

The Quality Connection

Issue 7

"Hope is born again in the faces of children" - Maya Angelou



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Beyond the Rule

A Path to Quality Care

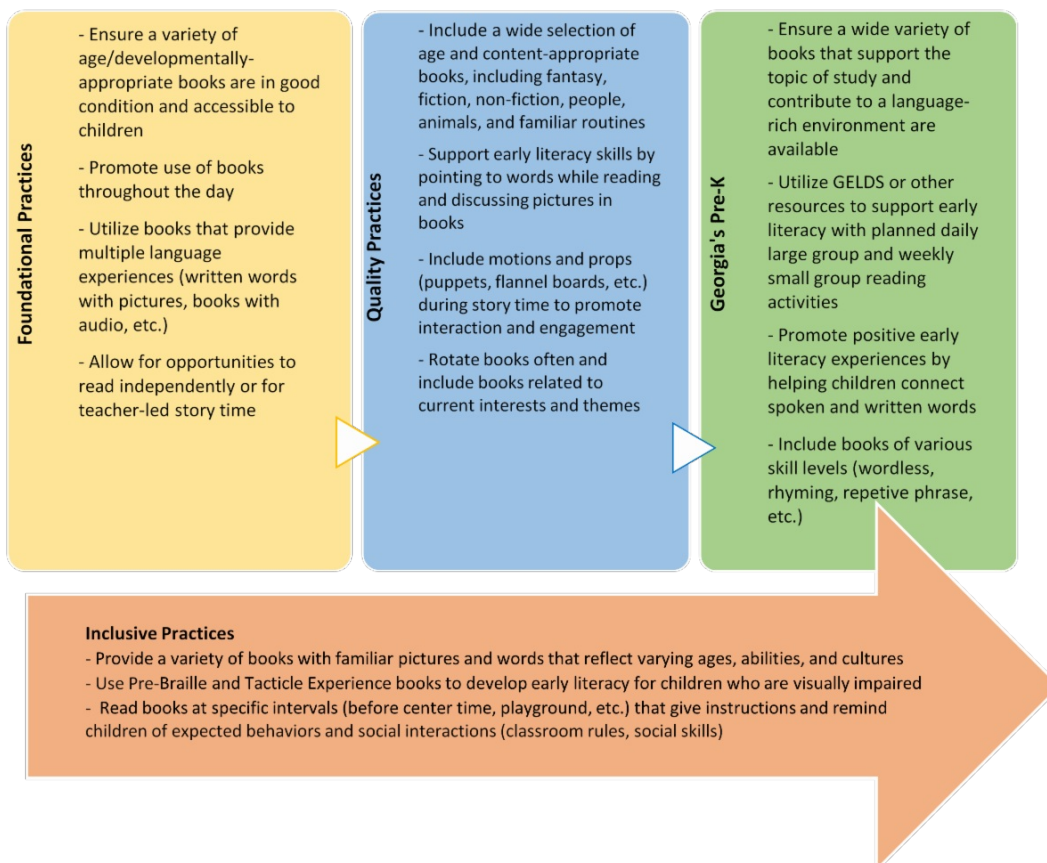


**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Each issue of *The Quality Connection* will focus on one classroom component and will identify connections between requirements and expectations of DECAL's various divisions and what impact each one has on classroom practices around the specific component. *The Quality Connection* will also illustrate how all DECAL programs are part of a quality continuum and are designed to work together towards continuous quality improvement.

This issue will focus on the importance of **books in early literacy development**.

The following chart shows the progression of foundational practices found in Child Care Licensing rules, to practices utilized in Quality Rated and preschool-specific practices found in Georgia's Pre-K. Strategies for Inclusion and Behavior Support should be embedded throughout all levels of quality practices.



Connecting Quality

Facts to Remember

Books in early literacy development

Books play an important part in developing early literacy and learning. Help facilitate children's interest in reading by using engaging, age-appropriate books that contain pictures and words, support listening, and comprehension skills, and promote children's understanding of how printed and spoken language connect. Books also promote emergent literacy skills as children use the pictures to begin recognizing, learning, and understanding new words and vocabulary. Introducing books and reading to children daily, has profound effects on children developmentally. Beginning in infancy, exposure to language and literacy both in child care programs and at home, increases children's language and vocabulary, and social-emotional skills later in life.



Virtual Connections to Early Literacy in a COVID-19 Environment

Childcare providers can use a variety of wonderful opportunities to engage children, support families, and promote early literacy virtually.

Suggestions include:

- Host teacher/peer-led virtual story times.
- Set up virtual small reading groups by hosting limited groups of families and children at scheduled times.
- Host a virtual group literacy activity with students.
- Allow children to suggest/share their favorite stories, and connect them to songs, finger plays and poems.
- Create a virtual platform (i.e., Google Classroom, Facebook, etc.) to share relevant story or literacy activity ideas.

Keep in mind:

- Not all families have access to electronic devices.
- Consider using phone calls, group or individual text messages, as well as, sending information via regular mail.
- Ensure that an adult is involved alongside the child to assist with use of technology and for a quality experience.
- Provide families with "off-screen" literacy activities, to limit children's screen time and promote personal at-home interactions.

Resources available:

- Georgia's Pre-K at Home lesson plans: <http://www.decal.ga.gov/PreK/WelcomeToGAPreKAtHome.aspx>
- Toddler Time at Home lesson plans: <http://www.decal.ga.gov/InstructionalSupports/ToddlerTimeAtHome.aspx>

Click the link for: [From Talking to Reading: How Early Language Builds Literacy](#) , to hear how adults can learn about the connection between early language and early literacy, and how to help build a child's communication and literacy skills.

Click here to listen!

How do books and early/emergent literacy connect to child development and the classroom environment?

Infants

Books should be colorful, engaging and safe to touch

- Teachers read fiction/non-fiction, short board books to individual infants throughout the day
- Teachers point and talk to older infants about familiar pictures in books (Ex. Animals, people, toys, food, etc.)
- Teachers use gestures/finger play that connect to stories/ books

Toddlers & 2's

Books should be varied in topics and easily accessible

- Teachers read books to individual or small groups of interested children during free play
- Teachers encourage toddlers to repeat words and point to pictures in the book
- Teachers allow toddlers to independently select books related to current themes or topics of interest

Preschool 3's & 4's

Books should include printed words, pictures and content

- Teachers read books frequently throughout the day, during both group and informal play times
- Teachers read books with picture or word step-by-step instructions to guide children through an activity (Ex. dancing, cooking, etc)
- Teachers allow opportunities for children to read independently in quiet areas

School Age

Books should range in topic, and encourage discussion

- Teachers read books to students and encourage student-led group and individual reading and discussions
- Teachers read one chapter per day of a chapter book with older students (Ex. 1-5th grade) and provide materials for an optional drawing/art activity related to the story content
- Teachers guide children to use books (Ex. Dictionary, thesaurus, etc.) to look up answers to questions that children ask

***How* can books enhance early/emergent literacy in the classroom environment?**



Children benefit from reading aloud, enjoying special individual attention, reinforcing language and concept development, and working on book handling skills.



Individualize interactions and learning by reading short stories to small groups of interested children during play.



Hand puppets can be used to enhance early literacy when used with popular rhymes and finger plays.



- Additional information and resources
 - Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning/Quality Rated <http://qualityrated.org/>
 - For Provider assistance/inquiries regarding children's behavior, please contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialist Helpline at: 1-833-354-4357 or email inclusion@dec.al.ga.gov
 - For additional language and literacy information, please access the following links:
 - Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) - <http://www.gelds.dec.al.ga.gov/>
 - Cox Campus Language and Literacy Online Training - <https://app.coxcampus.org/courses/categories>
 - All issues of The Quality Connection can be accessed at: <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/Notifications.aspx>



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