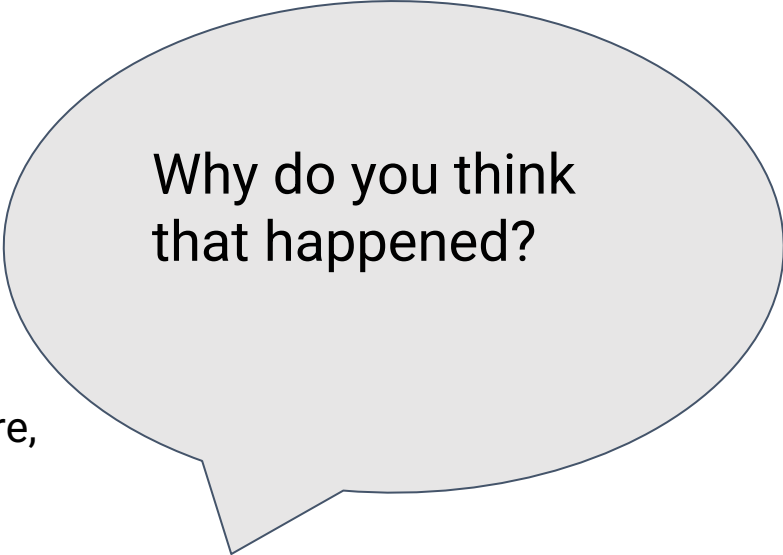**Remember:** identify, name, count, repeat, recall

**Understand**: describe, discuss, explain, summarize,

**Apply:** explain why, dramatize, identify with, relate to

**Analyze:** recognize change, experiment, infer, compare, contrast

**Evaluate:** express opinion, judge, defend, criticize

**Create**: make, construct, design, author

Why do you think that happened?
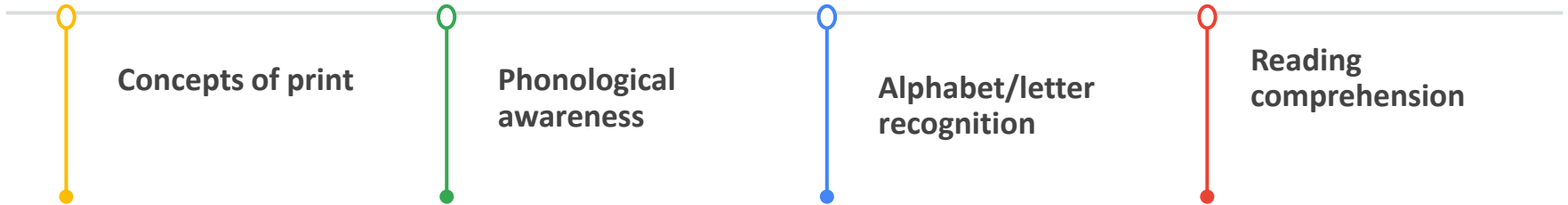
# Emergent or Early Literacy Principles

Foundational Skills for Literacy Development

# Key Principles of Early Literacy

**Concepts of print**

**Phonological awareness**

**Alphabet/letter recognition**

**Reading comprehension**

# Concepts of Print

Model, point out, and discuss
- the front and back of the book;
- the author and illustrator;
- page numbers;
- where to start reading, where to continue;
- how to hold the book; and
- individual words.



Photo by Jason Sung on Unsplash

# Phonological Awareness

Develop phonological awareness by:
- paying attention to and playing games with **rhyming** words,
- counting **syllables** in words, and
- recognizing initial **sounds** in words.



Photo by Ryan Fields on Unsplash

# Alphabet/Letter Recognition

Develop letter name and sound recognition by

- identifying and pointing out letters all around you, and

- introducing the sounds that letters make with simple, familiar words.



Photo by Gautam Arora on Unsplash

# Reading Comprehension

Support reading comprehension by

- modeling how you develop understanding from the text,

- asking open-ended questions, and

- engaging children with the text and pictures.



Photo by Andrew Ebrahim on Unsplash

# Key Takeaway

- Children develop the foundations for literacy through everyday activities that build awareness of letters, sounds, rhymes, and concepts of print.



Photo by Gabriel Tovar on Unsplash

# Early Literacy Research

# Question

Which children benefit from high-quality literacy instruction?

# Question

Which factors support the effectiveness of early literacy programs?

# Which factors support the effectiveness of early literacy programs?

- Certified teachers with a strong educational background (master's or bachelor's degree).

- The use of a research-based curriculum with explicit support for language and literacy

- Coaching teachers in the use of the curriculum throughout the school year

- High-quality instruction and close teacher–child relationships

- To support long-term effects, high-quality literacy instruction in pre-k must be followed by high-quality elementary school.

Hadley, E. B. (n.d.). *Research review on early literacy*. David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching, College of Education University of South Florida. https://www.usf.edu/education/anchin/research/research-review-on-early-literacy.pdf

# A Classroom Strategies to Support Early Literacy

# Interactive Book Reading

A Classroom Strategy to Support Early Literacy

# Phonological Awareness Activities

A Classroom Strategy to Support Early Literacy

# Supporting Early Literacy

Examples of Community Initiatives

# Community Initiatives

## Community Campaign: "Talking Is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing"

- A public awareness and action campaign that aims to motivate parents and caregivers to talk, read, and sing more with their young children.
- Initiative in 32 communities and two statewide campaigns in Michigan.
- Three components: trusted messengers, high-quality materials, and environmental prompts.

## The Get Georgia Reading Campaign

- Nearly 100 partners are working on a campaign to get children reading by third grade.
- Four-part agenda
  - Language nutrition: All children should receive language rich adult–child interactions.
  - Access: All children and families have access to supportive services.
  - Productive learning climate: Address the impact of the learning climate on social-emotional development, school attendance, engagement, and ultimately student success.
  - Teacher preparation: All educators provide high-quality, evidence-based instruction.

# Discussion Questions

Breakout Sessions

# Q1: What commitments can you make to do what matters most for young children?

# Q2: What are some challenges in implementing the classroom strategies discussed today?

# Q3: What challenges do you see in implementing early childhood literacy initiatives in your states?

# Q4:How can states think about supporting early literacy post-COVID?

Thank you!

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# Presenters

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