



A Leader's Role in Strengthening Emergent Literacy Instruction Through Collaborative Professional Learning

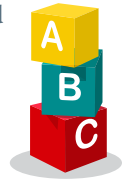
Providing professional learning opportunities for teachers is one of the many responsibilities of early education leaders. Although one-time workshops can be informative, teachers benefit most from continuous, collaborative, and practice-relevant professional learning.^{1,2} Early education leaders play a vital role in ensuring teachers have access to this type of professional learning. They also support teachers to sustain newly learned evidence-based instructional practices in the classroom.^{3,4} The challenge for many leaders is how to design and structure these types of opportunities.

Professional Learning Communities are one type of structure for collaborative professional learning. The REL Southeast developed *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy (PLC)*, a structured set of free resources designed to support effective emergent literacy instruction at the preschool level. These materials provide teachers with an effective professional learning experience to strengthen their use of evidence-based instruction in print knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language.

Here are three ways that early education leaders can plan and structure their teachers' use of these resources.

1. Set a Collective Vision for Effective Emergent Instruction

- Engage teachers in meaningful discussions about effective instructional practices and set collective goals for implementation.
- Build collective knowledge of effective emergent literacy instruction at the preschool level.
- Provide instructional and pedagogical leadership to create a vision for effective instruction.



2. Build Capacity to Implement the PLC by Creating Ongoing, Job-Embedded Professional Learning Opportunities

- Identify and lead a team to explore the [PLC materials](#) and develop a plan for implementation.
- Develop an implementation plan by considering what structures and resources are already in place and utilizing the [PLC Reflection Guides](#).
- Include teacher aides, volunteers, and other specialists in PLC opportunities.
- Ensure teachers have resources, materials, and schedules to support effective instructional practices outlined in the PLC materials.



3. Support and Sustain PLC Implementation

- Foster collaborative, continuous improvement among teachers through regular shared planning and reflection time.
- Ensure teachers have ongoing access to coaches or specialists to strengthen emergent literacy practice, including how to use materials and resources, engage children, and set up learning environments.
- Establish feedback loops that support implementation, reflection, and adjustment.



Learn More



This infographic is part of the Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy suite of materials. Explore the materials and related administrator materials [here](#).

Kosanovich, M., Phillips, B., & Willis, K. (2020). *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy: Participant Guide - Modules 1-4* (REL 2020-021). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Education Laboratory Southeast

1 Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 3-15. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ727591>.

2 Desimone, L. M. (2011). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 68-71.

3 Colmer, K., Waniganayake, M., & Field, L. (2015). Implementing curriculum reform: Insights into how Australian early childhood directors view professional development and learning. *Professional Development in Education*, 41(2), 203-221.

4 Siraj-Blatchford, I. & Manni, L. (2008). *Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector. The ELEYS Study*. London Institute of Education.