

# PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT




# Introduction

Welcome to LENA's Partner Communications Toolkit! This guide is intended to support communication about your organization's partnership with LENA — from drafting press releases to preparing for interviews and presentations.

Sharing information about your LENA program is an important way to generate stakeholder and participant engagement, funding opportunities, and media coverage. Effective messaging goes hand-in-hand with successful program recruitment and management.

Please feel free to reach out to **communications@lena.org** with any questions. We're happy to consult with you on communication strategies and coordinate outreach efforts.

Look for the  icon to find downloadable resources online!

You can find supporting digital resources at [LENA.org/comms-toolkit](https://lena.org/comms-toolkit). Throughout this Toolkit, you will see the  icon. This means that the materials referenced can also be located at the link above.

## Connect with us



X

@LENAEarlyTalk



Facebook

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LinkedIn

LENA Early Talk



YouTube

LENA Early Talk

## Related Resources

### The 14 Talking Tips and more!

The 14 Talking Tips are research-based techniques for increasing early talk with children. This resource, along with many others, are available to share with families and caregivers at [LENA.org/resources](https://lena.org/resources).

### LENA Webinars

See a full list of LENA's recorded and upcoming webinars featuring expert interviews, the latest brain and early language research, and insights and learnings from other LENA program partners. View them at [LENA.org/webinars](https://lena.org/webinars).

### LENA Blog

LENA's blog is full of case studies, detailed summaries of research studies and program evaluations, and personal stories about teachers and parents. Visit [LENA.org/blog](https://lena.org/blog).

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# Useful Terminology

**A new LENA program can often be difficult to describe. Use the terms below to help explain your program to families, funders, the media, or your community.**

**LENA** is a national nonprofit on a mission to transform children's futures through early talk technology and data-driven programs. Their programs help caregivers — both parents and teachers — increase interactive talk with young children. Through locally sponsored initiatives, these programs help communities make measurable improvements in their children's futures at the age when they have the greatest impact and highest return on investment.

*A note on capitalization: For the most part, don't capitalize LENA-specific terms (e.g., LENA clothing, LENA report, LENA device, etc.). Notable exceptions are program and trademarked names (LENA Hub, LENA Online, LENA Start, LENA System, Talking Tips), and LENA Day.*

**LENA Start** is a set of group classes to help families with young children increase interactive talk. During weekly sessions, caregivers receive feedback on how much they're talking, combined with instruction on techniques for talking and reading more with their child.

**LENA Home** helps home visitors support families in increasing interactive talk with their child. Home visitors are provided a number of session topics to choose from, such as shared reading or songs and rhymes, as well as instruction on how to use LENA technology and feedback.

**LENA device:** Refer to the LENA recording device as a "LENA device," and subsequently either "the device" or "the LENA." In informal explanations, use the analogy of a "talk pedometer" rather than a "word counter," since LENA is the only validated measure of conversational turns. Research has shown that turns are more highly correlated with brain development and later outcomes than adult words alone.

**LENA Day** is the preferred term over "recording day," which may raise privacy concerns.

**LENA's "talk pedometer" technology** measures back-and-forth interactions between children and adults. The amount of conversations young children experience has been scientifically linked to brain structure and brain activity, as well as language, literacy, and social-emotional development.



# Crafting Your Message

## LENA Start Recruitment Course

We highly recommend completing our online course at [learn.LENA.org/start-trainings#OnlineCourses](https://learn.LENA.org/start-trainings#OnlineCourses). This course features recruitment advice, tips, and real-life solutions from other LENA partners. Learn how to create your own program **Recruitment Plan** including:

- An elevator pitch that delivers the core messaging of your individual program.
- Identifying your program audience.
- Family outreach.
- Individualizing recruitment materials.



## Key Messages

### LENA's programs are built on a foundation of three truths:

**1. Early talk is key.** You can think of it like the links in a chain:

- We know early talk heavily influences early language development.
- Early language leads to vocabulary and kindergarten readiness.
- Kindergarten readiness strongly predicts 3rd-grade reading scores, and 3rd-grade reading is a central factor in high school graduation rates — which in turn heavily influence all the life outcomes that follow.



Each one of these factors has been heavily researched, so we know it's all connected: **If you want to give children every chance to succeed, you must address early talk.**



## 2. Families (and other conversational partners) are the secret sauce.

Increasing interactive talk not only supports responsive caregiving and cognitive development, but also links to emotional health, social-emotional skills, self regulation, and early literacy skills.

Research indicates that adults overestimate how much they talk, and those who talk the least actually overestimate the most.

The challenge in early child care settings can be even steeper. Early childhood teachers deal with multiple children at once, and tending to primary physical needs generally takes priority. There can be a perception that a quiet room is a successful room, so talk levels are often low.

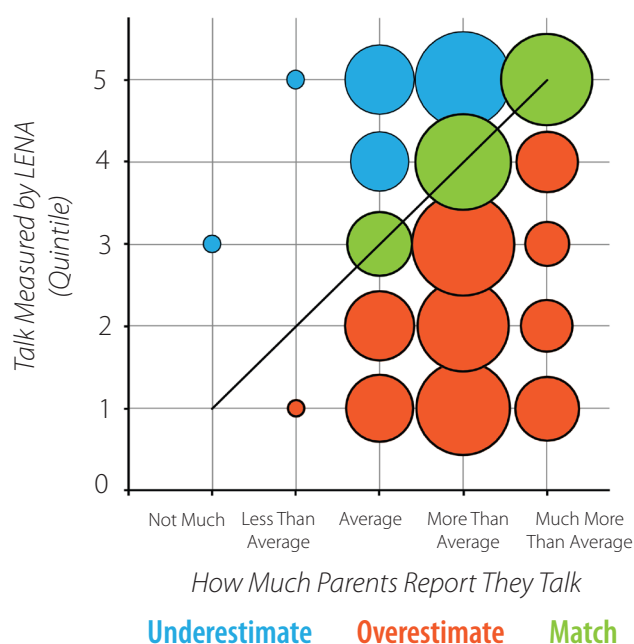
## 3. You can't improve what you don't measure.

As with any type of behavior change, regular feedback is needed to drive improvement.

What sets LENA-based initiatives apart is the fact that LENA tools serve a dual purpose. They provide valuable information and objective feedback to families and teachers. LENA data supports direct evaluation of the initiative. This enables programs to learn and adapt rather than implement and hope.

But, it can't just be about the technology. Behavior change is not easy, and caregivers need additional supports (tips, strategies, and coaching) to go with the objective feedback that LENA provides.

### Parent Talk: Subjective Belief vs. Objective Measurement



# FAQs

Answers to the most frequently asked questions about LENA! Have a question that isn't listed here? Please send it to us at [communications@lena.org](mailto:communications@lena.org).

## How do the programs work?

**LENA Start** and **LENA Home** are designed for families with young children. These programs provide caregivers with coaching, curricula, and measurable feedback using LENA technology. These programs show families how to make lasting increases in the conversations they have with their children.



## How does the technology work?

The **LENA device** is often referred to as a “**talk pedometer**” — instead of counting steps, it measures a child’s language environment. One day each week, a child wears a small LENA device in comfortable clothing. The device captures the child’s audio environment for that **LENA Day**.

LENA software processes the audio into data about talk, which is presented in clear reports that are shared with caregivers. The most important LENA metric is conversational turns, or serve-and-return interactions, which have been scientifically linked to brain structure and function, language development, social-emotional development, early literacy skills, and long-term academic outcomes. For more information, visit [LENA.org/technology](https://lena.org/technology) and [LENA.org/conversational-turns](https://lena.org/conversational-turns).

## How is LENA unique? How is it different from other baby wearables?

LENA is the only validated tool for measuring conversational turns in early childhood. LENA is also used and trusted as the standard in measuring talk by more than 400 research institutions around the world. Using LENA technology, researchers have published more than 200 peer-reviewed studies on early language environments.

## What languages can LENA be used with?

LENA programs are primarily delivered in English and Spanish, but the technology has been validated in many other languages, including Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, and Arabic. No matter what language is used, caregivers can see changes and track their progress over time.

## What results have you seen?

In addition to providing objective feedback to families and caregivers, LENA programs have built-in effectiveness measures in place. LENA has seen evidence of increased adult words and increased conversational turns across all programs.

**For example:** LENA Start graduates show significant increases in adult words and conversational turns, particularly in families who began the program below the 50th percentile in either metric. Children whose parents participate in the program gain nearly two months of developmental skill every month, and research shows that the positive benefits endure in the long term.

Explore more highlights and outcomes at [LENA.org/effectiveness](https://lena.org/effectiveness).

## Since caregivers are aware they are being recorded, does that change their behavior?

Initially this may happen — it's what's known as the "observer effect." For most adults, however, it's really difficult to keep up unnatural behavior over multiple hours, let alone multiple LENA Days.

## What about privacy concerns?

LENA takes privacy and data security very seriously. LENA technology does not understand or transcribe words in any language. It cannot play back audio. What's produced is data: counts of words, conversational turns, and so forth. For more information, visit LENA's privacy page ([LENA.org/privacy-policy](https://lena.org/privacy-policy)). Learn about our voluntary internal audits for data security here: [LENA.org/security](https://lena.org/security).

## Are these programs sensitive to cultural differences and the different ways caregivers may talk to children?

The science is clear: There is great power in fostering conversational turns with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. However, the nature of those turns (e.g., how they are achieved, what language, what subject, etc.) can and should vary widely. LENA never tells people what to say or how to say it. Adults are introduced to a variety of strategies and techniques, then choose what resonates best with their family.



# Sharing Your Message

When your program is first beginning to launch, a great way to begin spreading the word to families, is to send out a **press release** to your local media outlets and to share a similar announcement in your organization's newsletter or on your website. For more suggestions and guidance on how to reach out to media outlets, see "Six Steps for Successful Public Relations" in the appendix.



We provide press release templates for our partners to use when launching a site. Find full versions of these editable templates at [LENA.org/comms-toolkit](https://lena.org/comms-toolkit).

## **[ORGANIZATION NAME] Launches New Initiative To Close the Talk Gap**

### **LENA Start® Improves School Readiness for Infants and Toddlers 0-33 Months**

**[TOWN, STATE, DATE]** — LENA and **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** are pleased to announce an initiative to improve kindergarten readiness by encouraging parents to talk more with their children. [LENA Start®](#) features parent classes in English and Spanish that employ LENA "talk pedometer" technology to measure how much parents are talking with their children, and how much children are responding. The program will launch at **[DATE, LOCATION]**.

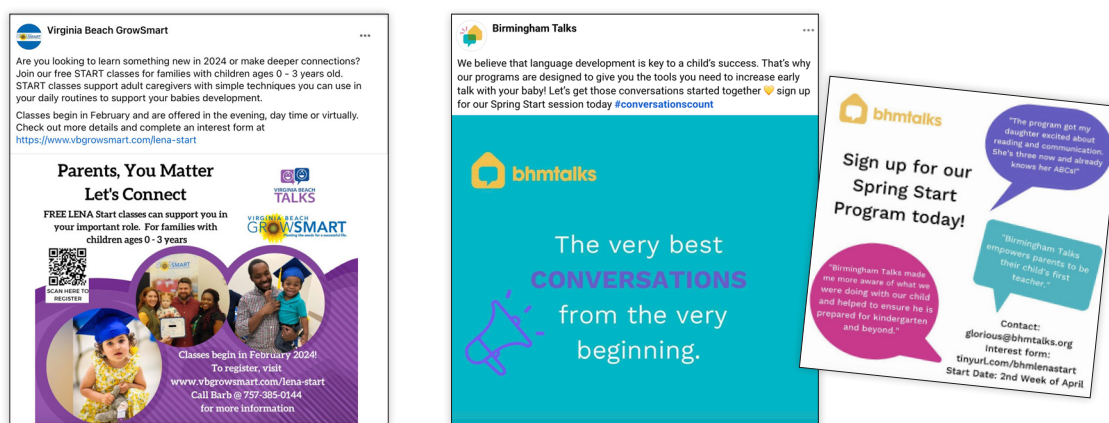
# Tips for Social Media Success

Using social media is a great way to stay connected with your community and raise awareness about your LENA program. Every organization's needs are different, so it is important to first ask yourself:

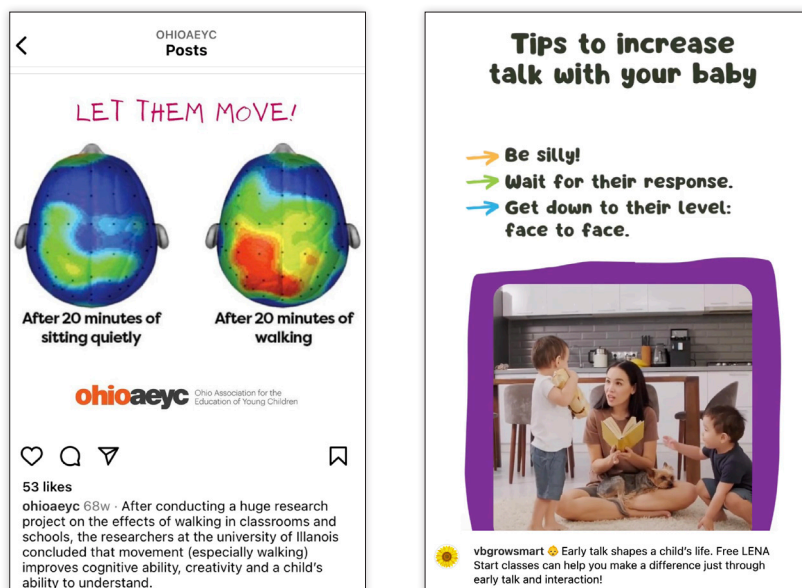
1. Who am I trying to reach?
2. What do I want my audience to know/learn?
3. How do I want my audience to engage with my posts?

Use your answers to help guide the type of content you create!

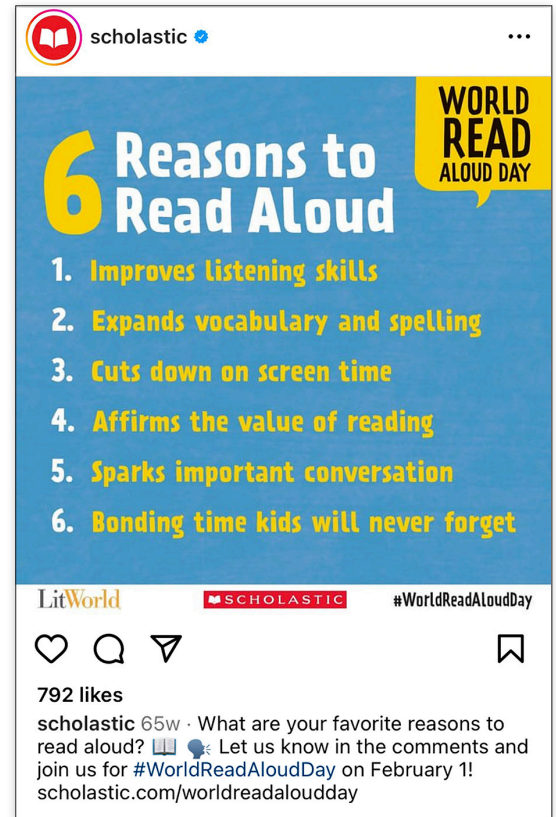
**Consider creating a graphic** or image with the relevant information you want to convey, especially for special events. Not only are these more visually compelling than plain text, they're often the trick to fitting more information into your character-limited post.



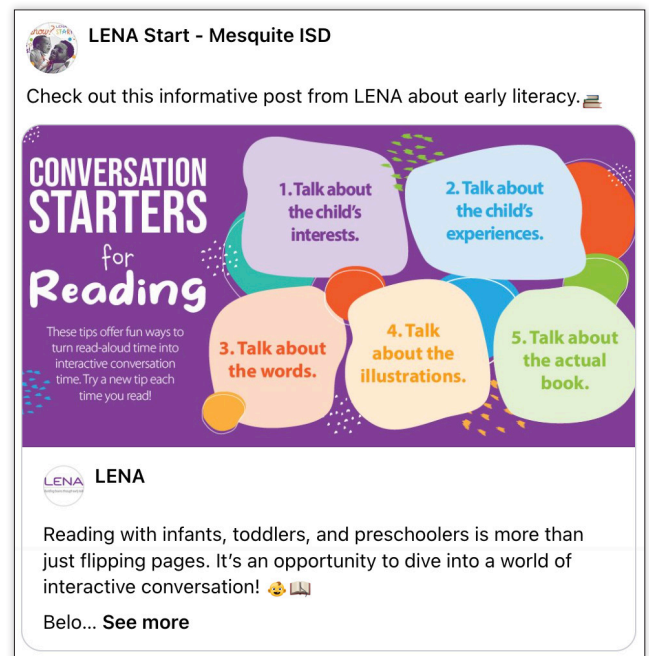
**Write clear posts that help readers understand your topic.** Remove unnecessary hashtags and confusing acronyms. Write clearly with correct grammar and punctuation. Avoid abbreviations. Use clear images to support your message.



**Tie your posts to what's going on in the world.** Take advantage of trending “holidays” to generate easy, engaging content and connect with a wider audience!



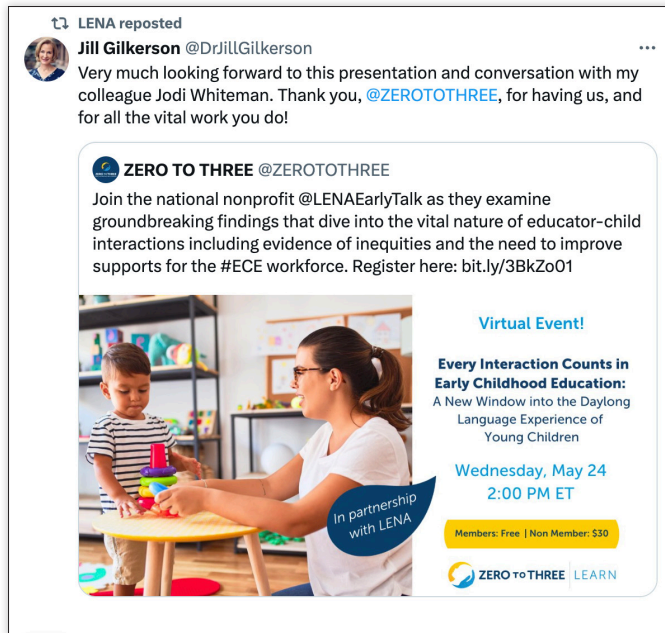
**Consider scheduling evergreen content** to ease the burden of constant content creation. Using a graphic from LENA's **social media toolkit** or reposting relevant content makes things even easier!



## Community Management and Engagement

Social media provides an opportunity to engage with your community in an authentic way. Don't be afraid of two-way communication — back-and-forth conversation is key!

**Tag LENA (@LENAEarlyTalk) and other partner organizations** in your posts so that they will be seen, shared, and engaged with.





# Sharing LENA Resources: Dos and Don'ts

We always encourage organizations to share stories and pictures from their LENA programs, along with helpful resources and tips for caregivers. However, we also ask that sites respect the usage and sharing restrictions that apply to all copyrighted materials. If in doubt, refer to the guidance below or reach out to [communications@lena.org](mailto:communications@lena.org) with any questions.

## Quick Tips:

### Do:

- Remember the two 'As': attribution and approval.
- Always credit LENA when sharing copyrighted information. Contact LENA for approval before altering copyrighted materials or publicly distributing them.
- Rather than posting proprietary resources directly (like the 14 Talking Tips), link to the download page instead. All free downloads can be found at [LENA.org/resources](https://lena.org/resources).
- Contact LENA with requests for resources that would be helpful to you. We may already have something that would meet your needs or be able to work with you to create it.

### Don't:

- Alter LENA materials without written permission.
- Remove LENA logos, graphics, or copyright notices from materials.
- Distribute copyrighted program resources to program participants without permission.
- Post copyrighted materials on a public website.
- Present LENA materials or resources as your own.

## Avoid sharing copyrighted program materials externally.

LENA program resources and materials are provided for distribution to your team and program participants. Do not post LENA materials on your public website or share digital or physical copies externally without prior permission. If you would like to point someone to a helpful LENA resource, please limit to those LENA makes publicly available via our social media accounts, blog, and website. Please share links to download a resource rather than reposting the resource itself. Check [LENA.org/resources](https://lena.org/resources), [LENA.org/webinars](https://lena.org/webinars), and [LENA.org/blog](https://lena.org/blog) for informative content to share.

## Remember to credit LENA when sharing LENA materials.

When sharing information with LENA as the original author, include full attribution, including a copyright notice, LENA logo, and link back to LENA's website as applicable. Please do not remove any copyright notices or any accompanying LENA logos. Importantly, never present or re-brand any LENA materials as your own.

## Avoid altering LENA resources or curricula.

We try to make our programs and materials flexible and generally applicable to most organizations that use LENA. Do not alter our curricula or materials without express written permission and approval of the final product.



# Recruiting Families for LENA Programs

Families unfamiliar with LENA may not immediately see the benefits that your LENA program may offer, and may be reluctant to sign up to join. You want your marketing message to create a personal connection with potential families. Think of a need common to your community families — and how LENA Start or Home might help solve that issue.

## 1. The problem

The “problem” identifies a need, desire, or challenge a caregiver has. Use a brief message, known as a hook, to address that need.

## 2. The solution

The “solution” frames LENA Start as a way to support families in solving the “problem”. Add key phrases that quickly describe the program and how it supports participants.

## 3. The ask

The “ask” encourages parents to attend a LENA Start Orientation session or to sign up for a LENA Home program. Provide more details about your program: Orientation date, time, and location, contact information, and any incentives.

**In Action:** Visit Lesson 3: What Are You Saying in our online Recruitment course at [learn.LENA.org/start-trainings#OnlineCourses](https://learn.LENA.org/start-trainings#OnlineCourses) to see how LENA Start partner Mesquite ISD uses their elevator pitch to start a conversation with families.

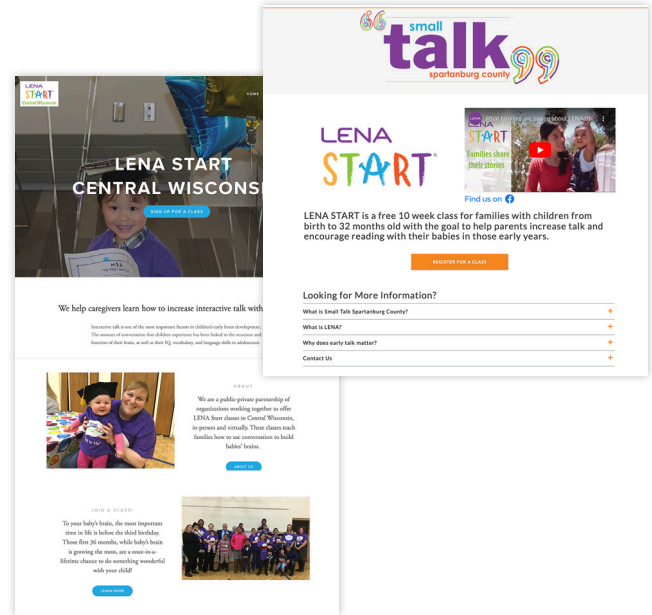


# Recruitment Techniques for Digital Platforms

When introducing LENA on websites and social media, it's important to capture interest without overwhelming families with too many details at once.

## Create a program webpage

- Adding a page to your organization's website or creating a dedicated website for your LENA program is an effective strategy to consolidate and share information with interested families.
- List the dates, times, locations, and duration of upcoming classes.
- Add contact information for your organization's primary recruitment coordinator.
- Consider embedding a form on the page for interested families to indicate interest.
- Add a link to LENA's program recruitment webpage, [info.LENA.org/lena-start-for-families](https://info.LENA.org/lena-start-for-families), to explain how LENA works using family-friendly language.



## Example Websites

- **Website**  
Marathon County (Wisconsin): [lenastartmc.org](https://lenastartmc.org)
- **Web page**  
Chatham County Partnership for Children (North Carolina): [chathamkids.org/lena-grow](https://chathamkids.org/lena-grow)

## Provide options to engage

Post a brief description of the program followed by an invitation link to attend an orientation or sign up for classes. Give families options for dates and times, along with asking families for their name and best form of contact for follow up (i.e., phone or email).

**In Action:** Read Aloud Delaware passed out recruitment flyers to partners who then distributed them to the families they served. The flyers detail several ways to sign up for classes; website, email, or phone. Families can choose the option that works best for them.



## Build Excitement

Highlight incentives through photo sharing, announcements, and weekly challenges. You could create an announcement that shares the incentive earned for completing a particular phase of recruitment. e.g., “Earn a \$25 gift card for every family you recruit to LENA Start.”

**In Action:** LENA Start Marathon County incorporated weekly challenges on Facebook. They presented it as a friendly competition that incentivized parent-to-parent interaction for current LENA families. Prizes were distributed to weekly winners after each challenge.

Here are some other examples LENA Start sites have used for weekly challenges:

- **Talking Tips Challenge:** Take a pic of you and your child participating in one of the 14 Talking Tips.
- **Vest Challenge:** Take a pic of your child wearing their vest on their first LENA Day.
- **Nap Time Challenge:** During your child’s nap time, introduce LENA Start to as many friends and family members as you can and invite them to our next Orientation session via this link/QR code. (Note: this challenge is for parents who have already expressed interest/registered for LENA Start.)



## Develop a promo video

Create and post a one-minute intro video to LENA that highlights program details to social media platforms/website. Incorporating LENA family graduate and educator stories in your video is a great way to build credibility.

## Digitize Recruitment Materials

Create electronic recruitment documents that can be uploaded on multiple virtual platforms for recruitment purposes, such as:

- Recruitment flyers, caregiver interest form, parent referral card.
- Add questions to e-forms that will inform your virtual engagement strategy.
  - What is your home language?
  - How comfortable are you with using video meetings?
  - How did you hear about LENA?
- Add QR codes to flyers, yard signs, website profiles.





# Sharing Program Results

Data helps to illuminate the scope and effectiveness of a program. Successful outcome data alongside a compelling narrative will help to win funders, potential partners, and media to your cause.

Note: Implementing with fidelity is key to consistently achieving a program's desired outcomes. Reporting results in instances where the program did not meet LENA's fidelity requirements must include a notice that the program was not implemented as designed. Please feel free to reach out to LENA with any questions on reporting and fidelity requirements.

**Before you begin sharing data, consider a few questions:**

## Who am I talking to, and why?

Match the data you share with the interests of your audience. A few general recommendations to guide you through sharing data with common stakeholders are:

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Key message</b>	<b>Metric(s)</b>
<b>Journalist/Media</b>	Share data that communicates how you are serving the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of families served to date.</li> <li>Number of participants served from a certain zip code or total number of zip codes served to date.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational partner (potential or existing)</b>	Share data that communicates how you're bringing about a change in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of growth in conversational turns for all program participants to date.</li> <li>Graduation rate.</li> </ul>
<b>Funder (potential or existing)</b>	Share data that illustrates how your organization is impacting the community and increasing its impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reach (# of families served + growth year over year).</li> <li>Target number of families to serve in next five years.</li> <li>Family/community engagement (Are there parents who become volunteers or coordinators?)</li> <li>Demographics of community served.</li> </ul>
<b>Local early childhood oversight committee/ commission; Board of Education; nonprofit Board of Directors</b>	Share data that illustrates meeting a step on the path toward their target outcome. Match the data to the Board's strategic plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data that shows how interactive talk affects a child's long-term outcomes, like kindergarten-readiness or third-grade reading levels.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Recruitment</b>	Share data that shows a potential participant what to expect from the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data that shows how many people participate in each group.</li> <li>Data and research that show benefits to children.</li> <li>Quotes and testimonials from participants about the benefits they've experienced as a result of the programs.</li> </ul>

**Tip:** Consider keeping notes on what kinds of questions you typically receive from different kinds of audiences. This will help you prepare and answer questions using data more effectively in the future.

For example, if you often receive questions from journalists on how many families you plan to serve, make a note and have this number ready any time you do a media interview or write a press release.

Sometimes this data isn't built into the LENA program. Know what additional data will be of value to your community and make a plan to collect and track it.

## What story do I want to tell?

Data doesn't make sense without context. Consider what story you want to tell, then evaluate how the data you have could support that narrative.

People intake new information via cognitive shortcuts, which means they tend to interpret numbers without context in ways that reinforce their existing mental schemas, biases, and stereotypes. To fight this, use a strong narrative that reframes data in the way you want it to be interpreted.

## How can I illustrate the short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes of my program?


Certain outcomes from your LENA program can be tracked immediately, while others take longer. For example, you can see data on increased interactive talk immediately after a group completes their sessions. But other outcomes — like improved kindergarten readiness — take longer to demonstrate. To show the potential longer-term outcomes you are aiming to achieve, use graphics and summaries of research on the potential impacts of your work. Consider how you can show short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes from your program.

### Research on conversational turns:

What studies published in 2018 can tell us about better brain development


#### What is a conversational turn?

A conversational turn occurs when a child vocalizes and an adult responds, or an adult speaks and a child responds.



#### Why look at conversational turns?

Conversational turns have been linked to brain structure and function as well as to long-term outcomes for language skills, socioemotional development, and intelligence.




### Effects of conversational turns...

#### In the brain:


##### Brain function

Two studies conducted by Harvard and MIT researchers found that conversational turns were linked to both brain activity and structure in four- to six-year-olds. One study discovered that **turns were strongly correlated with brain activation in areas associated with language, such as Wernicke's and Broca's areas.**



##### Brain structure


Another study focused on linking conversational turns to white matter connectivity between two regions in the brain critical for language. By using diffusion MRI, researchers were able to see the activation of neural pathways in children's brains as the children responded to interactive talk. In fact, the evidence suggests that **conversational turns may strengthen these "information highways," allowing parts of the brain to work together more effectively.**



#### Over time:


##### Ages zero to three

In 2006, LENA researchers recruited more than 300 families with young children to complete daylong audio recordings monthly for six months. These recordings measured adult words, back-and-forth conversation, and other language metrics. **Researchers hoped to see how verbal interaction influenced cognitive development over time.**




##### Ages nine to 14

Ten years later, researchers conducted the second phase of the study, inviting the original participants, now in early adolescence, for follow-up language and cognitive assessments. **Researchers found that the conversational turns experienced early in life were predictive of children's IQ, verbal comprehension, vocabulary, and other language skills in adolescence.**



#### How LENA can help

Our programs use objective measurement and focused coaching to support parents and teachers in increasing conversational turns with children. By providing feedback and training, we want to help every parent, caregiver, and teacher harness talk to make a difference in the lives of children.



#### For more on interactive talk:

View our on-demand webinar featuring Dr. Jill Gilkerson and Dr. Rachel Romeo, lead researchers on the studies above. Sign up at:

[info.lena.org/webinars](https://info.lena.org/webinars)

## How can I collaborate with other people/organizations to use data to tell a compelling story?

Your data may only be one puzzle piece in a broad picture of community growth and development. Consider how you can pair data from your LENA program with data from other programs, partners, or organizations to tell a bigger story.



## Additional Resources for Sharing Results

### Craft Your Success Story for Funders

Discover the art of sharing your program's achievements in a way that resonates with your audience, inspires community buy-in, and opens doors to potential funding opportunities.

- Highlight program successes using a customizable presentation.
- View examples from LENA partners to learn easy and engaging ways to communicate your successes.
- Watch webinar highlights for expert tips on crafting a dynamic and influential presentation that effectively showcases your program achievements.

Visit LENA's Community of Practice at [learn.LENA.org/community-success-story](https://learn.LENA.org/community-success-story) to learn more about sharing program achievements.

### LENA blog

- 5 ways to make data a part of your program success story:  
[LENA.org/sharing-successes-through-data](https://www.LENA.org/sharing-successes-through-data)

### Infographics

- Early literacy infographic
- Conversational turns research infographic

# Sharing Participant Stories

Sharing the stories of people who have experienced positive changes as a result of your LENA program is one of the best ways to increase understanding and support of it.

**Here are some suggested questions to ask participants when you're interviewing them for a testimonial story:**

- What kinds of things did you learn in the program?
- What was it like to get the feedback reports?
- What are things you changed or realized because of the data?
- What was your favorite part of the program?
- What surprised you about the program? What was unexpected?
- What surprised you about yourself?
- What did you think of the 14 Talking Tips? Which ones did you find most helpful?
- How has LENA affected your approach to parenting/teaching?
- What changes did you see in your child/classroom?
- If you had to talk to someone else who didn't know anything about LENA and this program, what would you tell them?
- Anything else you'd like to add?

If you're creating a video, you'll need to gather additional quotes that explain the context of the program. **Try asking additional questions such as:**

- Could you start out by saying and spelling your name?
- Could you describe the LENA program?
- What's the goal of the program?
- What was a typical class/coaching session/home visit like?





# APPENDIX

# LENA Program Style Guide

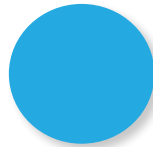
## Colors



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RGB: 251, 176, 64  
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CMYK: 60, 90, 0, 0  
RGB: 127, 63, 152  
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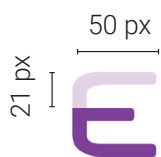
CMYK: 50, 100, 0, 0  
RGB: 141, 198, 63  
#8dc63f

## Logos



### Specifications

The LENA logo is written in the typeface Neuropol in “LENA purple” (#7f3f98).



### Variations

The LENA logo may be displayed with a tagline or in black and white. Depending on text color, backgrounds may be purple (#7f3f98), white, or black.



### How not to use

Do not display the logo in any other colors or on photographic backgrounds. Never alter the text color.

#### Bad



Never stretch, rotate, or add a drop shadow or any other type of visual effect to the logo.

#### Bad



## Program Logos [↓](#)

LENA Home, Start, should always be displayed with the LENA logo at top. Use the corresponding swatches below for each program. The larger color displayed is primary, while the smaller swatch is secondary.



Colors:



Colors:



## Iconography

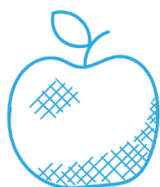
### Style

Icons should be simple in how they depict objects. Avoid overly detailed icons. Use bold, graphic images. The Noun Project is a useful resource for finding simple icons. Use the main LENA colors for icons.

*Good*



*Bad*



### Stroke weight

Avoid using icons with varying thicknesses of strokes, or different types of icons together.

## Image Treatment

Photos used in LENA materials should reflect LENA, being candid, playful, optimistic, displaying interaction, and focusing on caregiver/child relationships. Most photos should depict children in the infant, toddler, and preschool age range, as LENA is an organization that focuses on the development of children in early childhood.

### Tinting

Images may be overlaid with a tint, which may be one of the main LENA colors. Tint should be no more than 50% opacity on an image.



*No tint*

*50% opacity*

*Bad: 80% opacity*

## Typefaces

LENA's typefaces are Myriad Pro and Gotham Rounded. If you do not have access to those fonts, similar widely available alternatives are: Calibri or Arial for Myriad Pro and Arial Rounded MT for Gotham Rounded.

### Myriad Pro Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890.,;?!  
.....

*This type is generally used for all copy for printed and digital materials. Myriad Pro Light may also be used.*

### Gotham Rounded Medium

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890.,;?!  
.....

*This type is typically used for headers. Generally, Gotham Rounded should be used in curriculum materials due to its more playful appearance.*

## Sharing Visual Content

Using visual aids is ideal for communicating information about data and keeping the attention of your audience. Use these guidelines to create effective, relevant, and useful visual content.

### When and how to use visuals

Visuals can often be used in place of text to convey the same information, or alongside text to reinforce comprehension. Icons may be useful to demonstrate concepts.



Children whose parents participated in LENA Start are gaining nearly two months of developmental skill every month.

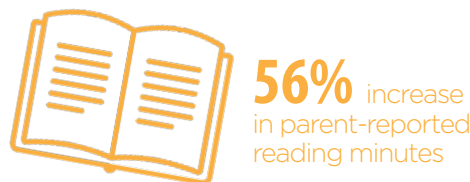


80%  
graduation rate

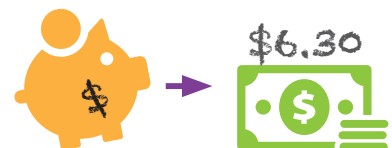


### Highlighting data

When possible, highlight data that supports your message.



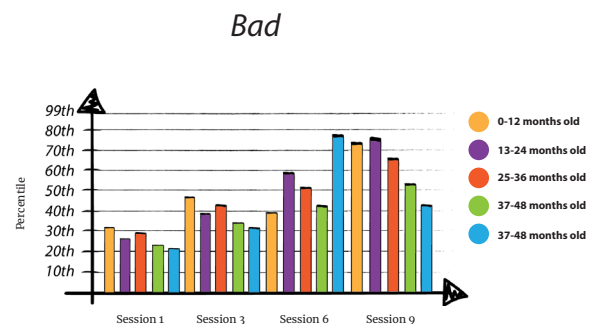
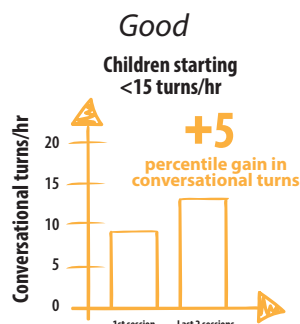
Parents reported reading 56 percent more at graduation than at the start of the program.



According to professor James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, every dollar invested in high-quality child care programs generates a benefit of \$6.30.

### Using charts

Charts or graphs can be useful when they are easy to understand. Avoid overly complex graphs and aim for simplicity.



# Photo Recommendations

## Tips for taking photos

Strong photos create a compelling visual package to carry your information. Taking good photos doesn't require a fancy camera — you can do it right from your phone.

A few quick edits can help to improve the quality of your photos. Most phones allow users to make basic edits in the native photo app. You can also edit photos within a social media platform or using software like **Photoshop** or **Gimp** (available to download for free). Raise the brightness and contrast for more vibrant pictures.



If you're not able to take photos, consider using a stock photo. Try **Stocksnap.io**, **Pexels**, **Unsplash**, or **Reshot** for free stock images to use on social media or in marketing materials.

Free graphic design tools like Canva and Adobe Spark often include free photos or icons and can be used to create images and graphics perfectly sized to fit each social media platform.



## Guidelines for taking photos of people

- Make sure the people are comfortable and at ease. Explain who you are and what you're doing. Give everyone time to acclimate to your presence before you start taking pictures.
- If you're taking photos of kids, **get down on their level**. Make sure your camera is at the same height as their faces. Don't be afraid to crawl, kneel, sit, or lie on the floor. Experiment with new angles. Can you shoot over their shoulder? Looking up at them from on the ground? Straight down at a table?
- Use the rule of thirds. Divide your image into thirds horizontally and vertically, and place the subject in any of the intersections to create strong composition. Most cameras and phones have the option to turn on a virtual grid to make it easier to visualize.
- Keep your back to the sun or window, and have the person face it. That way, their face will be well-lit instead of silhouetted or shadowed. Avoid having people look directly into the sun — they'll get squinty.
- When possible, take photos of people in action. For example, a photo of a parent being handed a graduation certificate will be more interesting than a photo of a parent holding it up after the ceremony. Aim to capture genuine moments.



# Six Steps to Successful Public Relations

## STEP

### 1

## Lay the groundwork.

**Know who's who:** Curate lists of journalists who are relevant to your organization. Compile basic contact and beat information for each person. Update this list every four to six months.

**Develop a media response plan:** Decide what sort of response your organization will provide to media inquiries. A few key questions to consider:

- In what amount of time will you respond to media inquiries?
- Who should requests be filtered through? Who is available to support interviews with journalists? Are staff allowed to talk to media directly, or should they involve the communications team?
- How would your organization define a media relations crisis? If a crisis comes up, how will you and your team respond?
- If you're a public organization, who will handle an open records request?

**Send regular communications:** Consider sending a regular email (for example, once a month) to key media contacts with story ideas and organizational updates. This will help you to begin building relationships and establishing yourself as a reliable source.

## STEP

### 2

## Craft your pitch.

**Consider newsworthiness:** Your pitch should have value to a general audience and match standard news values. Get to know your local media outlets so you'll be able to understand what kind of stories fit with their goals. If you don't have a strong angle, don't send the pitch. Regularly sending weak pitches will train reporters to ignore or delete your emails.

**Look for opportunities to add value:** Consider how your organization or staff can serve as thought leaders. Keep an eye out for opportunities to provide "expert commentary." Try signing up for a tool like **Help a Reporter Out**, which connects journalists with sources who are qualified to comment on stories.

**Send all the types of content you have:** Include any blog posts, photos, or videos you've created when you send a pitch. News outlets are hungry for content and may repurpose your materials. When possible, provide access to original data for reporters to analyze.

**Create social proof before sending a pitch:** Social media has democratized editorial gatekeeping. These days it's users, rather than editors, who determine what content is important. Social media buzz is a signal to traditional media that something is newsworthy.

## STEP

### 3

## Pitch the story.

**Make it easy to read:** Put the main pitch in the body of your email – don't assume that a busy editor will take the time to click into an attached press release.

**Send early:** Stories are assigned early in the week and early in the day. Send your pitches during these times.

**Think like a reporter:** Solve problems that a reporter might encounter before they arise. For example, if you're trying to pitch a TV reporter, have a date and time set up for them to visit and film, and secure photo permissions in advance.

## **STEP 4** Prepare for the Interview.

**Select the right people for interviews:** Vet people — especially if they're program participants — before they do an interview with media on your organization's behalf.

**Prepare three key messages:** No matter what question the reporter asks, draw the answer from your three key messages. This strategy is especially useful in interviews with a negative slant, but can be helpful for staying on track during any interview.

**Practice, practice, practice:** Coach everyone who will be talking with a reporter. Encourage:

- Repeating the question in the answer, especially for video interviews.
- Paraphrasing one of the three key messages in every answer.
- Acknowledging when unsure of the answer to a question.

## **STEP 5** Follow up.

**Be prompt:** Send any missing information (like data or photos) or anything you referenced (like an article or website link) to the reporter via email immediately after they leave.

**Provide corrections if needed:** Don't ask to see the story before it's published, but do send corrections if you notice something incorrect in the final version.

## **STEP 6** Form relationships.

**Connect directly:** Try to meet local reporters in person. When you have positive or negative feedback to share, pick up the phone or set up a face-to-face meeting.

**Be a high-quality source:** It's okay to pitch stories that aren't about your organization. Share the love with your partners. Not only will the coverage benefit everyone in the long run, but you'll earn a reputation as a reliable source who can provide information on the community.

**Never be rude:** Turn negative coverage into an opportunity to form relationships. Be polite and professional, and you'll earn an opportunity to pitch a positive story later.

**Engage digitally:** Follow reporters on Twitter and LinkedIn. Engage with their stories, and let them know when you particularly enjoy a story.

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