Community Early Literacy Guidebook for Organizations

Oregon's Vision For Implementation of Early Literacy Programs in:

Community-Based Organizations, Early Learning Hubs, Providers of Early Learning Services, Post-Secondary Institutions of Education, and Public Libraries

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Key Terminology

These key terms are highlighted here to provide clarity and reinforce shared meaning-making:

Assessment: the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students

Culturally responsive: the implicit recognition and incorporation of the cultural knowledge, experience and ways of being and knowing of students in teaching, learning and assessment. This includes identifying, valuing and maintaining a high commitment to students' cultural assets in instruction and assessment; diverse frames of reference that correspond to multifaceted cultural perspectives/experiences; and behaviors in the program that can differ from White-centered cultural views of what qualifies as achievement or success.

> Note: The term "culturally responsive practices" centers the importance of affirming students' intersectional cultural identities. However, there are other terms and bodies of research that are important to uplift: culturally sustaining pedagogies, linguistically responsive instruction and culturally relevant pedagogy. While each of these terms and bodies of research vary in their definitions, they all reinforce the importance of creating and cultivating a learning environment where students feel seen, heard and valued – where students know they belong and can show up and learn as their full and authentic selves.

[Culturally Sustaining](#): a dynamic instructional approach that is strength-based. It centers and sustains students' and families' cultural and linguistic identities, experiences, and funds of knowledge.

Developmentally Appropriate: designing and implementing learning environments to help all children achieve their full potential in literacy through: (a) building on each child's strengths; (b) taking care to not harm any aspect of each child's physical, cognitive, social, or emotional well-being; and (c) considering what is known about:

> (A) age-related characteristics that can inform what experiences are likely to best promote a student's learning and development;
>
> (B) what is known about each child as an individual that has implications for how best to adapt learning experiences; and
>
> (C) the social and cultural contexts in which a student lives in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family.

Early Literacy: skills outlined by Oregon's English Language Arts and Literacy Standards for grades K–5, inclusive of reading foundational skills (e.g., print concepts; phonological awareness; phonics, decoding and word recognition; fluency); comprehension; language and vocabulary; writing; speaking and listening. These standards reflect the literacy skills and knowledge that begin developing before students enter kindergarten and lay a foundation for more advanced literacy development in later grades.

Evidence-based Literacy Practices: instructional practices with a proven record of success based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence that when implemented with fidelity result in adequate gains in literacy achievement for students.

Families: means parents, grandparents, extended family members, chosen family and any caregiver and/or meaningful adult in a child's life.

Funds of Knowledge: bodies of information developed within historical and cultural contexts that provide individuals and households the knowledge they need to maintain their well-being.

High-dosage Tutoring: means tutoring that: (a) is provided outside of the school day; (b) is provided by a qualified and trained tutor which is defined for Community Grants as a person who has the training necessary to implement the research-aligned tutoring model effectively; (c) uses a research-aligned tutoring model that employs evidence-based strategies and is administered in a culturally responsive manner and that is combined with the training necessary for tutors to implement the model effectively; (d) is provided to four or fewer students; (e) uses materials that are aligned to the program; and (f) uses student assessment data and other evidence of student learning to inform tutoring sessions and adjust to student needs.

High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM): instructional materials that include specific learning goals and lessons aligned to content standards, student-centered approaches to inquiry-based learning, research-based teaching strategies, teacher support materials and embedded formative assessments to effectively help teachers implement instructional units and courses that are integrated, coherent and sequenced.

Instruction: high-quality instruction in the program setting that is aligned to grade-level standards, centered around grade-level-aligned materials, and inclusive of every student participating in the program. It maximizes learning by providing access to high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), culturally responsive instruction, a trained tutor and developmentally-appropriate texts and tasks.

Linguistically Responsive: teaching practices that support the learning, development, and engagement of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. It includes support for continued development of children's home or tribal languages by authentically incorporating children's languages into the learning environment.

Literacy: identifying, understanding, interpreting, creating, computing, and communicating using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. It includes reading and writing, and also thinking, listening, and speaking

Multilingual Learner: a student who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speaks or understands languages other than English, speaks or understands little or no English and/or requires support in order to become proficient in English. "Multilingual learner" is used intentionally to promote multiliteracy and honor the process of language and literacy development in two or more languages. While English Learner is the formal term used most often in K–12 policy, this term is inadequate and reinforces a deficit view of multilingual students. To reinforce the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and the importance of neutralizing language status, additional terms (such as multilingual learners and emergent bilinguals) bring an asset orientation necessary to ensure children are valued for the language(s) developed in their home and community context.

Out-of-School Time: is a supervised program that young people regularly attend when school is not in session. This includes before and after the school day, as well as programs that occur during school breaks.

Research-based Literacy Practices: models, theories and practices that are based on the best research available in the particular field of study. These practices differ from evidence-based in that they have not been researched in a controlled setting to measure efficacy.

Research-Aligned Strategies: means strategies that: (a) are literacy focused; (b) are culturally responsive and relevant to diverse learners; (c) are based on long-term research derived from the science of reading and writing; and (d) Apply instructional practices that are developmentally appropriate and specifically designed for students with disabilities and students who are English language learners.

Science of Reading and Writing: means: (a) The convergence of findings from research on reading and writing processes, development and instruction; and (b) The teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension through explicit and systematic instruction that can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual learners through developmentally appropriate practices.

Trained Tutor: means an individual who is trained to implement a program providing high-dosage tutoring.

Introduction, Purpose and Use

This guidebook complements the Community Early Literacy Framework (CELF) and is intended for use by recipients of the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Early Literacy Success Community Grants and any other organization looking to support early literacy for students in grades Pre-K to 3. The audiences include but are not limited to: Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Public Libraries, Oregon Tribes, Early Learning Hubs, Providers of Early Learning, Post-Secondary Institutions and any other organization looking to implement an early literacy program outside the school day.

You will see words such as *students, youth* and *children* in this guidebook. For our purposes, these words are used interchangeably to represent the school-aged participants of a program or organization. In addition, similar to the CELF, the word *families* is intentionally used to include parents, grandparents, extended family members, chosen family and any caregiver and/or meaningful adult in a child's life.

This guidebook will serve as a foundational resource to support the implementation of early literacy programs throughout the state of Oregon. In it are 4 domains with each domain having multiple indicators which identify the conditions and qualities that, when implemented with fidelity, encompass the domain.

In the following pages, you will find a practical and detailed application of what is laid out in the CELF and will help organizations implement a successful early literacy program outside of the school day.
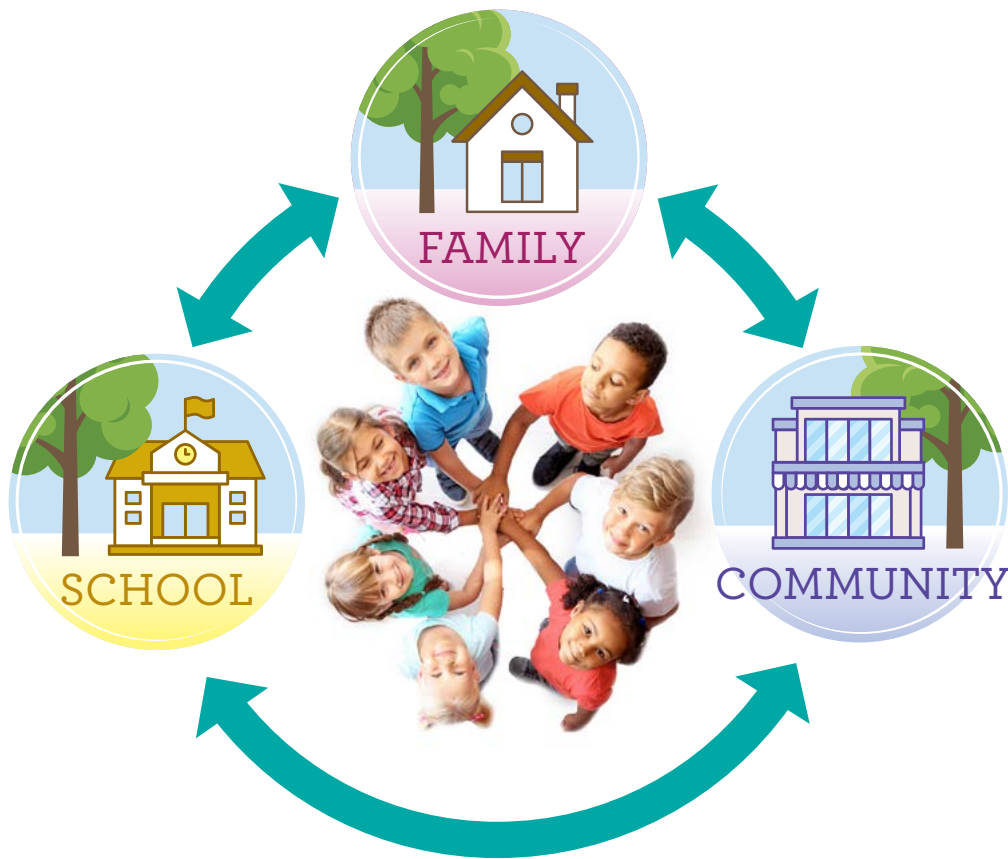
Defining the Four Domains

This guidebook focuses on 4 domains and sub-indicators that organizations should use as they implement their programs under the Early Literacy Success Community Grants. The practices outlined specifically for organizations will build upon the early literacy work already occurring in children's homes and in the communities they are a part of. When implemented with fidelity, these domains and indicators will ensure the highest level of success and literacy outcomes for Oregon's children participating in programs outside of the school day.

Domain 1: Academic Acceleration

High quality, individualized and data-informed early literacy services are provided outside the school day.

Evidence-based, research-aligned early literacy instruction (often referred to as "the science of reading and writing") plays a critical role in the development of reading skills (Oregon Department of Education, 2023, p. 24) that are pivotal to academic success in the PK–3 educational setting and beyond (Hanover Research, 2016). The implementation of effective instructional practices that attend to essential knowledge and early literacy skills expected for students outside of the school day, including during school breaks and summer months, can reinforce the early literacy instruction that takes place within the school day and cultivate academic success (Ammar et al, 2021).

For children to succeed, they need the people in their lives (including teachers, program staff and family members) to believe they can learn (Ohio Department of Education, 2023). Programs should have a plan to reach all learners including students with reading difficulties as well as those with 504 plans or Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Additionally, it is important that programs have a system in place to monitor student progress which can include both formal and informal assessments to inform student instruction (Oregon Department of Education, 2023). A comprehensive and continuous assessment system will allow program staff and families to make decisions based on each child's needs. This type of informed, differentiated instruction is one aspect of high-dosage tutoring.

High dosage tutoring is provided by a qualified and trained tutor in small groups, at least twice a week, and uses research-aligned strategies and practices. When done with fidelity, high-dosage tutoring is shown to improve students' literacy skills and achievement (Duke Social Science Research, 2022). Because literacy is connected to all other content areas, literacy achievement is strongly tied to other academic and social successes (IMSE, 2022). Therefore, ensuring children are able to read is so important and why those children who are able to read proficiently by 3rd grade are less likely to drop out of school and more likely to have better outcomes (Fiester, 2013).

Domain 2: Empowering Intentional Engagement

All families have access to affirming engagement activities to maximize and enhance the many ways they support early literacy success.

Literacy development occurs long before students ever step foot into a classroom. It also occurs outside of the classroom walls even after children begin attending school. Literacy can take form in various ways including but not limited to storytelling, singing, cooking together and engaging in a family's culture and traditions (Oregon Department of Education, 2023, p. 14). Use of shared book reading, engaging in games that promote executive function skills and participating in activities that build vocabulary and language are all ways families can also help support literacy (Oregon Department of Education, 2023, p. 14). By empowering families and caregivers to see their existing roles in their child's life as a powerful one that contributes to literacy development, together community programs and organizations can collaborate to enhance literacy opportunities in and outside of the classroom.

Family engagement is an interactive process where program staff, families/caregivers and their children construct positive relationships. It is a shared responsibility between families and professionals that consists of mutual respect; "family engagement means doing with–not doing to or for–families" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). This type of intentional engagement requires strategies that are systemic, integrated and comprehensive (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018) as well as always working from the premise with outcomes in mind.

Strong family and caregiver engagement is shown to empower them. Through this engagement, families and caregivers feel supported, confident and knowledgeable to advocate for their children (SEDL. 2013). This engagement also increases academic success for students and forms a positive relationship between programs/teachers and families/caregivers (Epstein et al, 2019).

Domain 3: Cultural Identity and Multilingualism

Families' cultural and linguistic identities are assets which provide rich funds of knowledge, traditions, and histories that bring immense value when systems acknowledge, reflect, and honor them.

Culture, identities and language play a pivotal role in youths' lives and the communities they are members of. Cultural identity refers to a feeling of belonging and identification with a certain group that often reflects a person's religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender identity and race. Cultural identity is developed and preserved through sharing and honoring traditions, heritage, language, customs and beliefs (Chen, 2014). The identities that a child holds and the language(s) they speak, shape the way they perceive and access the world around them and their journey to developing early literacy. This is because "culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students…bring to the instructional process" (Krasnoff, 2016). Families and caregivers–often childrens' first teachers at home and in the community–bridge the development of a child's identity to their development as readers and scholars within and outside of the PK-3 school setting. (Oregon Department of Education, 2023, p. 13)

Programs that provide high-quality instruction and materials, believe all children can learn, and have program practices that honor culture and multilingual learners are some of the best ways to support children from diverse backgrounds (National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, 2023; Ohio Department of Education, 2023). Intentional support for children who are multilingual learners means building a program that is culturally proficient, engages English Learners and has effective practices that is paramount to academic success (ECLKC, 2020; Ohio Department of Education, 2023). This is often referred to as "culturally responsive teaching" (Krasnoff, 2016). A culturally responsive program serves racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse students and ensures they "have the opportunity to meet their learning challenges with the strength and relevance found in their own cultural frame of reference" (Krasnoff, 2016). In order to be culturally and linguistically responsive, teachers and program staff must have a strong "understanding of the specific cultures of the students they teach" and "how that culture affects student learning behaviors". This will help support positive interactions with the students/children they serve and provide instruction/programs to embrace the nuances of various cultures (Krasnoff, 2016).

Domain 4: Strengthening Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are comprehensive and intentionally coordinated with systems of care to enhance the conditions conducive to early literacy success.

Children's first and most important teachers are their families. Communities are the "villages" that help raise children outside of their homes. Literacy acceleration occurs when the formal literacy instruction happening in schools is supported and reinforced at home and in the community through collaboration and formalized partnerships with community-based organizations, groups, hubs and resources (Oregon Department of Education, 2023, p. 13). Through these partnerships, barriers to advancement, participation and opportunity are identified and replaced with equitable opportunities for advancement for all (Ammar et al., 2021).

Community partners are able to provide support and resources that both families and staff need and want (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Families can leverage these partners and utilize early literacy practices both in and outside the classroom (Oregon Department of Education, 2023, p. 14). Because literacy learning can and should happen before entering the classroom, it is important to provide children opportunities to develop their literacy skills through expanded learning. This refers to time outside the school day or sometimes called, "Out-of-School Time," which includes time before school, after school and during school breaks and summer.

Organizations and entities within a community can partner with others within their community as well, such as their local schools. This is because community organizations are in a unique position to bridge the gap during out-of-school time. By partnering with the schools and various organizations within the community, these entities are able to support and supplement the learning that happens within the classroom as well as help support families and caregivers with the learning that is occurring in their child(ren)'s school.
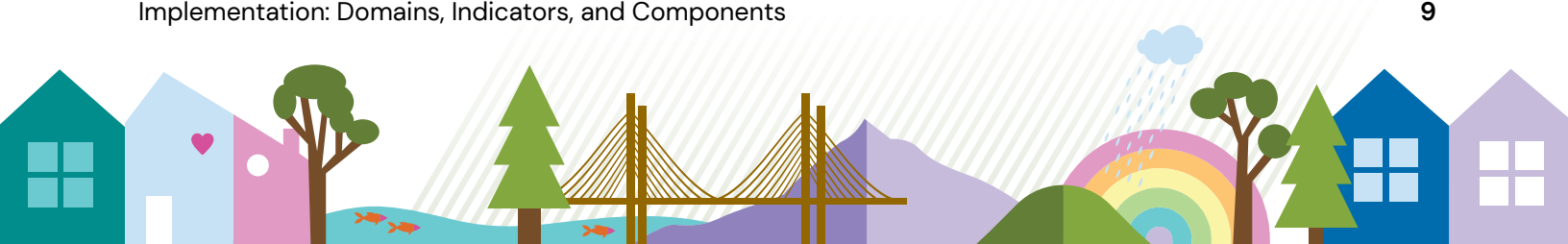
Implementation: Domains, Indicators, and Components

This table lays out the indicators with full implementation components for each domain. The indicators identify the conditions and qualities that, when implemented with fidelity, encompass the domain. Organizations providing early literacy supports should use this as a guide for successful full implementation of an early literacy program.

Domain 1: Academic Acceleration

High quality, individualized and data-informed early literacy services are provided outside the school day.

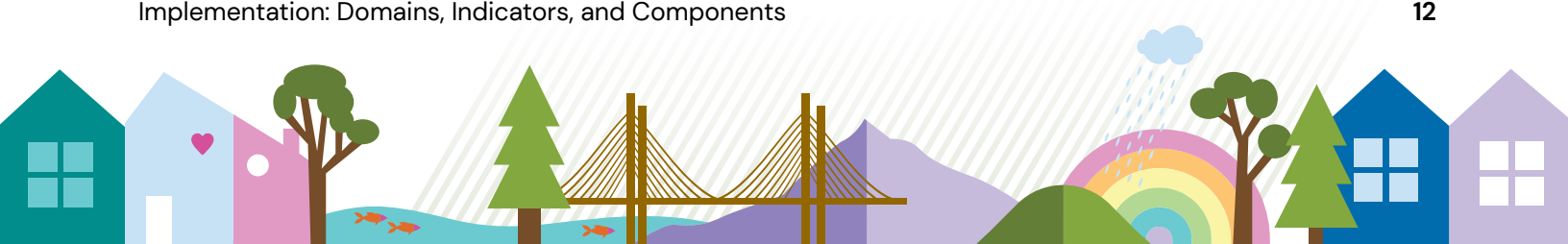| Indicators	Components
1.1 Instruction and instructional materials used are based on Science of Reading and Writing and aligned with research-based literacy practices.	• The tutoring program uses a research-aligned tutoring model based on the science of reading and writing which means: (a) The convergence of findings from research on reading and writing processes, development and instruction; and (b) The teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension through explicit and systematic instruction that can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual learners. (c) The integration of reading and writing. • Instruction is delivered via research-aligned strategies. • High-dosage tutoring instructional program being implemented has been selected from ODE's approved list (to be published in early 2025). • Lesson structure(s), instructional routines and procedures in place maximize learning and use tutoring time effectively. • Tutoring program and materials are informed by and align to those being used in students' school programs. • High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) are used for literacy instruction outside of the school day. • High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIMs) being used have been selected from ODE's approved list (to be published in early 2025).

Indicators	Components
1.2 Instruction is developmentally appropriate based on ongoing monitoring of student progress considering various research–aligned assessments and data points.	• Instruction is informed by student needs and tutoring groups are determined by ongoing monitoring and assessment data. • Assessments are aligned with research and administered in a way that meets each child's needs. • The tutoring program provides practices that are developmentally appropriate which means designing and implementing learning environments to help all children achieve their full potential in literacy through: (a) building on each child's strengths; (b) taking care to not harm any aspect of each child's physical, cognitive, social or emotional well–being; and (c) considering what is known about: (A) age–related characteristics that can inform what experiences are likely to best promote a student's learning and development; (B) what is known about each child as an individual that has implications for how best to adapt learning experiences; and (C) the social and cultural contexts in which a student lives in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family. The program is responsive to student needs through effectively using data (assessment and evidence of student learning).
1.3 Instruction and instructional materials are culturally sustaining–reflecting and affirming individual students' culture, language(s) and identities.	• Children receive instruction that reflects and affirms them. • When appropriate, instruction is delivered in children's home language(s). • The instructional materials used reflect and affirm the children who are interacting with them. • When appropriate, instructional materials are in children's home language(s) • The tutoring program is culturally sustaining and aligns to culturally–responsive practices for all students.

Indicators	Components
1.4 Instruction and assessments are designed to meet the diverse cognitive and linguistic needs of all learners.	• Staff at programs are in communication with students' families and/or schools and teachers and receive the results of literacy assessments and progress. • Staff at programs are in communication with students' families and/or schools and teachers to ensure they are aware of students with 504s, IEPs and any other pertinent specifically designed instructional needs. • Program staff form connections with students to ensure trust and safety when delivering instruction and/or administering assessments. • The tutoring program applies instructional strategies that are specifically designed to meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities and multilingual students. • The tutoring program administers assessments that are specifically designed to meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities and multilingual students. • Students are strategically grouped and groupings allow the tutor to deliver relevant instruction to all students.
1.5 High–dosage tutoring is delivered (in–person or virtually) at a minimum of at least 3 times a week, 30 minutes per session and 10 week cycles. (Note: Optimal frequency is 50 hours over four months.)	• High–dosage tutoring groups include no more than 4 students and are at optimum frequency and duration. • The organization has appropriate infrastructure and program staff to provide high–dosage tutoring. • High–dosage tutoring is provided to meet various needs of families' schedules. • Students receive consistent tutoring from the same tutor. • Systems and tools are used to continuously improve program effectiveness.
1.6 High–dosage tutoring is provided by trained tutor.	• Staff are trained by a vetted high–dosage tutoring vendor. • Tutors are ideally teachers or paraprofessionals. If tutors are not trained teachers or paraprofessionals, other adults such as community members, college students or parents can be trained to provide high–dosage tutoring. • The tutoring program complies with all local and state regulations and policies regarding background checks for tutors.

Indicators	Components
	• Training for tutors is research-aligned and based on the science of reading and writing including the specific knowledge and skills relevant to the literacy concepts and culturally responsive instructional practices to effectively implement the tutoring program.
	• Tutors receive training on meeting the needs of specific student groups that have historically experienced academic disparities.
	• Tutors receive training on how to understand and apply Oregon's ELA content standards.
	• Tutors receive training on developmentally appropriate practices as defined in OAR 581-017-0801.
	• Tutors receive training on how to collect, analyze, and use data (including formative assessment) to understand students' strengths and needs, plan future sessions, and adjust student groupings.
	• Tutors receive training on building rapport and relationships with students including how the tutor creates safe learning environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.
	• Tutors receive training on equity-centered and strengths-based principles and practices, including the belief that all students can achieve their full potential in literacy.
1.7 High-dosage tutoring sessions are ideally delivered by a tutor who has lived experience with the identities that individual students hold.	• Tutors ideally have lived experience of the students they serve. • Tutoring is provided in a child's home language(s) or in a language other than English when appropriate.
1.8 High-dosage tutors receive ongoing, job-embedded professional development and training.	• Tutors are supervised and provided feedback, ideally during each tutoring cycle. • After initial training, tutors receive annual professional development.
1.9 Children's families are partners in academic program progress.	The program and/or tutors engage with families/caregivers and provide updates on student progress.

Domain 2: Empowering Intentional Engagement

All families have access to affirming engagement activities to maximize and enhance the many ways they support early literacy success.

Indicators	Full implementation components:
2.1 Children and families should have frequent opportunities and access to participate in cultural gatherings, events and celebrations that increase a sense of belonging and engagement.	• Cultural gatherings are held to support early literacy within your community. • An increase in sense of belonging and engagement is evident by strong participation and positive feedback. • Community events are scheduled based on frequency and times that provide the highest level of ongoing participation. • Food and childcare are provided at events.
2.2 Families are centered in community literacy efforts and have voice, decision-making power and influence within the organization.	• Families are given many opportunities to have their voice heard. • Strong, two-way partnerships exist where power and decision-making is shared equally. • Formal and ongoing means to collect and analyze information from families around literacy are in place.
2.3 Multilingual families have access to workshops around early literacy in their respective home language(s) that honor and promote the development of students' home language(s) and literacy.	• Early literacy workshops are provided in families' home language(s). • Workshops elevate the literacy development that is already occurring and provide families with ways to complement it.
2.4 Families have access to no-cost workshops that offer information, training around reading skills and tutoring, that support academic early literacy achievement in the home.	• Families who are interested have the opportunity to access formal training around literacy instruction to support the children in their homes, as well as small groups of students. • Trainings are advertised and attending the trainings are easily accessible for families. • Technology, space and support are provided for accessing training.

Indicators	Full implementation components:
2.5 Families have access to workshops around navigating schools and school systems, including deepening understanding of their child(ren)'s literacy progress and advocating for their child(ren) in school settings.	• Families are provided information on how to navigate school systems. • Families are provided opportunities to deepen their understanding of their child(ren)'s literacy progress in schools. • Families are supported with ways to advocate for their child(ren) in schools.
2.6 Families have equitable access to workshops and engagement opportunities through the dismantling of barriers such as: (a) transportation,(b) family needs and schedules and (c) presentations and written materials in languages reflective of attendees and the community.	• Workshops are provided at multiple times/dates. • Workshops held work around families' schedules. • Families are provided with transportation to attend workshops. • Presentations and materials at workshops are in families' home language(s) and translation services are available.
2.7 Family workshops around early literacy supports are based on specific needs voiced by caregivers. (i.e. surveys, online communication, listening sessions and informal conversations.)	• Family needs are clearly understood and based on multiple forms of information gathering including surveys, listening sessions, home languages, etc. • Engagement and learning opportunities are targeted on specific needs gleaned from this comprehensive information gathering. • Engagement occurs at multiple times throughout the day and week that are accessible to caregivers and take into account jobs, transportation and childcare needs.

Domain 3: Cultural Identity and Multilingualism

Families' cultural and linguistic identities are assets which provide rich funds of knowledge, traditions, and histories that bring immense value when systems acknowledge, reflect, and honor them.

Indicators	Full implementation components:
3.1 Children have access to books and other media that reflect and affirm their cultural and linguistic identity.	• All Pre–K to Grade 3 children have access to books that are culturally reflective and engaging in their home language(s) and in English. • All Pre–K to Grade 3 children have access to both instructional and independent leveled books in their home language(s) and in English. • Books are easily accessible and free, with options as needed for delivery to homes.
3.2 Children use and learn about their home language(s) and oral traditions (i.e. storytelling) in homes and communities, including cultures, celebrations and traditions.	• Embedding culture, celebrations, heritage and traditions in literacy learning supports a sense of belonging, pride and relevance for children. • Families and children understand that multilingualism is an asset and increases cognitive function, confidence and self–esteem as well as supports English language development. • Families and caregivers promote ongoing learning of home language(s) through both oral and written form.
3.3 Community program staff, practices, instructional materials and activities reflect and affirm students' culture(s), identities and language(s).	• Program staff reflect students' identities and/or have knowledge of students' racial ethnic groups, culture and traditions to incorporate that knowledge into their instruction. • Program staff have high expectations for their students. • Program instructional materials reflect student identities and culture. • Program staff are trained to use culturally and linguistically responsive practices. • Students feel seen, heard and understood by program staff.

Domain 4: Strengthening Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are comprehensive and intentionally coordinated with systems of care to enhance the conditions conducive to early literacy success.

Indicators	Full implementation components:
4.1 Books and other literacy materials are provided throughout frequently accessed service locations in the community (i.e. food banks, pediatrician's offices or other health services and faith-based organizations).	• Families are provided resources and information on where in the community they can access books and literacy materials. • Frequently accessed service locations in the community provide books and other literacy materials to families. • Program has a system in place to identify service locations in the community that can provide books and other literacy materials. • Families have various ongoing opportunities to provide feedback (in-person and digitally) to program about accessibility and availability of these resources at service locations.
4.2 Technology devices (i.e. tablets, phones and/or computers) and internet access are made available for no or low-cost.	• Program provides technology devices to students and families participating in their program, to use in either their organization or in their homes. • The internet is available to program participants to use at their organization. • Program provides information to families about how to access no or low-cost internet providers in their community.
4.3 Transportation to early literacy services is provided for no or low-cost.	• Program provides transportation to and from the organization to students and families they serve. • Transportation services that are provided meet the financial needs of families program serves.
4.4 Community partnerships between organizations and schools are formed through engagement activities that build upon the early literacy learning happening in the homes and schools.	• Your organization has a through-line with your local district/schools. • Your organization understands the literacy instruction and supports that are being provided at your local district/schools. • Your organization has multiple checkpoints with your neighborhood district/schools to create alignment of literacy instruction and supports. • Your organization builds upon the literacy instruction and supports provided by your local district/schools.

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