# **Virtual Kit: Oral Language and Early Literacy**

**Kit QT**

Early childhood is a critical period for young children’s language and literacy development. The primary prevention of reading difficulties is to ensure that young children develop strong language skills and engage in meaningful experiences filled with print, literacy play, storybook reading, and writing (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

The *National Early Literacy Panel NELP* (2008) conducted a synthesis of scientific research in the early literacy skills of children birth through five. They identified knowledge, skills and abilities that young children need to learn to improve later literacy development.Based on the *NELP* Report, four areas have emerged as important for young children’s early literacy experiences: oral language (speaking and listening), phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print knowledge (National Institute for Literacy, 2009).

Language development begins with children’s earliest interactions with responsive caregivers. The time between birth and age five is an optimal period for children’s language development (ASHA, 2013), and has a strong influence on children’s later reading comprehension (NELP, 2008). In examining the aspects of language that influence literacy outcomes, the NELP Panel (2008) found that multiple features of language development were associated with reading comprehension, including syntactic and semantic development, complex vocabulary knowledge (i.e. children explaining or defining word meanings) and listening comprehension.

Families and professionals have an opportunity and responsibility to incorporate language and literacy enhancing experiences into children’s daily lives. To do this, they must understand the most current research in early literacy and the evidence-based practices associated with supporting young children’s language and literacy development. This Virtual KIT was designed to provide information on Oral language development that supports early literacy, birth to five.

**Show me now! (I need this tomorrow.)**

These websites will help you find an evidence-based practice, or the evidence base for your practices.

* [Typical Speech and language Development](http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/)
* [The Role of Early Oral Language in Literacy Developmen](http://languagemagazine.com/?page_id=5100)t
* [Language Development for Preschoolers who are English Learners](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/36679/)

**What does this look like in practice? (I have a little more time to read about this.)**

* [Kansas Guide to Learning Literacy: Birth to Five Years](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mGa80anlsXw%3D&tabid=5899&mid=14457) (.pdf)
* [Early Beginnings: Early Literacy Knowledge and Instruction](http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPEarlyBeginnings09.pdf) (.pdf)
* [Learning to Talk and Listen](https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/LearningtoTalkandListen.pdf) (.pdf)

**What does the ECRC have on this topic?**

Below are selected resources from the Early Childhood Resource Center. For additional resources related to the literacy go to the KITS Early Child Resource Center and click on ECRC catalogue, or call (620) 421-6550 ext. 1638 for personal assistance.

Howes, C., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (eds.) (2011). *Dual language learners in the early childhood classroom.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Justice, L. & Vukelick, C. (eds.) (2008). *Achieving excellence in preschool literacy instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

Morrow, L. M., Freitag, E., & Gambrell, L. B. (2009). *Using children's literature in preschool to develop comprehension*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Neuman, S. & Dickinson, D. (eds). (2011).  *Handbook of early literacy research, Vol. 3.* New York: Guildford Press.

Rhyner, P. M. (Ed.). (2009). *Emergent literacy and language development*. New York: Guilford Press.

Roskos, K. A., Tabors, P., O. , & Lenhart, L. A. (2009). *Oral Language and Early Literacy in Preschool*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Smith, M. W., Brady, J. P., & Anastasopoulos, L. (2008). *Early language and literacy classroom observation tool, pre-K*. Baltimore: MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Vukelich, C., & Christie, J. F. (2009). *Building foundations for preschool literacy*. Nerwark, DE: International Reading Association.

**How can I find training materials on this topic?**

* [CONNECT Module: Dialogic Reading Practices](https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/?o=nectac)
* [Common Core and Early Literacy](https://vimeo.com/15739132): Webinar: The Foundational Roles of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Early Literacy
* Visit the KITS Collaborative Calendar on the website to find out if there might be an upcoming training related to this topic.

**What if I still need help?**

Contact KITS by e-mail to request assistance or by calling 1-800-362-0390 ext. 1618.

**If you thought this kit was helpful, you might also like ….**

* [Kansas Kids Ready for Learning: Language and Literacy](http://readyforlearning.net/html/langdev.shtml)

**Evaluation**

Please take a minute to complete a brief survey located on the Virtual Kits page on the website to let us know what you think about this virtual kit, and what other topics you would like to see addressed in the future.

**References:**

ASHA. (2013). [Typical speech and language development](http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development)

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel. Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy.

National Institute for Literacy. (2009). Early Beginnings: Early Literacy Knowledge and Insturction. Jessup, MD: U.S. Department of Education.

Snow, C., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.