Helping Young English Learners at Home: Simple and Fun Activities to Strengthen Language Development
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](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose a brief, engaging piece of informational text</td>
<td>Choose a brief, engaging piece of informational text that includes academic vocabulary as a platform for intensive academic vocabulary instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose a small set of academic vocabulary for in-depth instruction.</td>
<td>Choose a small set of academic vocabulary for in-depth instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities (writing,</td>
<td>Teach academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities (writing, speaking, listening).</td>
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<tr>
<td>speaking, listening).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach word-learning strategies to help students independently figure out</td>
<td>Teach word-learning strategies to help students independently figure out the meaning of words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>the meaning of words.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Recommendation 2:** Integrate oral and written language instruction into content-area teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategically use instructional tools—such as short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers—to anchor instruction and help students make sense of content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicitly teach the content-specific academic vocabulary, as well as the general academic vocabulary that supports it, during content-area instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of the content material.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Recommendation 3**: Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide writing assignments that are anchored in content and focused on developing academic language as well as writing skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all writing assignments, provide language-based supports to facilitate students’ entry into, and continued development of, writing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use small groups or pairs to provide opportunities for students to work and talk together on varied aspects of writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess students’ writing periodically to identify instructional needs and provide positive, constructive feedback in response.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
Introduction to the FCA Sheets and the Educator’s Guide

Kelli Scardina
REL Northwest

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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

ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Resources/CaregiverActivities
Sample FCAs

Page 1: Overview and Instructions

**Overview and Instructions**

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

**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, for the book, for experiences indoors and additional language supports.

1. **Step 1:** Read aloud to create an experience with your child inside or outside of the house. Example: Pretend you are a walk around your neighborhood together.

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

   - Why did you think this language? (If your child answers your question without your help, add hints to add more to their answers. You can model the hints.

   - Ask surface and deeper-level questions. Surface-level questions help your child recall something they didn't ask. Examples: What are there for kids at the store? Don't worry if you have questions to help your child think about the experience and just keep going. Examples are going to the park, watching the animals, or just playing games.

3. **Step 3:** Revisit your child's ideas or write about the other experiences.

**Questions about Experiences**

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

**Language Supports/Scaffolds**

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

- *Prepare, cocinar o comer una comida*
- *Jugar un juego*
- *Organizar un entorno, un juego o habitación lima, limón, azúcar, sal, un cuchillo*

**Actividad para familias y cuidadores: Actividad para ayudar a los jóvenes aprendedores de inglés hablando con sus niños o niñas con experiencias**

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

- *Dar un paseo por el barrio*
- *Jugar en un lugar nuevo*
- *Observar algo nuevo (aleñas, hojas, plumas, olivos, etc.)*

**Aposos Lingüísticos adicionales**

Su niño o niña puede aprender mucho de su vocabulario cuando hace y responde a preguntas sobre una experiencia. Puede usar el siguiente cuadro para hacer preguntas y respuestas para hablar con su niño o niña sobre una experiencia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas superiores para hacer sobre una experiencia</th>
<th>Respuestas posibles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Qué hiciste?</td>
<td>Observa __________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Qué te gustó sobre lo que hiciste?</td>
<td>__________ sobre ___ y ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Qué es algo nuevo que has aprendido hoy?</td>
<td>Algo que aprendí hoy: ______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas más profundas para hacer sobre una experiencia</th>
<th>Respuestas posibles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Qué más me gustó sobre eso por qué?</td>
<td>___ por ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Cómo se le ocurrió esa respuesta?</td>
<td>Se me ocurrió esa respuesta porque ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Dónde estabas cuando ___?</td>
<td>Estaba en ___ porque ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Por qué no conoces ___?</td>
<td>En mi opinión, no conozco ___ porque ___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Descargar**

Los niños pueden introducirse en el vocabulario de los dos lados, así como respondiendo preguntas sobre una experiencia. Ahora que su niño o niña ha respondido a algunas preguntas, animo a hacer preguntas sobre lo que su niño o niña ha respondido sobre una experiencia. Los niños pueden usar sus propias preguntas para hacer alteraciones de los preguntas de la tabla anterior. Hacer preguntas permite que los niños amplíen su vocabulario en los dos lados.
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.
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?*

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

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface-Level Questions to Ask About an Experience</th>
<th>Possible Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you notice?</td>
<td>I noticed_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you wonder about _____?</td>
<td>I wonder about _____ and ____.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is something new you learned today?</td>
<td>One thing I learned was ____.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**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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REL Northwest

Karen Pérez
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The FCAs in action
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
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!
Overview of the FCAs and Educator’s Guide

ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Resources/CaregiverActivities
Stay in Touch

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Thank You!

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References

