Professional Development in the Science of Reading for Ohio Pre-K Educators

Lexia® LETRS® for Early Childhood Educators (LETRS EC) has been approved by the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce to **fulfill the requirements of Section 265.330 (A)(2) of House Bill 33** for pre-kindergarten intervention specialists, English learner teachers, reading specialists, and instructional coaches for pre-kindergarten only. It is also **approved by the Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association** (OCCRRA), offering participants the opportunity to **receive 36.5 credit hours** for completing the coursework.

Ohio admins!
Meet HB 33 by June 30, 2025

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators is a professional development course specifically designed for educators and care providers of young children. LETRS EC provides early childhood educators with literacy professional development focused on the science of reading to teach the foundational skills young students (pre-K–K) need before learning to read and write. Course materials are designed to include developmentally appropriate content, providing the in-depth knowledge pre-K–K teachers need to teach language and literacy skills.

The Lexia® LETRS® Suite has long been recognized as **the gold standard of professional development**, where teachers gain the knowledge essential to becoming successful teachers of language and literacy instruction. Authored by Dr. Lucy Hart Paulson and Dr. Louisa C. Moats, LETRS EC provides in-depth knowledge and tools that early childhood educators can use with any well-designed early literacy program.

The LETRS EC course has three primary goals:

- Focus on definitions and concepts related to early literacy and language, the process involved, and the developmental sequence by which these skills develop.

- Expand strategies used to design and implement rich learning activities that are engaging, effective, evidence-based, and developmentally appropriate.

- Describe and discuss assessment procedures to make the best use of data in teaching the youngest learners.

Research

A substantial body of research supports the benefits of intentionally teaching young children basic skills—in developmentally appropriate ways—to build their foundational learning across the developmental domains. Young children learn in a variety of contexts, including structured and semi-structured settings. All activities should be planned, playful, and intentional, with clear expectations for developmentally appropriate learning outcomes.

Some notable research that informs LETRS for Early Childhood Educators is listed here.

Early Childhood Instructional Principles	Supporting Research
Simple View of Reading (SVR)	The theoretical model of the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Hoover & Tunmer, 2020) provides the foundation for the concepts discussed in this course. Competent reading is dependent on being able to decode words (word recognition) and make meaning of what is read (language comprehension). The development of each of these components begins in the preschool years.
Reading Rope	Hollis Scarborough, an eminent developmental psychologist and reading researcher, depicted the attainment of fluent reading as the progressive interweaving of strands or subskills in a rope (2001). The early stages in the development of these crucial skills is described in detail in the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators course.
Child-centered and Teacher-directed	The best instruction for children includes a balance between child-centered and teacher-directed approaches to learning (Landry, Swank, Smith, Assel, & Gunnewig, 2006; National Association of the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] & National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education [NAECS/SDE], 2009; National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008). The results of a large study conducted by Connor, Morrison, and Slominski (2006) determined that whole-group instruction (as an explicit meaning-focused routine) and play (as an implicit meaning-focused activity) positively contributed to vocabulary growth in young children. Small-group instruction was more effective than whole-group instruction for alphabet learning, whereas play and child-led activities showed little growth in letter learning.
Phonological and Phonemic Awareness	Phoneme awareness is an essential underpinning for learning to decode and, ultimately, to read and spell words accurately and automatically (Kilpatrick, 2015; Miles & Ehri, 2019).
Evidence-based Curricula	The strongest early childhood curricula include components to teach oral language and vocabulary, knowledge of letters, and phonological awareness (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Frede, 1995; Landry et al., 2006; Whitehurst et al., 1994). Landry et al. found that the use of a focused language and literacy curriculum provides significant benefits for children, especially in receptive and expressive vocabulary skills and even when teachers were in their first year of training (2006).

Professional Learning Content

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators is a professional development course specifically intended for pre-K and kindergarten teachers, from those just starting out in the classroom to those with years of experience. This course empowers teachers to understand the what, why, and how of early literacy instruction, based on the most current scientific research. The program answers what the key components of early language and literacy instruction include and is detailed in the units outlined below:

- **Unit 1: Early Literacy Foundations—**Participants learn about the early literacy foundations and the research influences on early childhood policies and programming, including developmentally appropriate practices (DAP). A basic framework of assessment is described along with predictive indicators for literacy learning across the developmental domains.

- **Unit 2: Oral Language Connections—**Topics include a description of oral language structures and stages of development linked to assessment procedures. Instructional strategies to build oral language foundations include language facilitation techniques, questioning routines, and interactive storybook reading procedures.

- **Unit 3: Phonological "PH"oundations—**This unit describes the developmental sequences of phonological awareness and connects them to assessment. Instructional strategies include embedded routines and intentional activities for helping young children develop these important skills.

- **Unit 4: Print Knowledge ABC to XYZ—**This unit addresses print knowledge in the three component areas of print concepts, alphabet knowledge, and writing. Developmental stages and trends of how young children learn print knowledge are described along with assessment procedures in measuring these skills. Evidence-based teaching methods are included with strategies to facilitate young children's print knowledge.

## Bridge to Practice: Application of Learning

Bridge to Practice activities at the end of each unit provide opportunities for teachers to demonstrate their understanding of the course content by taking the research into their own classrooms or participating in case studies of realistic classroom scenarios. Teachers synthesize new information, explore what changes might need to be made in their instructional delivery, and reflect on the implications of this new understanding.

Examples of Bridge to Practice activities include daily schedules and routines for oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge; using an early literacy checklist for student assessment purposes; and planning repeated reading lessons. In addition, in the first session, participants will select three students to follow through the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators course by collecting data, making observation notes, and considering how specific skills and strategies might be helpful in meeting those students' needs.

The Bridge to Practice activities help participants create portfolios of work that reflect their professional growth. Completing this portfolio is a requirement for successful completion of the course.

Online Resources

In addition to downloadable Bridge to Practice activities, classroom resources, and the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators eBook, the new eBook edition of Good Talking Words is available in the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators platform. Designed to help educators teach young children foundational communication and social interaction skills, Good Talking Words provides a series of 10 engaging, playful, and developmentally appropriate lessons in a direct instructional approach.
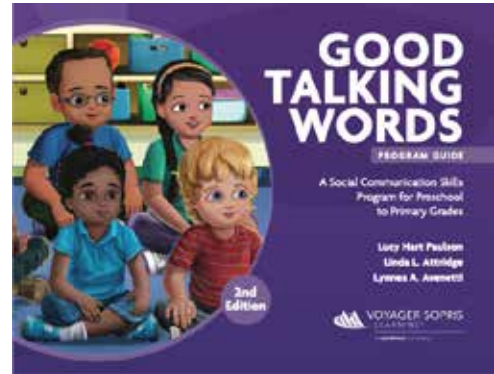
Professional Learning Design

LETRS EC is provided in a blended format and is delivered in a year. It includes four units of instruction, each of which is divided into sessions. Each unit of the course addresses a critical component of early learning and literacy. Each unit is composed of two to four learning sessions. Sessions in the manual follow the same sequence as the online sessions. To complete the course, participants must read the manual, complete the online activities, and attend the two group sessions.

The time to complete the reading, online, and Bridge to Practice activities will vary, but as a rough guide, LETRS for Early Childhood Educators takes approximately 32 to 38 hours of individual study to complete.

- The online course (including reading/participant manual) takes between two and eight hours per unit, depending on the unit.

- The Bridge to Practice application activities (online course) take between 30 minutes and two hours per unit, depending on the unit.

- The face-to-face/live online professional learning sessions take six hours of training after completing Units 1-2 and six hours of training after completing Units 3-4 in the LETRS online learning platform, for a total of 12 hours of training.

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators				
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Number of sessions	2	4	2	2
Estimated hours to complete unit	3.5−4.5	7.5−9.5	4.5−5	4.5−6

For a more detailed account of the hours needed to complete each unit, please see:
LETRS for Early Childhood Educators Estimated Time to Complete by Unit

Assessment & Growth Monitoring

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators Pretest

At the start of LETRS for Early Childhood Educators, participants take a 20-question pretest that is intended to document their knowledge. The pretest is untimed so participants can reference their notes or manual.

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators Check for Understanding

Check for Understanding assessments (typically four to five questions) are presented at the end of each session. These assessments are untimed so participants can reference their notes or manual. They will see their score and incorrect answers as soon as they finish a Check for Understanding assessment, which may be attempted up to two times. The best score will be recorded in the online learning platform.

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators Unit Assessments

Unit assessments (10 questions) are given at the end of each LETRS for Early Childhood Educators unit. The unit assessments are untimed so participants can reference their notes or manual. Participants will see their score and incorrect answers as soon as they finish a unit assessment. Each unit assessment may be attempted up to two times. The best score will be recorded in the online learning platform.

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators Posttest

A posttest is given at the end of the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators course of study. The posttest is not timed, and participants can reference their notes or manual. The posttest may only be attempted one time.

Growth Monitoring

LETRS for Early Childhood Educators offers reporting at the state, region, district, and school levels. Users with these levels of access will see live data related to activity, progress, and scores. The administrative homepage shows various data points supporting the implementation: license purchased, teachers enrolled, teachers started, and cumulative active users.

An administrator or campus leader can note participant completion, progress, and assessment scores, and has the ability to drill down to identify areas of struggle.

Within the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators Online Application/Platform, a district or school can retrieve a variety of information that can be used to track teacher participation and progress. The following is a high-level overview of some of the types of data, reports, and information a district or school can retrieve to inform decisions and identify trends and gaps:

- **District/School Overview and Summary—**This is a quick visualization of utilization of active licenses, participants within the district/school, and where the participants are in the course content.

- **Progress Reports—**Users can view cohort and participant scores for each assessment (pre-/posttest and unit) and quickly see where participants are in the program, including which unit and/or volume has been completed and its completion date.

- **Pacing Check—**This is an embedded feature that uses a vertical marker to provide the user a visual indication of which participants have progressed to or past an expected spot in the course content. Users can view participants with Furthest Progress and Least Progress.

- **Participant Details—**Users can view details for individual participants, including the participant's last login, license status, course progress, how much time was spent in a unit, and all scores and certificates earned by the participant.

For additional tracking and filtering, each district and school has the flexibility to create its own cohort(s). A cohort is a group of participants within the same course. A participant can be in multiple cohorts or no cohort. This is similar to creating student groups for progress-monitoring or tracking purposes.

Motivation & Engagement

Research has found that educators need multilayered support to transfer understanding of a topic to the classroom and ensure sustained improvement in student learning. Thus, LETRS includes interactive, multimedia supports like classroom video modeling, drag-and-drop exercises, and journal-type entries, all of which build on and reinforce the knowledge educators acquire in the online or face-to-face sessions. LETRS is relevant to teachers and administrators in general education and special education and uses accessible language and interactive exercises in both the face-to-face and online sessions to help educators understand the science behind the best ways to teach reading to today's students.

About Lexia

For 40 years, Lexia® has been at the forefront in the science of reading revolution, offering trailblazing professional learning, curriculum, and embedded assessment solutions that provide districts with actionable ways to accelerate literacy gains.

Contact the Lexia Ohio team to learn more!