



Meeting Children's Early Literacy Needs

August 30–31, 2021





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A Professional Learning Pathway to Early Literacy

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SRCL Project Overview

- All 24 LSSs applied for and received funds through a competitive, peer reviewed process.
- Focus on:
 - ✓ Use of evidence based practices for designing and implementing effective professional learning
 - ✓ Supporting collaboration between LSSs and Community Based Early Childhood Programs
 - ✓ Alignment of local literacy plans to state literacy plan
 - ✓ Development of state and local systems for professional learning and technical assistance for implementation



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Early Literacy Strategy In Focus

- Providing professional learning on evidence based literacy instruction for teachers of four year olds throughout the state. (Early Childhood LETRS from Voyager Sopris/Lexia Learning authored by Louisa Moats and Carol Tolman).
- Offering Facilitator Trainings to sustain this initiative so LSSs can utilize own staff to train their teachers in addition to their community based preschool teachers.
- Interested applicants apply through a Google Survey and are selected based on:
 - ✓ interest,
 - ✓ commitment to integrate newly learned strategies into instruction (teacher and administrator),
 - ✓ and diverse representation throughout the state and instructional setting (public, community, Family Child Care, Head Start).



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Early Literacy Strategy In Focus

Goals:

- ✓ to provide a clear, consistent knowledge base for teachers of four year old students throughout the state on foundations of literacy instruction
- ✓ to provide a method for teachers to quickly assess students and understand how to create effective small group instruction based on student need
- ✓ to support teachers, Directors, and Supervisors in evaluation of current curriculum for alignment to evidence based literacy instruction



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Evidence of Success

- **Participants' Reaction:** end of course survey, over 200 applications for 80 slots in each cohort, participant recommendations to colleagues/supervisors
- **Participants' Learning:** Pre and post assessments demonstrate average teacher growth of **30%** on evidence based literacy instruction, Bridge to Practice activities, journal reflections
- **Organization Support and Change:** Maryland has 24 Local School Systems
 - 6 LSS staff, 2 Community teachers and 3 MSDE staff trained as Facilitators,
 - 7 LSSs utilized other state funds to support Early Childhood LETRS professional learning in their system,
 - 5 LSSs utilized other state funds to support other professional learning on evidence based literacy instruction,
 - LSS Supervisors and Community Based Childcare Directors report that teachers are requesting additional learning and materials to support evidence based literacy instruction



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Evidence of Success

- **Participants Use of New Knowledge and Skills:** Participant Bridge to Practice activities, Administrator LETRS/E LETRS Training plan to be able to observe and support evidence based literacy instruction, participants' team members are requesting to attend future cohorts after hearing about new strategies during team planning sessions
- **Student Learning Outcomes:** *Expect to see increases in:*
 - ✓ Language and Literacy scores on Early Learning (4's) and Kindergarten Readiness (5's) Assessments,
 - ✓ Foundational Reading scores on 3rd grade Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program



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Lessons Learned

- Suggestion: require LSSs to identify future facilitator plans to sustain initiative, require LSSs to identify community based childcare partners as participants in trainings
- Continue to share research with early childhood stakeholders on evidence based foundational literacy, survey teachers around the state to determine need/interest, and survey teachers and administrators pre-post professional learning



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Next Steps

- Utilize the Pathways to Early Literacy plan: other state funds dedicated towards project through 2023 to sustain multiple pathways for teachers and administrators to obtain knowledge (E LETRS, Literacy Essentials, IES Emergent Literacy PLC)
- Create and sustain collaborative networks for LSSs that are providing evidence based professional learning on early literacy
- Support annual Early Literacy Summit each summer to provide additional professional learning opportunities for early childhood teachers and administrators



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Resources and Contact Information

- LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling):
<https://www.voyagersopris.com/professional-development/letrs/overview>
- Other pathways to Early Literacy:
 - Literacy Essentials free online modules: <https://literacyessentials.org/literacy-essentials/modules/>
 - IES Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy:
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/elplc/index.asp>
- Vanessa Williams, Early Learning Program Specialist: Vanessa.williams2@Maryland.gov
- Nancy Perkins, Striving Readers Grant Specialist: Nancy.Perkins@Maryland.gov

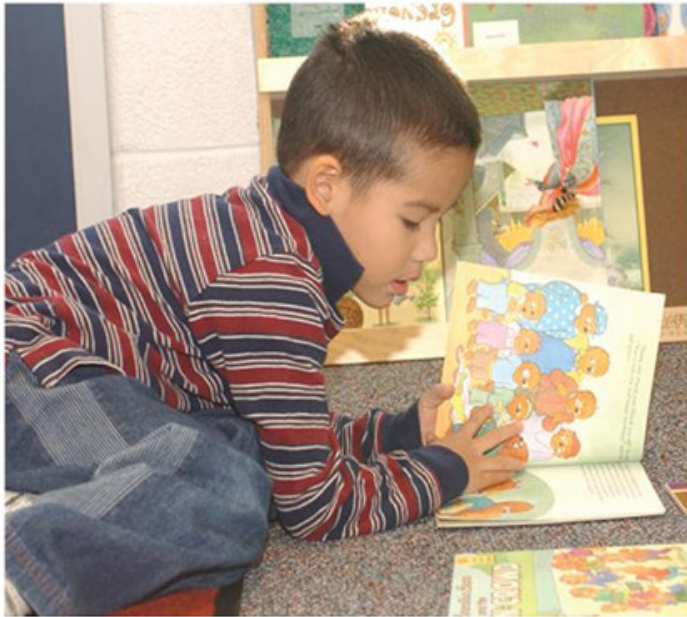


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Building Relationships in Early Education Through Literacy



Shannon Knutson, Moorhead MN, Literacy Coach
Lexi Lundberg, Moorhead MN, Family Literacy Specialist



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CLSD Project Overview

- Minnesota Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant
 - 12 districts/charter school sub grantees (42 individual sites)
 - \$35,912,560
- MN CLSD Objectives
 - **Objective 1:** Site **leadership teams** will engage in a continuous improvement process to build on effort, outcome and fidelity results each year.
 - **Objective 2:** Local **literacy coaches** will implement the MDE coaching process to build the capacity of core literacy instruction through the use of identified evidence-based practices, leading to improved student outcomes in literacy.
 - **Objective 3:** **Family Literacy Specialists** will build the capacity of each site through the use of identified evidence-based practices, leading to improved family collaboration.
 - **Objective 4:** The grant age/grade bands are large and require alignment of standards, coaching and literacy practices in a vertical and horizontal alignment, with special attention to key transition points: Pre-K to Kindergarten and middle school to high school.



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Early Literacy Strategy In Focus

1. Backpack Reading

- a. Collaboration with Families and Promoting Literacy (EBP 10)
- b. Extended conversations, provision of abundant reading materials, ongoing observation and assessment of child's language and literacy development (EBP 7, 8, 9)

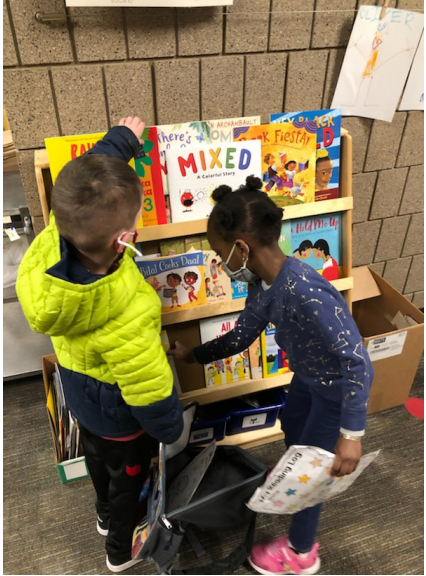
The classroom team made videos for families to help explain the program and support their work at home. These videos were sent home by the classroom teacher, the special education teacher, speech pathologist, and the classroom Minnesota Reading Corp tutor.

Topic included:

- i. General overview of read alouds with a focus on print, comprehension and vocabulary
- ii. How to focus on speech sounds in vocabulary
- iii. Phonological awareness, segmenting words, rhyming and alliteration

1. Native American ECFE class

- a. Collaboration with Families and Promoting Literacy (EBP 10, prek and birth)
- b. Attention to print consents, share books in engaging ways (EBP 2, 3 birth)



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Evidence of Success



1. Backpack Reading

- a. We implemented the backpack program in one classroom and plan to expand it to multiple classrooms in Fall 2021. Overall it was very successful, students and families became invested in the program. Parents were requesting books to add to our collection at school and to their home collection. We had 100% participation.
- b. Kids were excited to pick out books. By the end of the year the kids were asking for specific books to be added to our collection.
 - i. 330 books have been sent home
 - ii. 291 books have been returned to school
 - iii. 39 books have been added to home libraries

1. Native American ECFE class

- a. Weekly surveys were distributed to families and reviewed by educators each week. Results were positive and allowed our team to be responsive to weekly requests by our families.
- b. Families came each week and completed the month long class.
- c. Older kids started coming with their siblings.



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Lessons Learned

1. Backpack Reading

a. Differently

- i. Document ready with information for parents on the types of books selected
- ii. How to talk to parents about hard topics

b. Advice

- i. Build relationships with classroom families and staff
- ii. Buy in from classroom teams
 1. Book selection
 2. Value

1. Native American ECFE class

a. Differently

- i. Transportation and location

b. Advice

- i. Be vulnerable
- ii. Use the resources available to you



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Next Steps



Backpack Reading

- Expanding it to 2 preschool rooms and an EIS transition room
- Expanding books to be responsive of new kids
- Providing families the opportunity to give feedback throughout the year (3 times)
- Provide families with a list of books on topics that are socially responsive that are available upon request

Native Ed ECFE

- Increase to 2 sessions of 4 classes (fall and spring)
- Expanding to include more cultural groups in our local community (Kurdish and Somali)



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Resources and Contact Information

- Kirkus Review
 - <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/>
- Resources
 - [10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Sexism and Racism](#)
 - [A Guide to Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias](#)
- Shannon Knutson, sknutson@moorheadschoools.org
- Lexi Lundberg, alundberg@moorheadschoools.org



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The Evolution of Collaboration

Kimberly Muff,
Literacy Network of Kansas (LiNK) Project Director

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SRCL Project Overview

- Literacy Network of Kansas <https://www.litnetks.org/>
- 8 subgrantees representing 190 schools
- \$27 million
- Subgrantee priorities based on needs defined by their Literacy Needs Assessment, especially English Learners, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities



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Early Literacy Strategy In Focus

- Collaborate with early childhood partners to provide support for schools, families, and communities
- *Babble.Talk.Read.* (created by SEKESC)
- *Can't Wait to Read* initiative with KS Health Foundation



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Evidence of Success

- *Babble.Talk.Read.* has about 200 visitors per month over past 6 months (1,184 hits).
- *Can't Wait to Read* distributed over 16,000 bilingual books to families. Campaign website – approximately 27,000 visits. Across all media platforms – more than 8.6 million impressions. Nearly 300,000 videos viewed on Facebook and YouTube.



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Lessons Learned

- Collaborate with partners.
- Be practical with resources.
- Engage families with early learners creatively.
- Allow partnerships to evolve. Our partnership with The Kansas Health Foundation led to their facilitation of a *Community of Practice* for those engaging with families of English Learners. So many resources were shared between its members!



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Next Steps

- *Babble.Talk.Read.* plans to add new content and continue social media posts
- *Can't Wait to Read* extended to *Communities Supporting Early Literacy* initiative
- *Communities of Practice* for Early Learners and Family Engagement will continue



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Resources and Contact Information

- Babble. Talk. Read.
 - <https://btr.greenbush.org/>
- Can't Wait to Read
 - <https://readwiththem.org/>
- Community of Practice – Early Childhood
 - [LiNK Early Childhood CoP Resources](#)
- Community of Practice – Family Engagement for English Learners
 - [LiNK Family Engagement CoP Resources](#)

Kimberly Muff, kmuff@ksde.org



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