

LENA
GROW[®]

Coach Guide

This belongs to:

LENA[®]



Credits

LENA Grow® Coach Guide, Edition 3.1

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Terrance D. Paul (1946–2014), inventor of the LENA® System and creator of LENA Start™. Terry's dream was to give all children a better opportunity to learn and lead happy and successful lives. He contributed his time, talent, and treasure to that end by starting LENA, a 501(c)(3) public charity based in Colorado. Terry's vision is reflected in LENA's mission: To transform children's futures through early talk technology and data-driven programs.



Thank you to the LENA Grow Advisors who shared their expertise in shaping this version of the LENA Grow program:

- **Kayla Anderson**, teacher at Greenbrier Preschool in Georgia
- **Kimberly Brenneman**, funding officer of education at Heising-Simons Foundation
- **Melody Brown**, teacher at Beacon Community Development Center in Georgia
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- **Julie Foster**, assistant principal at B. D. Lee Elementary School in South Carolina
- **Larissa Fullilove**, EHS coach at Porter-Leath in Tennessee
- **Angela Mitchell**, coach at the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County in Florida
- **Nicole Norton**, director at Williamsburg Campus Child Care in Virginia
- **Jessica Pablo**, lead teacher at The Primary School in California
- **Racquel Washington**, program manager at ChildCare Group in Texas
- **Brigitte Willis**, family child care owner of A Better Day Christian Learning Center in Georgia
- **Janet Yang**, coach at Child Development Resources in Virginia

How to Use This Guide

Welcome to LENA Grow! This Coach Guide provides guidance for each coaching session and includes the resources, ideas, and tips you need to help teachers complete the program successfully.

Materials are organized into the following sections:

LENA Fundamentals A quick reference for frequently used LENA vocabulary, the LENA Feedback Cycle, the LENA Grow sequence schedules, and implementation logistics.

LENA Orientation Planning and facilitation to introduce teachers to the basics of LENA Grow.

LENA Grow Sequences Week-by-week facilitation and coaching guidance for each sequence of LENA Grow, including:

- Preparation for a LENA Grow sequence.
- Coaching session guidance.
- Wrap-up for a LENA Grow sequence.

Appendices Reference materials, including fillable forms and relevant pages from the LENA Grow Teacher Guide.

Look for these helpful icons in your guide:



Coach Tips

Practical tips from other LENA Grow coaches.



Caring Coaching

Thoughtful ideas to foster a focus on strengths-based coaching and equity-focused teaching practices.



Rooted in Research

Information about the research behind specific program elements.



Fidelity

Requirements

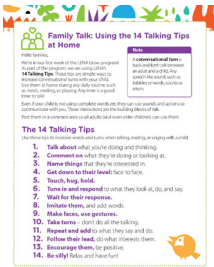

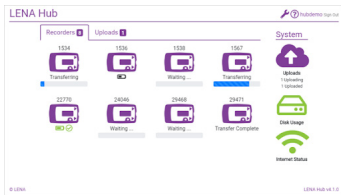
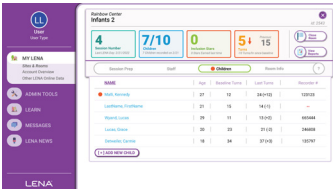

When you see this icon, check Appendix D to ensure that your program is currently meeting fidelity requirements.



Appendices

When you see this icon, reference the Appendices tab for supporting materials.

LENA Fundamentals

LENA Terms		
<p>Conversational Turns</p>	<p>Back-and-forth alternations between an adult and a child.</p> <p>LENA technology counts a “turn” every time an adult speaks and a child responds (or vice versa) with no more than five seconds in between.</p>	<p>A turn is made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult words • Child vocalizations <p>Any speech-like sound, such as coos, babbles, or words, counts as part of a turn.</p>
<p>14 Talking Tips</p>	<p>Simple, research-based strategies for increasing talk throughout the day. A printable copy is included in both this guide and the Teacher Guide. A poster is also provided for each participating classroom.</p>	 <p>The 14 Talking Tips</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk about what you're doing and thinking. 2. Comment on what they're doing or thinking on. 3. Name things that they're interested in. 4. Get down to their level for activities. 5. Touch, hug, hold. 6. Notice and respond to what they look at, do, and say. 7. Wait for their responses. 8. Invite them, and join in. 9. Make faces, use gestures. 10. Take turns - start off 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!
<p>LENA Device</p>	<p>A small, wearable, child-safe recorder. Worn each LENA Day, the device captures verbal interactions between adults and children.</p>	
<p>LENA Hub</p>	<p>The transfer software used to upload data from the LENA device to LENA Online. When processing, a Multi Dock and cords are used to link devices to your computer.</p>	
<p>LENA Online</p>	<p>A website to manage your program, access data, and view reports. Through this site you will also access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Prep Preparation steps to complete before each weekly coaching session, plus links to session videos, slide decks, and other electronic resources. • LENA Library A self-serve online database with answers to frequently asked LENA Grow questions, how-to guides, and troubleshooting instructions. 	 <p>When you see this icon, access LENA Online:</p> 

LENA Feedback Cycle

The reflective feedback cycle is at the heart of LENA Grow and all LENA programs.

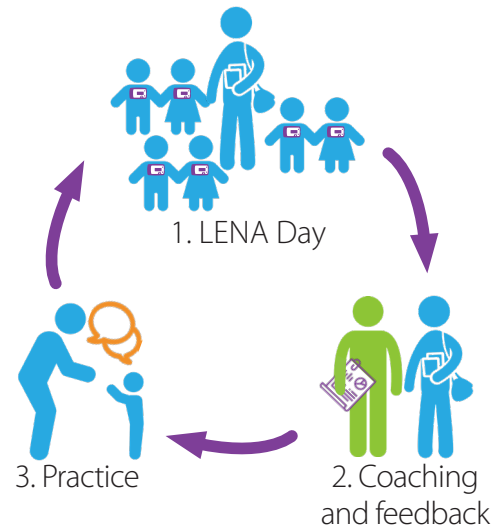
Each week of LENA Grow follows the same cycle:

1. A LENA Day: During a LENA Day, children wear the LENA device, so that teachers' interactive talk can be captured and measured. Data from this day is turned into a LENA report that is shared during the coaching session, enabling teachers to reflect on their practice and classroom equity.

2. Coaching and feedback: The coaching session always comes after the LENA Day. During each session, teachers review the objective data from their own LENA Day. Coaches use a strengths-based approach to ask questions and learn more about the teachers' experience.

LENA reports show how much talk and interaction each child received, enabling teachers to reflect on their progress and set a clear goal for their next LENA Day. Coaches also introduce teachers to the 14 Talking Tips and other strategies to increase talk during existing classroom routines.

3. Practice: These are the days between the coaching session and the next LENA Day. On these days, teachers practice what they learned and work toward achieving their goals in order to show measurable improvement on their next LENA Day.



Rooted in Research

Objective feedback and cycles of reflection and analysis have been shown to increase effective teacher behaviors.

Orientation

60
min.

Prepare for LENA Grow Sequence

Use the Room Prep Checklist (found in LENA Library and LENA Online Session Prep) to prepare for Orientation and LENA Grow sequence(s).

Orientation introduces teachers to the basics of the LENA Grow program. It helps prepare new teachers for their first LENA Day and reminds returning teachers of the benefits of the program. When introducing LENA Grow, your energy and support set the tone for the entire program — a little bit of enthusiasm can go a long way!

During Orientation, you will guide teachers through slides, videos, forms, and other resources to make sure everyone is ready to get started with LENA Grow.

For teachers who are new to LENA Grow, complete the full 60-minute Orientation. For returning teachers, hold a brief meeting to review any relevant Orientation slides and ensure they are prepared to begin another LENA Grow sequence.

Teacher Learning Objectives

- Recognize the connection between early talk and brain development.
- Understand, explore, and learn how to successfully use LENA Grow program materials and resources, including LENA devices and the Teacher Guide.
- Be able to explain program benefits to families and other teachers.



Coach Tip

If you are supporting teachers who are new to LENA and teachers who have already completed a sequence, ask the returning teachers to share their experience, answer questions, and give advice!

Orientation Presentation

Review each slide and discuss with teachers. Use the script as a guide, adding personal comparisons or examples you feel will resonate best with the teachers in your group.

A few notes:

- Videos are embedded in the slide deck. Check that you can play them (with audio) prior to delivery.
- **"Do the blue": Blue text** indicates an action or note for the presenter only.
- **"Yak the black": Black text** indicates text that should be read out loud.
- The script below is also included in the Notes section of the slide deck.
- This presentation is designed with a group setting in mind. Modify as needed if you are presenting to only 1-2 teachers.
- If presenting to both new and experienced LENA Grow teachers, ask the experienced teachers to share and consider which sections might benefit from peer learning.



1. Introduction

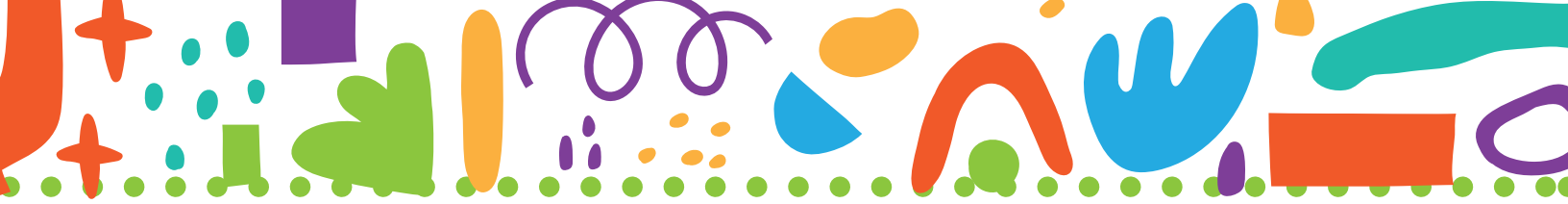
- Welcome teachers and make introductions.
- Ask teachers to fill out **LENA Grow Room Sign Up Sheet** (found in Appendix A).

At start:

“Hello! Welcome to LENA Grow Orientation! I am very pleased to introduce you to this great program.”

“LENA Grow is a practice-based professional-development program for early childhood educators that focuses on enhancing early talk between adults and children. LENA recognizes that you, as educators, play a critical role in the development of the children in your care. You have a powerful relationship with each one and care deeply about their growth.”

“LENA also knows that caring for children takes your full attention! That’s why they designed the program to help increase interactions with each child in your classroom, **without disrupting your existing classroom routines.**”



Why is early talk important?

Birth to 5 is a critical window.

Early talk is related to:

- Optimal brain development.
- Becoming a strong reader.
- Later IQ and academic success.

Now is the time to focus on increasing quality interactions!



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2. What is early talk and why is it important?

“Early talk refers to the conversations that occur between adults and children — even babies! You may be familiar with the importance of talking to children, but did you know that research shows that it’s even more powerful to talk WITH children?”

“The first years of a child’s life — especially birth to five — are the most critical for brain development. Early talk is one of the most important factors that helps create a firm foundation of healthy brain architecture in children.”

“The amount of interactive talk babies experience in the first few years of life is related to so many aspects of lifelong health and learning. This includes school readiness, language abilities, social-emotional development, and even IQ scores. Think about the impact you can have on the lives of the children in your care just by talking with them!”

“LENA helps by giving you data about the talk environment in your classroom to make sure all children are having engaging experiences with you.”

- Consider adding your own analogy to create a mental image of how talk builds brain development. For example, compare the young brain to “fertile soil” for developing language skills.



The LENA Grow Program

LENA Grow builds more talk into classroom activities using the feedback cycle.

You will complete this cycle once a week for five weeks.



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3. The LENA Grow program

“The LENA Grow program uses data from LENA technology, weekly coaching sessions, and teacher materials to help build more talk into your daily classroom activities.”

“Each week of the LENA Grow program follows the same format. This is called the LENA Feedback Cycle. Here’s how it works:

1. A LENA Day. Children wear a vest containing a LENA device. The device captures the talk each child experiences during the day. LENA software processes this data and generates reports.

2. A coaching session. During your weekly coaching session with me, we’ll review data from your LENA Days,



discuss program successes and challenges, set a target goal, and learn new techniques and talk strategies.

3. Practice. Each day after your coaching session, practice engaging children in interactive talk. Work toward achieving your target goal!"

"The cycle repeats itself once every week: one LENA Day, then one coaching session, then days to practice new strategies. Each sequence lasts for five weeks."



What teachers are saying about LENA Grow



LENA Grow Overview

© LENA

4. What teachers are saying about LENA Grow

"LENA Grow has helped thousands of teachers increase early talk with children. No one advocates for a program better than someone who has done it and loved it. Let's listen as a few experienced teachers tell us what they want you to know about using LENA Grow."

- [Click anywhere to play video.](#)

"Your entire classroom community will benefit from participating in LENA Grow. What are some of the benefits teachers mention in the video? What benefits can you envision for your own classroom?"

- Possible answers:
 - Child care is more than just feeding, changing, and playing. Teachers help children learn and develop.
 - Vocabulary growth.
 - Opportunities for teachers to understand children more.

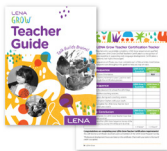


Teacher materials

Inside you'll find:

- Weekly overviews.
- Additional resources.
- Family engagement materials.

Extra information in front and back pockets!



LENA Grow Overview

© LENA

5. Teacher materials

"The next step in understanding LENA Grow is to become familiar with the materials! This is the LENA Grow Teacher Guide. It contains everything you need for your classroom to successfully complete LENA Grow: weekly overviews, additional teacher resources, and parent engagement materials. There are also some additional pages tucked into the pockets of your binder."

"You will receive your Teacher Guide with the rest of your LENA materials."



- Hold up Teacher Guide. Pass around for teachers to explore.
- Explain to teachers how and when they will receive their Room Kits.

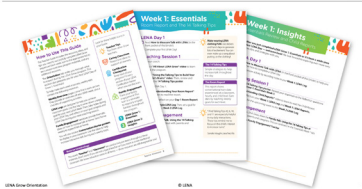
"I want to draw your attention to the LENA Certified Teacher Tracker."

- Show tracker page in Teacher Guide.

"Teachers who successfully complete all five weeks of a LENA Grow sequence are qualified to become LENA Certified Teachers! Check off boxes as you complete each step. In the larger box, write the date of completion."



Teacher materials



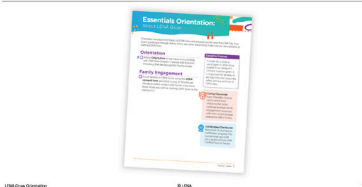
6. Teacher materials cont'd.

"This guide is organized into tabs. Every tab in your guide is set up the same way: first an overview page, then any materials you need for the week, and finally, a handout that you can copy and send home with families."

"The first page, How to Use This Guide, provides a summary of how to find and use information in this binder. Along the right side, there is a list of icons that may appear in callout boxes or alongside weekly checklists: Teacher Tips, Caring Classroom, Certification Checkpoint, and Family Engagement."



Teacher materials



7. Teacher materials cont'd.

"We are currently in the Orientation section. Everything you will accomplish this week is listed on the left side."

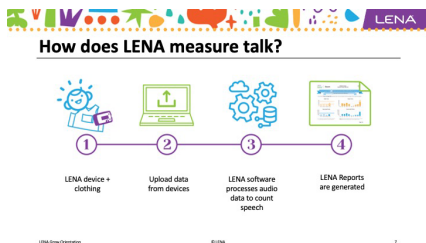
"The next tab, LENA Grow 1 Essentials, contains everything you need to complete the first five-week sequence of LENA Grow. We are about to begin this sequence. You'll build foundational skills and learn more about how early talk can transform your classroom. During this first sequence, we'll also discuss the 14 Talking Tips, tips for family engagement, and additional weekly topics such as Transitions, Indoor play, Mealtimes, and Shared Reading."

- Hand out and explain the individual LENA Grow schedule for your program. Make sure to note when the LENA Day and coaching session will occur each week.



- If teachers attending this Orientation are completing a different sequence, point them to the appropriate tab for their sequence.

“Everything you need to understand and use LENA Grow is in this binder. Reference this guide when you have questions, need a reminder, or are preparing for the upcoming week.”



8. How does LENA measure talk?

“Now that you know about the LENA Grow program and weekly structure, let's focus on the actual LENA Days. Remember: A LENA Day is when information about the talk environment in your classroom is collected.”

“But how does that happen?”

“LENA Grow uses a few pieces of technology to help measure your classroom talk environment. The first is called the LENA device — a small, wearable, child-safe recorder. Worn by the children each LENA Day, the device captures verbal interactions between adults and children.”

- [Show device and vest.](#)

“At the end of your LENA Day, talk data is uploaded from your devices to the cloud. Data is processed by LENA software to produce counts of conversational turns and adult words. ‘Conversational turns’ are what LENA calls the back-and-forth talk between an adult and child. You’ll learn more about them over the next few weeks.”

“The software generates feedback reports with objective data about the levels of talk in your classroom. We have a video coming up that explains the process more in depth.”

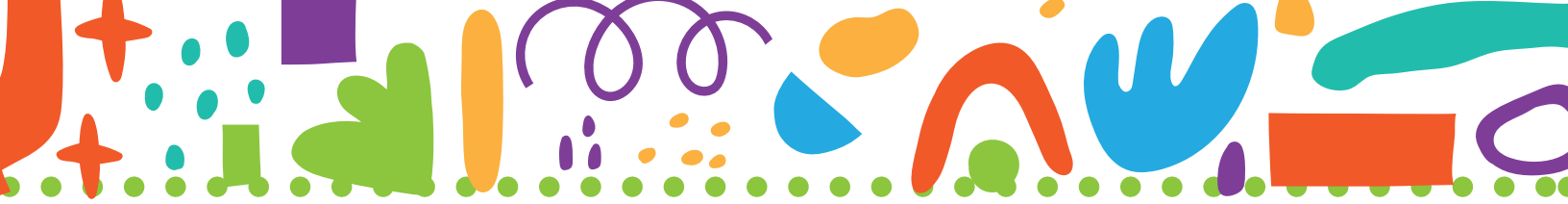
9. Privacy features

- Teachers may express concern over “being recorded” or how they might “get in trouble” for something said in the classroom. Please use the following information to directly address these types of concerns.

“There are a few things you need to know about the LENA device:”

- [Read bullet points on slide.](#)

“The LENA device works like this: You go out to lunch.

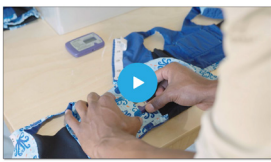


A family at the next table starts talking to one another. But they speak in a language you don't understand. You can tell who speaks and who responds, but you have no idea what they are saying."

"LENA technology works a lot like that. At the end of the day, it really is a pedometer for talk: Instead of counting steps, it helps count your words."



How to measure talk with LENA



LENA Grow Foundation

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10

10. How to measure talk with LENA

"We are going to watch a video that explains the recording process more in depth. Included in your materials is How to Measure Talk With LENA. This page outlines the steps you will see in this video."

- [Hold up the How To Measure Talk With LENA page.](#)
- [Click anywhere to play video.](#)

"Let's take a few minutes to review what we just learned about LENA technology. I want to emphasize two key points:

- During your LENA Day, try and act natural. Don't overdo talk. Ignore the LENA device, and (if possible) pretend it isn't even there!
- Try to complete a LENA Day the same day each week, but change the day if:
 - Several children are absent. Try to make sure at least half of the participating children are wearing vests each LENA Day.
 - Something out of the ordinary is scheduled to happen that takes much of the day.
 - None of the teachers present are participating in LENA Grow."



Review: How to measure talk

1. Which picture shows the correct way to put the LENA device into the clothing?



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11

11. Review: How to measure talk

"That video contained some very important information about LENA technology. Let's do a quick review together.

1. Which picture shows the correct way to put the LENA device into the clothing?"

- [Answer: c](#)
- [Review responses and address any questions or points of confusion.](#)



Review: How to measure talk

2. The LENA device is ready and in the clothing. When do you put the vest on the child?
- When the child arrives.
 - After the child has breakfast.
 - When the child goes outside.
 - Whenever you remember.

LENA Grow Orientation © 2016

12. Review: How to measure talk

- Read slide.
- Answer: a
- Review responses and address any questions or points of confusion.



Review: How to measure talk

3. When should you turn off the LENA device?
- Turn it on or off when you want.
 - During nap time.
 - When the child is eating.
 - When the child leaves for the day.

LENA Grow Orientation © 2016

13. Review: How to measure talk

- Read slide.
- Answer: d
- Review responses and address any questions or points of confusion.



Review: How to measure talk

4. What should you do with the LENA clothing during nap time?
- Leave the LENA clothing on the child.
 - Remove the LENA clothing if the child is uncomfortable or to follow safe sleeping practices. Leave the clothing next to the child and put it back on after the nap.
 - Take off the LENA clothing. Leave it off for the rest of the day.
 - Both a. and b. are correct, depending on the child.

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14. Review: How to measure talk

- Read slide.
- Answer: d
- Review responses and address any questions or points of confusion.



Family engagement and consent



LENA Grow Orientation © 2016

15. Family engagement and consent

"Next, let's talk about how you will introduce the program to your families. Families will first learn about LENA Grow through the Family Consent form. This form allows children to participate, explains the use of the LENA device, and provides information about privacy."

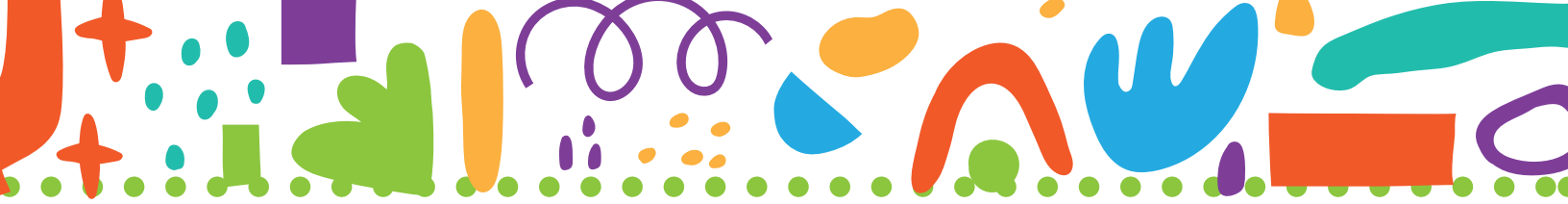
- Pass out copies of the consent form.

"Many parents and caregivers share common questions regarding the program. The Family Engagement page provides answers to the most frequently asked questions. Take a few minutes to read over this page now."

- Allow 3-4 minutes for everyone to read the page.

"With a partner, role-play teacher/parent. Ask one another any questions you think parents in your room may ask you. Some common parent/caregiver questions are:

- "How does the program work?"



- "Can I listen to what happens in the classroom?"
- Give teachers 4-5 minutes to practice. Encourage everyone to switch roles halfway through.
- Move around the room checking on how the conversations are going.
- Ensure teachers understand differences in consent forms:
 - OPT OUT consent form: Families return the form only if they DO NOT want their child to participate.
 - OPT IN consent form: Families return the form if they want their child to participate.

"Were there questions your partner asked that you couldn't answer? Let's discuss those now."

"In order to track your family engagement from week to week, a LENA Grow Family Engagement Tracker is included in the front pocket of your binder. The tracker helps you document your family engagement efforts, making sure you connect with each family at least once during the program."

- Explain how the tracker works for your program: Once a week? Once a sequence?



LENA Days

- Every LENA Day follows the same steps:
1. Find the assigned vest and LENA device for the child.
 2. Turn on the device and press record.
 3. Put the device back in the LENA vest. Snap in place.
 4. Put the vest on the child and leave it on until the end of the day.
 5. When the child leaves for the day, remove the vest.
 6. Turn off the device.



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16

16. LENA Days

"Which brings us to... your very first LENA Day!"

- Read slide.
- Demonstrate steps, using a vest and device.

"Each classroom will have its own box for LENA devices and clothing. Store your LENA devices and vests in the box anytime they are not being used."



LENA Days



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17

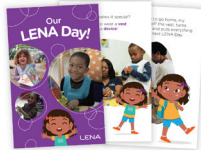
17. LENA Days cont'd.

"Let's look at the How to Measure Talk With LENA page again. There are a few things to note about how the device works and how to get a good recording with the device. As you follow the steps, practice using the vests and devices."



- Review page.
- Partner teachers as necessary. Practice operating devices and inserting into vests, 3-5 minutes.

Our LENA Day social story



18. Our LENA Day social story

“You can help children prepare to wear a vest each LENA Day. Read the story, Our LENA Day, to help children understand more about what a LENA Day looks like in a classroom. In addition to the printed book, you can also show the story on a screen.”

- Hand out printed copies of story.
- Point out screen link on slide.

“The story is one great way to show children what wearing a vest is like. What are some other ideas about getting children to wear vests?”

What teachers are saying about LENA Grow



19. Teacher testimonials

“LENA Grow gives us an exciting way to learn and practice ways to create more meaningful interactions between the adults and children in our classroom community.”

- Click anywhere to play video.

“I hope you are as excited as I am to learn more about interactive talk!”

Questions?



20. Questions

“This concludes your LENA Grow Orientation! Just a few reminders...”

- Provide date of first LENA Day.
- Provide date when consent forms are due.

“Please let me know if you have any other questions!”

“Remember to reference your LENA Grow schedule and Teacher Guide to support you in moving through each week of the program. I can’t wait to see how you, your children, and your classrooms grow!”