# **Virtual Kit: Vocabulary and Early Literacy**

**Kit QT**

Early childhood is a critical period for young children’s language and literacy development. The primary prevention of reading difficulties is to ensure that young children develop strong language skills and engage in meaningful experiences filled with print, literacy play, storybook reading, and writing (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

The *National Early Literacy Panel NELP* (2008) conducted a synthesis of scientific research in the early literacy skills of children birth through five. They identified knowledge, skills and abilities that young children need to learn to improve later literacy development.Based on the *NELP* Report, four areas have emerged as important for young children’s early literacy experiences: oral language (which includes vocabulary knowledge), phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print knowledge (National Institute for Literacy, 2009).

Young children’s vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in both reading/listening comprehension and decoding. Beginning readers use their word knowledge to decode by matching the phonological representation to a known word (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009). For comprehension tasks, vocabulary can be thought of as “little pieces of knowledge” that provide background information necessary to comprehend both oral and written language (Neuman, 2011). A child’s vocabulary size at age 3 is one of the strongest predictors of their 3rd grade reading achievement (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009).

Families and professionals have an opportunity and responsibility to incorporate language and literacy enhancing experiences into children’s daily lives. To do this, they must understand the most current research in early literacy and the evidence-based practices associated with supporting young children’s language and literacy development. This Virtual KIT was designed to provide an overview of vocabulary and early literacy, birth to five.

**Show me now! (I need this tomorrow.)**

These websites will help you find an evidence-based practice or the evidence base for your practices.

* [Shoot for the SsTaRS: A Strategy for Teaching Vocabulary to Promote Emergent Literacy](http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Shoot-for-the-SSTaRS-Strategy.aspx)
* [Vocabulary Development with English Language Learners](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/32556/)

**What does this look like in practice? (I have a little more time to read about this.)**

* [The Foundational Role of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Early Literacy](http://vimeo.com/15739132)
* [The Educational Effects of a Vocabulary Intervention on Preschoolers’ Word Knowledge and Conceptual Development: A Cluster-Randomized Trial](http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/88072/RRQ.46.3.3.pdf?sequence=1) (.pdf)
* [Causal Supports for Early Word Learning](http://www.umich.edu/~rdytolrn/pdf/wordlearning.pdf) (.pdf)
* [Repeated Interactive Read-Alouds in Preschool and Kindergarten](https://www.readingrockets.org/article/repeated-interactive-read-alouds-preschool-and-kindergarten)

**What does the ECRC have on this topic?**

Below are selected resources from the Early Childhood Resource Center. For additional resources related to the literacy go to the KITS Early Child Resource Center and click on ECRC catalogue, or call (620) 421-6550 ext. 1638 for personal assistance.

* Apel, K. & Masterson, J. (2001). *Beyond baby talk: from speaking to spelling: A guide to language and literacy development for parents and caregivers.* New York: Three Rivers Press.
* Beauchat, K. A., Blamey, K. L., & Philippakos, Z. A. (2012). *Effective Read-Alouds for Early Literacy*. New York: Guilford Press.
* Dickinson, D. K., & Neuman, S. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (Vol. 2). New York: Guilford Press.
* Enzell, H. K. & Justice, L. M. (2005).  *Shared storybook reading: building young children’s language and emergent literacy skills.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
* Farstrup, A. E. & Samuels, S. J. (eds.) (2008).  *What research has to say about vocabulary instruction.* Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.
* Hamilton, C. E., & Schwanenflugel, P. J. (2011). *Paved for success: building vocabulary and language development in young learners*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
* Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
* Pinkham, A. M. , Kaefer, T. & Neuman, S. B. (2012).  *Knowledge development in early childhood: sources of learning and classroom implications*. New York: Guilford Press.

**How can I find training materials on this topic?**

* [Language and Vocabulary: Florida’s VPK Teacher Toolkit](http://www.flvpkonline.org/teachertoolkit/langVoc/index2.htm)
* [Dialogic Reading Practices: Connect Module 6](http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-6)
* [Dialogic Reading Video Series](http://www.getreadytoread.org/early-learning-childhood-basics/early-literacy/dialogic-reading-video-series)
* [Common Core and Early Literacy: Webinar: The Foundational Roles of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Early Literacy](http://vimeo.com/15739132)
* Visit the KITS Collaborative Calendar to find out if there might be an upcoming training related to this topic.

**What if I still need help?**

Contact KITS by e-mail to request assistance or by calling 1-800-362-0390 ext. 1618.

**If you thought this kit was helpful, you might also like ….**

* Kansas Kids Ready for Learning: Language and Literacy <http://readyforlearning.net/html/langdev.shtml>

**Evaluation**

Please take a minute to complete a brief survey to let us know what you think about this virtual kit, and what other topics you would like to see addressed in the future.

**References:**

ASHA. (2013). Typical speech and language development Retrieved March 18, 2013, from <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development>

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel. Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy.

National Institute for Literacy. (2009). Early Beginnings: Early Literacy Knowledge and Insturction. Jessup, MD: U.S. Department of Education.

Neuman, S. (2011). *The Effects of Vocabulary Interventions for Children At-Risk: Evidence from a meta-Analytic Review*. Paper presented at the Third Annual RTI Summit, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico.

Roskos, K. A., Tabors, P., O. , & Lenhart, L. A. (2009). *Oral Language and Early Literacy in Preschool*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Snow, C., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.