

Pre-Application Toolkit
Early Reading First
Featuring Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy*™

Scholastic Inc. has prepared this Grant Assistance Toolkit to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and/or public or private organizations or agencies in the development of an *Early Reading First (ERF)* grant program. The Toolkit provides key information in these areas:

- Funding program information
- Alignment of the ***Building Language for Literacy Program*** to *ERF* grant requirements
- Grant writing support

***Building Language for Literacy*™ is the research-based reading program featured in this Toolkit.**

Building Language for Literacy (BLL) is a Pre-Kindergarten curriculum that provides a rich environment of print and nonprint experiences related to language and literacy development. It incorporates such early childhood teaching tools as literature, music, poetry, learning center activities, and puppets to engage children as active learners.

BLL is a flexible program that can become the basis for a complete early literacy curriculum or fit neatly into current curriculum. The program is built around these four foundational goals:

- ◆ Oral language
- ◆ Phonological awareness
- ◆ Letter/sound knowledge
- ◆ Print knowledge

Due to the extensive research demonstrating that oral language and vocabulary levels correlate to future reading and school success (Tabors, Snow & Dickinson, 2001), oral language is the primary focus of the *Building Language for Literacy* program.

Using the Toolkit

This Toolkit is designed as a resource to provide information that can be used when completing the pre-application for *Early Reading First* grant funds. It only addresses application requirements that are pertinent to Scholastic products and services and does not cover all *ERF* expectations.

The Toolkit also includes grant writing tips and examples of the types of information needed when applying for a grant. Contact the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) for the official application that has all the requirements and guidelines.

Please note these symbols throughout the Toolkit to help you write your application:

 ***Highlights additional support and suggestions for writing your application.***

 ***Refers to *Building Language for Literacy* features.***

Scholastic's Commitment

Scholastic is committed to the sustainability of quality programs in order to improve teaching and learning. For more information about the products included in this Toolkit, please contact your Scholastic Regional Office.

California
800-342-5331

Northeast
800-878-8398

Southeast
800-221-5312


Southwest
800-221-5312

West/Midwest
800-225-4625



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 *Because every grant program is unique, it is important to adapt the language provided in this Toolkit rather than copy it. Your proposal is more likely to be successful if you **customize** your application. Be sure to incorporate specific information about your program's needs, vision, programs, and design when you write your *Early Reading First* application.*

Funding Program Overview: *Early Reading First*

The information in this section of the Toolkit is based on the federal *Guidance for the Early Reading First Program* (March 2003) and the *Fiscal Year 2005 Application for New Grants for the Early Reading First Program* that is available at this website:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Purpose of *Early Reading First*

Title I, Part B, Subpart 2 of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* is known as *Early Reading First*. The ultimate goal of the *ERF* is to improve the school readiness of our nation's young children, especially those from low-income families, by providing support for Early Childhood Education programs serving preschool-age children.

Specifically, *Early Reading First* grants will provide funds to:

1. Support local efforts to enhance the early language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research
2. Provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and print-rich environments so that they can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in Kindergarten and beyond
3. Use language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research to support the age-appropriate development of:
 - ◆ *Oral language*—vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension
 - ◆ *Phonological awareness*—rhyming, blending, segmenting
 - ◆ *Print awareness*
 - ◆ *Alphabet knowledge*—letter recognition
4. Use screening assessments or other appropriate measures to identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure, and to determine whether those children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success
5. Integrate instructional materials and programs based on scientifically based reading research into existing preschool programs



Building Language for Literacy is a research-based program that provides a curriculum designed to help children acquire school readiness skills in language and early reading in four critical curriculum framework areas: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabetic knowledge. ***Building Language for Literacy*** is a perfect match for the *Early Reading First* Program.

Eligibility

The U.S. Department of Education will award *Early Reading First* grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants, as described below:

1. **School Districts:** One or more Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) identified as being eligible on the list of “Eligible LEAs” that is posted on the USDOE website for the FY 2004 *Early Reading First* program grant competition at:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/eligibility.html>
2. **Public or Private Organizations:** One or more public or private organizations or agencies—including faith-based organizations—located in a community served by an eligible LEA. Unless the public or private organization is a preschool program applying on its own behalf, it must apply on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool-age children, such as a Head Start program, a child care program, a family literacy program such as Even Start, or a lab school or university.
3. **A Collaborative:** One or more of the eligible LEAs, applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.

What Projects Must Do


Early Reading First provides funding and support to turn preschool programs into centers of excellence by improving instruction and classroom environment through scientific research-based practices in language, cognition, and early reading.

All *Early Reading First* projects must provide the following activities:

-  **For more information about these activities, as well as, research-based approaches and strategies, the *Early Reading First* Guidance is available at:**


<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/legislation.html>

1. **Classroom Environment:** Provide preschool-age children with high-quality oral language and print-rich environments in which to acquire oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.


 *Each of the 12 **BLL** units provides at least four weeks of explicit instruction in oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. Skills are taught on a continuum so they are reinforced in each unit. Each unit contains a variety of engaging multi-cultural print material including fiction and non-fiction trade books and PlaceBooks™, oversized books filled with photographic explorations of the places within each theme.*


2. **Professional Development:** Provide professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development that will assist in developing the preschool-age children's:


- ◆ *Oral language*—expressive and receptive language, including vocabulary development
- ◆ *Phonological awareness*—rhyming, blending, and segmenting
- ◆ *Print awareness*
- ◆ *Alphabet knowledge*—letter recognition

 *Professional development for the **Building Language for Literacy** program is integrated into the curriculum through the Blueprint for Literacy model lessons. In addition, each of the 12 units in the program contains four professional development workshops. Within each workshop are these areas: Research Shows, What You Can Do, Informal Assessment, Observing Children, and Good Teaching Practices.*


3. **Services and Instructional Materials:** Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills.

 *In **BLL**, children experience activities to develop oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and print knowledge on a daily basis. Skills are presented recursively so that children have multiple experiences to build a deep foundation in language development. The developmental skills are introduced and practiced along a continuum; however, the units within each phase (Phase One and Phase Two) can be done in any order. The skills and objectives are more advanced in Phase Two than in Phase One and vocabulary and concepts become more difficult as the "places" move from the more to less familiar.*


 *The **BLL** curriculum framework and objectives are based upon the National Research Council report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. This report documents scientific evidence that children's performance in all of these areas is significantly better when access to books and other literacy materials is combined with professional development and training for preschool teachers.*

 ***BLL** features "language-loving" characters that act as concrete models of abstract literacy concepts as well as models that inspire and motivate learning. It is built upon a "Places" framework that reflects children's home and community experiences to help children make meaningful connections. It contains built-in professional development that helps teachers integrate their own learning about children's language and literacy development with their actual curriculum planning and daily lesson implementation. Finally, it is structured to make the most of every teachable moment in the classroom day—by providing language use and enrichment ideas and activities, including morning circle time, story time, learning centers, and transition times.*


4. **Screening Assessments:** Acquire, provide training in the use of, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success.

 **BLL** includes an Assessment Handbook that provides both individual and group assessment instruments. The Handbook contains these components:

- Overview of early literacy assessment
- Unit assessments
- Mid-year and end-of-year assessments
- Suggested follow-up activities
- Progress reports—Oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and print knowledge are measured with the formal assessment instruments.

 Informal assessment techniques and suggestions are found at the end of each unit of the program. These include suggestions for individual and class profiles, as well as suggestions for evaluating the literacy environment of the classroom.

5. **Integration:** Integrate the above instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's overall programs.

 **Building Language for Literacy** is designed to be both practical and flexible in its classroom integration. Each *Unit Guide* provides detailed lessons for developing oral language, reading, and writing skills; assessment strategies; second-language support suggestions; and built-in staff development.

6. **Coordinate with Reading First:** If applicants are located in a school district that receives a subgrant under the *Reading First* program, coordinate their *Early Reading First* activities with the school district's *Reading First* activities to ensure continuity for children between the Pre-Kindergarten program and Kindergarten through Grade 3 reading instruction.

7. **Report Annually:** Submit to the USDOE annual performance reports. Additionally, the annual performance report must report the project's performance against the GPRA indicators using the following two measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the *Early Reading First* program:


- ◆ The percentage of preschool-age children who demonstrate age-appropriate oral language skills as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III
- ◆ The average number of letters that preschool-age children are able to identify as measured by the K Upper Case Alphabet Knowledge subtask on the PALS Pre-K assessment

8. **Cooperate with any Evaluation:** Participate fully in any evaluation of the *Early Reading First* program carried out by the USDOE.

Invitational Priorities


The Secretary has established two invitational priorities for the FY 2005 *Early Reading First* program.

1. The Secretary is especially interested in proposals that would use *ERF* funds to support preschool programs that operate full-time, full-year Early Childhood Educational programs, at a minimum of 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, 46 weeks per year, and that serve children for the two consecutive years prior to their entry into Kindergarten.
2. The Secretary is also especially interested in projects in which, in all preschool centers supported by *ERF* funds, at least 75% of the children enrolled in the preschool qualify for free or reduced-priced lunches; or at least 75% of the children enrolled in the elementary school in the school attendance area in which that center is located qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

 ***Applications that meet one or both of these Invitational Priorities do NOT receive any absolute or competitive preference.***

The Secretary encourages applicants to propose comprehensive approaches in designing their *ERF* programs to ensure that preschool-age children will possess the reading readiness skills they will need in school. For example, research shows that the following are important ingredients in young children's acquisition and retention of language, cognitive, and early reading skills:

- ◆ **Intensity of services**—Applicants are encouraged to think about how to increase the *intensity* of the existing preschool education services that focus on language and cognitive development, in addition to increasing the quality of instruction, early learning environments, and professional development.
- ◆ **Building Children's Background Knowledge and Thinking Skills**—Applicants are encouraged to think about how to weave content—for example, science, math, or geography—throughout the preschool program to enrich children's language and early reading skills as well as their background knowledge.

 *During Choice Time, hands-on learning centers integrate language and literacy skills into math, science, social studies, and the arts. The centers include: Math Center, Science Center, Art and Writing Center, Dramatic Play Center, Block Center, and Messy Play Center. Activities expand upon concepts explored during Story Time, and provide children with opportunities to meet commonly accepted Pre-Kindergarten objectives in the areas of Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Print Knowledge, and Alphabet Knowledge.*


Competitive Priority **NOVICE APPLICANT**

Early Reading First Pre-Applications that are submitted by a *novice applicant* or a *group of novice applicants* will receive 5 extra points. To receive points under this pre-application competitive priority an applicant must:

1. Qualify as a novice applicant as described below:
2. Check “Yes” in response to Question 6 on ED Form 424.

A “novice applicant” means any applicant for a grant from USDOE that:

- A. Has never received a grant or subgrant under the program for which it seeks funding
- B. Has never been a member of a group application, that received a grant under the program for which it seeks funding
- C. Has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under the program

 **Questions regarding eligibility for this competitive priority may be submitted by e-mail to ERF@ed.gov or by phone to 202-260-4555.**

The Pre-Application Process

Pre-applications for grants under the *Early Reading First* program **must be submitted electronically using the Department's e-Grants system**, accessible at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>. The deadline for electronic submission of *ERF* pre-applications is 4:30 p.m. (Washington, DC time) February 7, 2005.

Applicants must submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Pre-Application Form A, and Pre-Application Survey for Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Electronic pre-applications must comply with all page limit requirements. Applicants may NOT e-mail an electronic copy of a pre-application to USDOE.

 ***Please see Section D for specific instructions for electronic submission of pre-applications and hours of operation for the e-Grants web site.***

After Submitting the Application Electronically

After applicants submit the pre-application, they will receive an automatic acknowledgement that will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to their application).

Within three working days after submitting the application electronically, applicants are required to fax a signed copy of the ED 424 to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

1. Print ED 424 from e-Application.
2. The applicant's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.
3. Place the PR/Award number in the upper right-hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED 424.
4. Fax the signed ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6272.

Tips for Electronic Submission

- ◆ USDOE strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the pre-application deadline date to begin the pre-application process.
- ◆ Prior to submitting the electronic pre-application, USDOE recommends that applicants print a copy of it for their records.
- ◆ For technical assistance with the e-Application system, contact the e-Grants Help Desk at 1-888-336-8930.

The Pre-Application

Part I of the pre-application


- ◆ Survey on Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- ◆ ED Form 424
- ◆ Pre-Application Form A
- ◆ Title Page (Optional for e-Applicants)
- ◆ Table of Contents (Optional for e-Applicants)
- ◆ Abstract—Applicants must submit a one-page, double-spaced Abstract, briefly describing their proposal project.

Part II of the pre-application

- ◆ Pre-application Narrative—The 10-page pre-application narrative should respond to the pre-application selection criteria in the order in which they are listed.

Part III of the pre-application

- ◆ List of names and addresses of existing preschool programs that the proposed *ERF* project would support, including a brief description indicated under Quality of Project Design, Note, Purpose 1
- ◆ Endnote citations

 ***For a complete list of all required forms and information, please consult the pre-application Final Checklist located in section D of the Early Reading First pre-application package, CFDA No. 84.359A.***

Following a review of the pre-applications, the USDOE will determine which applicants are invited to submit full applications. In this second phase of the *ERF* application process, peer reviewers evaluate full applications.


Pre-Application Deadline: *February 7, 2005*


Early Reading First Criteria

Early Reading First is a federal grant program that is part of the President’s early childhood initiative, “Good Start, Grow Smart.” These grants are designed to help existing Early Childhood Education programs become centers of educational excellence for preschool-age children. Through improvements in the instruction and classroom environment, children will develop the critical language, literacy, and cognitive skills that will prepare them for success in Kindergarten.

Applicants for *ERF* funds must ensure that their program aligns with the following key emergent literacy skills:

- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge

| <i>Early Reading First Criteria</i> |  <i>Building Language for Literacy</i> |
|---|--|
| <p>Oral Language</p> <p>Development of expressive and receptive language including vocabulary, the contextual use of speech and syntax, and oral comprehension abilities</p> | <p>Research has found that reading aloud to children, followed by discussion, is correlated to later success with independent reading. Each unit begins with “Get Ideas Going” during which children talk about the place that they are going to explore in this unit. Following the introductory discussion, the teacher and children explore the PlaceBook, which is filled with beautiful, “language-rich” illustrations and give children opportunities to use new vocabulary and build concepts around these new words.</p> <p>After building an overall understanding of the “place,” children participate in many activities to use both familiar and new vocabulary to deepen their understanding. For example, children participate in a dramatic play, create their own story situated in the “place,” name and describe objects located in the “place” and ask questions, and listen to stories, songs and poems all revolving around the “place.”</p> <p><i>Nina the Naming Newt™</i>, another language-loving, original character in the program, is a tool for building vocabulary. Along with Nina, children learn and use new words to describe the stories and participate in the oral language activities.</p> |



| Early Reading First Criteria |  Building Language for Literacy |
|--|---|
| <p>Phonological Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying and making oral rhymes ▪ Identifying and working with syllables in spoken words through segmentation and blending ▪ Identifying and working with “onsets and rimes” ▪ Identifying and working with individual sounds in words | <p>To support emerging literacy, one of the foundational goals of Building Language for Literacy is to develop phonological awareness. Throughout the program, children engage in meaningful, fun activities that help them build their awareness of the sounds of language. Through daily opportunities to sing songs, hear poetry, create rhymes, and simply play with language, children are exposed to the sounds and patterns of language. <i>Reggie the Rhyming Rhino™</i>, one of the language-loving, original characters in the program, is a tool for learning and developing phonological awareness.</p> |
| <p>Print Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print | <p>Throughout Building Language for Literacy, children are exposed to a variety of print—fiction and nonfiction trade books, poems, printed words of songs, signs, lists, recipes and so on. By participating in “read-alouds” and related activities, children develop an understanding that print carries a message and recognize that stories have sequence and flow. Children also participate in activities that help them understand how books should be handled. Furthermore, teachers are asked (in the Unit Guide) to write down what children are saying so that they see the connection between spoken and written words.</p> <p>Through multiple encounters with these materials, and the provided strategies modeled by teachers, children develop critical concepts of print that aid the reading process.</p> <p>Furthermore, the language-loving characters—Nina, Reggie, and Leo—use their language and literacy skills to explore print and the world around them.</p> |
| <p>Alphabet Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter recognition | <p>To facilitate children's understanding of the <i>alphabetic principle</i>, one of the foundational goals of BLL is to develop in children an awareness of letter/sound correspondence. Children engage in activities that help them make letter/sound discoveries in authentic and meaningful ways, including writing and creating letters and songs.</p> <p><i>Leo the Letter-Loving Lobster™</i>, one of the language-loving characters in the program, is a tool for learning the letters of the alphabet and the sounds that are associated with each letter. Leo says the first letter of every word he sees. <i>Leo's Alphabet</i>, an alphabet frieze on seven song cards, is designed to be used while singing the alphabet song, reinforcing the idea that the letters are part of a system called the alphabet. In addition, Leo helps children make connections between letters and sounds through literature, games, and activities.</p> |


BLL Alignment to Early Reading First Required Activities


Early Reading First programs must include the following components:


- Classroom Environment
- Professional Development
- Services and Instructional Materials
- Screening Assessments
- Integration

The following chart details how **Building Language for Literacy** fulfills the above *ERF* required activities.

| Early Reading First Requirement |  Building Language for Literacy |
|---|---|
| <p>Classroom Environment</p> <p>A high-quality oral language and print-rich environment</p> | <p>In Building Language for Literacy, developmental skills are introduced and practiced in a systematic way. Specific goals and objectives spelled out in the BLL Unit Guides form the basis of all activities. Children have experiences that develop oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and print knowledge on a daily basis. Key skills are presented multiple times to give children many experiences to build a deep foundation in language development.</p> <p>BLL builds on children's life experiences by focusing activities on familiar places, people, and activities in the home and community. The program encourages children to use prior knowledge to relate to new understandings, thus increasing the possibility of success for each student.</p> <p>The BLL program is a practical, yet flexible tool for teachers. The program is organized around a total of 60 minutes of instruction each day that can be integrated into the existing curriculum, as well as making the classroom a place for vocabulary and language development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Song and Poem Time: 15 minutes ▪ Story Time: 20 minutes ▪ Choice Time: 20 minutes ▪ Transition Time: 5 minutes <p> <i>For a complete overview of each of these four program areas, including goals and activities please see pages 32-33.</i></p> |

| Early Reading First Requirement |  Building Language for Literacy |
|---|---|
| <p>Professional Development</p> <p>Professional development that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development</p> | <p>Professional development for the BLL program is integrated into the curriculum through the Blueprint for Literacy model lessons. Each of the 10 units in the program contains four professional development workshops. Each workshop covers these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Research Shows</u>: This section provides examples from 1) the NAEYC/IRA Joint Position Statement and/or 2) Report on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties research that supports the classroom activities. ▪ <u>What You Can Do</u>: This section provides specific tips for maximizing children’s learning potential through the activity. ▪ <u>Informal Assessment</u>: This section provides a model of classroom dialogue with annotated insights about the discussion. ▪ <u>Observing Children</u>: This section offers specific suggestions for responding to children’s understandings and literacy behaviors. ▪ <u>Good Teaching Practices</u>: This section offers practical classroom management tips. <p>In addition, the Scholastic Early Childhood Seminar Series offers five one-day seminars that can be customized to meet district needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Essentials of Early Literacy and Language Development ▪ Integrating Content Area Themes ▪ Learning Literacy through Interactive Activities ▪ Linking Literacy and Mathematics ▪ Supporting the English Language Learner <p>A Scholastic Reading Specialist is available to conduct a free one-day in-service for grantees using BLL as part of their curriculum.</p> |
| <p>Services and Instructional Materials</p> <p>Activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing language, cognitive, and early reading skills</p> | <p>Program authors, Dr. Susan B. Neuman and Dr. Catherine E. Snow, bring a wealth of experience in and knowledge of the research and best practices in teaching early reading skills. In addition, the program was developed using <i>Early Reading First</i> criteria and the NAEYC/IRA Joint Position Statement on Early Childhood Education and Early Reading.</p> <p>BLL provides a rich environment of print and nonprint experiences related to language and literacy development to engage and motivate early learners. Early childhood activities in different cross-curricular contexts, including music, drawing, and social studies, engage children as active learners through direct instruction and well-developed learning center activities.</p> <p>In addition, BLL provides detailed lesson plans for developing oral language, reading, and writing skills.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

| Early Reading First Requirement |  Building Language for Literacy |
|---|--|
| <p>Services and Instructional Materials—Continued</p> | <p>The program has two levels that teach the following skills:</p> <p>Phase I: Focus: Oral Language Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alphabet recognition, concepts of print, consonants, short vowels, and digraphs <p>Phase II Focus: Advanced Oral Language Development and Experimental Reading and Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consonant blends, inflection endings, long vowels, variant vowels, and diphthongs <p>BLL contains the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher Materials: Program Overview, Unit Guides, Assessment Handbook, Parent Involvement Handbook, music book, and audiocassettes ▪ Classroom Literature: Trade books, board books, mini-books, and PlaceBooks™ ▪ Character Kits: Puppets, plush toys, word cards, song charts, poem charts, song cards, and character punch-outs |
| <p>Screening Assessments</p> <p>Screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success.</p> | <p>The BLL Assessment Handbook provides formal unit-by-unit assessment, as well as mid- and end-of-year measures. The formal assessment measure student mastery of skills, and informal assessments can be used to develop individual and class profiles. Both assessments are used to inform instruction and teacher decision-making.</p> <p>The Assessment Handbook contains these components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview of early literacy assessment ▪ Unit assessments ▪ Mid-year and end-of-year assessments ▪ Suggested follow-up activities ▪ Progress reports <p><u>Formal Assessment</u> These skills are measured with the formal assessment instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Language: Vocabulary, listening/responding, using language, and speaking ▪ Phonological Awareness: Sounds, letter/sounds, and word parts ▪ Letter Knowledge: Letters, letter/sounds, and writing name ▪ Print Knowledge: Responding to print and concepts of print <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

| Early Reading First Requirement |  Building Language for Literacy |
|---|---|
| <p>Screening Assessments— Continued</p> | <p><u>Informal Assessment</u> Informal assessment techniques and suggestions are found at the end of each unit of the program. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggestions for both individual and class profiles ▪ Suggestions for evaluating the literacy environment of the classroom |
| <p>Integration</p> <p>The preschool program integrates the instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures described above into the overall early childhood education program offered.</p> | <p>Building Language for Literacy offers an integrated program of instruction with early childhood activities that include cross-curricular experiences in literature and music while learning about themes that are relevant to the children’s life, such as Home, Store, Farm, and Supermarket. Through direct instruction and well-developed learning center activities, students are actively engaged in the learning process.</p> |

Customize Your *Early Reading First* Application

This section of the Toolkit provides basic information for those preparing to write an *ERF* grant. It is not intended to fully explain every part of the grant application, but should help you understand how to organize information within the *ERF* pre-application.

The *Early Reading First* Pre-Application

 **Be sure to obtain the application for *Early Reading First* from the U.S. Department of Education as it contains the official instructions, schedules, and requirements.**

All USDOE forms for the *ERF* pre-application are available at the following web site:


<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Part I of Pre-Application

- I. Survey on Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- II. ED Form 424
- III. Pre-Application Form A
- IV. Title Page
- V. Table of Contents--List the contents in this order:
 - I. Abstract
 - II. Pre-application Narrative
 - A. Quality of the Project Design
 - III. Appendices
 - A. Names, addresses, and brief description of preschool programs
 - B. Endnote citations
- VI. Abstract (one-page, double-spaced)

The *summary* or *abstract* encapsulates all the components of the proposal and gives an overview of the proposed program; it is basically, the program “in a nutshell.” The summary/abstract includes the following information:

- ◆ The audience—Who will the program directly impact?
- ◆ The need/problem—What need will the program address?
- ◆ The educational goals—What does the program strive to ultimately accomplish?
- ◆ The objectives and effectiveness indicators—Who do what by when?
- ◆ The evaluation plan—What are the guiding questions in the evaluation plan?

 **Because the abstract is essentially a summary of the program, you should write it after the grant proposal is completed. It can be summarized from other parts of the proposal.**

Part II of Pre-Application

I. Pre-Application Narrative (10 pages, double-spaced)

The 10-page application narrative should respond to the Pre-Application Selection Criteria in the order in which they are listed. Information that applicants provide in one section of the pre-application may be cross-referenced in another section.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN—0-100 points

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 1: The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2: The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 3: The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 1*:

- ◆ *Full endnote citations, in the appendices, supporting the research basis for the Quality of Project Design narrative.*
- ◆ *An explanation of the extent to which the body of research on which the project is based meets the definition of Scientifically Based Reading Research.*

For *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2*, the *ERF* statute lists the following five purposes for the *Early Reading First Program*; applicants should address these five purposes in the order indicated.

Purpose 1: To integrate such scientific reading research-based instructional materials and literacy activities with existing programs of preschools, child care agencies and programs, Head Start Centers, and family literacy services.


Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 1*:

- ◆ Specify the existing preschool program(s) that the project proposes to support and improve with *Early Reading First* funds.
- ✍ ***The Secretary recommends that, in the case of center-based programs, applicants generally include no more than a total of five centers in order to ensure that funds are sufficiently concentrated to achieve the program goals.***

(continued)


- ◆ Explain how each existing center selected for the proposal has the capacity and potential to become an *ERF* preschool Center of Educational Excellence. The Secretary believes that such centers are likely to be preschool programs that currently:
 - Have existing, appropriately equipped, preschool classrooms in which the Early Reading First program will be implemented
 - Have high rates of daily attendance for enrolled children
 - Are staffed by teachers, with the qualifications necessary to implement a language and literacy focused project, such as a bachelor's degree
 - Demonstrate a history of low staff turnover
 - Effectively attend to the developmental domains traditionally supported by preschool programs, including social, emotional, and physical; and are ready to implement an added component focused on developing young children's oral language, cognition, early reading skills
- ◆ Include in the appendices the name(s) and address(es) of the preschool program(s) that the project will support.

 **For specific information to include in each of the above criteria, please refer to section D of the ERF pre-application package.**

 In **Building Language for Literacy**, developmental skills are introduced and practiced in a systematic way. Specific goals and objectives spelled out in the **BLL Unit Guides** form the basis of all activities. Children have experiences that develop oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and print knowledge on a daily basis. Key skills are presented multiple times to give children many experiences to build a deep foundation in language development.

 Each Unit follows a 60-minute routine divided into the following activities:

- Song and Poem Time (15 min.), which uses audiocassettes and song and poem charts to help students expand their vocabulary, explore the sounds of language, and build concepts
- Story Time (20 min.), during which students listen to, read, reread, and discuss high-quality literature in a variety of genres; this can be done in large- or small-group settings.
- Choice Time (20 min.), which integrates small-group, hands-on learning with concepts explored during Story Time
- Transition Time (5 min.), which integrates language and literacy activities into classroom routines, such as setting-up and winding-down periods


 **BLL** builds on children's life experiences by focusing activities on familiar places, people, and activities in the home and community. The program encourages children to use prior knowledge to relate to new understandings, thus increasing the possibility of success for each student. For children who are unfamiliar with a place due to socioeconomic or demographic reasons, this program allows them to become familiar with words and concepts of which young children should be aware.


Purpose 2: To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of:

- a. Recognition, leading to automatic recognition, of letters of the alphabet
- b. Knowledge of letter sounds, the blending of sounds, and the use of increasingly complex vocabulary
- c. An understanding that written language is composed of phonemes and letters each representing one or more speech sounds that in combination make up syllables, words, and sentences
- d. Spoken language, including vocabulary and oral comprehension abilities
- e. Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 2:*

- ◆ Outline the proposed project's goals for improving young children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Outline the curriculum's defined scope and sequence and describe how it is structured, systematic, and aligned to support the development of children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Describe how the curriculum, combined with project procedures and other supports, will ensure that each day teachers know what they are supposed to do in order to support the development of children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge, and the extent to which the curriculum and other project supports will provide teachers with the materials to do it.
- ◆ Describe how instruction in new knowledge and skills is explicit and intentional and starts as teacher directed and moves towards more independent activity with the context of whole-group instruction and practice, small-group instruction and practice, and independent practice.
- ◆ Outline the content, or subject matter, that will be provided as the context for improving children's oral language and background knowledge.
- ◆ Detail the amount of time the proposed program will spend developing each child's language, cognition, and early reading skills.

 ***BLL is based on the latest research in early literacy development to provide the critical language and literacy skills that children need to build a strong foundation for reading. For a complete list of the program's research-based goals for improving reading skills and how they are achieved, please see page 33.***


 ***Dr. Susan B. Neuman and Dr. Catherine E. Snow developed the Building Language for Literacy program which is based on the following seminal research:***


1. *Report of the National Reading Panel, Teaching Children to Read*
2. *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children, A Joint Position Statement from NAEYC and IRA*
3. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children by the National Research Council. Although published before Early Reading First criteria were established, Building Language for Literacy's goals are exactly aligned with the four foundational early literacy skills as identified by the legislation.*


Purpose 3: To provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich environments, so that children can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in Kindergarten and beyond.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 3:*

- ◆ Outline the proposed project’s goals for improving the language and print richness of the environment.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to enhance the literature and print richness of the environment.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to implement so that the physical environment will provide support for the development of children’s oral language.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to implement so that the physical environment will provide support for the development of children’s background knowledge.

 **Building Language for Literacy** contains print-rich and literature-rich materials including: trade books, board books, mini-books, and PlaceBooks™, which are oversized books filled with photographic explorations of the places within each Unit theme. The program also uses word cards, song charts, poem charts, and song cards. In addition, Big Place Books and Little Place Book packs are supplemental materials available to enhance the classroom.


 During the discussions of new vocabulary and theme concepts in the story, poem, song, and center times, oral language skills are developed. Each lesson may introduce up to two-dozen words, with each activity having its own suggested vocabulary list of approximately six to eight words. The words that are introduced with the first reading of the Place Book have pictures on “Nina’s Word Cards” and serve as the key words that help children build concepts about what they see in that “place.” The subsequent word lists are provided as suggested vocabulary for the teacher to use when guiding discussion during Song and Poem Time, Story Time (especially during book re-readings), and Choice Time. The context and visual references for these additional vocabulary words are available throughout the Teacher Guide.


 In the **BLL** program, children participate in many activities to use both familiar and new vocabulary. For example, children participate in a dramatic play, create their own story situated in the unit theme “place,” name and describe objects located in the “place” and ask questions, and listen to stories, songs and poems all revolving around the “place.”

Purpose 4: To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 4:*

- ◆ Outline the goals for the project's proposed professional development program.
- ◆ Describe the content and scope and sequence of the professional development to be provided.
- ◆ Explain the strategies and materials that will be implemented in the professional development that will ensure that it will be classroom focused and will enhance the implementation of the curricula, materials, and instructional strategies outlined in *Purpose 2*.
- ◆ Delineate the number of hours, the frequency, and the method of delivery of the professional development for each teacher and the extent to which the professional development will be high-quality, sustained, and intensive.
- ◆ If teacher mentoring is provided as part of the professional development plan, specify the qualifications of the teacher mentor and explain the link between the teacher mentoring and the professional development delivered in a classroom or workshop setting.

 ***Applicants may cross-reference demographic, information from Purpose 1, regarding the income level of children whose early language, literacy, and prereading development will be enhanced through professional development provided to the teachers.***


 ***Professional development for the **BLL** program is integrated into the curriculum through the Blueprint for Literacy model lessons. Each of the 12 units in the program contains four professional development workshops. Each workshop covers these areas:***


- ◆ ***Research Shows:*** *This section provides examples from 1) the NAEYC/IRA Joint Position Statement and/or 2) Report on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties research that supports the classroom activities.*
- ◆ ***What You Can Do:*** *This section provides specific tips for maximizing children's learning potential through the activity.*
- ◆ ***Informal Assessment:*** *This section provides a model of classroom dialogue with annotated insights about the discussion.*
- ◆ ***Observing Children:*** *This section offers specific suggestions for responding to children's understandings and literacy behaviors.*
- ◆ ***Good Teaching Practices:*** *This section offers practical classroom management tips.*


Purpose 5: To use screening reading assessments to effectively identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 5*:

- ◆ Specify screening instruments for young children’s oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Specify progress-monitoring instruments for young children’s oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Provide validity and reliability date for specified measures, when it exists.
- ◆ Describe strategies, systems, and professional development activities that will ensure teachers gather high-quality data and will assist teachers with using information gained from screening reading and progress monitoring assessments to improve instruction for individual children.


 **Applicants may cross reference information from Purpose 4 regarding the content of professional development.**

 ***BLL** provides embedded informal and formal assessment that allows teachers to observe children on a daily basis. The frequent, thorough assessments enable teachers to identify at-risk children.*

 *The **BLL** Assessment Handbook provides formal unit-by-unit assessment, as well as mid- and end-of-year measures. The formal assessments measure student mastery of skills, and informal assessments can be used to develop individual and class profiles. Both assessments are used to inform instruction and teacher decision-making.*

 *These skills are measured with the formal assessment instruments:*


- ◆ Oral Language: Vocabulary, listening/responding, using language, speaking
- ◆ Phonological Awareness: Sounds, letter/sounds, word parts
- ◆ Letter Knowledge: Letters, letter/sounds, writing name
- ◆ Print Knowledge: Responding to print, concepts of print


 **Building Language for Literacy** was developed based upon educational research reported in these key publications, as well as guidance from its academic authorship. For a complete listing of the **BLL** endnote citations, please refer to page 29.

- *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, C.E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P., Eds., 1998)
- *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* (Neuman, S., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S., 2000)
- *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (Neuman, S.B. & Dickinson, D.K., Eds., 2001)
- *Phonemic Awareness in Young Children* (Adams, M.J., Foorman, B.R., Lundberg, I., and Beeler, T., 1998)
- *Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments* (National Education Goals Panel, 1998)
- *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* (Burns, M.S., Griffin, P., & Snow, C.E., Eds., 1999)

For Selection Criterion 1, Factor 3, applicants are encouraged to include the following information:

- ◆ Demonstrate how the proposed project will coordinate with the LEA to prepare students with the foundational language, cognitive, and early reading skills to ensure a successful transition into the LEAs Reading First program, if it has one, or a district's elementary reading program based on scientific research.

 **Building Language for Literacy** offers an integrated program of instruction with early childhood activities that include cross-curricular experiences in literature and music while learning about themes that are relevant to the children's life, such as Home, Store, Farm, and Supermarket. Through direct instruction and well-developed learning center activities, students are actively engaged in the learning process.

 **BLL** has been correlated to the following: Creative Curriculum, Head Start, Developmental Reading Assessment, Focus for Instruction, and the IRA/NAEYC Joint Position Statement. The IRA/NAEYC Joint Position Statement is available on Scholastic website at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/bll/correl.htm>.


Part III of Pre-Application

- I. List of names and addresses of existing preschool programs that the proposed *ERF* project would support. Include the following information in your description:
 - The ages and number of the children being served
 - Demographic and socioeconomic information on those children
 - Information on the types of special needs that any of the children may have
 - The average hours the children attend the program in hours/day, days/week, and months/year
 - Primary funding source(s)
 - The basic instructional program
 - The number of staff and their qualifications

 ***This information may be organized into chart form.***

II. Endnote citations

- Each reference should include at a minimum the author(s), the title of the book or journal and article, and the date of the publication.

 ***Do NOT include a general reference bibliography; include ONLY endnote citations for those quotations included in the ten-page narrative.***

NOTE: Do not include any enclosures or appendices other than those listed on the "Pre-Application Final Checklist" in section D of the ERF pre-application package.

Early Childhood Research Citations & Endnote Citations


The ultimate goal of *Early Reading First* is to prevent later reading difficulties. The program is designed to prepare children to enter Kindergarten with the necessary cognitive, early language, and literacy skills for success in school.

Applicants must use *ERF* funds to:

- ◆ Provide preschool-age children with high-quality oral language and print-rich environments in which to acquire oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge
- ◆ Provide professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development that will assist in developing the preschool-age children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge
- ◆ Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills
- ◆ Acquire, provide training in the use of, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success
- ◆ Integrate these instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's overall programs

RESEARCH CITATIONS

Because *Early Reading First* requires an emphasis on instructional materials and professional development grounded in scientific research, applicants are encouraged to include research citations within the narrative sections of their pre-applications. The following quotes can be used when drafting the indicated sections of the pre-application.

 **Make sure you *ONLY* include endnote citations for each of the quotations used in your narrative.**

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The number of months that children spend in preschool has been found to be related to achievement test scores in second grade, behavior problems in third grade, and school retention in kindergarten through third grade. Children with more preschool experience had higher achievement scores and fewer behavior problems and were less likely to be required to repeat a grade (*Pianta & McCoy, 1997*).

In order to develop their language capabilities, children need a language and conversation-rich environment. Research demonstrates that the number of words and variety of conversations children hear affect the speed of their language growth (*Snow et al., 1995*).

Studies have firmly established the importance of reading aloud as one of the most important activities for reading success (*Bredekamp, Copple, & Neuman, 2000*). However, simply reading aloud to children does not by itself impact children's reading abilities; dialogue about and beyond the immediate context of the book is critical (*Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001*).

Importantly, studies show that book discussions that focus beyond the immediate context of the book have a greater impact on children's literacy (*Dickinson & Tabors 2001; Snow et al., 1995*).

Overall children learn by talking with adults: during daily routines, storytelling, reading, by relating personal experience, and having complex conversations in which they offer opinions (*Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999*).

Intentional, focused instruction should be based on clearly defined goals and embedded in daily routines (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE 2002). To achieve these goals, teachers need to provide both planned experiences and ones that emerge as an outgrowth of children's interests, offering a balance between teacher-centered and child-initiated activities (*Hohmann & Weikart, 1995*).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"The knowledge and skills of the teacher account for the largest difference in academic achievement than any other single factor. (*Darling-Hammond et al., 1999*). The professional development of teachers has been shown to be integrally related to the overall quality of early childhood programs and thus, the overall effect of those programs in having a positive outcome for children" (*Kontos et al., 1997*).

Well-designed and effective professional development programs are job-embedded, continuous, collaborative, and research-based" (*Epstein, 1993*).

SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Approximately 20% of children have difficulty acquiring reading skills, particularly awareness of sound-symbol relationships. These children decode text at a slower rate than average (*Lyon, 1995 and Lyon & Motats, 1997*).

The building blocks of literacy for young children, in addition to oral language development, have been identified as print awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and phonological awareness (*Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999*).

In learning to read, children must unlock the relationships between the sounds they use to say words and the letters of the alphabet (*Juel, 1996; Chall & Popp, 1996; Torgeson, 1998*). Children's ability to discern the sounds in words and link them to alphabetic symbols is a strong predictor of reading success (*Stanovich & Seigel, 1994; Stanovich, 1993; Vellutino, Scanlon, & Sipay et al., 1996*).

SCREENING ASSESSMENTS

The primary role of assessment in early childhood education is to provide insight into the educational experiences that will be the most valuable for individual children (*Burns, 1996; Bodrova & Leong, 1996*).

Teaching and assessment need to be inseparably fused in an ongoing cycle of refinement (*Meisels & Attkins-Burnett, 2000*).

Appropriate assessment and monitoring of children's learning contributes to decision-making about practice, designing programs and planning curricula (*Wiggins, 1998*). To achieve these aims, teachers should use multiple methods of assessment over time, including observation, investigation, and interviews, as well as more formal assessments (*Shepard et al., 1998*).

The primary role of assessment in early childhood education is to provide insight into the educational experiences that will be the most valuable for individual children (*Burns, 1996; Bodrova & Leong, 1996*). Assessment should support and inform instruction (*Shepard, Kagan & Wurtz, 1998*).

Curriculum-embedded forms of assessment allow children to demonstrate their knowledge or skills through active engagement in classroom activities (*Meisels, 1996*).

For all children, it is individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate measures of their strengths, development, progress, and needs that will provide vital information to professionals involved in promoting children's learning (*Stiggins, 2001; McAfee & Leong, 2002*).

INTEGRATION

"A recent comprehensive review of early childhood programs for children from low-income families concludes that preschool programs can produce large effects on IQ during the early childhood years and sizable persistent effects on achievement, grade retention, special education, high school graduation, and socialization" (*Barnett, 1995*).

"Research is beginning to delineate the key experiences and circumstances that will enable children to realize their potential. These include nurturing relationships with caregivers, experiences that encourage social interchange, varied opportunities for expression, appropriate physical activity, cognitive stimulation and challenge, opportunities to explore the environment, and involvement with language, print, and other forms of communication" (*Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000; Denton & West, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001*).

"Children use language for complex and varied purposes. Language and literacy development is not only vital to specific reading skills and overall cognitive development, but recent research reveals that it plays an important role in children's social competencies. For instance, one study has correlated children's literacy with their ability to empathize with others" (*M. Regalado et al., 2001*).

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Overview of *BLL* Program

Song and Poem Time

- Goals**
- ◆ To expand vocabulary, explore the sounds of language, and build concepts
 - ◆ To instill the value of songs and poems in the acquisition of literacy
- Activities**
- ◆ Opening activities build on children’s prior experiences.
 - ◆ Singing again and rereading provide new opportunities to increase language learning.
 - ◆ Informal assessment demonstrates ways to make connections between poems and song for deep learning.
 - ◆ Second-language support provides easy adaptations or lesson enhancements to ensure learning.
 - ◆

Story Time

- Goals**
- ◆ To build a sense of “place” through high-quality literature
 - ◆ To introduce a variety of genres and reading routines
 - ◆ To discover the importance and instructional value of rereading over time
- Activities**
- ◆ Introducing the book activities cover getting ideas going, discovering the story, and exploring beyond the book.
 - ◆ Book genres include PlaceBooks™, Read Aloud books, rhyming books, alphabet books, shared reading books, and nonfiction books.
 - ◆ Rereading activities build on children’s growing knowledge and familiarity with the book, and provide activities for early, later, and remembered readings.
 - ◆ Activities across the curriculum
 - ◆ Informal assessment
 - ◆ Second-language support

Choice Time

- Goals**
- ◆ To stimulate language and literacy learning throughout the classroom
 - ◆ To integrate hands-on learning with concepts explored in Story Time
- Activities**
- ◆ Hands-on learning centers integrate language and literacy skills into math, science, social studies, and the arts. The centers are: Dramatic Play Center, Block Center, Math Center, Science Center, Art and Writing Center, Messy Play Center, and the Reading and Listening Center.
 - ◆ Informal assessment
 - ◆ Second-language support

Transition Time

- Goals**
- ◆ To turn time-consuming setting-up and winding-down periods into language-rich opportunities
 - ◆ To integrate language and literacy into classroom routines
- Activities**
- ◆ There are several short (2–5 minute), “quick and easy” literacy-supporting activities for use during the following transitions: morning separation, choice time, snack time, quiet time, getting dressed, lining up, cleaning up, and good-bye.

BLL Research Goals

Research proves that reading aloud to children is the most important activity for building concepts and skills for reading success. Therefore, during Story Time (20 minutes per day), high-quality literature is read, reread, and then discussed to build vocabulary and language skills.

Research says that growth in vocabulary and oral language use is related to reading success. Therefore, the **BLL** program encourages the use of specific names and descriptive words when talking with children, as well as referring to signs and labels around the room.

Research indicates that phonological awareness is related to reading success and begins to develop through traditional rhymes and word games. Therefore, the **BLL** program has a daily Song and Poem Time (15 minutes per day) where children sing songs, say chants and rhymes, and play with the sounds of language through poetry.

Research says that children acquire knowledge of letters and sounds through writing as well as through reading. Therefore, **BLL** provides drawing and writing opportunities after Story Time experiences, where children are encouraged to create their own illustrated songs and rhymes based on those introduced.

Research shows that a print-rich environment is critical for helping children incorporate literacy into play and to use literacy tools functionally. Therefore, Scholastic has provided Choice Time (20 minutes per day) literacy tools and activities that can be used in learning centers.

BLL Research Foundation

Building Language for Literacy is based on the educational research reported in the following two publications.

1. *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*. A joint position statement by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the International Reading Association (IRA). By Susan B. Neuman, Carol Copple, and Sue Bredekamp. Copyright 2000, published by NAEYC, Washington, D.C.
2. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. National Research Council. Committee Co-Chairs Catherine E. Snow and Susan Burns. Copyright 1998, published by National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.

Note: One of the authors of ***Building Language for Literacy*** is Catherine Snow, Ph.D. who co-authored the book *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Another author of ***Building Language for Literacy*** is Susan Neuman, Ed.D., one of the authors of the NAEYC – IRA Joint Position Statement.

About Scholastic Inc.

Scholastic is committed to providing teachers with effective materials for every stage of reading instruction to ensure that students develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in school. Our reputation is built on an 84-year history of helping foster and support effective learning for all students. For years, we have worked with leading researchers to develop scientifically based products that produce significant results in student achievement, as well as meaningful changes in teacher effectiveness.

We look forward to partnering with you to improve reading achievement, and would like the opportunity to talk with you about how we can best support your efforts to implement **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** over the next several years.