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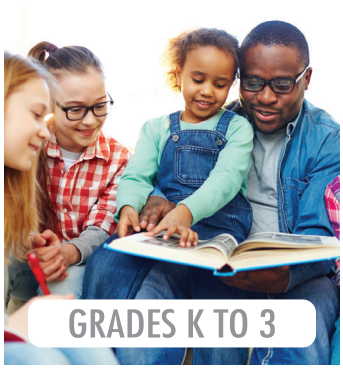
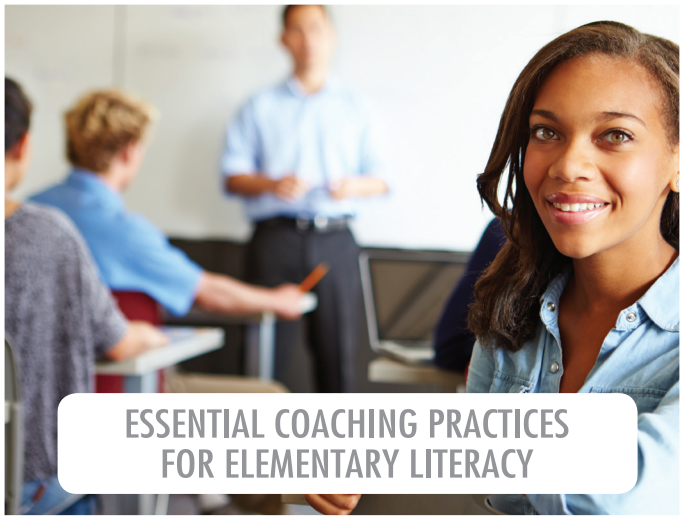
Essential Practices in Early and Elementary Literacy

This compilation of the Essential Practices in Early Literacy was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts.



ESSENTIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES



LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

COACHING PRACTICES

EVERY CHILD classroom Day

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These materials are provided through a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education

Social media and web connections: visit us at **www.gomaisa.org**
Twitter hastag **#MichiganLiteracy** and **LiteracyEssentials.org**

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A LEADER'S GUIDE TO A THEORY OF ACTION FOR
Raising Michigan's Literacy Achievement

The path to raising student achievement is not a direct line from funding to outcome. High levels of student achievement will result only when core instructional practices are defined with educator and system supports in place that contribute to literacy success for every student. These include the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Literacy Task Force (Early Literacy Task Force, 6-12 Task Force) *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy* (Birth to Age 3, Prekindergarten, Grades K-3, Grades 4-5) recommended for use in every classroom every day, *Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy* in every school and center, and *Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy* in use by every literacy coach. For the *Essential Instructional Practices for Disciplinary Literacy* (Grades 6-12), it is important that the practices are used consistently in every classroom on a regular basis.

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Literacy Theory of Action

This theory of action requires a structure of supports from the system to the student level.

- If we have *Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy* articulated and adopted at the system level,
  - we can align **research, practice, resources and policy.**
- If we have aligned policies, funding, initiatives, and resources system wide,
  - we can develop **leadership** for literacy at the state, regional and local levels.
- If we have state-wide leadership capacity focused on literacy at the school and center level in an intentional, multi-year manner,
  - we can embed and sustain professional learning through literacy **coaching** statewide.
- If teaching teams and individual teachers are supported by quality coaching,
  - we can strengthen the literacy instructional practices for all **Michigan Teachers**.
- If we have the *Essential Instructional Literacy Practices* occurring in every classroom, every day,
  - **All Michigan children** develop strong literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Each element is critical and will be attended to in ongoing evaluation and improvement of this initiative.

Professional learning design

As documented in the MAISA GELN ELTF *Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy: Prekindergarten and Elementary Grades* and *Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy*, support of administrators' and teachers' development requires job-embedded ongoing professional learning. After being introduced to new knowledge, skills, and dispositions, administrators and teachers need opportunities to practice and receive feedback as they employ new learning in the school, center, and classroom. Resources provided through Michigan Department of Education grants are developing skills of ISD early literacy coaches and creating a sustainable system of resources, including:

- Essential practices in literacy instruction, coaching, school-wide and center-wide practices, and leadership;
- access to university researchers who are experts in the area of early literacy;
- professional learning opportunities and a network to provide ongoing support; and
- print, video, and digital resources about effective literacy instruction, coaching, and leadership.

"One size fits all" professional learning does not meet the needs of today's educators. A blended training model of online and face-to-face experiences offers professional learning and corresponding wrap-around supports, including a statewide literacy mentors' network. Instructional modules under development will provide a rich library of video instruction segments. Also under development is an online professional learning community to support all Michigan early literacy educators.

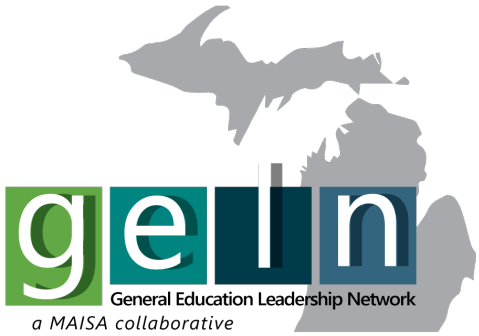
These intentional efforts will ensure a consistent, ongoing source of support for high-quality literacy instruction, resulting in improved literacy skills for all Michigan students.

This theory of action was developed by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators' (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force. This Task Force was first convened in December 2015 and includes stakeholders from Pre-K-12, ISDs, higher education, Michigan Department of Education, and key educational organizations across Michigan.

NOTES

COMMUNICATION POINTS FOR THE ESSENTIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN
Early, Elementary, and Disciplinary Literacy

The Essential Instructional Practices in Early, Elementary, and Disciplinary Literacy are a set of research-supported instructional practices that when implemented in the classroom, can have a positive impact on student literacy achievement. The use of these practices in every classroom, every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State's literacy achievement. They should be viewed akin to medical practice guides, as they present a minimum "standard of care" for Michigan's children.



These Instructional Practices were developed by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) and the 6-12 Disciplinary Literacy Task Force and include the following:

- Essential Instructional Practices in Language and Emergent Literacy: Birth to Age 3
- Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Prekindergarten
- Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3
- Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy: Grades 4-5
- Essential Instructional Practices for Disciplinary Literacy: Grades 6-12

Additionally, the MAISA GELN ELTF created organizational practices in support of literacy development that systemically impact learning, and also a set of research-supported literacy coaching practices that can provide powerful job-embedded, ongoing professional development with a primary goal of enhancing classroom literacy instruction through improving teacher expertise. The documents are titled as follows:

- Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy
- Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy

All of the documents are intended to be used collectively to support a strong literacy system. High levels of student achievement will result only when core instructional practices are defined and educator and system supports are in place to contribute to literacy success for every student. These include the instructional practices recommended for use in every classroom every day, school-wide and center-wide essentials in every school and center, and coaching essentials in use by every coach. For the Essential Instructional Practices for Disciplinary Literacy, it is important that the practices are used consistently in every classroom on a regular basis.

Some literacy instructional practices enjoy so much support in research that we should be using them in every classroom every day. For example, it should not be seen as acceptable for some schools to provide daily writing instruction for young children while others do not, or for some classrooms to conduct daily read-alouds while others do not. Every child in every classroom every day should experience research-aligned literacy instruction. However, for an individual child, that may not include experiencing every practice in the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy every day. For example, a teacher should provide small-group instruction each day, but not every child may experience instruction in a small group every day. Similarly, a teacher should collaborate with families every day, but the teacher may not be able to point to a collaboration (e.g., a conversation or lesson that intentionally builds on a family's assets) with every child's family every day. The phrase "as needed," which appears a number of times in the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3, illustrates the appropriate approach. We need to provide the literacy instruction that every child needs in every classroom every day.

The comprehensive set of practices can be accessed at literacyessentials.org

Formal and Informal Communication:	
Formal/Written When referencing or communicating about the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy as individual documents, always use the official document titles written below:	**Informal/Conversational** When referencing or communicating about the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy as individual documents in conversation, the following titles should be used at the minimum:
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential Instructional Practices in Language and Emergent Literacy: Birth to Age 3	• Birth to Age 3 Essential Instructional Literacy Practices
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Prekindergarten	• PreK Essential Instructional Literacy Practices
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3	• K-3 Essential Instructional Literacy Practices
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy: Grades 4-5	• 4-5 Essential Instructional Literacy Practices
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential Instructional Practices for Disciplinary Literacy: Grades 6-12	• 6-12 Essential Instructional Practices for Disciplinary Literacy
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy	• Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy
• Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy	• Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy

Social Media Considerations:

- Referencing literacyessentials.org will automatically link the website in your post and help followers gain direct access to the resources.
- Please use the following hashtags when referring to the Essential Instructional Practices in Early, Elementary, and Disciplinary Literacy:
  - #MichiganLiteracy
  - #MiGELN
- Please consider tagging the following organizations when referring to the Essential Instructional Practices in Early, Elementary, and Disciplinary Literacy:
  - @MAISA_ISDs (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators)
  - @mieducation (Michigan Department of Education)

Modules and Sample Video Communication Points

Modules:

- A series of online professional learning modules have been developed to support educators in understanding and implementing the following:
  - Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Prekindergarten
  - Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3
  - Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy
  - Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy

The modules contain content presentations accompanied by classroom videos that demonstrate each essential in practice. Reflection activities are included to support learners in checking their understanding and applying what they have learned to their own practice.

Videos:

- The classroom videos are snapshots of what the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3 or PreK-K practices look like in a classroom and are meant to be watched after the modules have been completed. The videos should be watched or used in conjunction with the modules for professional learning.

All modules and videos are found at literacyessentials.org.

For questions about the Essential Instructional Practices in Early and Elementary Literacy, contact Susan Townsend, MAISA Early Literacy Grant, Project Director, and Early Literacy Task Force Co-Chair at stownsend@gomasa.org.

For questions about professional learning, contact Erin Brown, MAISA Early Literacy Grant Project Coordinator at ebrown@gomasa.org.

For questions about access to the resources, contact Taylor Hoag, MAISA Administrative Assistant at thoag@gomasa.org.

MAISA Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
Supporting Regional Education Service Agencies

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NOTES

Practitioner Version

Essential Instructional Practices in Language and Emergent Literacy: Birth to Age 3

This document was developed by the **Early Literacy Task Force** (ELTF), a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

This document is intended to be read in concert with the Essential Instructional Practices in Early and Elementary Literacy: Prekindergarten. *There is important overlap and continuity in these and other "Essentials" documents.*

For more information, visit www.literacyessentials.org.

To reference this document: Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force (2018). Essential instructional practices in language and emergent literacy: Birth to age 3. Lansing, MI: Authors.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported literacy practices that should be a focus of professional development throughout the state. The focus of the document is on practices in individual interactions with children, rather than on center- or systems-level practices. The document focuses on infants and toddlers, as the first 3 years of life are when children learn the fastest and acquire the foundational skills that will support their development and learning for the rest of their lives. Improving language and literacy experiences in the infant and toddler years has the potential to improve "reading by third grade" outcomes. Early childhood programs can also help to address disparities in literacy achievement.

Research suggests that each of the ten practices in this document can have a positive impact on literacy development. We believe that the use of these practices in every care setting every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State's literacy achievement. They should be viewed, like practice guides in medicine, as a minimum "standard of care" for Michigan's children.

Language and emergent literacy skills develop rapidly during the first 3 years of life and are essential for later learning, along with other key skills for learning in the physical, social-emotional, and cognitive domains; this document focuses on practices to support language and literacy, though all domains of development are important. The main goal of emergent literacy during this time is to support language development, providing a foundation for literacy skills. From birth to age 3, language and literacy are one integrated domain. The core skills are understanding and using language and other forms of communication, and building vocabulary that reflects the child's understanding of the world. Some emergent literacy skills can also be encouraged directly, by exposing children to printed words, sharing reading experiences, and helping children become aware of sounds within words. When these experiences are fun and engaging, children develop a love of reading that will motivate them to learn to read. This document is written for early childhood practitioners who work with infants, toddlers, and their families (child care providers, early educators, home visitors, early interventionists), but the practices can be used by all adults who work with infants and toddlers and their families, in home-, community-, or early care and education (ECE)-settings. This document does not endorse any specific curriculum, but describes essential practices — specific ways of interacting with infants and toddlers — that should be infused throughout their learning experiences. Most of the practices should happen every day and be integrated into daily routines. Others should be less frequent because they focus on specific aspects of language, reading, and writing. This is not an all-inclusive list of every possible practice that supports language and emergent literacy, but instead, a description of the ones with the best evidence in the science of child development. Each recommended practice is based on current research, and may change when additional research provides more information on the best ways to support our youngest learners.

1. Create Safe, Secure, and Stimulating Environments

When infants and toddlers feel safe and secure, they can actively explore and focus on learning. When environments are stimulating, they support infants and toddlers to direct their own play, which provides adults with opportunities to engage in child-led conversations that support language development.

Create calm, predictable environments that support children's sense of safety.

- Care for children in small groups to reduce overstimulation.
- Use music and other sound intentionally, not as background noise.
- Create predictable but flexible routines (e.g., for sleep, eating, diapering/toileting, and play).
- Ensure children get enough sleep (infants: 13-14 hrs; toddlers: 10-13 hrs), including daytime naps.

Form consistent, close relationships to support children's sense of security.

- Care for infants and toddlers in primary caregiving groups, keeping the same caregivers/educators with children as long as possible.
- Interact affectionately and respond positively when children initiate physical or social contact.
- Respond quickly and calmly to children's physical and emotional needs, particularly distress.
- Communicate with adults and children in calm and consistent ways.

Create stimulating environments that encourage children's self-directed play and exploration, and use children's play as opportunities to support their language.

- Provide a variety of materials, including books, toys that promote eye-hand coordination (e.g., crayons, shape-sorters, blocks), role-playing toys (e.g., dolls, pretend food), music (e.g., rattles, drums), and art-making materials (e.g., paper, paint, markers, playdough).
- Reflect children's home cultures in music, decor, photos, and toys in early education and care settings.
- Place materials where crawlers and walkers can reach them on their own.
- Provide materials that can be used in more than one way; encourage children to choose their own toys and how they play with them.
- Use children's self-directed play as opportunities to label, describe, and explain what they play with and how they are playing.
- Plan enriching, playful experiences that intentionally and flexibly support development while building on children's interests.

2. Bring Attention to Print Concepts in Books and the Environment

Print concepts are understandings about how print works, and the functions it serves in our lives. Infants and toddlers learn about the many ways that print is used when we point out print concepts and printed words throughout the environment; creating a print-rich environment encourages adults to do this. Children learn print concepts about the mechanics of reading during book-sharing experiences.

Show children how print works, using both verbal and nonverbal strategies.

- Encourage children to touch and hold books and turn pages; comment on their actions with the book.
- Point to the print as you read it.
- Ask toddlers about simple print concepts (e.g., "Show me where to read.").
- Ask toddlers simple questions about print (e.g., "This is a P. Your name starts with P! Can you find another P?").
- Make comments about print (e.g., "That says 'help.'") and discuss the features of letters (e.g., "That is a D. It makes a /d/ /d/ /d/ sound, like dog and diaper.").

Show children that print has meaning and serves many purposes.

- Point to, read, and describe printed words in the environment, such as labels on shelves, packages, menus, and street signs, discussing purposes of the printed words (e.g., "That sign says 'blocks.' It tells us that this is where the blocks go on our shelves.").
- Show children that letters and words help readers understand what labels, menus, and signs say.

Create a print-rich environment that is meaningful to children.

- Use children's names and photos to label their belongings, cubbies, art, and other materials.
- Label bins and shelves with both pictures and words.
- Include words and images that are meaningful to children or useful in daily life (e.g., nursery rhymes, inspirational messages, grocery lists, packaging labels, menus, daily schedule, reminders).
- (See also Essential #8 for providing materials for reading and writing that are always available).

Use Developmentally Appropriate Literacy Experiences!

Avoid pushing children to read in this developmental period. There is no evidence that infants and toddlers can learn to read words conventionally, even when parents or educators use programs or materials attempting to teach infants or toddlers to read. Instead, there is evidence that having engaging and emotionally supportive book-sharing interactions with caregivers supports later reading development. Pressuring children to read can lead to bad reading habits and undermine their motivation to read. Instead, focus on creating fun learning experiences with books and print.

3. Share Books in Engaging Ways

Book-sharing fosters a love of reading when it is engaging and fun, and when children feel close to the adult reading. Book-sharing can be used to support comprehension and vocabulary when it is interactive, and when adults talk about the content of the book and link it to children's interests and experiences. Children who start sharing books with their caregivers before age 1 have better language and literacy skills later on.

Read to children from birth, and read often, sharing a variety of books and other texts.

- Share different types of books and other texts (e.g., magazines, newspapers, websites) with infants and toddlers, including stories, information books (which provide factual knowledge), and poetry.
- Choose high-quality books to share with children, making sure that at least some of the books have rich vocabulary (many different words, some words that are not from everyday language), use full sentences (rather than just one word at a time), and have pictures related to the printed words.
- Choose books with stories and topics that are interesting and enjoyable for children, including topics related to their family and culture.

Foster a love of reading by making book-sharing engaging and fun.

- Sit together with children, letting them sit on your lap or next to you while sharing books.
- Let infants and toddlers choose the books.
- Read the same books over and over again if children are interested in them – children love to predict what happens or appears next in their favorite books.
- Invite children to interact with the books by turning pages and pointing to pictures or words.

Make book-sharing interactive to support understanding of concepts and vocabulary development.

- Use different voices, facial expressions, and gestures to engage children in the meaning of the contents in books, acting out the important parts of stories, and talking about new words or ideas.
- Comment on links between the ideas in the book to children's experiences and interests.
- Comment on words that are new to children as you read books, and explain their meaning using words that infants understand or toddlers already say.
- Reinforce new words from books by talking with toddlers about the book topic so they can practice the new words themselves. Repeat new words and provide explanations or examples.
- Use questions and prompts to help children learn and label concepts in the book.

Low tech is best!

There is no substitute for adult-child interaction when it comes to language and emergent literacy. Limit television viewing and other screen time for children. If any, choose story-like, language-rich shows. Make television or tablet use interactive by watching with children and talking about what they see and hear.

4. Play With Sounds and Invite Children to Play With You

Infants are born paying attention to sounds of voices, and are attracted to higher-pitched and musical voices. Playing with sounds draws children's attention to the sounds in language and supports their skills for recognizing and working with the sounds of language (phonological awareness).

Encourage and respond to all sounds, from first coos to words and sentences.

- Imitate the sounds infants make, then expand on them with other vocalizations and words.
- Make eye contact and follow infants' facial expressions and eye gaze as you engage in sound play.

Use infant-directed speech with young infants to get and keep their attention.

- With infants less than 6 months old, use a higher pitched vocal tone, and stretch out the vowel sounds. Pause between phrases, and vary the pitch of your voice (e.g., "Hi baaaaby… See the biiiig bunny… She is soooo taaaall.").
- With infants less than 1 year old, use short phrases and repeat them several times.

Draw children's attention to the sounds of words using their names, songs, poems, and books.

- Sing songs with hand motions (which helps infants understand the meaning of the words) and let them "sing along" even before they can talk (e.g., Itsy Bitsy Spider; Sweet Potato Pie; I Can; or Wheels on the Bus). Draw children's attention to the sounds by clapping with the rhythm of a song.
- Share books, poems, and songs with rhymes (e.g., "Pat the cat sat on a mat.") or words that begin with the same sound (e.g., "Willy the whale likes wet water."). Play with the sounds in children's names. Talk about sounds in the words as you say them.
- Start by drawing children's attention to individual words (e.g., clap out the words in the sentence "The dog ran fast."). Next, draw attention to syllables (e.g., "Doorbell. That has two beats, doorbell. How many beats does pop-si-cle have?").

5. Enhance Two-Way Communication With Gestures

Gestures (hand and body motions used for communication) let preverbal children choose the topic of conversation and promote two-way communication between adults and young children, which encourages children's development of vocabulary. When toddlers combine two gestures, or combine gestures with words, this helps them learn to combine words and ideas into sentences.

Use gestures along with words to promote two-way communication.

- During play, use gestures to show what objects do (e.g., turn the plane propeller or make the frog hop).
- Use simple gestures while you sing so even preverbal children can learn to "sing along."
- During book-sharing, point to pictures as you read or talk about them. Use hand gestures to act out key concepts in the book.
- During care routines (meals, sleep, diapering), model gestures for the main concepts (e.g., "eat," "drink," "sleep," and "diaper") so preverbal children can learn to communicate their needs.
- Always talk while you gesture so children learn to pair the words with the gestures.

Encourage preverbal children to use gestures during book-sharing.

- Invite children to point to things they recognize in books by asking simple questions (e.g., "Where's the bunny?" and "Can you find the mouse?").
- Invite children to point to what they are interested in by asking open-ended questions (e.g., "What do you see on this page?" and "Which ones do you like?"). Then label and describe what they pointed to.

Respond to children's gestures to promote language.

- Use children's gestures as a cue for what to talk about. Translate their gestures into spoken words.
- Respond to children's gestures, and their gesture-word combinations, by repeating their message back and expanding on it.

6. Support Skills Across Developmental Domains That are Important for Writing

Writing is a multi-faceted activity about composing and communicating messages. It is supported by a set of skills including motor skills, understanding and using symbols, and creating messages for others. Early writing often looks like scribbles; this shows that children understand that writing has meaning and can communicate a message.

Provide opportunities for children to practice the motor skills needed for writing.

- Support fine-motor activities that build strength in small muscle groups in hands and fingers, such as working with playdough, finger painting, or picking up objects of different sizes, with hands then with tools.
- Provide a variety of age-appropriate materials to write, draw, and paint.
- Encourage all early forms of writing, including simple marks, scribbles, and drawing.

Give children natural opportunities to write or compose messages, and talk to them about the meaning.

- Talk about what they have drawn, marked, colored, or painted without evaluating it or assuming what it is. For preverbal children, comment on the composition (e.g., "I see that you used blue to make lines, and here is a red circle."). For verbal children, use open-ended prompts (e.g., "Tell me about your work," or "Can you tell me about this part?").
- Ask older toddlers what they have written when they are finished writing. Affirm their messages about the content, regardless of what their marks look like.

7. Converse With Children, Responding to Their Cues and Letting Them Choose the Topics

High-quality language interactions are central to supporting early language skills. Infants and toddlers need to hear a rich variety of language that is directly related to their attention and interests, and to be encouraged to communicate in all the ways they can — with facial expressions, hands and bodies, and voices. The same child-led, responsive interaction practices support both preverbal and verbal toddlers, but the practices can look a little different, depending on the child's age and communication skills.

High-Quality Language Interactions With Infants and Toddlers

	Preverbal Children	Verbal Children
Establish joint attention	▪ Get on the infant's level physically. Be close so the infant can see, hear, and touch you. ▪ Watch infants closely to learn what they pay attention to — look to their eye gaze, facial expressions, body orientation, and actions. ▪ Make eye contact so it is clear that you and the infant are paying attention to each other (dyadic joint attention). ▪ Look at the things the infant is looking at or playing with so you and the infant are attending to the same thing (triadic joint attention).	▪ Place yourself near the toddlers' activities, getting down at their eye level. ▪ Watch and listen to toddlers to learn what they are doing or trying to do. ▪ Look for opportunities to join the toddlers' activites without taking over. ▪ Comment on what toddlers are doing to let them know you are paying attention; wait for an invitation to join their play. ▪ Respond to toddlers' invitations to join their play or activity.

High-Quality Language Interactions With Infants and Toddlers

	Preverbal Children	Verbal Children
Talk to children about their interests	▪ Talk about things infants are doing and paying attention to (parallel talk). ▪ Narrate what you do as you do it (narrating/ self-talk). ▪ Warn infants before changing what you are doing (anticipatory talk).	▪ Talk about what toddlers do, see, and hear, and what they might think or feel. ▪ Let toddlers know ahead of time what you are going to do. Explain your reasons for doing what you do.
Encourage children to choose the topic of conversation	▪ Invite and encourage infants to choose their own toys and activities. ▪ Comment on what infants choose to do.	▪ Ask toddlers what they want to do. ▪ Support toddlers' activity choices. ▪ Comment on toddlers' choices.
Use child-directed speech	▪ Use a calm, warm tone of voice. ▪ Use a musical tone of voice, with higher-pitched tones, to get young infants' attention. ▪ Use short, simple sentences. ▪ Repeat key words or phrases. ▪ Emphasize key words with exaggerated voice, face, and gestures.	▪ Use a calm, warm, and normal tone of voice, and speak slowly and clearly. ▪ Use longer sentences with more complex, adult-like grammar. ▪ Use a variety of sentence types, including questions.
Respond to children's communication cues	▪ Respond to infants' facial expressions, sounds (cooing, babbling), and body language (gestures, head turns, squirming). ▪ Interpret infants' interests, experiences, and intentions, and translate them into words. ▪ Listen and watch for infants' cues that they are done interacting (glancing or turning away, fussing, moving away).	▪ Respond to toddlers' facial expressions, vocalizations, words, and body language. ▪ Interpret toddlers' interests, intentions, and internal states. Translate them into words and connect them to their context. ▪ Follow toddlers' leads when they end the interaction.
Imitate and expand	▪ Repeat infants' vocalizations or words back to them.	▪ Repeat toddlers' words and phrases, re-phrasing to use the words correctly (e.g., Toddler: "Me go." Adult: "You're saying you want to go?"). ▪ Repeat toddlers' words and add another idea. (e.g., Toddler: "Me go." Adult: "You want to go? I want to go, too. Who should we take with us?").
Extend what children say	▪ Talk about what infants are doing, what they are seeing and hearing, and what they might want or be trying to do (sportscasting: out-loud play-by-play of infants' actions and experiences).	▪ Talk about things connected to toddlers' interests and activities. ▪ Talk about things beyond the here and now (feelings and thoughts, events in the past or future, people not present).
Keep the conversation going	▪ Encourage infants to vocalize again. ▪ Engage in face-to-face vocal turn-taking. ▪ Ask simple questions and wait for an answer. ▪ Respond to any cue from the infant and keep the exchange going.	▪ Ask open-ended questions about what toddlers are doing. ▪ Use "I wonder" statements that invite toddlers to think about what is possible. ▪ Respond to all communication attempts and keep the conversation going.

8. Provide Materials for Reading and Writing That are Always Available to Children

Infants and toddlers learn best when they pursue their own interests in ways that utilize and build on their own skills. Environments and routines should provide them with the freedom to explore books and use writing and drawing materials at their own pace and in their own ways.

Provide children access to many different, high-quality books in all settings.

- Place books within children's reach so they can access books any time.
- Make sure children have access to their favorite books and ones that reflect their home language, family, and culture.
- Simple books are just as effective as ones with expensive features such as lift flaps.

Give children opportunities to write in whatever forms they can.

- Provide children with a variety of writing materials and surfaces on which to write (e.g., crayons or markers on paper, chalk on chalkboard or sidewalk, sticks in sand).
- Provide toddlers with opportunities to write meaningfully (e.g., "signing" their name, writing a grocery list, or checking off items from a list).

Low tech is best!

There is no evidence that technology supports language and literacy learning in the infant and toddler years, including electronic books and technology designed for education. The key to language development is active, back-and-forth communication between children and adults; limit the things that detract from these high-quality interactions.

- Limit children's access to electronic toys, tablets, phones, and media.
- Focus on books and writing materials, rather than electronic toys, games, and apps.

9. Monitor Language Development, Screen for Early Delays, and Refer Families to Services as Needed

Toddlerhood is when language delays first appear, and when early intervention is most effective. Delays in early language development may cause challenges in behavior regulation and social interactions; if not addressed, these delays lead to later difficulties in language and literacy.

Screen and monitor children's hearing.

- Ensure that infants' and toddlers' hearing is screened regularly.
- Monitor hearing for possible deficits that may be due to frequent ear infections.

Screen and monitor children's social communication behaviors, understanding of language, and ability to talk.

- Take families' concerns about their child's language seriously.
- Assess children's language and communication together with families.
- Make sure the person who screens the child's language is familiar to the child so the child is sufficiently comfortable and can show what they know.
- Use a validated screening tool to monitor children's abilities to understand language and to communicate with gestures and words.

Screen multiple-language learners in culturally and developmentally appropriate ways.

- Screen children in their primary home language.
- Screen and assess children learning two or more languages in both/all languages.
- Involve families in screening the child's language.

When screening indicates a hearing deficit, or a risk of delay in development, refer families in Michigan to Early On for further evaluation: www.1800earlyon.org

10. Work With Families to Promote Home Language and Literacy Environments That are Rich and Responsive

Infants' and toddlers' primary learning environment is their home, and their first and most consistent educators are the family members with whom they live. The home language and literacy environment has a strong and lasting effect on language skills, emergent literacy, and related social and academic skills.

Create positive, goal-oriented relationships between families and educators.

- Acknowledge families' roles in their child's development and learning. Ask for parent and family insights about their child's interests and needs.
- Take a strengths-based approach that recognizes that all families have the ability to support their child's development. Help to maximize those abilities.
- Refer families to services that can support their own health and well-being so they can be calm, attentive, and responsive to their infants and toddlers.
- Ask about and prioritize families' goals for their child's development and learning.
- Support families in their home language whenever possible.

Work within families' home routines to support infants' and toddlers' language and emergent literacy.

- Point out and encourage things families already do that support their children's language and literacy (e.g., talking about what interests their child, responding to child cues, and asking questions to keep the conversation going).
- Point out child behaviors that are communication cues, help families interpret these cues and respond in ways that support language development and emergent literacy. Show how families can explore and play with objects, talk, and use gestures during everyday routines with children.
- Help families identify ways to change their child's environment and routines to be calm, consistent, and stimulating (e.g., keep consistent meal and bedtime routines, maximize children's sleep, and reduce extra noise that may disrupt children's concentration).
- Communicate that all family members — mothers, fathers, siblings, and others — are part of the child's home language and literacy environment and can support their development.

Show families they can support language and emergent literacy in many ways in addition to "reading," including:

- Sharing books with pictures.
- Story-telling.
- Singing, rhyming, chanting, rapping, or other word play.

Incorporate families' culture and language in all settings.

- Represent the child's cultural background and home language (if it has a written form) in books, labels, and other materials.
- Provide families with children's books (to borrow or keep) in their home language or most comfortable language.
- Encourage families to communicate with their children in their most comfortable language. Recognize that the ability to speak multiple languages has many social and cognitive benefits for children.

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Process for Development and Review

This document was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF), a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. The Early Literacy Task Force included representatives from the following organizations, although their participation does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the organization they represent:

- Early Childhood Administrators' Network, MAISA
- English Language Arts Leadership Network , MAISA
- General Education Leadership Network, MAISA
- Kalamazoo Public Schools
- Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning
- Michigan Association of Supervisors of Special Education
- Michigan Department of Education
- Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
- Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative
- Michigan Reading Association
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Virtual University
- Reading NOW Network
- REMC Association of Michigan
- Southwest Michigan Reading Council
- Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant
- University of Michigan

Feedback on drafts of the document was elicited from other stakeholders, resulting in a number of revisions to the document.

Essential Instructional Practices in Language and Emergent Literacy

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a MAISA collaborative

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General Education Leadership Network
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Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy

By the **Early Literacy Task Force**, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. For a full list of representatives, please see the back page.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

This document is intended to be read in concert with Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy, Kindergarten - Grade 3. *There is important overlap and continuity in these two documents.*

To reference this document: Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force (2016). *Essential instructional practices in early literacy: Prekindergarten.* Lansing, MI: Authors.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported literacy instructional practices that could be a focus of professional development throughout the state. The focus of the document is on classroom practices, rather than on school- or systems-level practices (which will be addressed in a future document). The document focuses on prekindergarten, as literacy knowledge and skills developed in the preschool years predict later literacy achievement.[1] Prekindergarten education has the potential to improve "reading-by-third-grade" outcomes. Early childhood programs can also help to address disparities in literacy achievement. Research suggests that each of the ten practices in this document can have a positive impact on literacy development. We believe that the use of these practices in every classroom every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State's literacy achievement. They should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting a minimum 'standard of care' for Michigan's children.

The practices listed can be used within a variety of overall approaches to literacy instruction and within many different structures of the day; the document does not specify one particular program or approach to literacy instruction. We limited the list to ten practices; there are other literacy instructional practices that may be worthy of attention. In addition, new literacy research could alter or add to the instructional practices recommended here. For these reasons, choosing to enact the practices on this list would leave considerable agency and choice for individual districts, schools, centers, and teachers.

Each one of these ten recommended instructional practices should occur every day regardless of the specific program or framework being used in the classroom. The recommended instructional practices are to occur throughout the day, largely integrated into opportunities for learning in all other areas, not in an isolated block identified as "English Language Arts" or "Literacy." Literacy instruction should not dominate the prekindergarten day; in the long term, that approach is counterproductive. Later academic achievement is predicted not only by literacy knowledge and skill, but by mathematics learning, knowledge of the natural and social world, and certain aspects of social, emotional, and physical development.[2] Finally, it is important to read this document in relation to the State of Michigan's expectations for literacy development in prekindergarten,[3] which should garner careful attention in all Michigan prekindergarten programs and be one focus in observing classroom practice and children's development. The endnotes provide references to some research studies that support the practices listed. An exception is instructional practice #9, for which we were unable to locate closely supporting studies with preschool-age children.

1. Intentional use of literacy artifacts in dramatic play and throughout the classroom[4]

Reading and writing materials are not only present but used throughout the classroom environment.

• Within daily opportunities for dramatic play, the teacher provides, models use of, and encourages children's engagement with appropriate literacy artifacts, such as:

- order pads, menus, and placemats for a pizza parlor
- traffic signs, maps, blueprints, and building-related books in the block/construction area
- envelopes, stationery, postcards, stamps, and actual mail for a post office
- waiting room reading material, a schedule, and prescription pads for a doctor's office
- a copy of books, such as The Little Red Hen, labeled puppets and objects from the story

• Within centers and other areas of the classroom, children are encouraged to interact with reading and writing materials, such as:

- books related to construction or building in the block or construction area
- simple recipes for making snacks
- labels that indicate where items go
- children's names, for example on cubbies and sign-in sheets, which may vary over time (e.g., first with photos, then, later, without photos)
- writing materials in each area of the classroom, for drawing and writing about objects being observed in the science area

(See also instructional practice #8.)

2. Read aloud with reference to print[5]

Daily read alouds include verbal and non-verbal strategies for drawing children's attention to print, such as:

- running finger under words
- noting specific features of print and letters (e.g., "that is the letter *D* like Deondre's name")
- asking children where to start reading
- counting words
- pointing out print within pictures

3. Interactive read aloud with a comprehension and vocabulary focus[6]

The teacher reads aloud age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital, including sets of texts that are thematically and conceptually related and texts that are read multiple times, with:

- higher-order discussion among children and teacher before, during, and after reading
- child-friendly explanations of words within the text
- revisiting of words after reading using tools such as movement, props, video, photo, examples, and non-examples, and engaging children in saying the words aloud
- using the words at other points in the day and over time
- teaching of clusters of words related to those in the text, such as vocabulary related to the garden or gardening

4. Play with sounds inside words[7]

Children are supported to develop phonological awareness, or conscious awareness of sounds within language, and especially, a type of phonological awareness called *phonemic awareness*, which involves the ability to segment and blend individual phonemes within words, through various activities, such as:

- listening to and creating variations on books with rhyming or alliteration
- singing certain songs (e.g., "Willoughby, Wallaughby…"; "Down by the Bay"; "The Name Game"; "Apples and Bananas")
- sorting pictures and objects by a sound or sounds in their name
- games and transitions that feature play with sounds (e.g., alliteration games, a transition that asks all children whose name begins with the *mmm* sound to move to the next activity)
- "robot talk" or the like (e.g., the teacher has a puppet say the sounds "fffff" "iiiii" "shhhh" and children say *fish)*

5. Brief, clear, explicit instruction[8] in letter names, the sound(s) associated with the letters, and how letters are shaped and formed[9]

Instruction that has been shown to be effective in fostering development of letter-sound knowledge is supported by tools such as:

- a high-quality alphabet chart
- cards with children's names
- other key words to associate with letter-sounds (e.g., *d is for dinosaur*)
- alphabet books with appropriate key words
- references throughout the day (e.g., "That sign says the store is open. The first letter is o. It makes the "oh" sound: ooopen.")

Research suggests that we should set a benchmark of children naming 18 upper case and 15 lower case letters by the end of pre-K[10] and should teach letter-sound associations, rather than letter names or sounds alone.[11]

6. Interactions around writing[12]

Adults engage in deliberate interactions with children around writing. Opportunities for children to write their name, informational, narrative, and other texts that are personally meaningful to them are at the heart of writing experiences. These deliberate interactions around writing include the use of interactive writing and scaffolded writing techniques.

- Interactive writing involves children in contributing to a piece of writing led by the teacher. With the teacher's support, children determine the message, count the words, stretch words, listen for sounds within words, think about letters that represent those sounds, and write some of the letters. The teacher uses the interactive writing as an opportunity for instruction, for example regarding the directionality of writing, purposes for writing, and specific letter-sound relationships.

- Scaffolded writing involves the individual child in generating a message the child would like to write. The message is negotiated and repeated with the child until it is internalized. The teacher draws one line for each word in the message using a highlighter or pen. The child writes one "word" per line, where "word" might be a scribble, letter-like forms, random letter strings, one or a few letters within the word, or all sounds within the word, depending on the child's writing ability. The teacher and the child read and reread the message.

7. Extended conversation[13]

Adults engage in interactions with children that regularly include:

- responding to and initiating conversations with children, with repeated turns back and forth on the same topic
- encouraging talk among children through the selective use of open-ended questions, commenting on what children are doing, offering prompts (e.g., "Try asking your friend how you can help"), and scaffolding higher-order discussion, particularly during content-area learning
- engaging in talk, including narration and explanation, within dramatic play experiences and content-area learning, including intentional vocabulary-building efforts
- extending children's language (e.g., The child says, "Fuzzy"; the adult says, "Yes, that peach feels fuzzy. What else do you notice about it?")
- stories of past events and discussion of future events

8. Provision of abundant reading material in the classroom[14]

The classroom includes:

- a wide range of books and other texts, print and digital, including information books, poetry, and storybooks accessible to children
- books and other materials connected to children's interests and that reflect children's backgrounds and cultural experiences, including class- and child-made books
- recorded books
- books children can borrow to bring home and/or access digitally at home
- comfortable places in which to look at books, frequently visited by the teacher(s) and by adult volunteers recruited to the classroom

9. Ongoing observation and assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs their education

The teacher engages in:

- observation and assessment that is guided by
  - an understanding of language and literacy development
  - the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten (2013) and, if applicable,
  - the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (2015)
- observation that occurs in multiple contexts, including play
- use of assessment tools that are considered appropriate for prekindergarten contexts
- use of information from observations and assessment tools to plan instruction and interactions with children

10. Collaboration with families in promoting literacy[15]

Families engage in language and literacy interactions with their children that can be drawn upon and extended in prekindergarten. Prekindergarten educators help families add to their repertoire of strategies for promoting literacy at home, including:

- incorporating literacy-promoting strategies into everyday activities such as cooking, communicating with friends and family, and traveling in the bus or car
- reading aloud to their children and discussing the text
- encouraging literacy milestones (e.g., pretend reading, which some parents mistakenly believe is "cheating" but is actually a desired activity in literacy development)
- speaking with children in their home/most comfortable language, whether or not that language is English[16]
- providing literacy-supporting resources, such as:
  - books from the classroom that children can borrow or keep
  - children's magazines
  - information about judicious, adult-supported use of educational television and applications that can, with guidance, support literacy development
  - announcements about local events
  - passes to local museums (for example, through www.michiganactivitypass.info)

(Endnotes)

1 Lonigan, C. J., Schatschneider, C., & Westberg, L., with the National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). Identification of children's skills and abilities linked to later outcomes in reading, writing, and spelling. In *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel* (pp. 55-106). Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy.

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Process for Development and Review

This document was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. The Task Force included representatives from the following organizations, although their participation does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the organization they represent:

Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District
Eaton Regional Educational Service Agency
Genesee Intermediate School District
Huron Intermediate School District
Ingham Intermediate School District
Iosco Regional Educational Service Agency
Jackson County Intermediate School District
Kalamazoo Public Schools
Lenawee Intermediate School District
Lewis Cass Intermediate School District
Livingston Educational Service Agency
Macomb Intermediate School District
Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District
Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education
Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
MAISA Early Childhood Administrators Network
MAISA English Language Arts Leaders Network
Michigan Department of Education
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
Michigan Reading Association
Michigan State University
Monroe County Intermediate School District
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District
Oakland Schools
Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
Reading Now Network
Regional Education Media Center Association of Michigan
Saint Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency
Saint Joseph County Intermediate School District
Southwest Michigan Reading Council
University of Michigan
Washtenaw Intermediate School District
Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency

Feedback on drafts of the document was elicited from other stakeholders, resulting in a number of revisions to the document.

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Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy

For more information and additional resources, please visit www.migeln.org.

NOTES

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Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

This document is intended to be read in concert with Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy, Prekindergarten. *There is important overlap and continuity in these two documents, and some children will benefit from instructional practices identified in the prekindergarten document beyond the prekindergarten year.*

Purpose

The purpose of the document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported instructional practices that could be the focus of professional development throughout the state. The focus of the document is on classroom practices, rather than on school- or systems-level practices (which will be addressed in a future document). Research suggests that each of these ten practices can have a positive impact on literacy development. We believe that the use of these practices in every classroom every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State's literacy achievement. They should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting a minimum 'standard of care' for Michigan's children.

The practices listed can be used within a variety of overall approaches to literacy instruction and within many different structures of the school day; the document does not specify one particular program or approach to literacy instruction. We limited the list to ten practices; there are other literacy instructional practices that may be worthy of attention. In addition, new literacy research could alter or add to the instructional practices recommended here. For these reasons, choosing to enact the practices on this list would leave considerable agency and choice for individual districts, schools, and teachers.

Literacy knowledge and skills developed in kindergarten through third grade predict later literacy achievement.[1] **Classroom instruction can have an enormous impact on the development of literacy knowledge and skills.**[2] **Many areas involved in literacy can be affected by instruction, including, but not limited to:**

- oral language, including vocabulary
- print concepts
- phonological awareness
- alphabet knowledge and other letter-sound knowledge/phonics (including larger orthographic units)
- word analysis strategies (especially phonemic decoding with monitoring for meaning)
- reading fluency (including accuracy, automaticity, and prosody)
- handwriting and word processing
- broad content and background knowledge
- knowledge and abilities required specifically to comprehend text (e.g., text structure knowledge, comprehension strategy use, genre knowledge)
- knowledge and abilities required specifically to compose text (e.g., planning, drafting, revising, and editing strategies; text structure, genre and craft knowledge; spelling and sentence construction strategies; capitalization and punctuation)
- literacy motivation and engagement
- vocabulary strategies, particularly morphological (meaningful word part) analysis

The recommended practices should occur throughout the day, including being integrated into opportunities for science and social studies learning, not exclusively in an isolated block identified as "English Language Arts" or "Literacy." At the same time, literacy instruction should not take the place of science and social studies inquiry nor addressing the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations for Social Studies nor addressing the Michigan K – 12 Science Standards.[3] In the long term, that approach is counterproductive; later academic achievement is predicted not only by literacy knowledge and skills, but by mathematics learning, knowledge of the natural and social world, and certain aspects of physical, social, and emotional development. Finally, it is important to read this document in relation to the State of Michigan's specific standards for literacy development in kindergarten through third grade[4] which should garner careful attention in all Michigan kindergarten through third-grade classrooms and be one focus in observing classroom practice and children's development. The endnotes indicate some connections between the ten instructional practices and the Michigan Standards, and they reference research studies that support the practices listed.

1. Deliberate, research-informed efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons[5]

The teacher:

- creates opportunities for children to see themselves as successful readers and writers
- provides daily opportunities for children to make choices in their reading and writing (choices may be a limited set of options or from extensive options but within a specified topic or genre)
- offers regular opportunities for children to collaborate with peers in reading and writing, such as through small-group discussion of texts of interest and opportunities to write within group projects
- helps establish purposes for children to read and write beyond being assigned or expected to do so, such as for their enjoyment/interest, to answer their questions about the natural and social world, to address community needs, or to communicate with a specific audience
- uses additional strategies to generate excitement about reading and writing, such as book talks and updates about book series. The teacher avoids attempting to incentivize reading through non-reading-related prizes such as stickers, coupons, or toys, and avoids using reading and writing as "punishment" (e.g., "If you can't listen, I'm going to send you to sit and read in the library").

2. Read alouds of age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital[6]

Read alouds involve:

- sets of texts, across read aloud sessions, that are thematically and conceptually related[7] and that offer opportunities to learn that children could not yet experience independently
- modeling of appropriate fluency (accuracy, automaticity, and prosody) in reading
- child-friendly explanations of words within the text and revisiting of those words after reading using tools such as movement, props, video, photo, examples, and non-examples, and engaging children in saying the words aloud and using the words at other points in the day and over time
- higher-order discussion among children and teacher before, during, and after reading[8]
- instructional strategies, depending on the grade level and children's needs, that:
  - develop **print concepts**,[9] such as developing children's directionality by running fingers under words and asking where to start, with texts being sufficiently visible to children that they can see specific features of print
  - model application of knowledge and strategies for **word recognition**[10]
  - build **knowledge of the structure and features of text**[11], including, with regard to structure, key story elements and common informational text structures (compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution, description, and sequence), and such as, with regard to text features, tables of content, diagrams, captions, and index
  - describe and model **comprehension strategies**, including activating prior knowledge/predicting; questioning; visualizing; monitoring and fix-up; drawing inferences; and summarizing/retelling
  - describe and model strategies for ascertaining the meaning of unfamiliar **vocabulary** from context[12]

3. Small group and individual instruction, using a variety of grouping strategies, most often with flexible groups formed and instruction targeted to children's observed and assessed needs in specific aspects of literacy development[13]

The teacher:

- ensures that children use most of their time actually reading and writing (or working toward this goal in kindergarten and early first grade)[14]
- coaches children as they engage in reading and writing, with reading prompts focusing primarily on (a) monitoring for meaning, (b) letters and groups of letters in words, (c) rereading
- employs practices for developing reading **fluency**, such as repeated reading, echo reading, paired and partner reading[15]
- includes explicit instruction, as needed, in **word recognition strategies**, including multi-syllabic word decoding, **text structure**, **comprehension strategies,** and **writing strategies**
- is deliberate in providing quality instruction to children in all groups, with meaning-making the ultimate goal of each group's work

4. Activities that build phonological awareness (grades K and 1 and as needed thereafter)[16]

Teachers promote phonological awareness development,[17] particularly phonemic awareness development, through explicit explanation, demonstration, play with sounds in words, and engaged study of words, such as by:

- listening to and creating variations on books and songs with rhyming or alliteration
- sorting pictures, objects, and written words by a sound or sounds (e.g., words with a short e sound versus words with a long e sound)
- activities that involve segmenting sounds in words (e.g., Elkonin boxes, in which children move a token or letters into boxes, with one box for each sound in the word)
- activities that involve blending sounds in words (e.g., "robot talk" in which the teacher says the sounds "fffff" "iiiii" "shhhh" and children say *fish*)
- daily opportunities to write meaningful texts in which they listen for the sounds in words to estimate their spellings

5. Explicit instruction[18] in letter-sound relationships[19]

Earlier in children's development, such instruction will focus on letter names, the sound(s) associated with the letters, and how letters are shaped and formed. Later, the focus will be on more complex letter-sound relationships, including digraphs (two letters representing one sound, as in *sh, th, ch, oa, ee, ie*), blends (two or three letters representing each of their sounds pronounced in immediate succession within a syllable, as in *bl* in *blue*, *str* in *string*, or *ft* as in *left*), diphthongs (two letters representing a single glided phoneme as in *oi* in *oil* and *ou* in *out*), common spelling patterns (e.g., *-ake* as in *cake*, *rake*), specific phonograms (e.g., *-all, -ould*), and patterns in multi-syllabic words.[20] High-frequency words are taught with full analysis of letter-sound relationships within the words, even in those that are not spelled as would be expected.

Instruction in letter-sound relationships is:

- verbally precise and involving multiple channels, such as oral and visual or visual and tactile
- informed by careful observation of children's reading and writing and, as needed, assessments that systematically examine knowledge of specific sound-letter relationships
- taught systematically in relation to students' needs and aligned with the expectations of the Michigan K-3 Standards for English Language Arts
- accompanied by opportunities to apply knowledge of the letter-sound relationships taught by reading books or other connected texts that include those relationships
- reinforced through coaching children during reading, most notably by cueing children to monitor for meaning and by cueing children to attend to the letters in words and recognize letter-sound relationships they have been taught

6. Research- and standards-aligned writing instruction[21]

The teacher provides:

- interactive writing experiences in grades K and 1
- daily time for children to write, aligned with instructional practice #1 above
- instruction in writing processes and strategies, particularly those involving researching, planning, revising, and editing writing[22]
- opportunities to study models of and write a variety of texts for a variety of purposes and audiences, particularly opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative texts (real and imagined) [34]
- explicit instruction in letter formation, spelling strategies, capitalization, punctuation, sentence construction, keyboarding (first expected by the end of grade 3, see the Practice Guide cited immediately above for detail), and word processing[23]

7. Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary and content knowledge[24]

The teacher:

- selects Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary words to teach from read alouds of literature and informational texts and from content area curricula[25]
- introduces word meanings to children during reading and content area instruction using child-friendly explanations and by providing opportunities for children to pronounce the new words and to see the spelling of the new words
- provides repeated opportunities for children to review and use new vocabulary over time, including discussing ways that new vocabulary relate to one another and to children's existing knowledge, addressing multiple meanings or nuanced meanings of a word across different contexts[26], and encouraging children to use new words in meaningful contexts (e.g., discussion of texts, discussions of content area learning, semantic maps)
- encourages talk among children, particularly during content-area learning and during discussions of print or digital texts[27]
- teaches morphology (i.e., meaning of word parts), including common word roots, inflections, prefixes, and affixes[28]

8. Abundant reading material and reading opportunities in the classroom[29]

The classroom includes:

- a wide range of books and other texts, print, audio, and digital, including information books, poetry, and storybooks that children are supported in accessing
- books and other materials connected to children's interests and that reflect children's backgrounds and cultural experiences, including class- and child-made books
- books children can borrow to bring home and/or access digitally at home
- comfortable places in which to read books, frequently visited by the teacher(s) and by adult volunteers recruited to the classroom
- opportunities for children to engage in independent reading of materials of their choice every day, with the teacher providing instruction and coaching in how to select texts and employ productive strategies during reading, feedback on children's reading, and post-reading response activities including text discussion[30]

9. Ongoing observation and assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs their education[31]

The teacher:

- engages in observation and assessment that is guided by
  - an understanding of language and literacy development
  - the Michigan K to 12 Standards for English Language Arts
- prioritizes observation during actual reading and writing
- administers assessments as one source of information to identify children who may need additional instructional supports
- employs formative and diagnostic assessment tools as needed to inform specific instructional targets (e.g., assessing knowledge of specific sound-letter relationships, assessing knowledge of specific vocabulary words taught, reading and writing strategies being used and not used)

10. Collaboration with families in promoting literacy[32]

Families engage in language and literacy interactions with their children that can be drawn upon and extended in kindergarten through third grade. Educators help families add to their repertoire of strategies for promoting literacy at home, including supporting families to:

- prompt children during reading and writing and demonstrate ways to incorporate literacy-promoting strategies into everyday activities, such as cooking, communicating with friends and family, and traveling in the bus or car
- promote children's independent reading
- support children in doing their homework and in academic learning over the summer months
- speak with children in their home/most comfortable language, whether or not that language is English[33]
- provide literacy-supporting resources, such as:
  - books from the classroom that children can borrow or keep
  - children's magazines
  - information about judicious, adult-supported use of educational television and applications that can, with guidance, support literacy development
  - announcements about local events
  - passes to local museums (for example, through www.michiganactivitypass.info)

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7 See, among others, Reading Literature, and Reading Informational Text, Standard #9.

8 See Standards for Reading Literature, Standards for Reading Informational Text, and Standards for Speaking and Listening.

9 See Foundational Skills Standard #1.

10 See Foundational Skills Standard #3.

11 See, most notably, Reading Standards for Literature #2, #3, and #5 and Reading Standards for Informational Text, Standards #3, #5, #7, and #8.

12 See Reading Standard for Literature #4 and Reading Standard for Informational Text #4.

13 For example, Gersten, R., Baker, S. K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide* (NCEE 2007-4011). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=19; Connor, C., Morrison, F., Fishman, B., Giuliani, S., Luck, M., Underwood, P., Bayraktar, A, Crowe, E., & Schatschneider, C. (2011). Testing the impact of child characteristics × instruction interactions on third graders' reading comprehension by differentiating literacy instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly, 46*, 189-221; Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide* (NCEE 2012- 4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=17; Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade: A practice guide* (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/readingcomp_pg_092810.pdf Taylor, B. M., Pearson, P. D., Clark, K., & Walpole, S. (2000). Effective schools and accomplished teachers: Lessons about primary grade reading instruction in low-income schools. *The Elementary School Journal, 101*, 121-165; Vellutino, F. R., Scanlon, D. M., Small, S., & Fanuele, D. P. (2006). Response to intervention as a vehicle for distinguishing between reading disabled and non-reading disabled children: Evidence for the role of kindergarten and first grade intervention. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39*, 157–169; Kuhn, M. R., Schwanenflugel, P. J., Morris, R. D., Morrow, L. M., Woo, D. G., Meisinger, E. B., . . . Stahl, S. A. (2006). Teaching children to become fluent and automatic readers. *Journal of Literacy Research, 38*, 357–387; Kuhn, M. R. (2005). A comparative study of small group fluency instruction. *Reading Psychology, 26*, 127-146.

14 See Reading Standards for Informational Text #10 and Reading Standards for Literature #10.

15 See Foundational Skills Standard #4.

16 For example, Brennan, F., & Ireson, J. (1997). Training phonological awareness: A study to evaluate the effects of a program of metalinguistic games in kindergarten. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 9*, 241–263; Bus, A. G., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (1999). Phonological awareness and early reading: A meta-analysis of experimental training studies. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *91*, 403-414; Ehri, L. C., Nunes, S. R., Willows, D. M., Schuster, B. V., Yaghoub-Zadeh, Z., & Shanahan, T. (2001). Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*, 250-287; Suggate, S. P. (2016). A meta-analysis of the long-term effects of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension interventions. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *49*, 77-96.

17 See Foundational Skills Standard #2.

18 Explicit instruction involves telling children what you want them to know, rather than expecting that they will infer this information. For example, explicit instruction about the letter L might include (although not necessarily all at once) the following: "This [pointing] is the letter called *ell*. *Ell* stands for the lll sound. Latoya's name starts with the lll sound: LLLatoya. Lion also starts with the lll sound: llllion. You can make ell with a straight line down and a short line across, like this [demonstrating], or you can make ell with just a straight line down, like this [demonstrating]."

19 For example, Lonigan, C. J., Schatschneider, C., & Westberg, L., with the National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). Impact of code-focused interventions on young children's early literacy skills. In *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel* (pp. 107-152). Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy; Ehri, L. C., Nunes, S. R., Stahl, S. A., & Willows, D. M. (2001). Systematic phonics instruction helps students learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 71*, 393–447; Graham, S., & Hebert, M. (2011). Writing to read: A meta-analysis of the impact of writing and writing instruction on reading. *Harvard Educational Review, 81*, 710–744; Ehri, L. C. (2005). Learning to read words: Theory, findings, and issues. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 9*, 167-188; Cheatham, J. P., & Allor, J. H. (2012). The influence of decodability in early reading text on reading achievement: A review of the evidence. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 25*, 2223–2246.

20 See Foundational Skills Standard #3 and Language Standard #2.

21 For example, Craig, S. A. (2003). The effects of an adapted interactive writing intervention on kindergarten children's phonological awareness, spelling, and early reading development. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38*, 438-440; Roth, K., & Guinee, K. (2011). Ten minutes a day: The impact of interactive writing instruction on first graders' independent writing. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 11*, 331- 361; Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=17; Graham, S., McKeown, D., Kiuhara, S., & Harris, K. R. (2012). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for students in the elementary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*, 879–896.

22 See Writing Standards #4 through #9.

23 See, in particular, Conventions of Standard English and Knowledge of Language substrands of the Language Strand.

24 For example, Elleman, A. M., Lindo, E. J., Morphy, P., & Compton, D. L. (2009). The impact of vocabulary instruction on passage-level comprehension of school-age children: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2*, 1–44; Goodson, B., Wolf, A., Bell, S., Turner, H., & Finney, P. B. (2010). *The effectiveness of a program to accelerate vocabulary development in kindergarten (VOCAB)* (NCEE 2010-4014). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education; Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (2007). Increasing young low-income children's oral vocabulary repertoires through rich and focused instruction. *The Elementary School Journal*, *107*, 251-271; Goodwin, A. P., & Ahn, S. (2013). A meta-analysis of morphological interventions in English: Effects on literacy outcomes for school-age children. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *17*, 257-285; Vitale, M. R., & Romance, N. R. (2011). Adaption of a knowledge-based instructional intervention to accelerate student learning in science and early literacy in grades 1 and 2. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, 5*, 79-93.

25 See Michigan K to 12 Standards for English Language Arts, Appendix A for more on vocabulary selection.

26 See Language Standards #4 and #5.

27 See Speaking and Listening Standards.

28 See Language Standard #4.

29 For example, Neuman, S. B. (1999). Books make a difference: A study of access to literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *34*(3), 286-311; McGill-Franzen, A., Allington, R. L., Yokoi, L., & Brooks, G. (1999). Putting books in the classroom seems necessary but not sufficient. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 93, 67-74; Foorman, B. R., Schatschneider, C., Eakin, M. N., Fletcher, J. M., Moates, L. C., & Francis, D. J. (2006). The impact of instructional practices in Grades 1 and 2 on reading and spelling achievement in high poverty schools. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 31*, 1–29; Reutzel, D. R., Fawson, P., & Smith, J. (2008). Reconsidering silent sustained reading: An exploratory study of scaffolded silent reading. *Journal of Educational Research, 102*, 37–50; Kamil, M. L. (2008). How to get recreational reading to increase reading achievement. In *57th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference*, 31-40. Oak Creek, WI: National Reading Conference.

30 See Reading Standards for Informational Text #10 and Reading Standards for Literature #10.

31 For example, Morris, D., Blanton, L. Blanton, W. E., Nowacek, J., & Perney, J. (1995). Teaching low achieving spellers at their "instructional level." *Elementary School Journal, 96*, 163-177; Witmer, S. E., Duke, N. K., Billman, A. K., & Betts, J. (2014). Using assessment to improve early elementary students' knowledge and skills for comprehending informational text. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, *30*, 223-253; Taylor, B. M., Pearson, P. D., Clark, K., & Walpole, S. (2000). Effective schools and accomplished teachers: Lessons about primary-grade reading instruction in low-income schools. *The Elementary School Journal 101*, 121-165.

32 For example, Sénéchal, M., & Young, L. (2008). The effect of family literacy interventions on children's acquisition of reading from kindergarten to grade 3: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*, 880-907; van Steensel, R., McElvany, N., Kurvers, J., & Herppich, S. (2011). How effective are family literacy programs? Results of a meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, *81*, 69-96; Jordan, G. E., Snow, C. E., & Porche, M. V. (2000). Project EASE: The effect of a family literacy project on kindergarten students' early literacy skills. *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*, 524-546. Kim, J. S., & Quinn, D. M. (2013). The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8: A meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions. *Review of Educational Research, 83*, 386–431.

33 August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.) (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

34 See Writing Standards #1, #2, and #3.

Process for Development and Review

This document was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. The Task Force included representatives from the following organizations, although their participation does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the organization they represent:

Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District
Eaton Regional Educational Service Agency
Genesee Intermediate School District
Huron Intermediate School District
Ingham Intermediate School District
Iosco Regional Educational Service Agency
Jackson County Intermediate School District
Kalamazoo Public Schools
Lenawee Intermediate School District
Lewis Cass Intermediate School District
Livingston Educational Service Agency
Macomb Intermediate School District
Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District
Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education
Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
MAISA Early Childhood Administrators Network
MAISA English Language Arts Leaders Network
Michigan Department of Education
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
Michigan Reading Association
Michigan State University
Monroe County Intermediate School District
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District
Oakland Schools
Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
Reading Now Network
Regional Education Media Center Association of Michigan
Saint Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency
Saint Joseph County Intermediate School District
Southwest Michigan Reading Council
University of Michigan
Washtenaw Intermediate School District
Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency

Feedback on drafts of the document was elicited from other stakeholders, resulting in a number of revisions to the document.

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Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy

For more information and additional resources, please visit www.migeln.org.

NOTES

NOTES

GRADES 4-5

General Education Leadership Network
a MAISA collaborative

Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy

This document was developed by the **Early Literacy Task Force**, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. For a full list of representatives, please see the back page.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

This document is intended to be read in concert with Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy, Grades K to 3. *There is important overlap and continuity in these two documents, and some students will benefit from instructional practices identified in the K to 3 document beyond the K to 3 years.*

Purpose

The purpose of the document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported instructional practices that could be the focus of professional development throughout the state. The focus of the document is on classroom practices, rather than on school- or systems-level practices (which are addressed in the document: Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy). Research suggests that each of these ten practices in every classroom every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State's literacy achievement. They should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting a minimum 'standard of care' for Michigan's children.

The practices listed can be used within a variety of overall approaches to literacy instruction and within many different structures of the school day; the document does not specify one particular program or approach to literacy instruction. We limited the list to ten practices; there are other literacy instructional practices that may be worthy of attention. In addition, new literacy research could alter or add to the instructional practices recommended here. For these reasons, choosing to enact the practices on this list would leave considerable agency and choice for individual districts, schools, and teachers.

The recommended practices should occur throughout the day, including being integrated into opportunities for science and social studies learning, not exclusively in an isolated block identified as "English Language Arts" or "Literacy." At the same time, literacy instruction should not take the place of science and social studies inquiry nor addressing the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations for Social Studies[1] nor addressing the Michigan K-12 Science Standards.[2] In the long term, that approach is counterproductive; later academic achievement is predicted not only by literacy knowledge and skills, but by mathematics learning, knowledge of the natural and social world, and certain aspects of physical, social, and emotional development. Finally, it is important to read this document in relation to the State of Michigan's specific standards for literacy development in fourth and fifth grade,[3] which should garner careful attention in all Michigan fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms and be one focus in observing classroom practice and children's development. The endnotes indicate some connections between the ten instructional practices and the Michigan Standards, and they reference research studies that support the practices listed.

1. Deliberate, research-informed efforts to foster motivation and engagement within and across lessons[4]

The teacher:

- Creates opportunities for children to identify as successful readers and writers (e.g., "I am a reader.")[5]
- Provides daily opportunities for children to make choices in their reading and writing across disciplines (choices may be a limited set of options or from extensive options but within a specific disciplinary topic or genre)
- Offers regular opportunities for children to collaborate with peers in reading and writing, such as through small-group discussion of texts of interest and opportunities to write within group projects[6]
- Helps establish meaningful purposes for children to read and write beyond being assigned or expected to do so, such as for their enjoyment/interest, to answer general or discipline-specific questions about the natural and social world, to address community needs, or to communicate with specific audiences[7]
- Builds positive learning environments that encourage students to set and achieve goals, as well as promote student independence
- Attends to and cultivates student interest by connecting literacy experiences to students' family and community experiences

2. Intentional, research-informed instruction using increasingly complex texts and tasks that build comprehension, knowledge, and strategic reading activity[8]

An important aspect of literacy instruction is foregrounding the use of reading and writing for the purpose of building knowledge about the world and about oneself. Ideally, comprehension instruction, including strategy instruction, is always in the service of supporting knowledge building. At times, the teacher needs to be very explicit about how to construct meaning from text, but this activity is always embedded in sense making with text. One dimension of comprehension instruction is signaling that there are many possible causes for comprehension breakdowns (e.g., poorly constructed text, insufficient prior knowledge, challenging concepts and vocabulary). It is important that students be encouraged to monitor their understanding and, when there has been a breakdown, have a repertoire of fix-up strategies. While teachers can model these fix-up strategies, the goal is for students to practice the use of these fix-up strategies so that they become independent readers.

To build comprehension, knowledge, and strategic reading, the teacher:

- Facilitates discussion of text meaning to support students to interpret the ideas in a text[7]
- Provides experiences for students to build knowledge to support their interpretation of text prior to reading (e.g., to build prior knowledge), during reading (e.g., to support text interpretation), and after reading (e.g., to extend learning)[9]
- Models and guides students to be metacognitive while reading (i.e., monitor for comprehension and use fix-up strategies when there are breakdowns in comprehension)
- Provides explicit comprehension strategy instruction (e.g., finding main ideas, summarizing, making connections between new text information and prior knowledge, drawing inferences). High quality strategy instruction includes:
  - Thoughtful selection of the text to use when introducing and teaching a comprehension strategy
  - Attending to the demands the text places on the readers to inform appropriate selection of texts
  - Demonstrating and describing how to apply the strategies that students are learning to different texts
  - Providing guided practice that reflects the difficulty level of the strategies that students are learning, as well as the demands of the text, and purposes for reading

3. Small group instruction, using a variety of grouping strategies, most often with flexible groups formed and instruction targeted to children's observed and assessed needs in specific aspects of literacy development[10]

The teacher:

- Is deliberate in providing quality instruction to children in all groups, with meaning-making the ultimate goal of each group's work, and ensures that children use most of their time actually reading and writing
- Provides and supports opportunities for small group discussion of literature and disciplinary text (e.g., Instructional Conversations and Literature Circles) so that students can draw on their own knowledge and the knowledge of their peers to co-construct the meaning of text
- Provides opportunities for developing reading fluency during small group work, such as paired and partner reading
- Uses small group routines (e.g., cooperative and collaborative learning, such as Reciprocal Teaching and Collaborative Strategic Reading) for fostering strategic reading and knowledge-building using text
- Provides opportunities for students to plan, draft, revise, and/or edit writing together, framed by specific guidelines for working together

4. Activities that build reading fluency and stamina with increasingly complex text[11]

Activities include:

- Listening to models of fluent reading (reading with appropriate accuracy, automaticity, and prosody) of age-appropriate books and other print or digital materials
- Engaging in repeated readings of familiar texts
- Engaging in wide reading of texts, including multiple modes (e.g., print, digital, visual, audio), genres, and topics
- Using reading materials of increasing text difficulty
- Opportunities to read independently for specific purposes, including for pleasure, for sustained periods of time
- Paired or partner reading

5. Discussion of the ideas in texts and how to construct text meaning across texts and disciplines[12]

The teacher:

- Reads aloud age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital[13]
- Carefully selects texts that provide the grist for rich discussion, and analyzes texts to identify specific learning goals, challenges (e.g., the complexity of the ideas in the text, insufficient information) and affordances (e.g., text organization, such as problem-solution or compare-contrast; text features, such as graphics or headings)[7]
- Uses discussion moves (e.g., linking students' ideas, probing children's thinking, having students return to the text to support claims about the ideas in the text) that help provide continuity and extend the discussion of the ideas in the text
- Provides tasks or discussion routines students know how to follow (e.g., Instructional Conversations and Literature Circles) when students discuss texts in small groups
- Provides regular opportunities for peer-assisted learning, especially for emergent bilingual learners, by pairing students at different levels of English proficiency

6. Research-informed and standards-aligned writing instruction[14]

The teacher provides:

- Daily time for student writing across disciplines, including opportunities for students to write using digital tools (e.g., word processing)[15]
- Opportunities to study text models of (e.g., mentor and student-written texts) and write texts for a variety of purposes and audiences, particularly opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative texts (real and imagined)
- Occasions for students to use writing as a tool for learning disciplinary content and engaging in disciplinary practices (e.g., writing scientific explanations), and that provide clear and specific goals for writing (e.g., address both sides of an argument)
- Explicit instruction in and guided practice using writing strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing writing
- Explicit instruction in spelling strategies, capitalization, punctuation, sentence and paragraph construction, purpose-driven text structure and organization, keyboarding, and word processing[16]

7. Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary, academic language, and content knowledge[17]

The teacher engages in:

- Teaching morphology (e.g., common word roots, inflections, prefixes, and affixes) and syntax[18]
- Attending to word relations (e.g., semantic maps, concept mapping, etc.)
- Providing explicit instruction in both general academic and content area vocabulary during reading and disciplinary instruction[19]
- Engaging students in wide reading that exposes them to rich and discipline-specific academic language, and provides the opportunity for vocabulary learning in the context of reading[20]
- Encouraging the use of new vocabulary in a variety of contexts and modes, including reading, writing, and discussion of print or digital texts for discipline-specific purposes[21]

8. Abundant and diverse reading material, including digital texts, and opportunities to read in the classroom[22]

The classroom includes:

- A wide range of books and other texts (e.g., print, audio, video, and digital), including information books, poetry, literature, and magazines[20]
- Books and other materials connected to children's interest and that reflect children's backgrounds and cultural experiences, including class- and child-made books
- Books and other reading materials children can borrow and bring home and/or access digitally at home
- Reading materials that expose students to rich language and vocabulary learning[21]
- Daily opportunities for children to engage in independent reading of materials of their choice, with the teacher providing instruction and coaching in how to select texts and employ productive strategies during reading, feedback on children's reading, and post-reading response activities including text discussion[20]

9. Ongoing observation and assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs small group and individual instruction[23]

The teacher:

- Observes and assesses students during reading and writing activities using an array of indicators (e.g., ratings of fluency, retellings/summary and discussion to assess comprehension, productivity to assess writing fluency, and accuracy of mechanics in writing)
  (Note: Use of formative assessments in these areas is particularly important for emergent bilingual speakers)
- Uses formative/benchmark assessments to monitor progress in literacy development and to guide instructional decision-making (e.g., differentiated instruction) for all students, including adding additional supports and providing opportunities for enrichment
- Uses diagnostic and ongoing assessment data to identify students who are struggling with reading and writing, and to design intensive, systematic instruction that focuses on identified learning needs
- Provides explicit feedback, related to reading and writing development, in which the teacher points out what the learner is doing correctly and incorrectly, and builds on earlier feedback

10. Collaboration with families in promoting literacy[24]

Teachers engage in:

- Supporting families to continue to provide reading and academic learning opportunities at home and during the summer months (e.g., book lending programs)
- Building on students' family and cultural resources and knowledge in reading and writing instruction
- Promoting children's independent reading outside of school
- Speaking with children in their home/most comfortable language, whether or not that language is English[25]
- Providing literacy-supporting resources, such as the following:
  - Books from the classroom that children can borrow or keep
  - Children's magazines
  - Information about judicious, adult-supported use of educational television and applications, or "apps," that can, with guidance, support literacy development
  - Passes to local museums (for example, through www.michiganactivitypass.info)

1 Michigan Department of Education. (2007). *Social Studies Grade Level Content Expectations Grades K-8.* Lansing, MI: Author. Retrieved May 8, 2017 from: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/4th_GLCE_196083_7.pdf; Michigan Department of Education (2015). *Michigan K-12 Standards Science.* Lansing, MI: Author. Retrieved May 8, 2017 from: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/K-12_Science_Performance_Expectations_v5_496901_7.pdf

2 For example, Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., and Cocking, R. (2000). *How People Learn,* National Academy Press, Washington, DC.

3 Michigan Department of Education. (nd). *Michigan K-12 Standards for English Language Arts.* Lansing, MI: Author. Retrieved May 8, 2017 from: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/K-12_MI_ELA_StandardsREV_470029_7.pdf

4 For example, Guthrie, J. T., McRae, A., & Klauda, S. L. (2007). Contributions of concept-oriented reading instruction to knowledge about interventions for motivations in reading. *Educational Psychologist, 42*, 237-250; Marinak, B. A., & Gambrell, L. B. (2008). Intrinsic motivation and rewards: What sustains young children's engagement with text? *Literacy Research and Instruction, 47*, 9-26; McCarthy, S. J. (2001). Identity construction in elementary readers and writers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(2), 122-151; Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., and Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A Practice Guide (NCEE #2008-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc.*

5 McCarthy, S. J. (2001). Identity construction in elementary readers and writers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(2), 122-151.

6 See, among others, Speaking and Listening, Standard #1

7 See, among others, Reading Literature, and Reading Informational Text, Standard #9

8 For example, Berkeley, S., Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A. (2009). Reading comprehension instruction for students with learning disabilities, 1995-2006: A meta-analysis. *Remedial and Special Education, 31*, 423-436; Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., and Torgesen, J. (2008). Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A Practice Guide (NCEE #2008-4027). Washington, DC: National center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc.; Berkeley, S., Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A. (2009). Reading comprehension instruction for students with learning disabilities, 1995-2006: A meta-analysis. *Remedial and Special Education, 31*, 423-436; Murphy, P. K., Wilkinson, I. A., Soter, A. O., Hennessey, M. N., & Alexander, J. F. (2009). Examining the effects of classroom discussion on students' comprehension of text: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(3), 740-764; Sencibaugh, J. M. (2007). Meta-analysis of reading comprehension interventions for students with learning disabilities: Strategies and implications. *Reading Improvement, 44*(1), 6-22; Wilkinson, I. A. G., & Son, E. H. (2011). A dialogic turn in research on learning and teaching to comprehend. In: M. L. Kamil, P. D. Pearson, E. Moje, & P. Afflerbach (Edss), Handbook of reading research: Volume IV (pp. 359-387). New York: Erlbaum.

9 See Reading Informational Text and Reading Literature Standards

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Process for Development and Review

This document was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. The Task Force included representatives from the following organizations, although their participation does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the organization they represent:

Early Childhood Administrators' Network, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Districts

English Language Arts Leadership Network of Michigan Association of Intermediate School Districts

General Education Leadership Network of Intermediate School Districts in Michigan

Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning

Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators

Michigan Association of Media Educators

Michigan Association of Supervisors of Special Education

Michigan Department of Education

Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association

Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative

Michigan Reading Association

Michigan State University

Michigan Virtual University

Reading NOW Network

Regional Educational Media Centers Association of Michigan

Southwest Michigan Reading Council

Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant

University of Michigan

Feedback on drafts of the document was elicited from other stakeholders, resulting in a number of revisions to the document.

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Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy Grades 4-5

For more information and additional resources, please visit www.migeln.org.

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Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy

Prekindergarten and Elementary Grades. A document of the Michigan General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force

This document was developed by the **Early Literacy Task Force**, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. For a full list of representatives, please see the back page.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

This document is intended to be read in concert with Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy, Prekindergarten *and* Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy, Grades K to 3. *The systems and practices outlined here provide school-level and program-level support for effective classroom instruction in prekindergarten and elementary literacy.*

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying systematic and effective practices that can be implemented at the organizational level in educational and care settings that serve young children. To meet the needs of all young learners, organizational practices must support literacy development in ways that systematically impact learning throughout elementary schools, early childhood learning centers, and other literacy-oriented learning environments and programs.[1]

Each of the ten recommended school-level or center-level systems and practices should occur in all Michigan prekindergarten and elementary school learning environments. These essential practices should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting a minimum 'standard of care' for Michigan's children.

The practices listed can be used in a variety of educational settings for young children. The document does not specify any particular programs or policies but focuses on research-based practices that can apply to a number of programs and settings. As the local systems and practices occur at the building or center level, it is the responsibility of the school, center, or program leadership to ensure that these systems and practices are implemented consistently and are regularly enhanced through strategic planning.

1. The *leadership team* is composed of instructional leaders committed to continuous improvements in literacy and ongoing attention to data.

Under the guidance of the lead administrator, the school or program leadership team:

- includes members with considerable and current expertise in literacy and early childhood education;
- promotes the implementation of evidence-based, high-quality literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned across the learning environment;[2]
- develops a vision, mission, set of goals, and educational philosophy that guide school climate and children's learning and that are shared school-wide and aligned across all ages and grade levels, including Pre-K, and across all professional roles for the purpose of continuous improvement;[3]
- maintains a comprehensive system for assessing children's strengths and needs and using that information to inform children's education;[4]
- focuses on multiple points of data and keeps the best interests of children paramount in assessment, knowing the primary purpose is to improve teaching and learning;[5]
- ensures a collaborative problem-solving approach that may include administrators, teachers, parents, aides, reading specialists, library media specialists, special educators, and others as needed;[6] and
- distributes leadership throughout the organization for the purpose of building leadership capacity among all staff.[7]

2. The *organizational climate* reflects a collective sense of responsibility for all children and a focus on developing child independence and competence in a safe space.

All adults—administrators, teachers, specialists, aides, and support staff—throughout the organization:

- share and act upon a sense of responsibility for the literacy growth and overall wellbeing of every child that is grounded in the shared belief that every child can and will be successful, regardless of location, demographic, or program funding;[8]
- ensure that the entire learning environment is emotionally and physically safe, such that there are positive adult-child relationships and positive child-child relationships throughout the building;[9]
- support the development of children's independence by engaging them in such practices as planning for their own reading and writing growth, observing and regulating their own reading and writing, and monitoring their own growth toward their reading and writing goals;[10] and
- help all children develop perceptions of competence and self-efficacy in reading and writing through such practices as helping children identify and build on their academic strengths, providing specific feedback to help children grow, and modeling the thoughts and practices of successful readers and writers.[11]

3. The *learning environment* reflects a strong commitment to literacy.[12]

Throughout the learning environment, there is evidence that:

- literacy is a priority (e.g., amount, type, and nature of print experience);[13]
- instruction is built on explicitness, continuity, and responsiveness;
- literacy occurs throughout the day and is integrated into daily math, science, and social studies learning;[14]
- children and teachers are actively engaged with the school library, media center, and library media specialist;[15]
- children regularly read, write, speak, and listen for multiple purposes and across content areas and their written work is made prominently visible;[16]
- books and learning materials reflect diversity across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic locations, genders, and social roles (see also Essential #8);[17]
- guest readers and volunteers (e.g., parents, college students) are recruited and trained to support literacy in an ongoing manner;[18]
- events and activities generate excitement around books and other texts, for example through the announcement of the publication of the latest book in a series and posting of book reviews and recommendations throughout the school; and
- school staff aim to foster intrinsic motivation to read, making only temporary and sparing, if any, use of non-reading-related prizes such as stickers, coupons, or toys, and avoiding using reading and writing as "punishment."[19]

4. Ongoing *professional learning* opportunities reflect research on adult learning and effective literacy instruction.

School, center, and program leaders ensure that professional learning opportunities are:

- data informed so that they meet the needs and best interests of teaching staff and their students;[20]
- focused on the "why" as well as the "how" of effective whole-class and small-group instructional practices, with opportunities for teachers to observe effective practice and to be observed and receive feedback from mentors and coaches;[21]
- driven by a belief that teacher expertise is a strong predictor of child success; [22]
- collaborative in nature, involving colleagues working together (e.g., study groups, collaborative inquiry, and problem solving)[23] and inclusive of other classroom and school staff;
- focused on research-based instructional practices that are age, developmentally, and culturally appropriate and that support children's literacy development (see Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Prekindergarten and Grades K-3);
- based in an understanding of knowledge and skills to be learned (see Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Prekindergarten and Grades K-3)[24]
- utilizing current research on motivation and engagement to support children's learning; and[25]
- inclusive of modeling and instructional coaching with colleagues who demonstrate effective practices with children and provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their knowledge, practice, and goals in an ongoing and continuous manner (see Essentials Coaching Practices in Early Literacy).[26]

5. There is a system for determining the allocation of *literacy support* in addition to high-quality classroom instruction with multiple layers of support available to children who are not reading and/or writing at a proficient level.[27]

School, center, and program leaders ensure that:

- instruction and additional supports are layered across learning environments, including the home, and:
  - are coherent and consistent with instruction received elsewhere in the school day and occur in addition to, not instead of, regular literacy instruction,[28]
  - are differentiated to the individual child's specific profile of literacy strengths and needs,[29]
  - highly trained educators are those teaching the children needing the most support;[30] and
  - teachers are supported in using and reflecting on analyses of multiple, systematic internal assessments (e.g., universal screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring tools) and observation as appropriate in an on-going basis to: identify individual child needs early and accurately; tailor whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction; and measure progress regularly.[31]

6. Organizational systems assess and respond to *individual challenges* that may impede literacy development.

School, center, or program systems and leaders ensure that:

- any potential learning, physical, visual, regulatory, and social-emotional needs that require specific conditions and supports are identified;[32]
- all assessments of such needs are culturally unbiased;[33]
- every adult has access to research-informed strategies and tools to address each child's demonstrated needs, including, for example, strategies for improving socio-emotional skills such as emotional understanding and techniques for helping children develop executive function skills such as planning;[34]
- children with significant needs receive coordinated, intensive supports and services that include continued collaboration among teachers, interventionists, family, and others whose expertise is relevant (e.g., special education teacher, school psychologist, school nurse, social worker);[35] and all adults intentionally work to:
  - identify child behaviors that may impede literacy learning and the conditions that prompt and reinforce those behaviors;
  - modify learning environments to decrease problem behaviors;
  - teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive learning environment;
  - draw on relationships with professional colleagues and children's families for continued guidance and support; and
  - assess whether school-wide behavior problems warrant adopting school-wide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative behaviors and foster positive interactions,[36] with particular attention to strategies or programs that have been shown to have positive impacts on literacy development.[37]

7. Adequate, high-quality *instructional resources* are well maintained and utilized.

Leaders and systems within the school, center, or program ensure that:

- teachers have consistent access to resources, including technological and curricular resources, that support research-informed instruction in all components of literacy instruction and that provide continuity across ages and grade levels;
- teachers have appropriate professional development and support for effective use of available technologies, materials, and resources;[38]
- each child has access to many informational and literature texts in the classroom and school, with culturally diverse characters and themes, that they want to read and that they can read independently or with the support of others;[39] and
- well-stocked school libraries and/or media centers, with library media specialists, offer a large collection of digital books, print books, and other reading materials for reading independently and with the support of others to immerse and instruct children in varied media, genres of texts, and accessible information.[40]

8. A consistent *family engagement* strategy includes specific attention to literacy development.

Members of the learning organization engage with families by:

- prioritizing learning about families and the language and literacy practices in which they engage to inform instruction, drawing from families' daily routines that build on culturally developed knowledge and skills accumulated in the home (e.g., inviting families to share texts they read and write as part of their lives at home or at work);[41]
- providing regular opportunities for families to build a network of social relationships to support language and literacy development (e.g., connect families with community organizations that provide access to books or other educational supports);[42]
- working collaboratively, as teachers and specialists, to plan various levels of instructional supports, assess the efficacy of those supports, and adjust accordingly;
- fostering familial and community participation in the education of children and the work of the learning environment;[43]
- empowering families to communicate about and impact the educational environment at school, as well as strengthen the educational environment in the home, regardless of education level, income, or native language of the primary caregivers;[44] and
- offering research-based guidance on how families can support literacy development (see Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Prekindergarten and Grades K-3).[45]

9. An ambitious *summer reading* initiative supports reading growth.[46]

The school, center, or program supports summer reading development by:

- facilitating opportunities for every child to read books and access texts during the summer, including summer reading programs offered through school and public libraries;[47]
- emphasizing books of high interest to children and offering book selections within the likely range of reading levels within each class;[48]
- providing instruction at the end of the school year to re-emphasize reading comprehension strategies and orient children to summer reading by encouraging use of effective strategies while reading at home;[49] and
- providing structured guidance to parents and guardians to support reading at home, such as by encouraging parents and guardians to listen to their child read aloud, discuss books with their child, and provide feedback on their child's reading.[50]

10. A network of *connections in the community* provides authentic purposes and audiences for children's work and helps facilitate use of quality out-of-school programming.

Connections beyond the school, center, or program walls provide:

- organization-wide and classroom-level partnerships with local businesses and other organizations that facilitate opportunities for children to read and write for purposes and audiences beyond school assignments;[51]
- access to opportunities for individualization, for example through one-on-one tutoring;[52] and
- opportunities for children to develop literacy outside of the school hours, including through engaging in out-of-school time library, community, and school programs in the summer and after school.[53]

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Process for Development and Review

This document was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. The Task Force included representatives from the following organizations, although their participation does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the organization they represent:

- Early Childhood Administrators' Network, MAISA
- English Language Arts Leadership Network , MAISA
- General Education Leadership Network, MAISA
- Kalamazoo Public Schools
- Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning
- Michigan Association of Supervisors of Special Education
- Michigan Department of Education
- Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
- Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative
- Michigan Reading Association
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Virtual University
- Reading NOW Network
- REMC Association of Michigan
- Southwest Michigan Reading Council
- Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant
- University of Michigan

Feedback on drafts of the document was elicited from other stakeholders, resulting in a number of revisions to the document.

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General Education Leadership Network
a MAISA collaborative

Essential Coaching Practices for Elementary Literacy

This document was developed by the **Early Literacy Task Force**, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. For a full list of representatives, please see the back page.

COACHING PRACTICES

This document is intended to be partnered with *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Prekindergarten* and *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: K to 3* as well as *Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy*.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported literacy coaching practices that should be a focus of professional development throughout the state. Literacy coaching can provide powerful job-embedded, ongoing professional development with a primary goal of enhancing classroom literacy instruction through improving teacher expertise.[1] Effective literacy coaching supports teachers to successfully navigate the daily challenges they face in their classrooms. As a result, instructional capacity and sustainability within the schools increases.[2] In addition, through improving teacher expertise and the quality of core instruction, student achievement increases.[3]

 To reference this document: Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force (2016). *Essential coaching practices for elementary literacy.* Lansing, MI: Authors.

The focus of this document is to identify the critical qualifications, dispositions, activities, and roles of effective elementary literacy coaches. Research suggests that each of the seven essentials is an important contributor to literacy coaching that results in increased student literacy learning. They should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting minimum expectations for Michigan's literacy coaches.

1. Effective literacy coaches have specialized literacy knowledge and skills beyond that of initial teacher preparation.[4]

Literacy coaches, due to the complexity of literacy instruction, must:

- have an in-depth knowledge of reading and writing processes and acquisition[5]
- recognize the varied purposes for assessment (e.g., screening, diagnostic, monitoring progress, achievement), select specific assessments that meet those purposes, administer and score assessments, and use assessment results to inform instruction[6]
- know and appropriately use research-informed instructional practices to help all students develop literacy knowledge, skills, and abilities including concepts of print, phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, word reading, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, writing, critical thinking, and motivation[7]
- be able to create a literate learning environment that considers how the physical arrangement, materials, group work, routines, and motivational factors such as choice and purpose contribute to learning in today's diverse classrooms[8]

Literacy coaches develop in-depth literacy knowledge and skills[9] by:

- completing advanced course work in literacy that results in a reading teacher or reading or literacy specialist endorsement
- having successful classroom teaching experience as evidenced by positive student learning
- continually updating their knowledge through professional reading, active participation in professional development workshops, and attendance at local, state, and national professional conferences

Teachers report that literacy coaches need advanced literacy knowledge and skills in order to carry out their responsibilities such as modeling research-informed literacy practices, helping teachers analyze assessment data and solve instructional problems, and recommending appropriate materials and resources.[10]

When literacy coaches have completed advanced course work in literacy and been successful classroom teachers, students of teachers they coached exhibited more literacy growth than students of teachers coached by literacy coaches who had not completed advanced course work in literacy.[11]

2. Effective literacy coaches apply adult learning principles in their work.[1, 2, 13, 14]

Effective literacy coaches also have specialized knowledge about adult learning principles, and they apply those principles when working with teachers.

- Adults are most interested in learning when it has immediate relevance to their job. Thus, the focus of literacy coaching should be on classroom instructional practices that foster literacy development.
- Adults want to be actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their learning. Thus, effective literacy coaches work with teachers to develop goals and methods for addressing and assessing those goals.
- Adults learn from reflecting on the problems that arise during the implementation of new knowledge/skills. Thus, effective literacy coaches guide teachers to reflect deeply on their practice and on the results of implementing new strategies with their learners.
- Adults learn best when they can integrate new knowledge and skills with previous experiences. Thus, effective literacy coaches help teachers understand how new concepts and strategies are similar and different from concepts they know and strategies they are currently learning.

3. Whether working with large groups, small groups, or individual teachers, effective literacy coaches demonstrate specific skills and dispositions in order to engage teachers and build collaborative relationships.[15]

Effective literacy coaches:

- use a variety of strategies to establish rapport and trust as the initial steps in building collaborative relationships (e.g., one-on-one conversations about teaching or student learning in general, attending grade level/team meetings as an interested listener/learner, finding specific resources/materials for a teacher)[16]
- strive to determine the underlying beliefs about literacy of the teachers with whom they are working in order to develop collaborative relationships[17]
- use language when engaging in conversations with teachers that is encouraging and supportive, not evaluative[18]
- position themselves as co-learners[19] and/or facilitators of teacher learning[20]
- are intentional, collaborating with teachers to set specific goals for their work with a respect for teachers' time and expertise. However, literacy coaches also demonstrate flexibility by being open to conversations and questions as they arise—conversations and questions that may lead to more intentional coaching.[21]
- are reflective—regarding their demonstration teaching, their observations of teacher's instruction, and the conversations they have with teachers[22]

4. Literacy coaching is most effective when it is done within a multi-year school-wide or district-wide initiative focused on student learning and is supported by building and district administrators.

Research results indicate that initiatives, including those that involve a literacy coaching component[23], may require three to five years to show impact on student learning.[24]

Support from building and district administrators is evidenced in various ways.

- Teacher participation in activities with the coach is higher when principals:[25]
  - present the coaches as sources of literacy expertise
  - actively participate in the professional development sessions designed for coaches and administrators as well as in activities facilitated by the coaches (e.g., modeling instruction, conferring with teachers)[26]
  - exhibit respect for the coaches as valued professionals
  - give coaches autonomy over their schedules
- Principals support coaches by:[27]
  - presenting them as sources of literacy expertise to the teachers
  - clearly describing and endorsing the coaching foci to the teachers
  - explicitly encouraging teachers to work with their coach
  - observing their work with teachers
  - explicitly communicating to them personally how much their work is valued[28]

5. Effective literacy coaches spend most of their time working with teachers to enhance teacher practice and improve student learning. They make effective use of their time by using a multi-faceted approach to coaching.

Effective literacy coaches:

- Spend time working directly with teachers, helping teachers to align their beliefs with research-informed instructional practices and enhance their:
  - classroom literacy environments[29]
  - use of research-informed literacy strategies[30]
  - implementation of new literacy programs and strategies[31]
  - use of practices aligned with state standards or curricular initiatives[32]
- Schedule their time so that they are spending as much time as possible working directly with teachers because more coaching with teachers has been associated with higher student achievement at both the school[33] and coach[34] level.
- Spend more time interacting with teachers by using a multi-faceted approach to coaching, carefully determining what types of coaching can be done effectively with large groups, small groups, and individual teachers.[35]
- Consistently monitor the amount of time they spend working with teachers. Time spent on managerial tasks (e.g., maintaining an assessment database, ordering materials) or attending meetings not directly related to their coaching work reduces the time spent addressing literacy initiatives and lowers teachers' perceptions about how helpful coaches are.[36]

6. When coaching individual teachers, effective literacy coaches employ a core set of coaching activities that are predictors of student literacy growth at one or more grade levels.[37]

Conferencing. Coaches and teachers hold one-on-one conferences for numerous purposes[38], including the following:

- to determine specific purposes for collaborations between the literacy coach and the teacher
- to analyze the critical instructional elements and benefits of a lesson taught by the coach to demonstrate a specific strategy or scaffolding technique
- to analyze the critical instructional elements and benefits of a lesson taught by the teacher
- to examine and select appropriate texts and materials for specific lessons and/or students
- to evaluate and make changes to the literacy environment of the classroom
- to discuss assessment results to determine instructional needs and plan instruction for the whole class, small groups of students, and individual students, particularly when the teacher is concerned about the progress of one or more students[39]

Modeling. Coaches engage in modeling for numerous purposes, including the following[40]:

- to enable teachers to learn how instructional practices work with their own students, giving them confidence to implement these practices
- to demonstrate how appropriate pacing, scaffolding, and materials contribute to students' engagement and learning
- to provide teachers with opportunities to observe and document students' literacy behaviors and response to instruction
- to demonstrate how to administer assessments and use data to inform instruction

Observing. Coaches engage in observation for numerous purposes, determined in collaboration with teachers[41], including the following:

- to observe and document specific literacy behaviors of students whose progress is of concern to the teacher
- to observe how literacy instructional practices are being implemented across the school to inform future professional development efforts at the school, grade, or individual teacher level
- to observe a teacher's instruction in order to provide support related to various aspects of instruction (e.g., planning, scaffolding, pacing, selecting materials, grouping, assessing progress toward instructional objectives)

Co-planning. Coaches and teachers co-plan[42] instruction in order to:

- help build collaborative relationships as both coach and teacher are seen as important contributors to the process
- ensure that instructional planning includes delineating learner outcomes, selecting appropriate practices, determining grouping options, and developing outcome-based assessment
- inform additional support from the coach which may include modeling, co-teaching, and/or observation of the co-planned instruction
- use assessment data to meet the instructional needs of students

7. Effective literacy coaches are integral members of literacy leadership teams at the school and/or district level.[43]

Literacy coaches serve as literacy leaders within their schools[44] by:

- providing grade/team-level professional development
- collaborating with special educators about literacy instruction for students who have special needs[45]
- serving on school committees that focus on literacy-related and student achievement issues, including being a member of the intervention and student support teams[46]
- working with administrators and other teachers to establish a school-wide literacy vision and to develop/refine and manage the school's literacy program
- analyzing data and helping teachers use the data to make decisions[47]
- serving as a liaison between the district and their schools by attending district-level meetings/workshops and sharing the information with the appropriate stakeholders (e.g., administrators, teachers, support personnel)

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Process for Development and Review

This document was developed by the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts. The Task Force included representatives from the following organizations, although their participation does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the organization they represent:

- Early Childhood Administrators' Network, MAISA
- English Language Arts Leadership Network , MAISA
- General Education Leadership Network, MAISA
- Kalamazoo Public Schools
- Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning
- Michigan Association of Supervisors of Special Education
- Michigan Department of Education
- Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
- Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative
- Michigan Reading Association
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Virtual University
- Reading NOW Network
- REMC Association of Michigan
- Southwest Michigan Reading Council
- Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant
- University of Michigan

Feedback on drafts of the document was elicited from other stakeholders, resulting in a number of revisions to the document.

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