

Amplify.

General Overview

PreK



Core Knowledge Language Arts



Core Knowledge®

PreK



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PreK

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PreK General Overview

Core Knowledge Language Arts PreK (CKLA PreK) is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum designed to prepare young children for later reading success by building foundational language and literacy skills. CKLA PreK materials and instruction provide explicit, systematic support for developing young children’s language, literacy, and content knowledge within the context of developmentally-appropriate early childhood settings. This curriculum is aligned with the Core Knowledge PreK Sequence (available for free at <http://www.coreknowledge.org/download-the-sequence>).

This program provides excellent preparation for young children who will be entering a Kindergarten classroom implementing the Core Knowledge Language Arts Kindergarten curriculum. The literacy skills, vocabulary, and content knowledge developed in CKLA PreK are explicitly designed to provide a foundation for the skills and content taught in CKLA Kindergarten classrooms.* Additionally, CKLA PreK can be used as a stand-alone PreK language arts curriculum that comprises part of a comprehensive PreK curriculum—regardless of subsequent content and method of instruction.

** See www.engageny.org and www.coreknowledge.org for further information regarding Core Knowledge Language Arts Curricula for Kindergarten through Grade 2.*

Developmentally Appropriate Activities

Each day of CKLA PreK instruction is designed to be engaging and appropriate for students ages four and five years who are enrolled in early childhood programs. Complete plans are provided for 45 minutes of daily instructional time that is designed to be implemented within activity contexts that already exist in most early childhood settings. For example,

guidance is given for conducting activities during arrival time, morning circle, learning centers, small groups, whole group, book readings, and transition times (i.e., when students move between activities). Within each of these activity contexts, CKLA PreK provides guidance for teaching and practicing Common Core Standards for Communication and Literacy for PreK using routines and activities that are consistent with recommended early childhood classroom practices.

Content-Rich Instruction

In addition to explicit instruction in early language and literacy skills, CKLA PreK develops students' knowledge of content areas—including social studies and science—by consistently exposing students to rich, developmentally appropriate texts and activities over the course of a school year. CKLA PreK is organized into seven domain-based units of instruction addressing both fiction and nonfiction content. Each domain-based unit focuses on an area of content knowledge that is foundational to children's later learning. By studying each of these domains over a period of approximately twenty instructional days, students are given many opportunities to develop the vocabulary and content knowledge that undergirds later academic success, particularly reading success.

Language-Focused Curriculum

A main focus of CKLA PreK is developing young students' oral language skills, including their vocabulary and narrative skills. Oral language skills are the foundation for listening comprehension during the PreK years and reading comprehension in the later grades. In CKLA PreK, oral language skills are modeled and practiced as teachers read aloud to students and engage them in rich, content-related discussions. Students build content knowledge and vocabulary by listening to developmentally appropriate texts that build in complexity across the PreK year. Students are also given the opportunity to practice using the language they are hearing by participating in meaningful content-related activities and discussions.

Emergent Literacy Skill Instruction

Alongside content and language instruction, CKLA PreK students also receive explicit, systematic instruction in the emergent literacy skills that are precursors to reading and writing (e.g., phonological and phonemic awareness, print knowledge, narrative storytelling, etc.). Emergent literacy skill instruction occurs alongside—and is often integrated with—content

instruction in each domain-based unit. Emergent literacy skills are gradually and systematically introduced during small-group instruction, with particular attention paid to the developmental sequence in which young children typically acquire these skills.

What Makes CKLA PreK Unique?

Domain-Based Learning

In CKLA PreK, instruction is divided into seven *domains*. Domains are topics of knowledge that address specific fiction and nonfiction content relevant to PreK students (e.g., *Animals* is a CKLA PreK domain). The content knowledge presented in these domains is carefully chosen and sequenced to build in complexity across the PreK year and to provide the prerequisite knowledge and vocabulary students need to assimilate new, related information taught in later grades by Core Knowledge Language Arts and other curricula. For example, in the *Animals* domain, students first learn about animal body parts and then learn how animals use those body parts to live within their environments. Finally, they learn about animals' basic needs and how animals use their body parts within their environments to meet those needs. Thus, both the content of the topics and the related vocabulary build coherently across the domain.

CKLA PreK *domains* differ from *themes* developed in many PreK classrooms and curricula, in that they are made up of subtopics that are related to one another and build coherently within and across grade-levels. Themes (e.g., apples, teddy bears, butterflies, etc.) include subtopics with vocabulary words and concepts that are not repeated or related (e.g., baking apple pie, picking apples at the orchard, adding and subtracting apple-shaped counters, etc.). Additionally, what students learn about one subtopic (e.g., life cycle of an apple tree) does not necessarily support their understanding of other subtopics (e.g., units of measure for baking). Finally, themes are not likely to be repeated across grades to enhance and extend understanding.

CKLA PreK Builds Coherent Knowledge

Immersing students in domains of instruction ensures that they receive content-rich instruction over a period of time sufficient for them to build coherent knowledge about a particular topic. Well-developed background knowledge is not only essential for students' understanding of the world

around them, *but it is also key to students' listening comprehension at the PreK level and their reading comprehension during the elementary school years.* Thus, the goal of improving students' later reading comprehension is well served by providing a strong foundation of content knowledge during the early childhood years.

Core Knowledge domains of instruction are carefully chosen and sequenced to build prerequisite knowledge so that students can use that knowledge as they assimilate new, more complex information. The seven domains in CKLA PreK are:

- *All About Me*
- *Families and Communities*
- *Plants*
- *Animals*
- *Habitats*
- *Classic Tales**
- *Important People in American History**

** These particular domains do not include Skills instruction and are taught intermittently throughout the year.*

As mentioned above, domains in CKLA PreK were selected and ordered based on the idea that what students are ready to learn depends on what they have already learned. For example, in CKLA PreK, students spend approximately one month learning about plants and then one month learning about animals—before they learn about habitats (the places where animals and plants live together). This careful sequencing of domains allows students to use their prior knowledge about plants and animals to support their learning about the more complex topic of habitats. Furthermore, CKLA PreK domain development carefully considers and accounts for the topics that students are expected to encounter in later grades. In this way, knowledge builds cumulatively and comprehensively across grade levels. For example, PreK students begin the school year by studying that which is most familiar—themselves. They talk about their appearances, their body parts, their names, their preferences, and their five senses. In CKLA Kindergarten, students will use the knowledge gained in PreK to do an in-depth study of each of the five senses, their functions, and their associated body parts.

CKLA PreK Builds Strong Vocabularies

One of the most important benefits of domain-based learning is that each domain has a particular group of words or *vocabulary* that is repeatedly used in varying contexts throughout the domain. Domain-based instruction provides young children ample time and opportunity to acquire the words they need to understand and discuss a particular topic. It is this strong background in the language and content related to a particular topic that helps students understand texts that are read to them and texts they will eventually read on their own.

Word knowledge is systematically built in CKLA PreK through:

- interaction with adults in domain-related learning centers
- content-related transition activities designed to efficiently move students between learning contexts
- exposure to words in context as intentionally written or selected texts are read aloud
- comprehension and extension activities during which students have opportunities to use domain-related vocabulary
- explicit vocabulary instruction designed to reinforce and deepen word knowledge

In addition, words that might be unfamiliar to students and are key to their understanding of particular content are defined for teachers and students at the beginning of each lesson (i.e., core vocabulary). These definitions are also included for teachers to reference as they read texts aloud, so that unfamiliar words can be defined at the moment students encounter them. In these ways, CKLA PreK supports teachers as they intentionally build students' vocabulary in conjunction with their content knowledge.

Two Strands of Instruction: Listening & Learning and Skills

CKLA PreK consists of two strands of instruction, the Listening & Learning strand and the Skills strand. These two strands provide systematic and explicit instruction in language, literacy, and content knowledge foundational to later reading success. The Listening & Learning strand is designed to help students build the vocabulary and content knowledge critical to listening comprehension during the PreK

years and reading comprehension in the later grades. The Skills strand is designed to help students develop and strengthen skills that are foundational to later decoding, spelling, and writing (e.g., phonological and phonemic awareness, print knowledge, writing strokes, etc.). The two strands complement each other by systematically building towards the requisite comprehension and decoding skills that comprise skilled, fluent reading in the later grades.

Prepares PreK Students for Reading Success

Research on literacy development during the PreK period and beyond indicates that knowledge of the alphabet (i.e., letter names and letter sounds) is strongly correlated with students' later success in learning to read. Therefore, CKLA PreK provides instruction in both letter names and letter sounds throughout the school day. Every morning, as they take attendance, teachers help students learn the names of the letters in the students' own names. At the beginning of the school year, students focus on learning the first letter of their own names. By the end of the year, students are expected to be able to say the name of each letter in their first names. Teachers create opportunities for students to review letter names throughout the school day when they use letter flash cards to transition students from one activity to another. Teachers and students also spend a significant amount of time focusing on letter sounds during morning circle and small-group time. At the beginning of the year, students practice rhyming, listening for words in sentences, and listening for sounds in words. Students then begin to learn that sounds in words can be written down as letters (i.e., "sound pictures"). By the end of the school year, students have had the opportunity to learn eight sounds and their sound pictures. Knowledge of both sounds and letters prepares students for Kindergarten-level reading instruction, regardless of the method of instruction used in their future classrooms.

CKLA PreK COMPONENTS

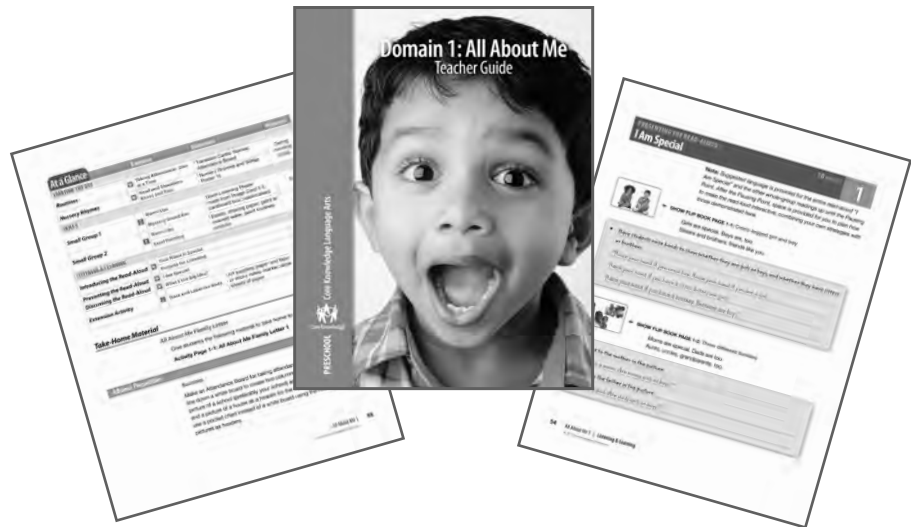
PreK General Overview

The components needed to implement CKLA PreK are as follows:

Teacher Guides

One per teacher per domain

The Teacher Guide provides the teacher with all of the information needed to conduct an entire domain of instruction, including review and assessment. Instruction is organized by day, with each day including activities for both the Listening & Learning and Skills strands (except for the *Classic Tales* and *Important People in American History* domains, which do not include Skills).



Flip Books

One per teacher per domain

Each Flip Book contains a sequenced collection of images that accompany content-related texts that teachers read aloud from the Teacher Guide. As students listen to teachers read text from the Teacher Guide and see related Flip Book images, they build domain-related knowledge.



Image Cards

One set per teacher per domain

Image Cards contain additional images that are used in Skills and Listening & Learning instruction to reinforce learning. Image Cards may be used multiple times during the day, across the domain, or multiple times throughout the year, so it is important to keep them organized and easily accessible while conducting activities.



Transition and Center Cards

One set per teacher per domain

Transition Cards are content and skills-related materials that are used to provide learning opportunities as students move between activities. Center Cards are designed to be posted in classroom Learning Centers and provide information to students and teachers regarding domain-based learning centers. Some Transition Cards may be used across multiple domains.



Activity Pages

One set per student per domain

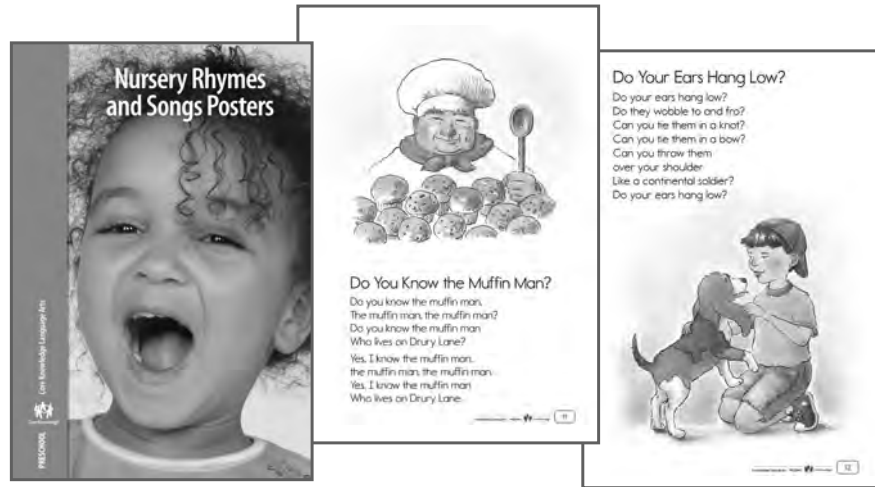
Activity Pages contain various activities for students to complete in class or at home with their families. These activities reinforce content and skills that are part of each domain.



Nursery Rhymes and Songs Posters

One set per teacher

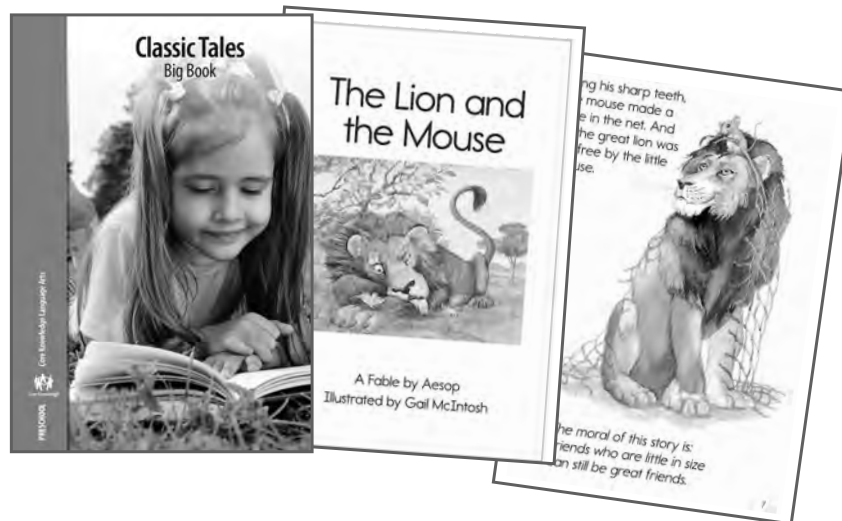
Nursery Rhymes and Song Posters display text and images from traditional rhymes and songs loved by young children. These posters are used during circle time and small-group time to familiarize students with the structure and sounds of oral language.



Big Book: *Classic Tales*

One set per teacher

The Big Book is a large-format book specific to the *Classic Tales* domain. The Big Book contains an abridged version of each story from *Classic Tales* alongside large illustrations and the printed text teachers read aloud to students.



Trade Books

In each domain, three to four domain-related trade books are read aloud during Listening & Learning instruction. Supplemental trade books are also recommended to be used to review and expand domain-related content.

Additional Required Materials

Further materials will be required for teachers to implement CKLA PreK. Many of these materials are already commonly found in PreK classrooms (e.g., art supplies, musical instruments, dress-up clothes, and toys). In many cases, substitute materials are acceptable, as long as the instructional objective of the activity is maintained. For a specific list of materials needed for each domain, refer to the Introduction of each Teacher Guide.

IMPLEMENTING CKLA PreK

PreK General Overview

Time Required to Implement CKLA PreK

CKLA PreK is comprised of seven domains of instruction, each with approximately twenty days of lessons. The curriculum is designed to be implemented throughout the school day and across the school year. Each day of instruction requires a total of approximately forty-five minutes—twenty minutes for small-group Skills instruction and twenty-five minutes for whole-group Listening & Learning instruction. Activities designed to reinforce and extend Skills and Listening & Learning content are also conducted during morning circle, learning centers, and transitions between activities. These strands of instruction and related activities can be scheduled in a variety of ways that accommodate the full-day and half-day schedules of early childhood classrooms.

Classroom Routines and Schedules

Typical PreK Routines and CKLA PreK

CKLA PreK is designed to fit within existing PreK classroom routines that are often already in place in early childhood classrooms (e.g., arrival time, circle time, small groups, whole group, and learning centers).

Arrival

Arrival time occurs at the beginning of the day as students transition from the school bus or their parents' care into the classroom. During arrival time, teachers greet the students and their parents as they arrive. Teachers use arrival time to build warm and caring relationships with parents and students. It is also a time for students to interact with the written form of their name by 'signing in.'

CKLA PreK provides a structured way for students to ‘sign in’ when they arrive that begins by having students learn to recognize the written form of their name and progresses to independent writing of their name. This progression is taught during circle time throughout the year, and is practiced on a daily basis during arrival time. The CKLA PreK progression for ‘signing in’ can be found in the Starting the Day section of each Teacher Guide.

Whole Group Circle Time

Circle time occurs at various points throughout the PreK day and involves all students and the teacher and/or aide. Students sit on the floor and teachers stand or sit at the head of the circle. During circle time, teachers (and eventually students) lead a variety of activities, such as conducting administrative tasks, reviewing classroom rules, singing songs, discussing the daily schedule, and reading books aloud.

CKLA PreK implementation involves three types of activities that occur during Whole Group Circle time. CKLA PreK teachers introduce and modify various classroom routines (e.g., taking attendance, daily schedule), lead students in reciting nursery rhymes, and conduct Listening & Learning instruction during circle time. Teachers might choose to distribute these CKLA PreK activities across more than one circle time each day in order to help students maintain their attention. CKLA PreK instruction and activities that occur during circle time can be found in the Starting the Day and Listening & Learning sections of each Teacher Guide.

Small Groups

Small Group time provides teachers and classroom aides the opportunity to work with individual students or small groups of students on particular skills. Small groups are led by the teacher and the classroom aide and are conducted in various locations inside or outside of the classroom, including—but not limited to—tables, the art center, the rug, and various learning centers. Activities and materials planned for each small group are modified to fit the skill level of the students in the group. Teachers and classroom aides take care to vary the composition of the small groups so that students have opportunities to collaborate with various peers. Teachers and aides alternate in leading a different small group each day or each week so that students have opportunities to work with different adults.

CKLA PreK Skills strand instruction occurs each day during Small Groups. The classroom teacher and aide each simultaneously lead two ten-minute Small Group activities. At the end of each ten-minute activity, students or teachers switch groups so that each student has the opportunity to participate in both Small Group activities. Directions for two Small Group activities are provided in the Skills section of each day of the Teacher Guide. *Teachers are encouraged to consider conducting Small Groups at various locations around the classroom (e.g., learning centers, rug, tables, etc.), with the goal of providing the least-restrictive setting needed to conduct the activity.*

Learning Centers

Learning Center time provides students with an opportunity to make choices and initiate activities on their own or participate in an activity led by the teacher and/or classroom aide. In CKLA PreK, Learning Center time is an intentional part of the day where teachers and aides facilitate Learning Centers on a daily basis.

CKLA PreK implementation calls for two types of activities to occur during Learning Center time on a daily basis. First, students have the opportunity to engage in a domain-related Learning Center that has been set up in advance by the teacher. Domain-related Learning Centers are facilitated by an adult, introduced at the beginning of each domain, and remain set up throughout the domain so students have multiple opportunities to participate in these Learning Centers. Secondly, students may participate

in a domain-related Extension Activity during Learning Centers, which is an engaging project that reinforces the specific content taught in domain-related read-alouds. Three or four Extension Activities are taught across the course of each domain. CKLA PreK instruction that occurs during Learning Center time can be found in the Learning Center section at the beginning of each Teacher Guide and the Extension Activities sections of each day of instruction.

Transitions

Transitions occur whenever students move between two activities or two different settings. Students might be transitioned between activities or settings individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Effective transitions turn waiting time into instructional time. When planned in advance, transitions provide opportunities to review content knowledge and practice skills.

Transitions in CKLA PreK provide opportunities for students to review domain-specific content and recently learned skills. Teachers facilitate transitions by using a set of visual cards to prompt students to answer a particular content- or skills-related question. A variety of ways to use each set of visual cards is given, and teachers are encouraged to think of new ways the cards might be used. CKLA PreK instruction that occurs during transitions can be found in the Transitions section at the beginning of each Teacher Guide.

Daily Schedules that Accommodate CKLA PreK

Forty-five minutes daily of dedicated direct instruction are required to fully implement CKLA PreK. These forty-five minutes include twenty minutes of Small Group Skills instruction and twenty-five minutes of Whole-Group Listening & Learning instruction. In addition, as noted previously, CKLA PreK practices are also integrated into other parts of the daily schedule, including morning circle and learning centers.

It is important for teachers to establish a consistent, organized, and intentional daily schedule with specific times dedicated to conducting CKLA PreK instruction. CKLA PreK instruction is highly adaptable to a variety of classroom schedules and is designed to fit within existing PreK classroom routines and contexts (e.g., circle time, center time, story time, etc.).

When establishing a schedule that works best for a particular classroom, there are a few important principles to consider. Starting the Day activities

(e.g., attendance and nursery rhymes) must be conducted *before* Skills and Listening & Learning instruction. Teachers may choose to conduct Skills and Listening & Learning instruction in any order and at any point during the school day. Extension Activities are designed to be conducted during Learning Center time.

Below are sample schedules that show how a teacher might accommodate Starting the Day, Skills, and Listening & Learning instruction in a typical PreK day.

Sample Full-Day Schedule

***Note:** *Especially at the beginning of the year, PreK students may have difficulty listening and attending for long periods of time. Teachers use their professional judgment and experience to decide how best to keep students engaged while completing CKLA PreK instruction (e.g., wiggle breaks, hands-on participation, singing songs, brain breaks, etc.).*

Your Schedule		CKLA PreK Instruction
8:00–8:15	Arrival	<i>Taking Attendance</i>
8:15–8:30	First circle	<i>Starting the Day</i>
8:30–8:40	Bathroom break	
8:40–9:00	Breakfast	
9:00–9:25	Second circle*	<i>Listening & Learning Whole Group</i>
9:25–10:25	Center time	<i>Domain-related Learning Center and Extension Activity</i>
10:25–10:45	Small group time	<i>Skills Small Groups</i>
10:45–11:05	Outdoor play	
11:05–11:15	Bathroom break	
11:15–11:55	Lunch	
11:55–12:10	Read aloud	
12:10–1:30	Nap	
1:30–1:40	Bathroom break	
1:40–2:00	Snack	
2:00–2:35	Small groups	
2:35–2:45	Third circle	
2:45–3:00	Dismissal	

Sample Half-Day Schedule

Your Schedule		CKLA PreK Instruction
8:00–8:15	Arrival	<i>Taking Attendance</i>
8:15–8:30	First circle	<i>Starting the Day</i>
8:30–8:40	Bathroom break	
8:40–9:00	Breakfast	
9:00–9:20	Small group time	<i>Skills Small Groups</i>
9:20–10:05	Center time	<i>Domain-related Learning Center and Extension Activity</i>
10:05–10:30	Second circle	<i>Listening & Learning Whole Group</i>
10:30–10:45	Small group time	
10:45–10:55	Bathroom break	
10:55–11:15	Outdoor play	
11:15–11:55	Lunch	
11:55–12:00	Dismissal	

The Classroom Environment

Explicit guidance as to how to create an overall classroom environment that is most appropriate for young children is not provided by CKLA PreK, but may be found in other resources. CKLA PreK does provide some explicit guidance on how to create a print-rich environment and how to structure specific, domain-related Learning Centers.

Print-Rich Environment

Display and use of print in the classroom environment fosters students' developing literacy skills. Environmental print in the PreK classroom includes object labels, charts with students' dictated stories, bulletin boards, and the daily schedule. To scaffold students' learning, teachers pair print with images (ideally photographs from their own classroom) that visually depict written words. Students are not expected to read print in the classroom, but rather to gradually gain an understanding of its purpose and how it is organized (i.e., that written symbols can be used to represent spoken language). Teachers draw students' attention to print and explicitly teach its function.

Teachers implementing CKLA PreK create a print-rich environment by adding labels with words and pictures to Learning Centers, material bins, the sign-in/attendance board, and other objects that students interact

with frequently. Teachers scaffold students' understanding and use of these printed labels, following the suggestions in the Starting the Day section of the Teacher Guide.

Learning Centers

Learning Centers are areas set up throughout the classroom that are designed to engage students in exploring particular materials or topics. The selection of materials for each center is based upon the competencies and skills currently being addressed during other classroom activities. Materials for each center are stored and labeled with pictures and words so students can access and replace them independently. Supplies and materials are plentiful for the number of students permitted at each center. Learning Centers may include areas for dramatic play, library, listening, computer, writing, block, table toys or manipulative, sensory table, cooking, science and discovery, and expressive art. Effective teachers rotate the materials available in each center regularly.

Learning Centers provide opportunities to develop language and literacy skills through inclusion of reading and writing materials related to the center, current skills, and/or domain-related content. These materials represent real-world or naturalistic uses of literacy. For instance, the block center might contain blue construction paper and white chalk so that students can make “blueprints” for their constructions. The dramatic play center, set up as a grocery store, might contain note pads for shopping lists and sales fliers from the newspaper, and the science and discovery center might contain field guides to pretend read and paper and drawing materials so students can document the growth and development of seeds they have planted.

Each CKLA PreK Teacher Guide contains extensive guidance on creating a domain-related Learning Center designed to provide opportunities for students to review and extend content and skills addressed in that domain. Suggestions for including appropriate reading and writing materials and modeling their use are included in each domain.

CKLA PreK TEACHER GUIDE CONTENTS

PreK General Overview

Each Teacher Guide contains all information needed for each day of instruction. The following sections are included in each Teacher Guide*:

- Alignment Chart
- Introduction
- Learning Centers
- Transitions
- Starting the Day
- Skills Instruction
- Listening & Learning Instruction
- Pausing Points
- Assessments

** The Classic Tales and Important People in American History domains contain content intended to be taught throughout the year. Thus, these domains' Teacher Guides only include instruction related to the Listening & Learning strand. They do not contain Starting the Day or Skills instruction.*

Introduction

The Introduction of each Teacher Guide outlines the organizational structure and content of each domain. Each Introduction opens with an alignment chart showing when both Core Content and Language Arts Objectives are addressed in each domain. The Introduction also includes a Domain Calendar that gives an overview of what is taught on each day of instruction and across the entire domain of instruction.

Domain Calendar

The Domain Calendar shows the titles of activities and read-alouds taught on each day of instruction throughout the entire domain during the three main contexts for instruction: Starting the Day, Skills, and Listening & Learning. It provides a quick reference point for teachers to gauge the pacing of instruction and general structure of the domain.

All About Me		Day(s)	
		1	2
		3	
Starting the Day			
Routines	Taking Attendance: One at a Time	Taking Attendance: One at a Time	Taking Attendance: Cubbies
	--	Introduce Learning Center Labels	--
Nursery Rhyme	Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes	Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes	Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes
Skills			
Small Group 1	Mystery Sound Box	Get the Rhythm of the Rhyme	Mystery Sound Box: Same or Different?
Small Group 2	Easel Painting	Make a Placemat	Easel Drawing and Coloring
Listening & Learning			
Read-Aloud/ Picture Talk	Read-Aloud: "I Am Special"	Picture Talk: "I Am Special"	Trade Book: <i>Shades of People</i>
Deepening Understanding	--	Humans	--
Extension Activity	Trace and Label the Body	Trace and Label the Body	Trace and Label the Body
Take-Home Material			
	Activity Page 1-1	--	--

Learning Centers

Each Teacher Guide includes a Learning Center plan that outlines a domain-related Learning Center specifically aligned to Core Content and Language Arts Objectives addressed in the domain. Domain-related Learning Centers are designed to be set up in the classroom during the entire twenty days of instruction. The Learning Center plan describes ways adults can facilitate meaningful domain-related play and conversation. Because each domain-related Learning Center is considered an essential context for oral language and content knowledge development, there are Core Content and Language Arts Objectives that accompany each Learning Center plan. Learning Center Cards are also provided to remind adults what language should be used during interactions with students and to orient students to each Learning Center. These Learning Center Cards label the center for students and list key vocabulary words and phrases for adults to model and facilitate in the center.

Each Teacher Guide also includes general suggestions for activities and materials that might be included in a variety of classroom Learning Centers that already exist in many PreK classrooms (e.g., writing center, library center, sensory table, etc.). Suggestions for how to conduct observational assessments during Learning Centers can be found at the back of each Teacher Guide.

Facilitating Conversations in Learning Centers

Learning Centers provide an important context for modeling and scaffolding student's expressive language. During Learning Centers, students can engage in extended conversations with adults and peers, practicing important social skills such as greeting people by name and asking questions. PreK students will likely need adult support in order to have conversations with peers and adults that last multiple turns (see the section on **Language Facilitation** for specific suggestions regarding scaffolding and continuing conversations with students), particularly at the beginning of the school year. Therefore, teachers or classroom aides are expected to facilitate Learning Centers throughout the school year.

Adults play important and evolving roles as language facilitators in Learning Centers. At the beginning of the domain, students may not possess the vocabulary and language needed to play different roles or participate in particular activities. They may be unfamiliar with the

materials found in the Learning Center and their intended usage. Initially, students may rely on teachers and aides to model language to play different roles in the Learning Center. Gradually, students will become more skilled at playing various roles, and teachers may step back and act as facilitators, providing input as appropriate rather than actively participating. The Teacher Guide provides suggestions as to different ways teachers might facilitate language in the Learning Center early in the domain when students are unfamiliar with roles, and later in the domain when students have had opportunities to learn related vocabulary by interacting in the Learning Center and from read-alouds.

Facilitating Emergent Writing in Learning Centers

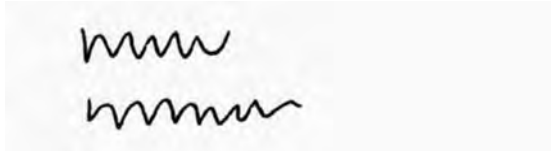
Learning Centers provide important opportunities for students to use writing to communicate and to develop an understanding of the different ways writing is used to communicate (i.e., emergent writing). Teachers facilitate students' understanding of the purpose of print by modeling and providing opportunities for students to write in the Learning Center. The Teacher Guide gives suggestions for how teachers might provide opportunities for emergent writing at different points throughout the domain. Initially, teachers may need to model writing for various purposes; eventually, students will begin to make attempts to write themselves. When working with students in the emergent writing stage of development, it is important to accept whatever form of writing students produce; it is not important that students write letters or form them correctly. What is important is that students represent their ideas through writing by drawing pictures, scribbling, writing letter-like shapes, and, eventually, writing letters and even words.

Developmental Stages of Writing

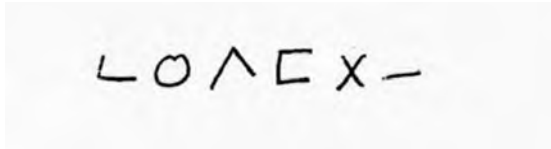
1. Scribbling



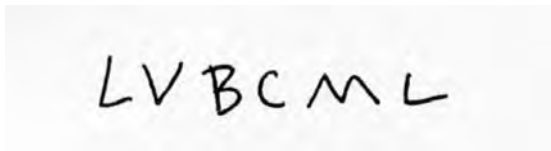
2. Wavy lines that can be “read”



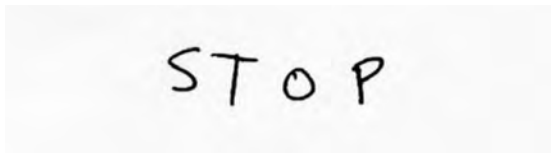
3. Strings of letter-like shapes that can be “read”



4. Strings of letters that can be “read”



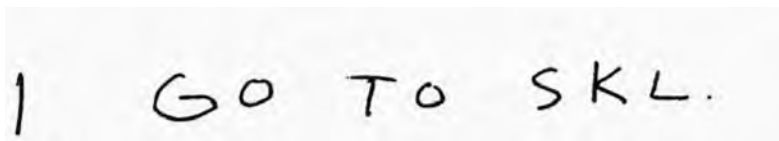
5. Real words copied from the environment, or memorized



6. Strings of words with some sounds, usually beginning and ending sounds the student hears



7. Separated words with the beginning and ending sounds, adding middle sounds as they progress



Transitions

Transitions provide opportunities throughout the school day for teachers to reinforce and students to re-encounter content taught in Skills and Listening & Learning instruction. Transition Cards are materials with skills and content-related pictures teachers show and give to students. Transition Cards provide teachers with meaningful ways to help students move between different activities during the school day. For each domain, suggestions are given at the beginning of the Teacher Guide for ways to use these cards throughout the domains. The Transition Cards and their associated activities are designed to help develop students' receptive and expressive vocabulary as it relates to both Skills and Listening & Learning. These cards can be used when students are expected to wait for another activity to begin, such as while standing in line for the bathroom or waiting for lunch to be served. Occasionally, these cards are used during Skills and Listening & Learning activities to support instruction.

Starting the Day

Activities presented in the Starting the Day portion of the lessons provide opportunities to introduce and practice classroom routines and nursery rhymes or songs.

Classroom Routines

Classroom routines are everyday activities such as taking attendance, signing in to Learning Centers, putting away materials, and so on, that keep classrooms running smoothly. Participating in routine activities gives students the sense that the school day is predictable. Eventually taking on a leadership role in these activities gives students a feeling of ownership over their school experience.

CKLA PreK focuses on embedding literacy instruction in the context of daily routines to make these routines meaningful to students. In the Starting the Day portion of each day, the Teacher Guide gives guidance on how to engage students in print awareness and recognition, vocabulary development, and oral language skills as they participate in daily routines. As the school year progresses, various classroom routines will be introduced and modified to correspond to students' developing academic and behavioral skills. Once a routine is presented or modified,

teachers are expected to incorporate each routine or variation into their daily schedule. Many teachers already conduct some classroom routines during a morning circle (e.g., attendance, calendar, weather, show-and-tell, etc.), so they may choose to do the Starting the Day portion of the lessons at that time.

Taking Attendance

Taking attendance (or ‘signing in’) is a daily routine especially suited to embedded literacy instruction. Throughout the year, various ways to take attendance are introduced and practiced. Each variation builds on students’ developing print recognition and oral language skills, increasing in difficulty across the year. For example, at the beginning of the year, students begin to recognize their written name tag with the help of a photograph of themselves. Eventually, teachers remove the picture and students recognize their printed name. By the end of the year, most students are writing their own names independently.

Other Routines

In addition to attendance, other routines, such as classroom jobs and signing in to Learning Centers, are introduced throughout the year. Typically a new routine, or variation on a routine, is introduced to students during morning circle. Teachers are then expected to continue the routine during each school day as appropriate.

Nursery Rhymes

In addition to completing classroom routines, students also develop the habit of learning and reciting a nursery rhyme at the beginning of every school day. Reciting nursery rhymes helps students become familiar with the rhythm of language and gives them exposure to the sound structure of words. Reciting the same rhyme again and again builds verbal fluency and enables students to eventually recite rhymes independently. Nursery rhymes are chosen to complement content from the Skills or Listening & Learning strands, and sometimes the rhymes are explored more in-depth during Small Group time. Reciting rhymes and songs also gives all students an opportunity to participate during Whole-Group time, and helps keep students engaged by giving them a chance to talk, sing, and to move their bodies. Students are also exposed to print on a daily basis through the use of the Nursery Rhymes and Songs Posters.

Skills Instruction

During Skills instruction, students gain experience with emergent literacy skills that develop during PreK and provide the foundation for skilled, fluent reading and writing in the elementary school grades. Skills activities target specific emergent literacy skills and progress in difficulty and complexity throughout the year. Comprehensive lists of which emergent literacy skills are taught in each domain are in the Introduction of each Teacher Guide.

Each day of CKLA PreK Skills instruction includes two ten-minute Small Group activities. Small Groups are intended to be conducted simultaneously with a teacher and classroom aide each leading a different group. Each small group begins with a Warm-Up that orients students to the skill or skills being targeted. Students participate in both Small Groups every day so that each student receives twenty minutes of Small Group instruction daily. Some teachers may prefer to lead both Small Groups themselves, which would require a total of forty minutes of instruction for every student to complete both activities in a Small Group setting.

Small Group instruction includes a range of activities that are designed to be conducted in various areas of the classroom—even outside. When planning Small Group, it is important to consider the least restrictive area where an activity might be conducted and to give students as much freedom of movement as is reasonable. Many activities can be conducted with students standing on the rug or moving around a Learning Center, rather than sitting at a table. Additionally, while adults usually begin the activity by modeling and teaching skills and/or concepts, opportunities are provided in each Small Group activity for students to explore and work independently with more limited teacher direction. Suggestions as to how teachers might gradually release control of the activities to students are given in the Teacher Guide, and we encourage teachers to think of additional ways to let students take the lead during Small Group.

Prerequisite and Emergent Literacy areas addressed in CKLA PreK Small Group instruction include:

Environmental Noises—*sounds made by instruments or objects in the environment*

CKLA PreK establishes the behaviors and routines needed to listen to sounds in language by first having students listen to environmental

noises. Students participate in activities such as discriminating between and making soft and loud, long and short noises; counting series of noises; copying sounds using musical instruments; and orienting to noises.

Phonological Awareness—*awareness of the sound structure of language, including the ability to recognize and produce rhyme, the ability to recognize and produce alliteration, the ability to isolate sounds and syllables, and the ability to segment and blend words from syllables and sounds*

Students are systematically exposed to activities designed to increase their awareness of sounds in language throughout the day in CKLA PreK. Especially in Small Group, students participate in activities like: reciting nursery rhymes, matching rhyming pairs, producing rhyming words, segmenting sentences into words, segmenting words into syllables and blending syllables into words, segmenting words into phonemes and blending phonemes into words.

Alphabetic Principle—*the system by which the sounds of our language are mapped to the sequence of letters in printed words*

Throughout CKLA PreK, students are taught that letters and words, in general, represent spoken language. Once students have come to realize that words are made up of sounds, they are introduced to the idea that specific sounds can be represented with particular symbols (i.e., *sound pictures* or *letters*). A limited number of sound-letter correspondences are taught in CKLA PreK.

Print Knowledge—*the understanding of the nature and uses of print, including understanding of the organization of print, its function, and knowledge of the purpose of letters and words*

Students' print knowledge is developed through encounters with printed text that teachers read aloud and environmental print that students use to navigate the classroom. Students practice and demonstrate print knowledge when they use emergent writing in Learning Centers. Teachers explicitly draw students' attention to the features of print, including: words, letters, print directionality, print organization, and punctuation marks.

Handwriting—the fine motor skills needed to make handwriting strokes, letter-like forms, and letters

CKLA PreK instruction includes specific attention paid to the fine motor skills and prewriting strokes needed to form letters. Through interactive, developmentally appropriate activities and exercises, students are introduced to prewriting strokes and, eventually, to letter forms. Prewriting strokes are introduced in the following order:

Vertical Line	
Horizontal Line	—
Diagonal Line	↘ ↗
Circle	○
Zigzag	↘ ↗ ↘ ↗
Dot	•
Cross	†
Bridge	⌒
X	×
Bowl	⌋
Moon	☾
Wave	〰
Cane	⌞
Hook	⌋

Narrative—ability to understand and produce extended oral accounts of fictional and nonfictional events, including original accounts and retellings of familiar stories

Students use and develop oral language skills through hearing and telling stories throughout the PreK year. Attention is paid to the setting and characters of stories that are read aloud. Initially, students tell stories about things they have actually experienced. Then, students sequence and retell events from texts (both fiction and nonfiction) that they have heard read aloud. Finally, students dictate their own fictional stories. Throughout the year, teachers model and encourage students to tell stories that have a beginning, middle, and end.

Vocabulary—*the words students understand when listening and use when talking*

Vocabulary knowledge is systematically built in CKLA PreK as students hear and use domain-related and academic vocabulary words. Opportunities to hear and use new words in context are provided while text is read aloud, during conversations with teachers and peers in Learning Center, while completing comprehension and extension activities, and during explicit vocabulary instruction.

Listening & Learning Instruction

Listening & Learning instruction is designed to provide students the experiences needed to develop domain-specific language and content knowledge that supports their listening and reading comprehension abilities. These experiences include participating in interactive read-alouds, read-aloud reviews (i.e., Picture Talks), and explicit vocabulary instruction (i.e., Deepening Understanding).

Core Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary words and definitions are included in each Teacher Guide and are intended to provide teachers with child-friendly ways to teach key words to young children. Teachers might use these words and definitions in a variety of ways. Teachers might refer to the words and their definitions when planning interactive read-alouds, telling students the given definition as they conduct the read-aloud. If teachers are unsure how to define additional words in a child-friendly way, the Core Vocabulary definitions give examples of how to do so. Teachers are not expected to define every word that they think may be unfamiliar to students, or even every word

included as Core Vocabulary. Teachers should define words that are central to the meaning of a particular read-aloud, taking care to provide a definition that is compatible with the way the word relates to Core Content addressed in the domain. In this way, students' vocabulary knowledge is systematically built around domain-related content. Additionally, as students progress through the read-alouds in each domain, they will gain increasing familiarity with Core Vocabulary as it relates to specific content.

It should be noted that the inclusion of the words on the Core Vocabulary list does not indicate that students are expected to use these words on their own. Repeated exposure to new words throughout the day, in activities such as read-alouds, nursery rhymes, and Picture Talks, will provide students many opportunities to hear and understand these words. Encountering these words throughout the day will provide the contextual experiences students need to add words to their own vocabularies and eventually use the words themselves.

Interactive Read-Alouds

Each Teacher Guide contains support for conducting interactive, whole-group read-alouds using both original CKLA PreK texts and trade books. Read-aloud texts gradually increase in complexity across the PreK year. All texts are supported by large-format photographs and illustrations shown in the corresponding Flip Book. In the Teacher Guide, guidance is given as to how to lead developmentally appropriate discussions and activities before, during, and after the read-aloud.

Read-alouds are designed to be presented in an interactive style, meaning that teachers elicit and facilitate student participation throughout the entire session. CKLA PreK teachers expect students to talk a great deal during read-alouds and take care to keep student conversations on-topic. In order to demonstrate how teachers might make these texts interactive, suggested language is given for read-alouds that occur early in the domains. This suggested language is provided to demonstrate how teachers might present these texts in a way that engages young children and sustains their attention. Teachers are encouraged to add their own ideas that build on their students' interests to the suggestions presented in the Teacher Guides. For the read-alouds that occur later in the domains, ample space is provided for teachers to write their own notes as to how they will make the read-alouds and trade books

interactive. **For all interactive, whole-group readings, it is imperative that teachers read the text and plan the prompts that they will use to engage students before conducting the read-aloud.**

Introducing the Read-Aloud

Each interactive read-aloud is preceded by a brief introduction to the content to be addressed in the text. By intentionally introducing the read-aloud, teachers help students make connections to things they already know, introduce words or ideas that might be unfamiliar, and help students make predictions. Teachers always end the introduction by giving students a specific purpose for listening to the read-aloud.

Presenting the Read-Aloud

Teachers present read-alouds to the entire class by reading the text from the Teacher Guide and showing the accompanying images in the Flip Book. As they present the text and images, teachers engage students in a conversations, ask students to respond to questions, define key vocabulary, physically act out words and events, make connections between the text and students' own lives, reread passages to help students answer questions, and employ other strategies that bring the meaning of the text alive.

Discussing the Read-Aloud

After each interactive read-aloud or trade book reading, there are approximately three teacher-led activities designed to help students engage with the core content of each text. These activities (called What's the Big Idea?) are designed to reinforce the main idea of the text for students. They progress from least to more challenging by requiring students to first use receptive language skills, then use expressive language skills, and finally, to refer back to the text to respond to a question. These activities provide excellent opportunities for teachers to quickly gauge whether or not students have grasped key concepts of the text they just heard.

Picture Talk

Picture Talks are presented the day after students hear original read-alouds. Using some of the same images in the Flip Book, Picture Talks provide opportunities for repeated exposures to vocabulary and content that students hear during interactive group readings. They are designed

to be facilitated by the teacher, but are meant to give students many opportunities to use the vocabulary and talk about the content they heard the day before during the interactive group reading. Teachers are encouraged to respond to and elaborate on any ideas that students contribute during a Picture Talk.

During a Picture Talk, teachers present a subset of the original images that students encountered during the interactive group read-aloud. The chosen images are designed to focus teachers' and students' attention on the central content or more challenging vocabulary from the original text. For all Picture Talks, suggested language is provided to guide teachers in creating opportunities that enrich students' understanding of the original text. **Like the interactive group read-alouds, it is imperative that teachers read the Picture Talk and become familiar with the prompts used to engage students before conducting the Picture Talk.**

Deepening Understanding

After each Picture Talk, students receive explicit vocabulary instruction designed to deepen their understanding of a particular word or group of words heard in the read-aloud text. This explicit vocabulary instruction is in addition to the rich, implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction embedded in the read-alouds and Picture Talks. During Deepening Understanding, teachers remind students of a word they heard in the read-aloud, give a definition of the word, review a meaning of the word that students have already encountered in the context of the text, and then expand students' knowledge of the word. During this final part of this activity, students' vocabulary knowledge is intentionally expanded by introducing related words or concepts that students did not necessarily encounter in the read-aloud. For example, students might have heard the word *inside* during a read-aloud, and they might learn its opposite (i.e., *outside*) during Deepening Understanding. Or, students might learn the word *shelter* during a read-aloud, and then learn words related to *shelter* (e.g., *protect*, *temperature*, *weather*, *live*, *safe*, *bed*, *house*, *igloo*, etc.) during Deepening Understanding.

Extension Activities

Extension Activities provide opportunities for teachers to reinforce and students to apply content knowledge presented in the read-alouds. These activities are designed to be conducted by the teacher or classroom aide during Learning Center time across a period of three to five days. Teachers are active facilitators of Extension Activities, in that they provide the appropriate materials and model and facilitate the language needed to complete an activity. Nevertheless, these activities are intended to be primarily student-led. That is, once the general instructions have been explained, the teacher strategically supports students' learning by a) following the students' lead, b) scaffolding their language, and c) providing content-related information. Since these activities cover certain Core Content and Language Arts Objectives, it is important that every student have an opportunity to participate in each activity.

Pausing Points

Pausing Points are opportunities within each domain to gauge students' understanding of content and skills that have been presented, complete any activities from previous days, and revisit material with which students are experiencing difficulty. Pausing Points do not follow the same daily structure (e.g., Starting the Day, Small Group, Whole Group read-aloud, etc.) as other days during the domain, but teachers might plan to do so if they wish. Pausing Point 1 includes both a Skills and Listening & Learning Assessment Task that can be used to quickly evaluate students' knowledge of important content and skills taught up until that point. Additional ideas for activities that reinforce or extend material from both Skills and Listening & Learning are included in the Pausing Point as well.

Assessment

CKLA PreK assessments are designed to provide a "snapshot view" of whether or not each student is mastering a subset of the specific Language Arts and Core Content Objectives presented in CKLA PreK. It is important to remember that, while many objectives are taught in each domain, the expectation is not that students will master every objective taught in a single domain; the goal is mastery of all objectives by the end

of the school year. Therefore, some objectives that are taught in a given domain will not be assessed until subsequent domains.

Because it is important to assess students in multiple ways, each domain contains three types of assessment: Portfolio Collection, Assessment Opportunities, and Task Assessments. Portfolios contain samples of student work and are intended to document students' progress throughout the domain and across the school year. Assessment Opportunities involve observing students in the context of CKLA PreK lessons and activities and recording observations relevant to Core Content and Language Arts Objectives being addressed. Task Assessments are direct assessments administered individually to each student during the Pausing Point and at the end of the domain during the Domain Assessment.

Portfolio Collection

Portfolio collection is an authentic, meaningful assessment technique that is very useful at the PreK level. It involves collecting samples of student's work across time. Drawings, paintings, samples of dictated work, and journal entries all may be collected to illustrate a student's skill level and competency in a particular area. Photographs and audio recordings may also be included to document students' work. Teachers periodically review portfolios and reflect on students' progress relative to Core Content and Language Arts Objectives, noting progress evident in student work.

Assessment Opportunities

Assessment Opportunities occur throughout the PreK day, particularly during activities that lend themselves to direct observation of students' skills. Direct observation is one of the most common and best methods for assessing PreK students' behavior. This type of observation can occur in a naturalistic setting or during specific activities designed to showcase the skill a teacher wishes to assess. Naturalistic settings include the playground, Learning Centers, and mealtimes; these settings are ideal for observing students' language skills and usage. Specific activities that lend themselves to observation include everyday whole-group and small-group activities where students give individual responses that are readily recorded. Guidance is given in the Teacher Guide as to which activities

provide Assessment Opportunities during which teachers might record observations relevant to Core Content and Language Arts Objectives being addressed.

Task Assessments

Task Assessments are particular activities, similar to those that students participate in on a day-to-day basis, that permit the observation of a student performing a particular skill or demonstrating particular knowledge. Well-designed Task Assessments incorporate the use of the same kinds of manipulative, concrete materials, and tasks that students have been working with to learn new skills and knowledge. Thus, the tasks students are asked to perform during Task Assessments are those that they have already performed during domain instruction. Task Assessments occur at the end of each domain and are useful for understanding which students might benefit from additional instruction in particular areas of content and skill.

LANGUAGE FACILITATION

PreK General Overview

Developing strong oral language skills is one of the most important goals of the early childhood period. Teachers play a direct role in students' language development in PreK as they model sophisticated language use and assist children who are developing language skills. This section describes specific strategies teachers can use to facilitate students' use and understanding of language. In many of the CKLA PreK Teacher Guides, specific language facilitation strategies are highlighted and discussed as ways support students' language development in the context of particular activities.

Language Stimulation and Support Techniques

Comments

Often, a teacher's inclination is to ask questions to get a conversation started. Effective teachers recognize that a comment can be just as effective or more effective at getting a conversation going. Consider the following examples: Shauna enters class one morning wearing a new pair of shiny red shoes. Teacher A says, "Shauna, I like your new shoes. Where did you get them?" Teacher B says, "Wow! Look at your new shiny *red* shoes!" Shauna's response to Teacher A will likely be a one-word answer or short sentence answering the teacher's question, "Where did you get them?" Shauna's response to Teacher B may very well be a story about going to get the new shoes. Teacher B's use of an open-ended comment provides Shauna the opportunity to answer following her own interests and excitement. Likewise, the use of a comment removes the pressure of Shauna's having to respond. Using comments provides children with an opening to initiate conversation and the freedom to talk about their own interests.

Self-Talk

Using the self-talk strategy, effective teachers describe what they are doing, seeing, or hearing. Effective teachers use self-talk to model for children language and vocabulary that go with specific actions. Again, there is no expectation that children respond. Through exposure to this language, children will build their own vocabularies. The following

examples demonstrate how effective teachers might use self-talk throughout the daily routine:

- “Lyle brought his goldfish Oscar for us to see. I am going to put the fishbowl in the science center so we can observe Oscar after we have snack.”
- “I am dishing out the fruit cocktail. I like fruit cocktail, because it is sweet and juicy.”
- “I see three children wearing green shirts today.”
- “I’m writing today’s morning message. I am going to start over here (pointing), and then I am going to write in this direction (pointing).”
- “I am going to teach you a new rhyme today. Listen to me as I recite the rhyme the first time.”

Labels and Object Descriptions

Children don’t always have the vocabulary for the names of objects around them. Effective teachers label objects in the children’s environment and use descriptive words to describe the attributes of those objects. The following examples demonstrate how effective teachers might use labeling and object descriptions throughout the daily routine:

- “That’s a *big paintbrush*. Ben has a *small paintbrush*.”
- “The *flat square* pieces are called tiles. You can make a *pattern* with the *colored* tiles at the manipulative center.”
- “Will you hand me a *pair of scissors*?”
- “We have clementines for snack today. Clementines are a *small* type of orange.”
- “Tamika is holding the carton of milk while I get out the cups.”

In each of the examples above, an adult may have easily understood our meaning had we used pronouns or less descriptive language. Adults use context to complete thoughts. Although children may have also understood our meaning, we would have exposed them to less language.

Open Questions

Open questions have a variety of possible answers. Effective teachers recognize that the use of open questions allows children to construct their own answers. Open questions support a sense of autonomy, as they

invite children to answer in their own, unprescribed words. The following examples demonstrate how effective teachers might use open questions throughout the daily routine:

- “Where do you think we should put our new goldfish bowl?”
- “What else do you think we will need if we want to set up a *farm* in our dramatic play center?”
- “How do you think we can keep our tower from falling over as it gets *taller*?”
- “What will you do at the *art* center today?”
- “Why do you think the fox is following Rosie?”

Although open questions are preferred because they allow children to construct their own answers, not all children have the language or cognitive skills to answer open questions. Effective teachers recognize that asking children questions that they are not yet capable of answering deters conversation. These teachers use a variety of question types suitable to the needs of individual children. The following examples demonstrate how effective teachers might scaffold using other questions types to meet the needs of individual children:

- **Open question preceded by a comment that models an appropriate response:** “Juanita thinks we should make our tower wider. Trey thinks we should put smaller blocks on the bottom. What do you think we can do to keep our tower from wobbling as it gets taller?”
- **Choice question:** “Do you think we should build our tower on the carpet or on the tile?”
- **Chaining closed questions to develop a higher understanding:** “What size are the blocks on the bottom? Is there another size we can use on the bottom so the tower wouldn’t be wobbly?”

Parallel Talk

Using the parallel talk strategy, effective teachers describe what children are doing. Effective teachers use parallel talk to model for children language and vocabulary that go with specific actions. Again, there is no expectation that children respond. Through exposure to this language, children will build their own vocabularies. The following examples

demonstrate how effective teachers might use parallel talk throughout the daily routine:

- “Monty is gluing *two big* eyes on his teddy bear.”
- “Jovan is pretending to be a cowboy. She is *galloping* on her horse.”
- “Erin is building a *tall* tower. She put *big* blocks on the *bottom* and *small* blocks on the *top*.”
- “Matty is moving his game piece *four* spaces because the spinner landed on *four*.”
- “Evan is looking out of the window to see what the *weather* is. He is going to report the *weather* for us *today*.”

Expansion

Using the expansion technique, effective teachers expand on what children say by repeating the child’s words in a more grown-up manner. The following examples demonstrate how effective teachers might use expansion throughout the daily routine:

- Child: “Zip.” Teacher: “Zipper up!” (helping child zip coat)
- Child: “I’m going home to Kara’s house.” Teacher: “You’re going to Kara’s house after school?”
- Child: “Go home time.” Teacher: “It’s time to go home!”
- Child: “My turn.” Teacher: “It’s your turn.”
- Child: “Red car.” Teacher: “You want the red car?”

Effective teachers consider a child’s language ability and respond by modeling an expansion just beyond the child’s capabilities. Note in the examples above that the teachers’ responses are only slightly longer and only slightly more complex than the children’s own words. The teachers’ responses maintain the children’s thoughts, yet model how an adult might express them.

Expansion Plus

Using the expansion plus technique, effective teachers expand on what children say by adding another sentence and more information to what the children say. The following examples demonstrate how effective teachers use expansion plus throughout the daily routine:

- Child: “Yellow car go.” Teacher: “You are pushing the *yellow* car. It has *red* tires.”
- Child: “I’m on the swing.” Teacher: “You are on the swing. You are pumping your *legs* to go *faster*.”
- Child: “I’m a good painter.” Teacher: “You are a good *painter*. You painted the *sun* and some *flowers*.”
- Child: “It’s rainy today.” Teacher: “It is rainy today. You are wearing your rain boots so your feet will stay dry.”
- Child: “More milk.” Teacher: “You want *more* milk? I’ll pour some *more* milk into your cup.”

Using expansion plus, effective teachers help children develop conceptual understanding of the world around them and the language that goes with the new understanding.

Repetition

Effective teachers use repetition to model correct articulation, pronunciation, syntax, and grammar while acknowledging children’s communication attempts in a positive manner. The following examples demonstrate how effective teachers use repetition throughout the daily routine:

- Child: “My stirt is lellow.” Teacher: “Your *skirt* is *yellow*! It’s very pretty.”
- Child: “Him shared the car with me.” Teacher: “*He* shared the car with you. That was nice of him.”
- Child: “I ovserbed how tall our plant grew!” Teacher: “You *observed* how *tall* our *plant* grew? How *tall* is it?”
- Child: “We goed to the pawk yetterday.” Teacher: “You *went* to the park *yesterday*? What did you do *there*?”
- Child: “The water in the fishbowl is big.” Teacher: “Yes, the water in the fishbowl is *high*. Oscar has plenty of room to swim.”

Using repetition, effective teachers help children understand the rules of language.

SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNERS

PreK General Overview

CKLA PreK provides a variety of opportunities and materials to support the diverse needs of PreK students. Early childhood classrooms are typically made up of students from a variety of backgrounds and with a wide range of experiences. All students, regardless of background and experience, display patterns of strength and weakness across areas of learning. Teachers strive to support students across instructional contexts, varying their levels of support in response to students' needs.

CKLA PreK materials provide students with a range of skills and abilities with opportunities for participation across all contexts of instruction. For example:

- During **read-alouds**, interactive opportunities include both literal (less challenging) and inferential (more challenging) questions related to the text. Responses are given both by using gestures and expressive language.
- **Image Cards** provide additional visual support to read-alouds and other activities, providing child-friendly, concrete visual references for content and skills.
- **Vocabulary** is developed through verbal definitions, physical demonstration, and examples and nonexamples.
- **Extension Activities** involve materials that can be adapted to scaffold students in a variety of ways; teachers can provide more or less structure and input depending on the needs of the students.
- **Classroom Routines**, such as taking attendance, rely on both visual and verbal prompts that can be individually tailored to students' needs.
- **Small Group** activities often include suggested 'rounds' of play that increase with difficulty and give teachers the choice to move forward to increase the level of challenge or repeat levels of play that prove challenging.

- **Transition Cards** provide repeated opportunities for practicing information on a daily basis, and can be used to require a verbal or gestural response from students, depending on their needs.
- **Learning Center** instructions provide guidance on ways to provide more structure and support to students early in the domain and more independence later in the domain.
- **Teaching Tips** are included in sidebars that give ideas for ways to extend and reinforce content and skills.
- **Pausing Points** include many suggestions and extra activities that both reinforce and extend learning.
- **Domain Assessments** involve manipulatives and receptive language for demonstration of knowledge.
- **Family Letters** suggest ways parents can support and reinforce learning at home through everyday activities. They also include high-quality texts and Nursery Rhymes and Songs that parents can use to support students' learning.
- **Activity Pages** provide child-friendly, engaging ways for parents and teachers to provide structured learning opportunities that can be adapted to students with a variety of skills and abilities.

RECOMMENDED CORE KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

PreK General Overview

For Teachers

1. Core Knowledge website: <http://www.coreknowledge.org>
2. *Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence and Teacher Handbook*. Edited by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and Alice Wiggins (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2009) ISBN 978-1-933486-05-5
Also available to download for free online: www.coreknowledge.org/the-PreK-sequence

Available from the Core Knowledge Store

<http://books.coreknowledge.org/home.php?cat=364>

Core Knowledge Stop and Think Songbook

Fifteen lively and engaging original songs designed to reinforce the Stop and Think approach and the steps of each Core Knowledge early childhood social skill. Lyrics included with the CD. Your children will love these songs!

Core Knowledge Social Skills Posters

Fourteen attractive, full-color posters printed on durable, coated card stock. The front of each poster includes photographs of PreK children modeling the specific social skill and lists each step, including suggestions for the teacher. The back of each poster includes the lyrics of the corresponding song from *The Core Knowledge Stop and Think Songbook*.

PreK Classroom Pictorial Schedule Cards

A set of 19 colorful cards, depicting daily activities in the PreK schedule, that have been designed especially for use by Core Knowledge PreK programs. Activities portrayed include: arrival, breakfast, circle time (2), small group time, read-aloud time (2), planning time, center time, clean up, review time, outside play, lunch, snack, nap, rhythm & movement, dismissal, special time, and field trip.

For Parents

1. *What Your Preschooler Needs to Know*. Edited by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and Linda Bevilacqua (Bantam Dell, 2008) ISBN 978-0385341981
2. *What Your Preschooler Needs to Know: Activity Book 1*. Written by Linda Bevilacqua and Susan B. Hitchcock and illustrated by Barbara Gibson (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2008) ISBN 978-1933486222
3. *What Your Preschooler Needs to Know: Activity Book 2*. Written by Linda Bevilacqua and Susan B. Hitchcock and illustrated by Barbara Gibson (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2008) ISBN 978-1933486239

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General Overview

PreK

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www.coreknowledge.org

