

# Professional Development Toolbox

## *Literacy and Vocabulary*

### LITERACY

❖ Ask teachers to select a piece of literature they are planning to use with their class. Walk through the book together and develop a list of ways the teachers can scaffold the story (e.g., gestures, actions, and picture) to aid in children's comprehension (PCF, p. 147, 192; PEL, pp. 54-55)

❖ Leave the teacher with a copy of the article *Storybook Reading for Young Dual Language Learners* (Gillanders & Castro, 2011). Ask the teacher to select one to two strategies from the article that they will implement and a timeline for implementation. On the next visit, have the teacher reflect on what went well and what they would do differently and why. (NOTE: This article includes eight specific strategies for storybook reading. Some of these strategies are included in other sections of this Tool Box) (NAEYC, Young Children)

❖ Ask the teacher to look at their daily schedules and identify times when they read to children. Ask them to identify times that they read aloud to small groups of children. If they are not reading aloud to small groups, help them identify times that they might include this in their daily schedules. Explain the following benefits: easier facilitation of conversation, greater participation by each child, and increased ability to monitor each child's learning. (PEL, p. 79; PCF, p. 199)

❖ Have a conversation with the teacher to assess their knowledge about dialogic reading. Select the video most appropriate for the teacher's current needs (Introducing the Strategy, Learning the Strategy, Observing the Strategy, and Using the Strategy). Ask the teacher to view selected Dialogic Reading video(s) from Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program website and complete any corresponding activities before the next meeting. (Note: Early Steps to Reading Success "Dialogic Reading" segment may be used in place of online videos. Online videos are chunked and provide trainers with the ability to differentiate for teachers' individual needs.) At the next meeting, review the concepts explored in the videos and create a plan for next steps. Repeat this process until the teacher has engaged in dialogic reading with an individual or small group. After implementation, ask the teacher to reflect upon his/her experiences. He/she should identify what went well, what he/she would do differently and why. (PEL, p. 79)



# Professional Development Toolbox

## *Literacy and Vocabulary continued*

❖ Introduce and model the uses of “text talk.” Invite the teacher to provide you with a text he/she will be using in his/her classroom. Together identify two to four words that will be key in helping children understand the text. Model the process of (1) reading the words as is used in the text and having the children repeat the word with the teacher; (2) provide a definition easily understood by preschoolers; and (3) use the word in a context other than that in the story (PEL, p. 79)

❖ Between visits, ask the teacher to view the “Moving Toward Literacy” section of *A World Full of Language* (CDE, 2006). At the next meeting, discuss with the teacher the practices they already have in place and their insights from the video. Ask each teacher to select one to two strategies he/she will implement before the next visit. At the following visit, provide time for discussion, reflection and additional planning. NOTE: “Moving Toward Literacy” includes the following subsections: Strengthen Interest in Print; Build Letter Knowledge; Make Books and Stories Come Alive; and Link Literacy to Home and Community. This strategy can be tailored to meet a teacher’s individual needs by using the assessments to determine which sections include content related to the areas on which the teacher wants to work. (*World Full of Language*)

❖ Together, view the *Early Steps to Reading Success* DVD section “Phonological Awareness.” (Note: Video is 12 minutes and may be viewed by the teacher, between meetings if necessary). Before viewing the video, ask the teacher to note the ways Bianca does the following to help children focus on sounds in words: plans lessons; uses spontaneous moments (at outdoor play, the water table, and with the class pet); and includes Samantha, a child who is learning English. Have a conversation with the teacher about the children in their care and brainstorm words that rhyme with each child’s name and words that use the same beginning sounds as each child’s name. Work with the the teacher to plan one way to support children’s phonological awareness during that routine (*Early Steps to Reading Success*; PCF, pp. 215-216; PEL, p. 82)





# Professional Development Toolbox

## *Literacy and Vocabulary continued*

### VOCABULARY

❖ With the teacher, look at the lesson plans for the week. Together, create a web to identify English vocabulary to be taught. Ask the teacher to list when and how each word will be introduced to the children. (Note: Early Steps to Reading Success “Oral Language B” segment illustrates this process and may be reviewed and discussed to enhance teachers’ understanding of this process) (PCF, p. 199).

❖ Discuss ways to identify key vocabulary words in literature and to introduce the words in the children’s home language and in English before reading. Explain how drawing attention to key vocabulary, providing expanded definitions with visual aids and using the new vocabulary will facilitate English-language development as well as understanding of the text (PCF, p. 208)

❖ With the teacher, review a piece of literature he/she will be reading in the next week. Together brainstorm specific ways to use manipulatives, illustrations, gestures and facial expressions to help children understand vocabulary (PCF, p. 192; World Full of Language)

❖ Ask teachers to watch the “Provide Scaffolds” section of A World Full of Language (CDE, 2006). Following the viewing, have teachers brainstorm ways to include movement, music and gestures as well as multi-sensory approaches (PCF, p. 199; PEL, p. 42; World Full of Language)

❖ Encourage teachers to implement a small-group “Sharing Time” when children can describe and talk about objects they bring from home. This practices will help tie vocabulary to children’s interests, reduce wait time for children who are listening, and provide a less threatening environment for children who are English learners to “try out” their new language (PEL, p. 40; PCF, p. 230; World Full of Language)

❖ Have the teacher identify one way they currently introduce new words to children. Together, view Early Steps to Reading Success “Oral Language Part A” (Note: video is 13 minutes; ask teachers to view segment prior to your visit if time does not permit viewing the video together.) Based on individual teacher need, you might discuss one or more of the following: Stephanie’s instructional goal and link to the Preschool Learning Foundations, the learning activities she provides, and the teaching strategies uses. Strategies for teaching vocabulary used are as follows: repeating vocabulary words, explaining the meaning of words, using a hands-on experience to illustrate the words’ meanings, connecting vocabulary to activities and content about which children are interested, facilitating conversations with children about activities in which they are engaged, and strategically selecting teaching strategies to match the size of the group. Ask teachers to select a topic of study to teach vocabulary. Help them brainstorm a list



of words they want children to learn, name two activities they could use, and identify at least one teaching strategy from the list above, that they plan to use with each activity. (Early Steps to Reading Success; PEL, pp. 31, 54-55; PCF, pp. 192,199)

*Professional Development Toolbox continued on next page*

# Professional Development Toolbox

## *Literacy and Vocabulary continued*

- ❖ Invite teachers to think about how they may use their resources including families to support vocabulary development in the classroom. Ask teachers to make a list of about five words that they are currently providing opportunities to learn in the classroom play areas. You may choose to use Handout 5: Paths to Acquisition from the Vocabulary module to inspire teachers to think about vocabulary in the classroom. Once you have the list, ask teachers to use their resources to translate these words into all the home languages in the classroom. For example, they can use teaching staff, support staff, families, and even children. Ask teacher to think about how they might use this list once it is complete. Suggest posting this list around the room once it is created. Let teachers know you will begin your next technical assistance meeting by discussing progress on this list and how it was used.