

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

### Table of Contents

The “What”: An Overview .....	3
Foundation: Rigorous Standards .....	4
Georgia Standards for Birth-to-grade 12 .....	4
Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership .....	5
A. Leaders create a plan for shared leadership and a plan for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to literacy.....	5
Building Block 2. Continuity of Care and Instruction .....	5
A. An early childhood coalition for literacy through which professionals from many organizations affecting young children and other stakeholders may meet to learn from and support one another is active. ....	5
B. A plan is in place to ensure smooth transitions from one school or agency to another.....	5
C. A plan is in place to connect families to schools and childcare entities.....	6
D. A plan is in place to connect communities to schools.....	6
E. A plan is in place to improve access for families to resources for developing early literacy in their homes. ....	6
Building Block 3. Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments.....	6
A. The infrastructure is in place for full implementation of screening and diagnostic assessments.....	6
B. The results of formative assessments are used to adjust intervention to meet the needs of children and students. ....	7
C. Summative assessments are used to determine effectiveness of interventions or instructional programs.....	7
D. Literacy screenings are used to assess readiness of individual children for reading and writing. ....	7
Building Block 4: Best Practices in Literacy Instruction.....	7
A. Instructional design and implementation are clearly and consistently aligned with GELS, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten. ....	7

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

B. Research-based instruction is standard practice in the development of phonological awareness, concepts of print (print awareness), alphabet knowledge, writing, and oral language.....	8
C. High expectations, grounded in developmentally-appropriate practice with a focus on student interest for all learners, are consistently evident.....	8
Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention.....	8
A. Infrastructure for a system of tiered-intervention based on screening and guided by progress monitoring is in place.....	8
Building Block 6. Professional Learning and Resources.....	8
A. Community partners receive professional learning in the development of early literacy. ....	8
B. In-service personnel receive professional learning in the development of early literacy. ....	9

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# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

### The “What”: An Overview

This document is a listing of “what” communities and their schools will need to have in place in order to provide their children and students access to a lifetime of literacy. Building on the foundation of rigorous standards, research has shown that implementation of the seven key building blocks listed here will provide communities with the infrastructure necessary for producing successful readers and writers. Those six building blocks are: (1) Engaged leadership; (2) Continuity of care and instruction; (3) Ongoing formative and summative assessments; (4) Best practices in literacy instruction; (5) System of tiered intervention; (6) Professional learning and resources.

“The What” is a synthesis of the recommendations found in the research portion of Georgia’s Literacy Plan, “The Why”. That document contains the research basis for each of the items included in this list. “The Why” attempts to capture the current consensus from the research in the area of literacy. This research has guided Georgia in developing this document to show the way forward in literacy. The last step is found in “The How”. That final document, an implementation guide, is intended to provide communities and districts with direction in how to implement “The What”— the six building blocks set forth in this document.

All of these are living documents and will be revised, amended, or added to as further is learned from research or in response to the advice of Georgia’s many partners in this venture.

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

### Foundation: Rigorous Standards

Goals, objectives, and priorities have been clearly articulated, aligned and sequenced throughout the various delivery systems of educational services to the children of Georgia. These goals, objectives, and priorities have been delineated for their different age groups in the Georgia Early Literacy Standards (GELS); the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework; the Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten; and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). To fully implement these sets of state standards, communities will need to develop a carefully crafted plan of transitions from stage to stage, grade to grade, and school to school to ensure that their children are provided with a coherent educational program.

#### GEORGIA STANDARDS FOR BIRTH-TO-GRADE 12

The following chart provides an overview of the standards. To access the specific standard for any particular age group, click on the highlighted words.

<b>Birth-to-3 years</b>	<b>4-years</b>	<b>3-5-years</b>	<b>K-5</b>	<b>6-12</b>
Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS)	Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten Students	Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework	Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Embedded within K-5 Standards	Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
<a href="http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GELSSection11.pdf">http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GELSSection11.pdf</a>	<a href="http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/ContentStandardsFull.pdf">http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/ContentStandardsFull.pdf</a>	<a href="http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Child%20Outcomes/HSRevisedChildOutcomesFramework(rev-Sept2011).pdf">http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Child%20Outcomes/HSRevisedChildOutcomesFramework(rev-Sept2011).pdf</a>	<a href="https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&amp;AID=245075&amp;MID=15932">https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&amp;AID=245075&amp;MID=15932</a> , pp. 9-33	<a href="https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&amp;AID=245075&amp;MID=15932">https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&amp;AID=245075&amp;MID=15932</a> , pp. 34-66

These standards are state-mandated and, as such, are the foundation of any educational plan in Georgia. However, the transitions between each set of standards must be ensured at the community level by community leadership.

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

### Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

A. Leaders create a plan for shared leadership and a plan for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to literacy.

1. Administrators or community leaders\* initiate plans for an early childhood coalition for literacy of stakeholders within the early-childhood community.
  - a. Leadership initiates the collection of data to assess areas of weakness and strength in the development of literacy.
  - b. Leadership calls for a plan for organizing, implementing, and sustaining a comprehensive approach to literacy .

\* Administrators or community leaders may be any community leader who is willing to initiate action, e.g., local school board, local school officials, building principal(s), business leaders, individual parents or parent group, teachers, local literacy group.

### Building Block 2. Continuity of Care and Instruction

A. An early childhood coalition for literacy through which professionals from many organizations affecting young children and other stakeholders may meet to learn from and support one another is active.

The following are in place:

1. A regular calendar of meetings
2. Stakeholders from as many entities and constituencies as possible are involved
3. One agency or individual has been designated to convene and lead the coalition

B. A plan is in place to ensure smooth transitions from one school or agency to another.

That plan may include the following:

1. A transition team on the early childhood coalition
2. A plan for students and parents to visit the next learning environment
3. A protocol for providing students with a coherent plan for care and instruction throughout his or her day, i.e., a shared plan for each student in multiple settings
4. Written protocols for transitions from one setting to another, on any given day and from year to year (e.g., guidelines for pre-literacy transition support for children moving from infant to toddler programs, and toddler to preschool programs)
5. Consideration of an expanded summer transition program to include children ages three and four identified as at risk who will be transitioning into Georgia’s Pre-K program

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

### C. A plan is in place to connect families to schools and childcare entities.

That plan includes the following:

1. Mechanisms for informing parents how to prepare their child for the next transition
2. Brochures, videos, and/or a website to keep parents informed in English and other critical languages
3. Learning opportunities for parents to inform them about developmental milestones and ways to prepare their children to meet the milestones

### D. A plan is in place to connect communities to schools.

That plan includes the following:

1. Mapping of community strengths and needs that identify information on topics such as family demographics, community assets, etc.
2. A contact list for community leaders and organizations to enlist to support the early childhood population
3. Procedures to strengthen relationships between communities and schools have been implemented, (e.g., making a presentation to the Rotary; requesting support from the City Council)

### E. A plan is in place to improve access for families to resources for developing early literacy in their homes.

1. Families receive support through community-based family literacy training
2. Community organizations partner to research available grant opportunities
3. Families of small children receive children’s books and reading material in their homes as a result of community efforts (e.g., Reading is Fundamental, Ferst Foundation, Reach Out and Read).

## Building Block 3. Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments

### A. The infrastructure is in place for full implementation of screening and diagnostic assessments.

That infrastructure should include the following:

1. Appropriate screening and diagnostic instruments for monitoring growth and development have been researched and identified (e.g., vision/hearing, cognitive, language)
2. Protocols are in place for staff and caregivers in determining when specific screening is needed
3. Procedures are in place for ensuring that parents are connected to appropriate resources (e.g., Babies Can’t Wait, Preschool Special Education within local education agencies) as a result of the screenings

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

B. The results of formative assessments are used to adjust intervention to meet the needs of children and students.

The following should be in place:

1. Developmental or progress monitoring instruments that are aligned with the GELS, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten are used to monitor efficacy of intervention
2. Assessments are administered according to established timelines
3. Instruction is adjusted based on results of assessments

C. Summative assessments are used to determine effectiveness of interventions or instructional programs.

Program effectiveness is assessed with tools such as the following:

1. Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Checklist
2. Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)
3. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)
4. Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R)
5. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) or a curriculum “fidelity-of-implementation” checklist aligned to program goals to measure the quality of the early literacy environment and classroom interactions
6. Instructional Quality Guides (IQ Guides)

D. Literacy screenings are used to assess readiness of individual children for reading and writing.

Those screenings may include the following:

1. Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to inform classroom instruction
2. *Ready to Read* as a screening tool in center-based classrooms
3. The Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) to measure the emerging literacy skills (comprehension, phonological awareness, alphabetic principles, concepts about print) of children attending licensed and/or registered child care programs
4. Work Sampling System to electronically transfer work sampling to Kindergarten teachers

### Building Block 4: Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

A. Instruction is clearly and consistently aligned with GELS, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten.

1. All faculty/staff receive professional learning in appropriate age-level standards, (e.g., GELS, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten).
2. All faculty/staff receive professional learning in age-level appropriate practices for differentiation based on assessment.

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

B. Research-based instruction is standard practice in the development of phonological awareness, concepts of print (print awareness), alphabet knowledge, writing, and oral language.

1. Faculty and staff receive professional learning in research-based instructional strategies for developing oral language for children birth-to-five.
2. Faculty and staff receive professional learning in research-based instructional strategies for developing pre-literacy skills in children birth-to-five.
3. Faculty and staff follow research-based practice in the development of pre-literacy and oral language.
4. Tools for monitoring implementation are used to ensure that research-based practices are being used consistently.

C. High expectations, grounded in developmentally-appropriate practice with a focus on student interest for all learners, are consistently evident.

1. A consistent focus on student interest is maintained through the use of developmentally-appropriate practice.
2. Curricular resources are chosen to align to all standards and developmentally-appropriate methods and pacing.

### Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention

A. Infrastructure for a system of tiered-intervention based on screening and guided by progress monitoring is in place.

1. Groundwork is laid for a tiered-intervention model in Head Start and GA PreK classrooms.
  - a. Screening and progress monitoring assessments are done at least three times per year.
  - b. All children receive exposure to research-based early literacy curriculum.
  - c. All classrooms are literacy-rich environments.
  - d. All staff receives professional learning in all elements of tiered instruction.
2. Protocols are followed for tiered intervention and for referrals to the process.
3. All domains (e.g., physical, social & emotional, language & literacy, cognitive) are included in the tiered intervention process.

### Building Block 6. Professional Learning and Resources

A. Community partners receive professional learning in the development of early literacy.

1. The knowledge and skills of community partners to contribute to family literacy have been evaluated and cataloged (e.g., librarians’ knowledge of excellent children’s literature;

# Georgia Literacy Plan Birth-to-Five

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## Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

public health providers’ knowledge of physical and safety needs necessary for early literacy development).

2. All applicable program standards are available to educators and caretakers (e.g. GELS, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten).
3. Barriers to providing professional for early care and education providers (e. g., access due to lack of adequate time, transportation, English proficiency) are acknowledged and are being addressed.
4. Community partners pair with early care and education providers to develop trainings and materials to support family literacy.

### B. In-service personnel receive professional learning in the development of early literacy.

1. A variety of data (e.g., student assessments, teacher needs assessment, teacher observations, professional training) is gathered to determine needs for professional development.
2. The content of training is aligned to early learning standards to prepare teachers and staff for implementation.
3. Protected time is provided for teachers and caregivers to collaboratively analyze data, share expertise, study the standards, plan lessons, examine student work, and reflect on practice.
4. Administrators participate in literacy trainings to learn how to promote change in practice and how to provide specific feedback aligned with early learning guidelines and standards.