



## Update From the Director

Early learning, particularly early literacy skills, are top priorities for REL Northwest partners. In Idaho, we're working in partnership with a regional early learning advisory committee to achieve their vision of equal access to high-quality early learning and development opportunities for children from birth to age five. Our partners have a special interest in looking at reading indicator outcomes on kindergarten readiness assessments. Read more about this Idaho partnership below.



There is work to be done to build students' foundational skills and accelerate learning from that base. [Recent scores](#) from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) long-term trend assessments confirm what we already knew about the effects of the pandemic on academic performance. From 2020 to 2022, average reading scores for students at age 9 dropped 5 points – the largest since 1990 – and math scores decreased 7 points, the first decline ever in mathematics. We'll learn more about student performance soon when [2022 NAEP reading and mathematics results](#) are released for grades 4 and 8.

As the education system adjusts to meet students' current needs, we must address the inequities that preceded and continued through the pandemic. We can help our youngest learners by ensuring their early care and learning environments use practices that have been shown to yield positive outcomes across developmental domains.

Below, we've provided details on the most recent What Works Clearinghouse practice guide that focuses on early childhood. These include recommendations – and how to make them happen – in language, literacy, math, social-emotional, and executive function domains.

At REL Northwest, we're energized by all the commitment to helping young children thrive in preschool and early childhood environments.

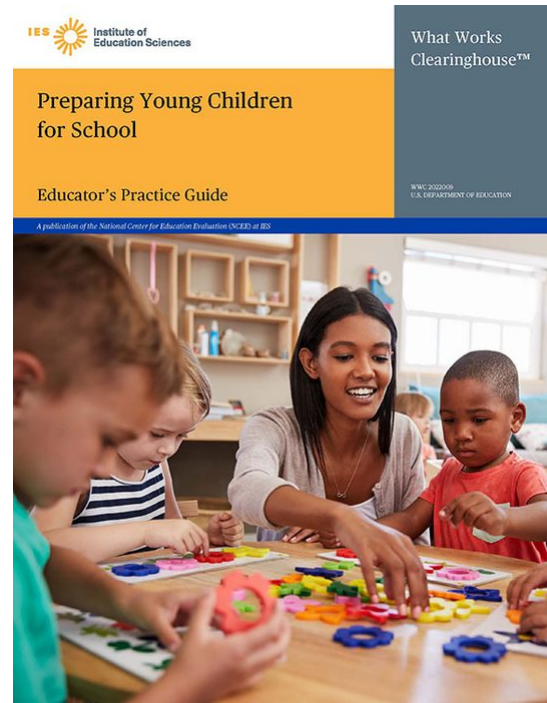
Read more about early childhood education on the [Institute of Education Sciences website](#), on the [REL Northwest website](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) (@relnw).

**Katie Drummond**  
Director, REL Northwest

## New Practice Guide: Preparing Young Children for School

Based on recent early learning and school readiness research, the new [What Works Clearinghouse](#) Practice Guide, [Preparing Young Children for School](#), offers practical recommendations for preschool educators.

The guide details seven evidence-based recommendations designed for state and local officials, educators involved in adopting curricula for preschool programs, and parents and caregivers. Each recommendation provides a specific strategy that schools or districts can implement to improve school readiness.



## Idaho Partnership Aims to Enhance Access and Quality of Early Care and Education

[REL Northwest is partnering](#) with the West Central Mountains Early Learning Advisory Committee, one of 15 early learning collaboratives across the state of Idaho, to enhance the access and quality of early care and education in the region to improve early literacy learning for kindergarten readiness.

A 2020 needs assessment by the West Central Mountains Early Learning Advisory Committee found that the region has a significant shortage of quality early childhood programming, straining families, social systems, and employers. The needs assessment identified a growing gap between the demand for quality early care and education and the limited supply in the rapidly growing region.

Families are asking for support in ensuring their children's school readiness.

REL Northwest is providing technical support around articulating and measuring the committee's early learning initiative objectives and selecting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based programming for early literacy.

As identified in [our partnership logic model](#), the work will support continuous improvement around implementing evidence-based practices, with the long-term goal of improving kindergarten readiness as measured by the [Idaho Reading Indicator](#).

[Read the full blog](#) on our Website ...

## Early Childhood Education Resources

See below for helpful early childhood education resources and tools:

- Designed for pre-K–1st-grade educators, REL West [hosted a webinar series](#) on storybook reading and culturally affirming instruction. This series focused on routines for storybook reading, ideas for school-to-home connections, and extension of storybook reading to creative expression activities.
- The [Early Childhood Data Use Assessment Tool](#) from REL Central helps identify and improve data-use skills among early childhood education program staff so they can better use data to inform, plan, monitor, and make decisions for instruction and program improvement.
- ECDataWorks developed the [Expanded School Readiness Framework](#) to help states explore the preparedness of schools, communities, and children. Read the action brief, view the video, and download the framework.
- REL Southeast developed an [infographic](#) explaining the different developmental domains as components of school readiness and the role of communities, families, and schools in preparing children.



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