



Crosswalk with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development

About LENA

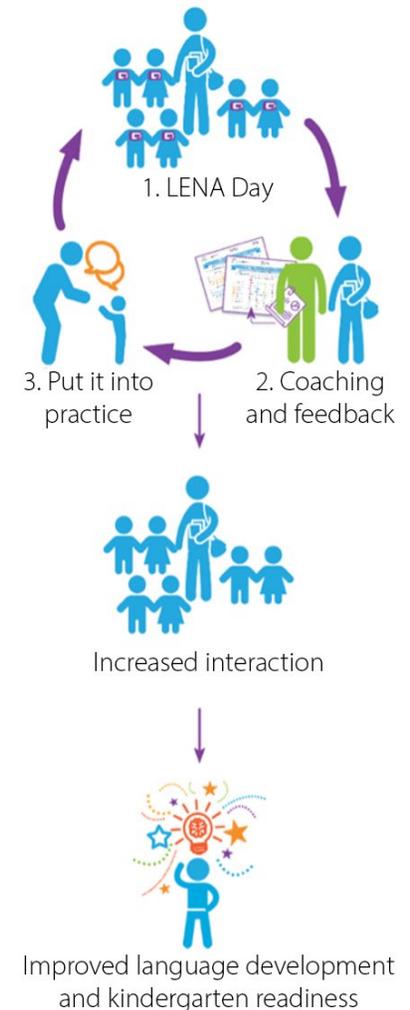
LENA is a national nonprofit on a mission to transform children's futures through early talk technology and data-driven programs. LENA's early talk technology, sometimes referred to as a "talk pedometer" or a "FitBit for conversation," is the global standard for measuring early language environments, including conversational turns. Visit www.LENA.org or email info@LENA.org to learn more about how LENA Grow supports early childhood teachers' professional development.

How LENA Grow Supports North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development

[LENA Grow](#) is an evidenced-based professional development program that helps teachers equitably improve classroom language environments in early learning settings, complementing the Foundations for Early Learning and Development's goals for children's early learning and development. To measurably improve equitable interactions with each child in their care, teachers participate in LENA Grow's five-week reflective feedback cycle. The cycle employs LENA's "talk pedometer" technology, strengths-based coaching, and early talk strategies to measurably increase conversational turns, one of the most predictive metrics of child outcomes.

LENA Grow helps teachers form a reflective practice habit that supports language development and builds responsive relationships. As teachers begin to talk *with* each child rather than *to* the children, they learn how to adapt their interactions to support each child's learning and development. Just as Foundations serves teachers across a wide variety of settings, LENA Grow is implemented in a variety of early learning settings throughout the U.S., including private/state-funded child care centers, family child care homes, and Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

How LENA Grow Works



Core Elements of LENA Grow

These elements work together to provide a cohesive, empowering professional development experience for teachers that drives meaningful and lasting increases in interaction. This change leads to more equitable language environments, higher TS GOLD® and CLASS® scores, accelerated language development, and increased teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

1. **Research base:** LENA Grow is rooted in over a decade of peer-reviewed research linking conversational turns to improved language, brain, and social-emotional development. More than 400 researchers and clinicians in over 40 countries have used LENA technology to study early language development.¹
2. **Early talk strategies:** At each coaching session, teachers receive research-based curriculum materials that provide strategies for increasing interactive talk. Areas of focus include personal care, transitions, indoor play, outdoor play, mealtimes, shared reading, early math, early literacy, and songs & rhymes.
3. **LENA Room Report:** At each coaching session, teachers review the Room Report, which provides objective interaction data on overall room averages and child-specific averages. It quantifies the number of conversational turns in the classroom across the day.
4. **LENA Child Report:** At each coaching session, teachers review the Child Report, which provides a detailed view of each individual child's experience across the day, including hourly counts of interactions and child vocalizations that highlight further engagement opportunities for teachers. This report is also used to engage families in a conversation about their child's early talk experiences and language development.
5. **Weekly strengths-based coaching:** LENA Grow coaches provide 30-60 minutes of coaching each week. The Coach Guide supports them in bringing a strengths-based lens to the data analysis and goal setting conversation with teachers.
6. **Weekly goal setting, documentation, and practice:** At each coaching session, the teacher sets a specific and measurable goal for the coming week. The teacher then documents progress toward that goal as they practice integrating early talk strategies throughout the week, including the next LENA Day.
7. **Family Engagement:** A Family Talk handout is provided each week for teachers to send home. Teachers also spend one coaching session developing a family engagement strategy and making plans for how they will engage families in extending quality interactions into the home setting.

How LENA Grow Supports North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development

LENA Grow supports each domain of North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development by improving the early talk environment for children, focusing specifically on the quantity and quality of adult-child interaction. As such, LENA Grow places a special emphasis on Language Development and Communication, which is aligned in more detail in the following table.

Foundations for Early Learning and Development		How LENA Grow Supports
Domains	Subdomains	
Approaches to Play and Learning	Curiosity, Information-Seeking, and Eagerness	LENA Grow supports interactive talk among teachers and children by providing strategies that promote curiosity, play, problem-solving, and persistence. During the LENA Grow sequence, teachers practice new strategies that support children’s approaches to play and learning. At each coaching session, teachers receive research-based curriculum materials that provide ideas on how to effectively engage young children during indoor and outdoor play.
	Play and Imagination	
	Risk-Taking, Problem-Solving, and Flexibility	
	Attentiveness, Effort, and Persistence	
Emotional and Social Development	Developing a Sense of Self	LENA Grow supports interactive talk between teachers and children, fostering positive, responsive adult-child relationships. Teachers receive research-based curriculum materials that provide ideas on how to effectively engage young children during times of the day that may be stressful for them, including personal care routines and transitions. They also practice strategies for promoting socialization during mealtimes. As children begin to vocalize more during LENA Grow, they are better able to express their emotions and needs. Peer-reviewed research has established a causal link between increased conversational turns and improved social-emotional competencies in the first three years of life. ² Furthermore, research has shown LENA Grow to have impacts on children’s social and emotional health, including improved DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) scores. ³
	Developing a Sense of Self with Others	
	Learning About Feelings	

Foundations for Early Learning and Development		How LENA Grow Supports
Domains	Subdomains	
Language Development and Communication	Learning to Communicate	<p>LENA Grow supports interactive talk among teachers and children, promoting language development and communication. Teachers receive research-based curriculum materials that provide strategies on how to increase interactive talk by creating joint attention, increasing conversational turn-taking, and recasting. Areas of focus include shared reading, early literacy, and songs & rhymes.</p> <p>Children in LENA Grow classrooms have shown increases in TS GOLD® scores⁴ and LENA Developmental Snapshot scores.⁵ In addition, peer-reviewed research has shown a link between increased conversational turns in preschool settings and improved vocabulary scores.⁶</p>
	Foundations for Reading	
	Foundations for Writing	
Cognitive Development	Construction of Knowledge: Thinking and Reasoning	<p>Teachers receive research-based curriculum materials that provide strategies on how to effectively engage young children, creating joint attention, increasing conversational turn-taking, and recasting. Areas of focus include indoor play, outdoor play, songs & rhymes, mealtimes, and early math. During the LENA Grow sequence, teachers practice new strategies to scaffold children's cognitive development.</p> <p>Peer-reviewed research has linked conversational turns to brain structure,⁷ brain function,⁸ reading skills,⁹ and executive functioning¹⁰ early in life, as well as IQ scores and language skills in adolescence.¹¹</p>
	Creative Expression	
	Social Connections	
	Mathematical Thinking and Expression	

How LENA's 14 Talking Tips Support the Language Development and Communication (LDC) Domain

LENA's early talk strategies, the 14 Talking Tips, are research-based techniques for increasing early talk and supporting healthy language development. Three research-based "active ingredients" power the 14 Talking Tips: creating joint attention, increasing conversational turn-taking, and then recasting.¹² This chart dives deeper into the Language Development and Communication domain to illustrate how LENA's 14 Talking Tips align with specific communication goals.

Language Development and Communication (LDC)		14 Talking Tips													
		1: Talk about what you're doing and thinking.	2: Comment on what they're doing or looking at.	3: Name things that they're interested in.	4: Get down to their level: face to face.	5: Touch, hug, hold.	6: Tune in and respond to what they look at, do, and say.	7: Wait for their response.	8: Imitate them, and add words.	9: Make faces, use gestures.	10: Take turns — don't do all the talking.	11: Repeat and add to what they say and do.	12: Follow their lead, do what interests them.	13: Encourage them, be positive.	14: Be silly! Relax and have fun!
Learning to Communicate	Goal LDC-1: Children understand communications from others	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓			
	Goal LDC-2: Children participate in conversations with peers and adults in one-on-one, small, and larger group interactions.				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	Goal LDC-3: Children ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.		✓		✓		✓	✓			✓				
	Goal LDC-4: Children speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.				✓			✓	✓		✓	✓			
	Goal LDC-5: Children describe familiar people, places, things, and events	✓		✓			✓					✓	✓		
	Goal LDC-6: Children use most grammatical constructions of their home language well.		✓	✓								✓		✓	
	Goal LDC-7: Children respond to and use a growing vocabulary.	✓		✓					✓			✓	✓		

References

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