



Helping Young English Learners at Home: Simple and Fun Activities to Strengthen Language Development

Heidi Larson
REL Northeast & Islands

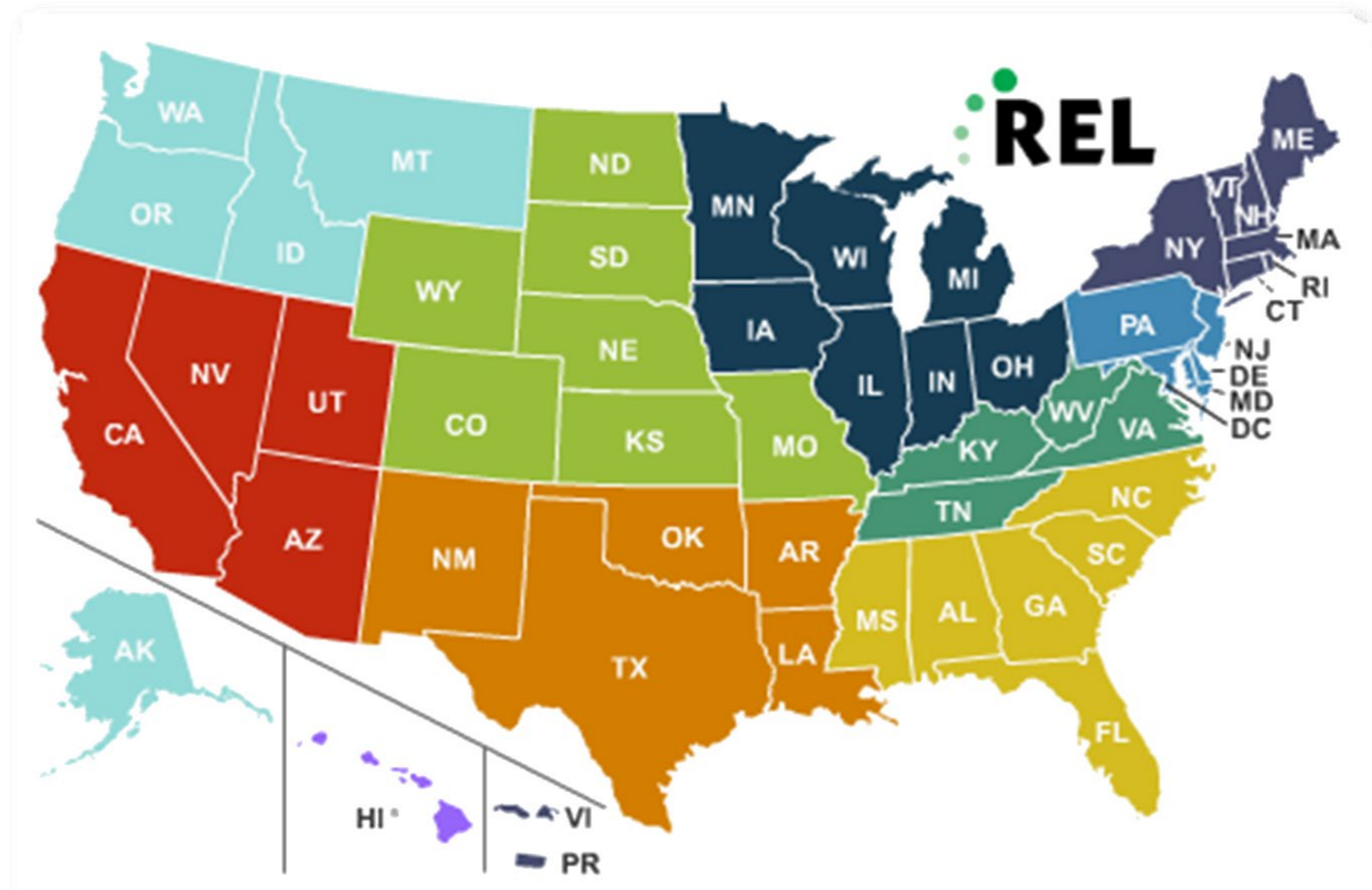
Johnpaul Lapid
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Karen Pérez
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Ten RELs work in partnership with LEAs, SEAs, and others to use data and research to improve academic outcomes for students



Today's Presenters



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Agenda

- ❖ Introduction to Practice Guide and its Uses
- ❖ Introduction to the Family and Caregiver Activity Sheets (FCAs) and the Educator's Guide
- ❖ Using the FCAs
- ❖ Q&A
- ❖ Closing and Survey

Goals

Participants will increase their understanding of:

- Research-based practices in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) 2014 English Learner Practice Guide
- Ways the family and caregiver activity sheets (FCAs) can be used to strengthen language development of their children at home with simple and fun activities
- Ideas for reaching out and supporting families and caregivers as they use the FCAs

Introduction to Practice Guide and its Uses

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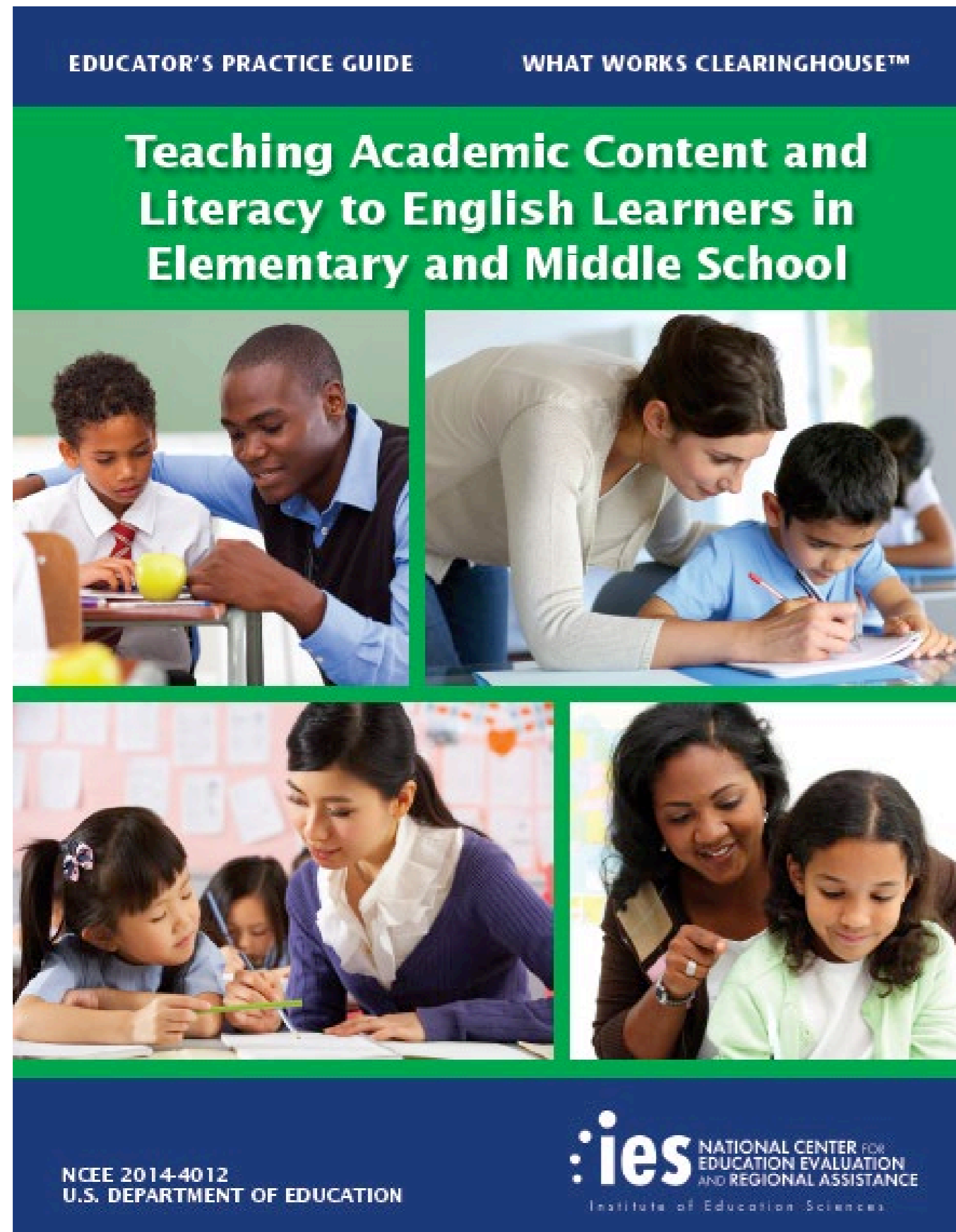
What are Practice Guides?

- The WWC practice guides share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges
- There are 24 practice guides each with a set of evidence-based recommendations written by a panel of experts
- For each recommendation there are:
 - descriptions of practice with examples
 - potential roadblocks and how to solve them
 - classroom scenarios
- <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

The screenshot displays the IES WWC What Works Clearinghouse website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the IES WWC logo, the text "What Works Clearinghouse", a search box, and a "Go" button. Below the navigation bar, the website content is organized into a grid of practice guide covers. Each cover includes a small image, the title of the guide, and the release date. The guides shown are:

- Using Technology to Support Postsecondary Student Learning** (Released: May 2019)
- Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools** (Released: September 2017)
- Strategies for Postsecondary Students in Developmental Education—A Practice Guide for College and University Administrators, Advisors, and Faculty** (Released: November 2016)
- Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively** (Released: November 2016)
- Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade** (Released: July 2016)
- Teaching Strategies for Improving Algebra Knowledge in Middle and High School Students** (Released: April 2015)
- Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School** (Released: April 2014)
- Teaching Math to Young Children** (Released: November 2013)

The 2014 English Learner Practice Guide



- Elementary and middle grades
- Developing English language proficiency while simultaneously building content knowledge and skills
- Four evidence-based recommendations

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/19>

Four evidence-based recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities.
- **Recommendation 2:** Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.
- **Recommendation 3:** Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.
- **Recommendation 4:** Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development.

Recommendation 1: Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities



Choose a brief, engaging piece of informational text that includes academic vocabulary as a platform for intensive academic vocabulary instruction.



Choose a small set of academic vocabulary for in-depth instruction.



Teach academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities (writing, speaking, listening).



Teach word-learning strategies to help students independently figure out the meaning of words.

Recommendation 2: Integrate oral and written language instruction into content-area teaching



Strategically use instructional tools—such as short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers—to anchor instruction and help students make sense of content.



Explicitly teach the content-specific academic vocabulary, as well as the general academic vocabulary that supports it, during content-area instruction.



Provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups.



Provide writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of the content material.

Recommendation 3: Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills



Provide writing assignments that are anchored in content and focused on developing academic language as well as writing skills.



For all writing assignments, provide language-based supports to facilitate students' entry into, and continued development of, writing.

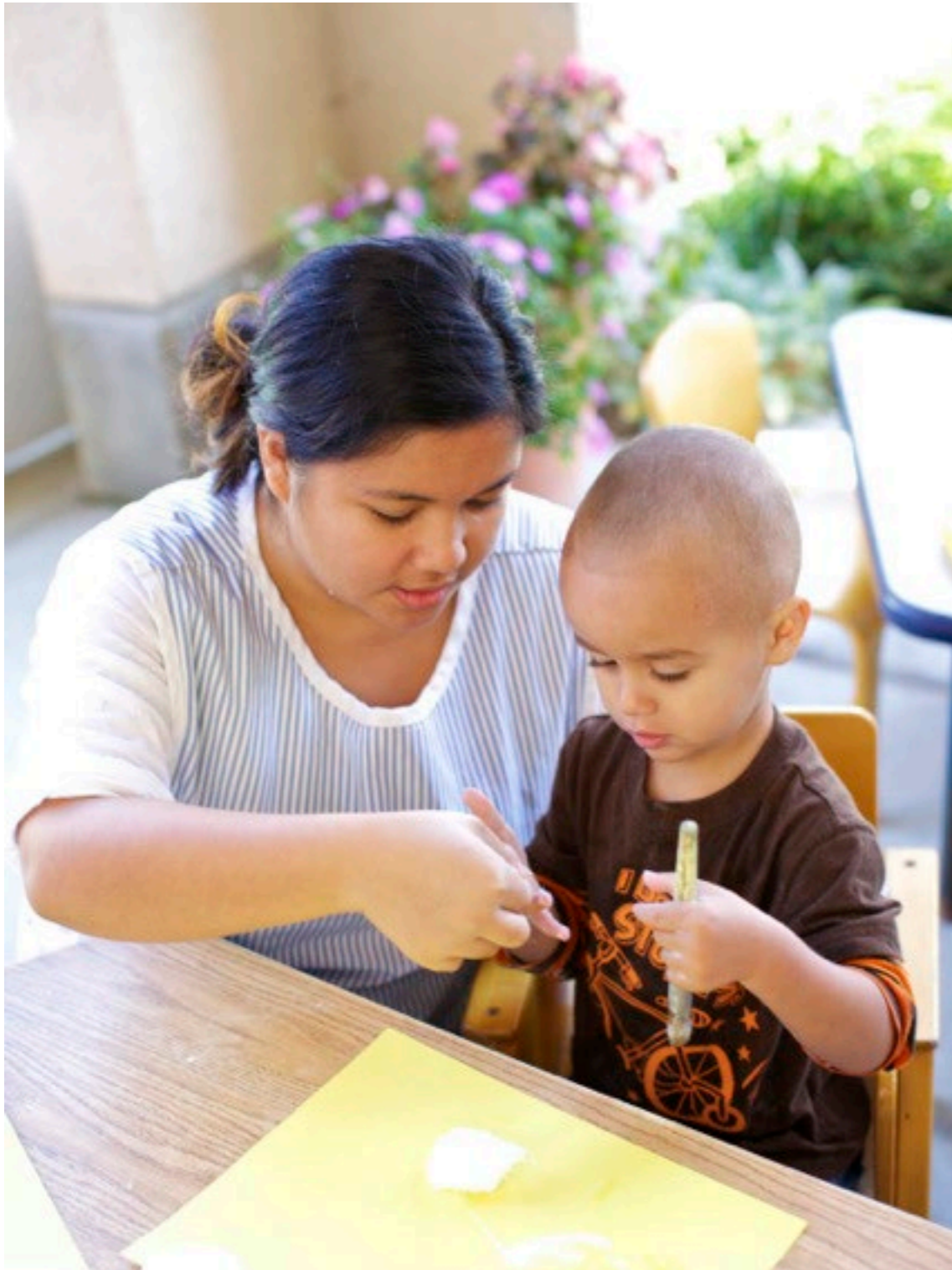


Use small groups or pairs to provide opportunities for students to work and talk together on varied aspects of writing.



Assess students' writing periodically to identify instructional needs and provide positive, constructive feedback in response.

Research to support families and caregivers' involvement

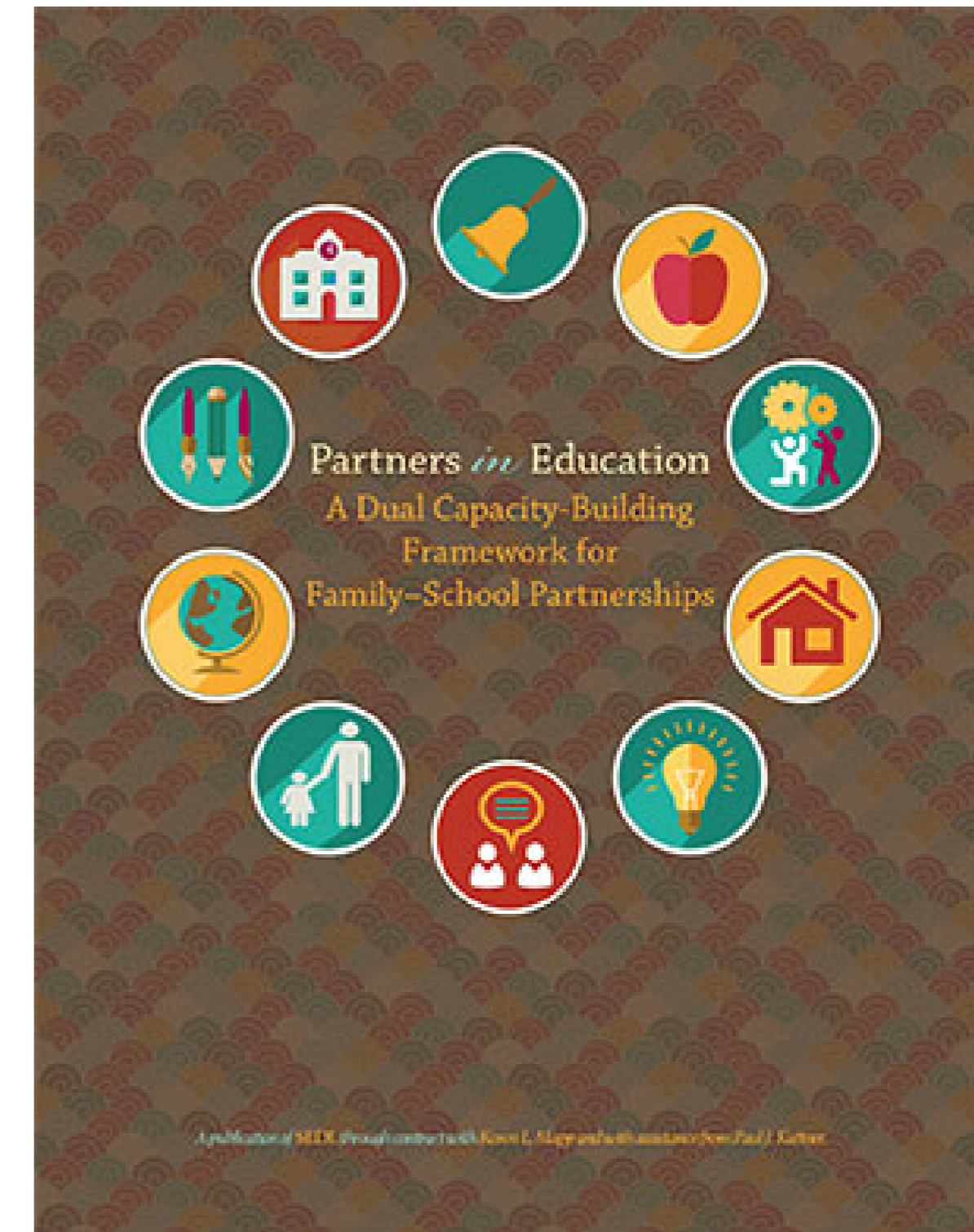


- Capitalize on students' home language, knowledge, and cultural assets
- Families and caregivers have the capacity to help their children develop language regardless of their background

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017

Principles for creating trusting partnership with families and caregivers

- Leverage family, caregiver, and student assets as significant contributors to teaching and learning
- Honor family and caregiver cultural practices
- Anticipate challenges and scaffold for success



U.S. Department of Education, 2013

Introduction to the FCA Sheets and the Educator's Guide

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What are the FCAs?

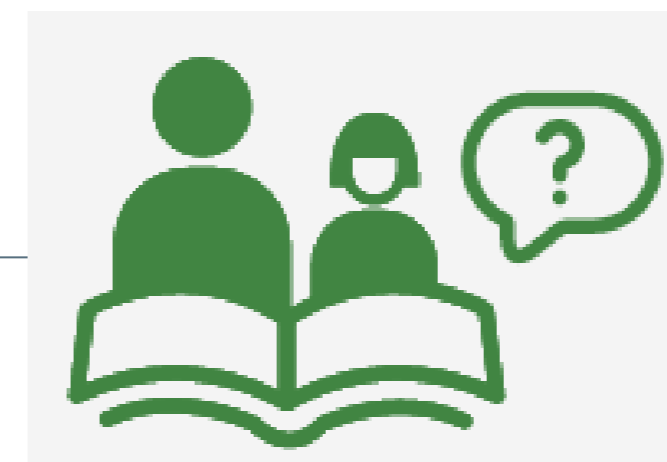
“I just want to enjoy being with my granddaughter at home. How can I make learning fun for her?”

–Grandfather of a young English learner












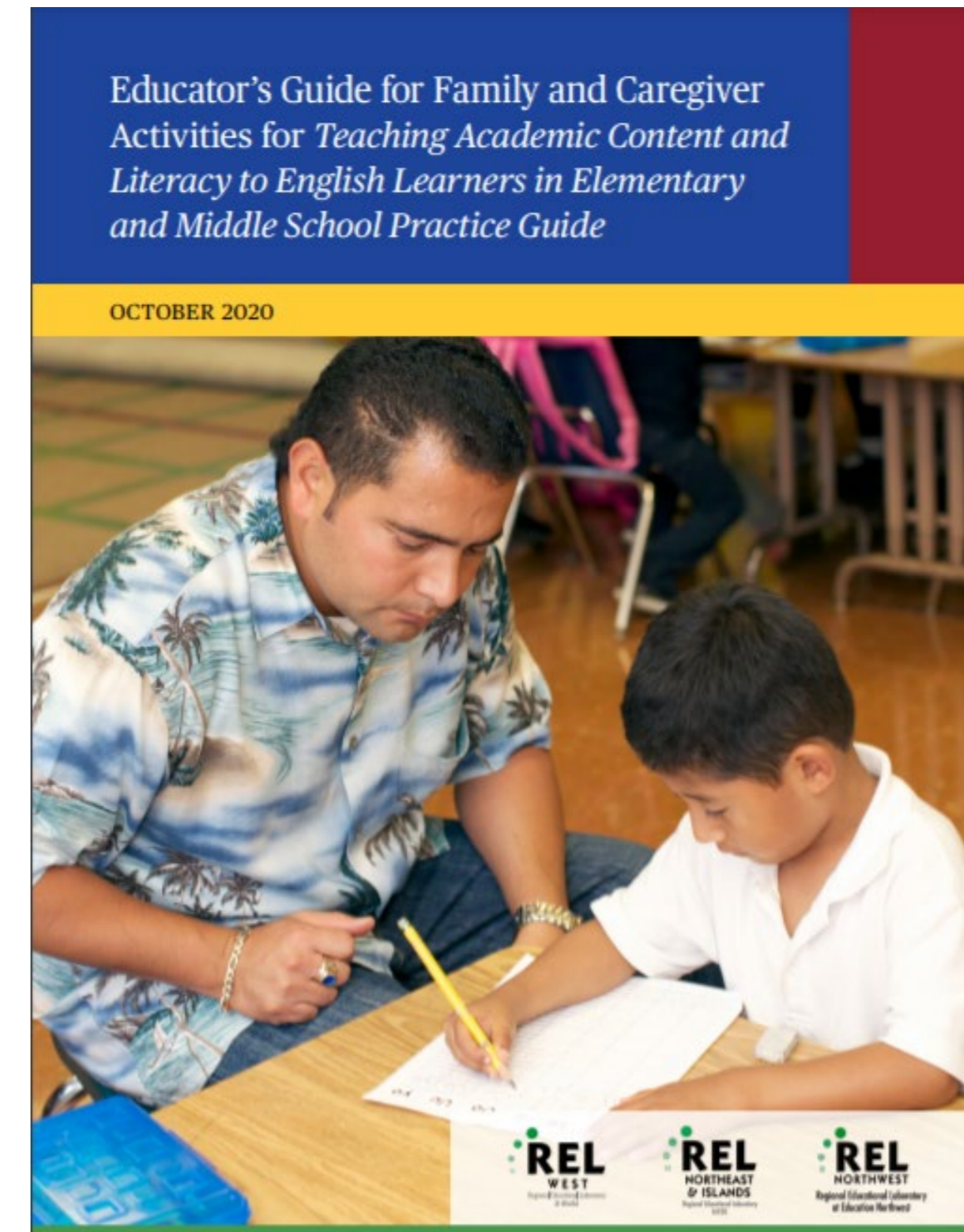
The FCAs...

- Make learning fun at home!
- Build on what families and caregivers already do (conversation, cooking, grocery shopping, storytelling)
- Do not need computers or the internet
- Are intended for use in primary grades
- Help scaffold children’s language development across the content areas
- Are available in English and Spanish!



Overview of the FCAs and Educator's Guide

 <p>Questions about Stories</p> <p>Strengthen language by asking and answering questions about a story.</p> <p>English Español</p>	 <p>Questions about Informational Text</p> <p>Ask and answer questions about an informational text.</p> <p>English Español</p>	 <p>Questions about Experiences</p> <p>Use everyday experiences inside and outside of the home to ask and answer questions.</p> <p>English Español</p>
 <p>Wordplay</p> <p>Play with vocabulary to build language.</p> <p>English Español</p>	 <p>Guess My Object</p> <p>Play a guessing game to build descriptive vocabulary.</p> <p>English Español</p>	 <p>Word Detective</p> <p>Build and practice using vocabulary by playing word detective.</p> <p>English Español</p>
 <p>Making a Meal Together</p> <p>Develop language while making a meal.</p> <p>English Español</p>	 <p>Interviewing a Special Person</p> <p>Interview a special person to build oral and written language.</p> <p>English Español</p>	 <p>Writing Notebooks</p> <p>Write daily to build oral and written language.</p> <p>English Español</p>



[ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/
Resources/CaregiverActivities](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Resources/CaregiverActivities)

Sample FCAs

Page 1: Overview and Instructions



Questions about Experiences

Use everyday experiences inside and outside of the home to ask and answer questions.

English | Español



FAMILY AND CAREGIVER ACTIVITY September 2020

Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About an Experience Regional Educational Laboratories
West, Northwest,
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Families and caregivers, you play an important role in your child's language learning. Children can strengthen their language every day by asking and answering questions about an experience. In this activity you will ask your child to talk about an experience they've had.

Keep in mind:

- You and your child can use your home language or English, whichever is strongest for you.
- Asking and answering questions in your home language will also help your child with English.
- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

Why ask and answer questions about an experience?

Asking and answering questions about an experience allows children to strengthen their language.

Let's get started!

Follow the steps below. *See the back for experience ideas and additional language supports.*



- ▶ **Step 1: Share, read** about, or create an experience with your child inside or outside of the home. Example: *Prepare a meal or take a walk around your neighborhood together.*



- ▶ **Step 2: Ask questions** about the experience before, during, or at the end.

- Help your child "stretch their language." If your child answers your question with one word, ask them to add more to their answer. You can model this for them.
- Ask surface- and deeper-level questions. Surface-level questions help your child recall what they did and saw. Example: *What are three things we saw at the park?* Deeper-level questions help your child think more about the experience and put ideas together. Example: *Is going to the park better than playing video games? Why?*



- ▶ **Step 3: Encourage** your child to **draw or write** about the experience.

This activity sheet helps families and caregivers carry out recommended practices described in the What Works Clearinghouse educator's practice guide, *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy in English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*. You can view the full guide here: <https://ies.ed.gov/iies/ncse/2019/05/PracticesGuide19>

Learning Goal: Children will strengthen their oral language skills

Grades: Kindergarten–3rd grade

Materials: Identify or create an experience that you would like to share with your child; paper and crayons, pencils, or markers



Actividad para familias y cuidadores: Estrategias para apoyar a los jóvenes aprendices de inglés haciendo y respondiendo preguntas sobre una experiencia

Tipos de experiencias dentro del hogar para hablar con su niño o niña

- Preparar, cocinar o comer una comida
- Organizar un estante, un cajón o habitación (una cocina, un baño o un cuarto)
- Jugar un juego



Tipos de experiencias fuera del hogar para hablar con su niño o niña

- Dar un paseo por su barrio
- Observar algo afuera (animales, insectos, charcos, árboles, nubes, etc.)
- Jugar en un lugar seguro



Apoyos lingüísticos adicionales

Su niño o niña puede ampliar o desarrollar su vocabulario cuando hace y responde preguntas sobre una experiencia. Piense en utilizar las siguientes preguntas y respuestas para hablar con su niño o niña sobre una experiencia.

Preguntas superficiales para hacer sobre una experiencia	Respuestas posibles
¿Qué observaste?	Observé ____.
¿Qué te gustaría saber sobre ____?	Me gustaría saber sobre ____ y ____.
¿Qué es algo nuevo que has aprendido hoy?	Algo que aprendí fue ____.

Preguntas más profundas para hacer sobre una experiencia	Respuestas posibles
¿Qué más me puedes decir sobre por qué pasó ____?	____ pasó porque ____.
¿Cómo se te ocurrió esa respuesta?	Se me ocurrió esa respuesta porque ____.
¿Cómo sabes que ____?	Sé que ____ porque ____.
¿Por qué crees/sientes que ____?	En mi opinión, creo/siento que ____ porque ____.


Desafío lingüístico:

Los niños pueden fortalecer su lenguaje todos los días, haciendo y respondiendo preguntas sobre una experiencia. Ahora que su niño o niña ha **respondido preguntas**, animelo a **hacer preguntas** para que usted responda sobre una experiencia. Los niños pueden crear sus propias preguntas o pueden utilizar algunas de las preguntas de la tabla anterior. Hacer preguntas permite que los niños amplíen su vocabulario todos los días.

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Page 2: Language Supports/ Scaffolds

Front: Principles and rationale



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- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

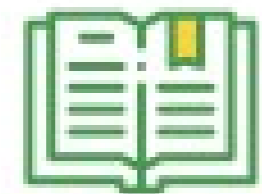
Why ask and answer questions about an experience?

Asking and answering questions about an experience allows children to strengthen their language.

Front: Learning goals, audience, materials, activity steps

Let's get started!

Follow the steps below. *See the back for experience ideas and additional language supports.*



- ▶ **Step 1: Share, read** about, or create an experience with your child inside or outside of the home.
Example: *Prepare a meal or take a walk around your neighborhood together.*



- ▶ **Step 2: Ask questions** about the experience before, during, or at the end.
- Help your child “stretch their language.” If your child answers your question with one word, ask them to add more to their answer. You can model this for them.
 - Ask surface- and deeper-level questions. Surface-level questions help your child recall what they did and saw. Example: *What are three things we saw at the park?* Deeper-level questions help your child think more about the experience and put ideas together. Example: *Is going to the park better than playing video games? Why?*



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Learning Goal: Children will strengthen their oral language skills

Grades: Kindergarten–3rd grade

Materials: Identify or create an experience that you would like to share with your child; paper and crayons, pencils, or markers

Back: Activity supports

Family and Caregiver Activity: Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About an Experience

Types of Experiences Inside of the Home to Talk About With Your Child

- Preparing, cooking, or eating a meal
- Playing a game
- Organizing a room (a kitchen, bathroom, or bedroom), a shelf or a drawer



Types of Experiences Outside of the Home to Talk About With Your Child

- Taking a walk around your neighborhood
- Playing in a safe location
- Observing something outdoors (animals, bugs, puddles, trees, clouds, etc.)



Back: Additional language supports

Additional Language Supports

Your child can stretch or develop their language when asking and answering questions about an experience. Consider using the questions and responses below as you discuss an experience with your child.

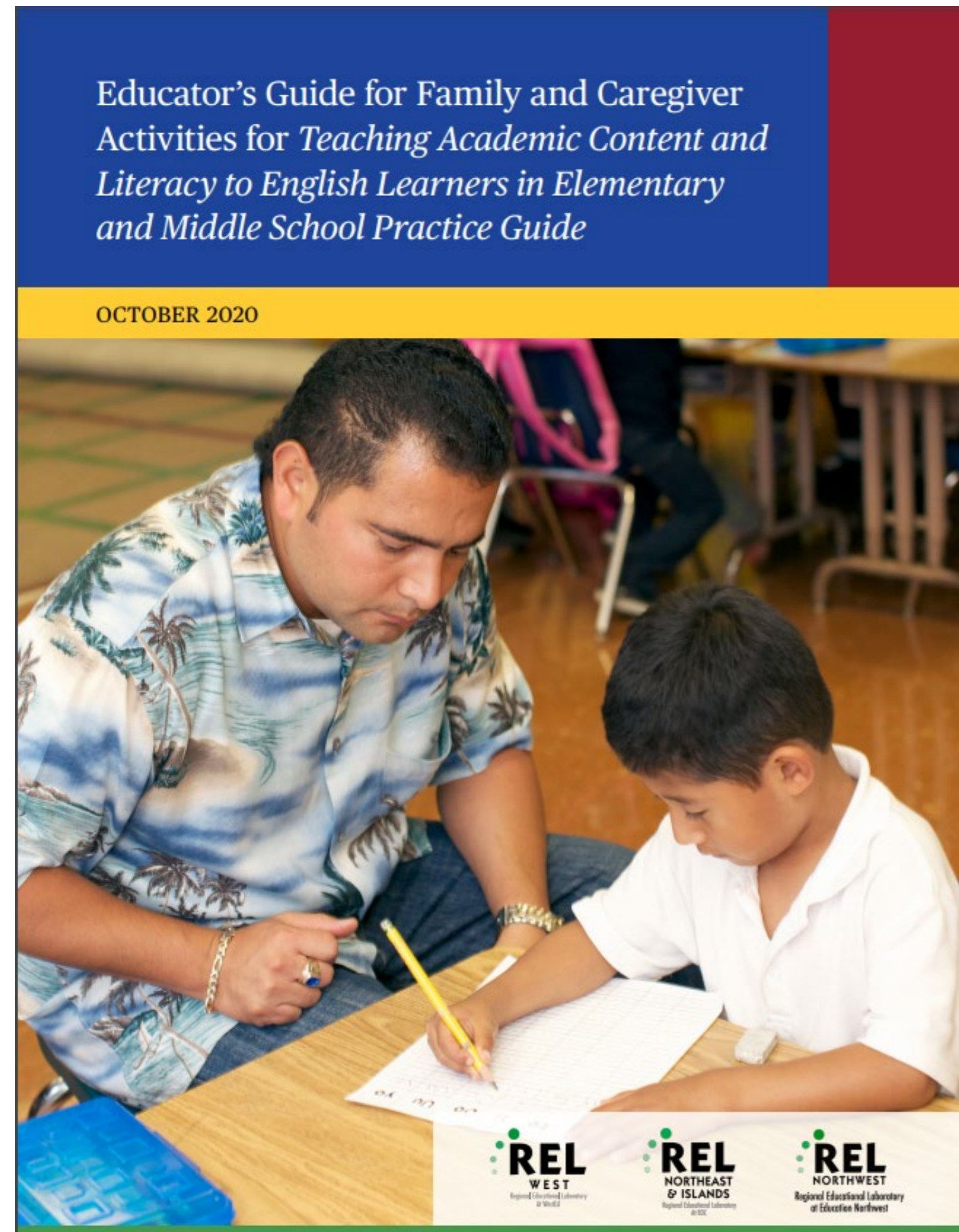
Surface-Level Questions to Ask About an Experience	Possible Responses
What did you notice?	I noticed ____.
What do you wonder about ____?	I wonder about ____ and ____.
What is something new you learned today?	One thing I learned was ____.

Deeper-Level Questions to Ask About an Experience	Possible Responses
Tell me more about why ____ happened.	____ happened because ____.
Tell me how you came up with that answer.	I think/know ____ because ____.
Tell me how you know ____.	I know ____ because ____.
Tell me why you think/feel ____.	In my opinion, ____ because ____.

Language Challenge:

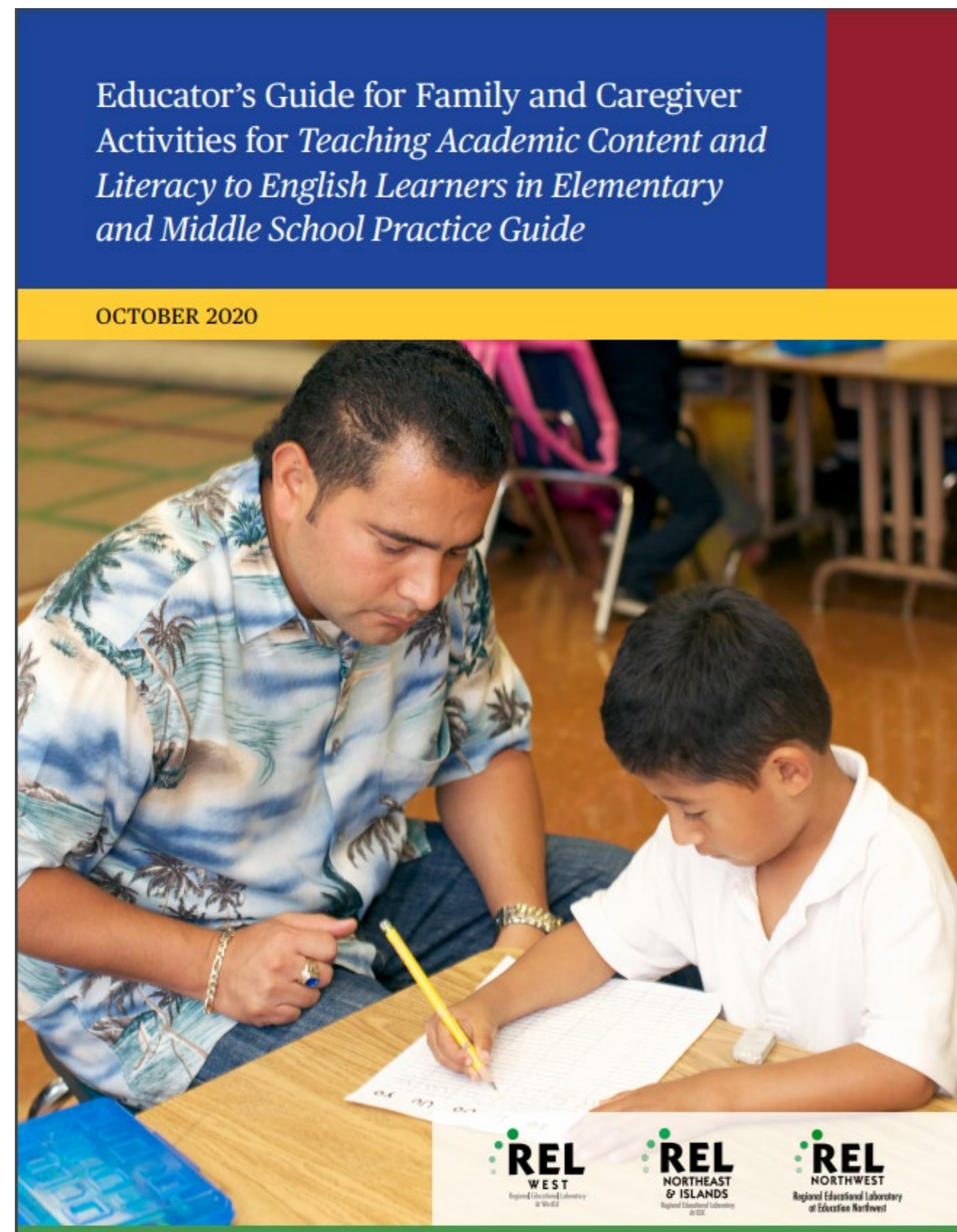
Children can strengthen their language every day by asking and answering questions about an experience. Now that your child has **answered questions**, encourage them to **ask questions** for you to answer about an experience. Children can create their own questions to ask you or they can use some of the questions in the table above. Asking questions allows children to stretch their language on a daily basis.

What is the Educator's Guide?



- Who is it for?
- The Educator's Guide includes...
 - Summary of the EL Practice Guide and its recommendations and practices
 - An overview of how the activities help scaffold children's language and literacy development across the content areas
 - Supports and strategies to connect with families and caregivers and help them make the most out of the activities.

Components of the Educator's Guide



- General tips for making the most of the FCAs
- Preparing the activity sheets
- Disseminating the activity sheets
- Supporting families and caregivers in using the activity sheets
- Following-up activities
- Offering differentiated language-based supports

Using the FCAs

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The FCAs in action



Making a Meal Together

Develop language while making a meal.

[English](#) | [Español](#)

A conversation with a grandparent



Questions about Stories

Strengthen language by asking and answering questions about a story.

[English](#) | [Español](#)

A conversation with a family liaison



Guess My Object

Play a guessing game to build descriptive vocabulary.

[English](#) | [Español](#)



Interviewing a Special Person

Interview a special person to build oral and written language.

[English](#) | [Español](#)



Making a Meal Together

Develop language while making a meal.

[English](#) | [Español](#)












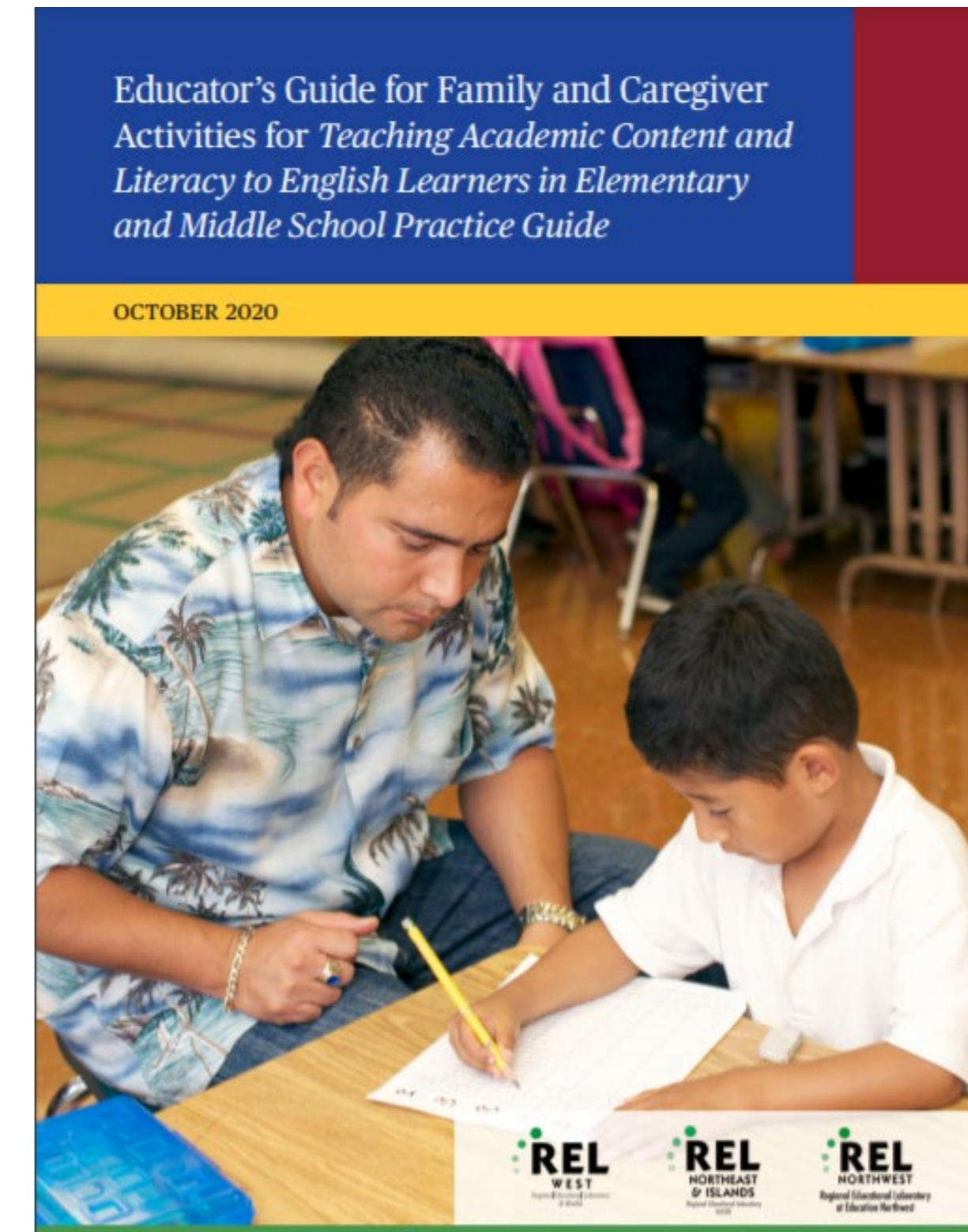
Tips for sharing the FCAs with families and caregivers



- Try them at home yourself
 - Introduce each FCA and how to use it in parent meetings
 - Send home in packets
 - Collaborate with PTAs and English learner parent groups for dissemination
-
- Share through community organizations such as libraries, food banks, childcare centers, after-school programs, and family resource centers
 - Follow up, provide encouragement, and celebrate successes!

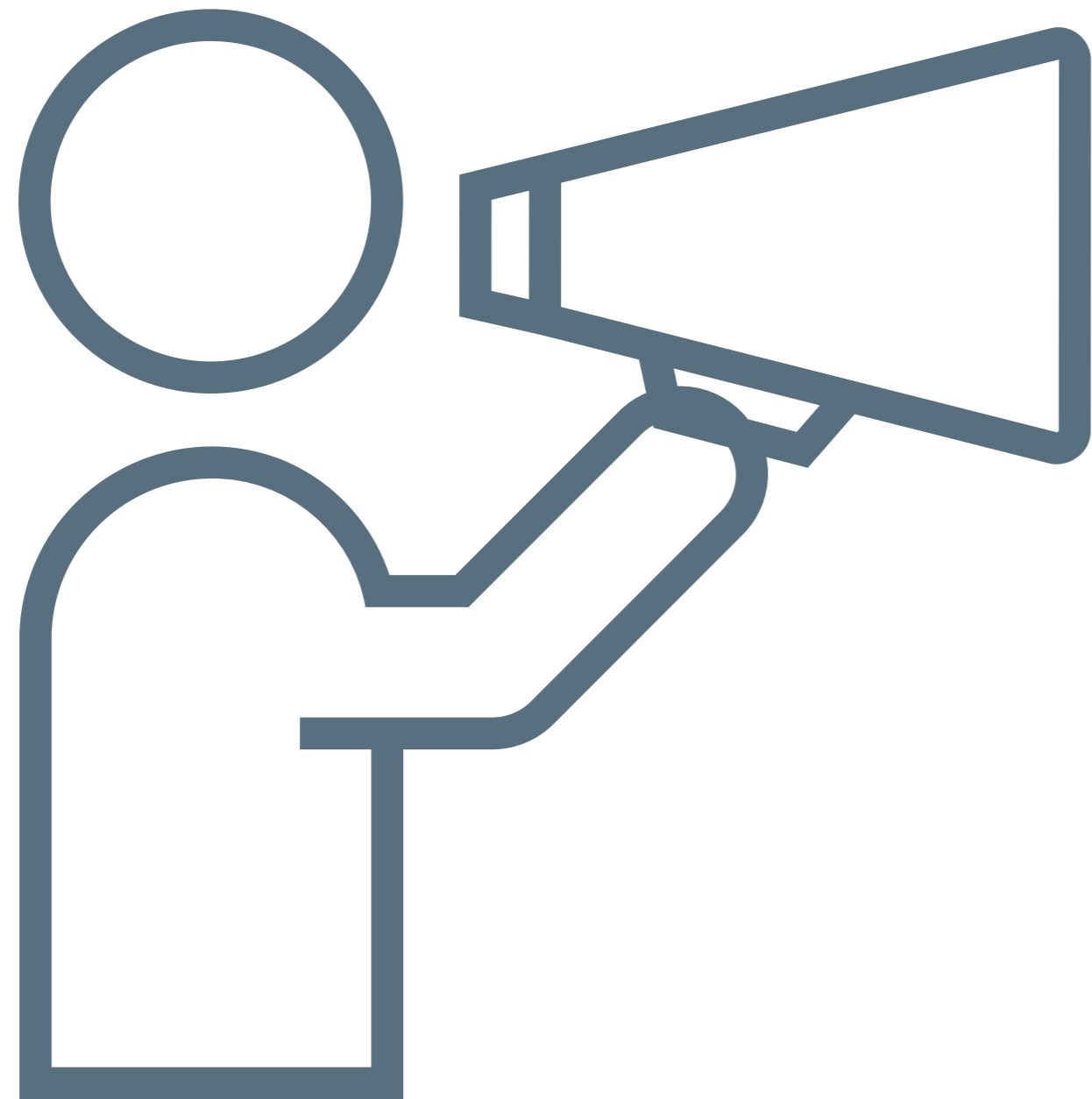
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[ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/
Resources/CaregiverActivities](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Resources/CaregiverActivities)

Stay in Touch



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Thank You!

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References

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