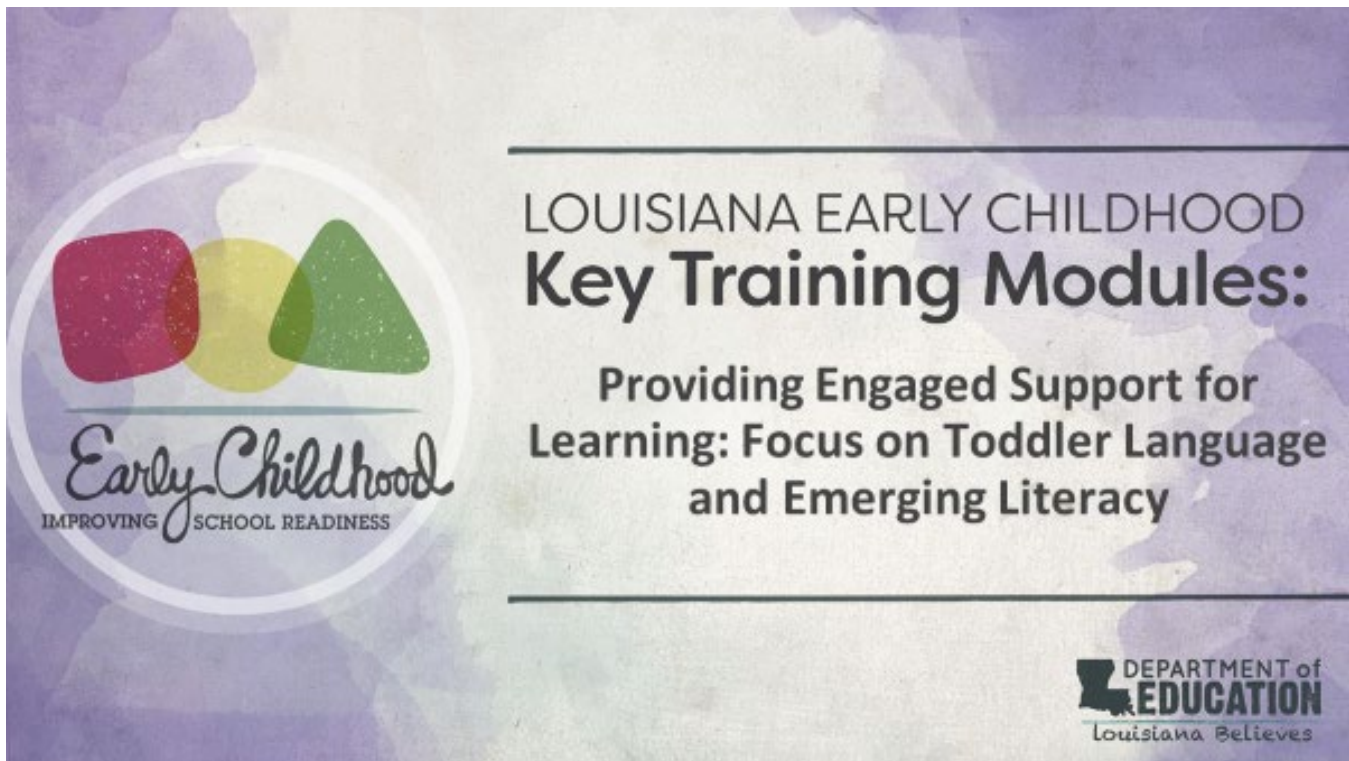# Module 2A: Outline & Manual

Providing Engaged Support for Learning: Focus on Toddler Language and Emergent Literacy

Contents

Module Description

Sharing books with toddlers offers a prime opportunity for increasing children's higher order thinking and language learning. Unlike for older preschool children, the primary focus of early literacy for toddlers is on language development and the construction of meaning. While some toddlers do become aware of prints and begin to recognize letters, print related skills should not be the focus of their book-related interactions with teachers. Rather, it is important for teachers of toddlers to recognize that the value of sharing books with children lies in the opportunities they present to prompt language and expand vocabulary, and to encourage children to engage in more complex cognition such as inferring meaning and making predictions. This module will be designed to improve the quality of teachers' interactions with children as measured by the *Engaged Support for Learning* domain of the Toddler CLASS® that focuses on Facilitation of Development and Learning, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling.

Pre-Work

- *Review the trainer's coded version of the transcript to guide the group discussions after watching the videos*

Materials

- Chart paper and markers
- Copy paper
- Pencils or pens for participants
- Handouts
    - *Language and Literacy: Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards*
    - *Quality of Feedback Practice*
    - *Transcript of Toddler Book Sharing Video*

- o *Toddler Book Sharing Video: Engaged Support for Learning Notetaking*
- o *Pre- and Post-Assessment*

Learning Outcomes

Candidates who actively participate in this session will be able to…
- Define what constitutes early literacy learning for toddlers
- Establish an environment that offers emotional and behavioral support as they engage in literacy interactions
- Facilitate classroom activities and interactions to expand toddlers' thinking and active engagement
- Embed feedback opportunities into instructional activities and interactions with children to scaffold their learning, provide information, and offer encouragement and affirmation of children's responses
- Model language in ways that support children's language use and encourage their use of more advanced language

Training Agenda

Total Content Time: 2.0 hours
Total Session Time: 3.0 hours

Item	Time/Duration
Registration/Sign-In	30 minutes prior to course start (*not included in total course time*)
Welcome, Session & Group Introductions	15 minutes
Toddler Language and Emergent Literacy	15 minutes
Overview of Toddler CLASS®	20 minutes
High Quality Literacy Interactions for Toddlers: Emotional and Behavioral Support	20 minutes
High Quality Literacy Interactions for Toddlers: Engaged Support for Learning	50 minutes
Session Closing & Post-Assessment	15 minutes (*not included in total course time*)
Individualized Q&A	15 minutes following course completion (*not included in total course time*)

Training Manual
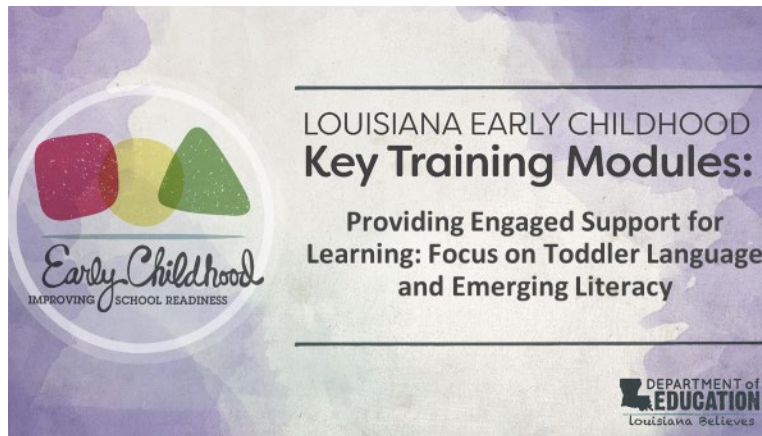
Distribute the Pre-Assessment Evaluation as participants enter the training.
- *Ask them to complete the Pre-Assessment Evaluation and return to you*
- *Briefly review the forms to identify the group's needs*
- *Emphasize the learning objective(s) identified by the group as needing support*
- *Modify the session to spend more time on knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the group*
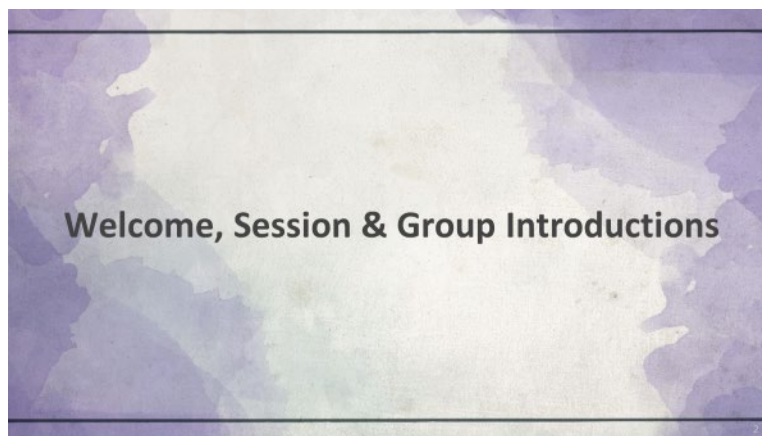
Good morning/afternoon. This is a presentation of the Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules. I am (insert name) and I will be your trainer today.

This morning/afternoon, we will begin by getting to know a little bit about one another, and also review what you will be learning today.

First, I want to welcome and thank you for taking the time to join us today. I appreciate your dedication to young children in Louisiana. Your efforts to grow will help them grow, so thank you.

In this session, we will explore what constitutes literacy learning for toddlers, and how teachers can use the two domains of the toddler CLASS® to plan instruction that support his important aspect of children's development. Both the

Emotional Support and Engaged Support for Learning domains include behaviors that support children's learning, language development, and early literacy.
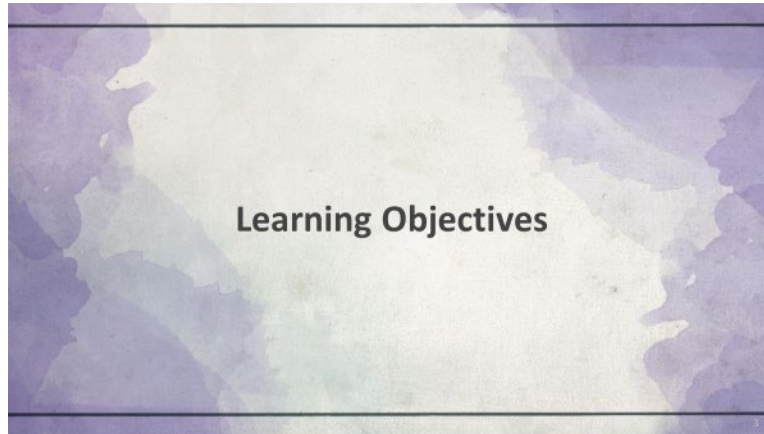

Read each learning objective aloud.

- **Define what constitutes early literacy learning for toddlers**
- **Establish an environment that offers emotional and behavioral support as they engage in literacy interactions**
- **Facilitate classroom activities and interactions to expand toddlers' thinking and active engagement**
- **Embed feedback opportunities into instructional activities and interactions with children to scaffold their learning, provide information, and offer encouragement and affirmation of children's response**
- **Model language in ways that support children's language use and encourage their use of more advanced language**

Are there any additional points we should add to our list of objectives for today?

Record responses on chart paper.
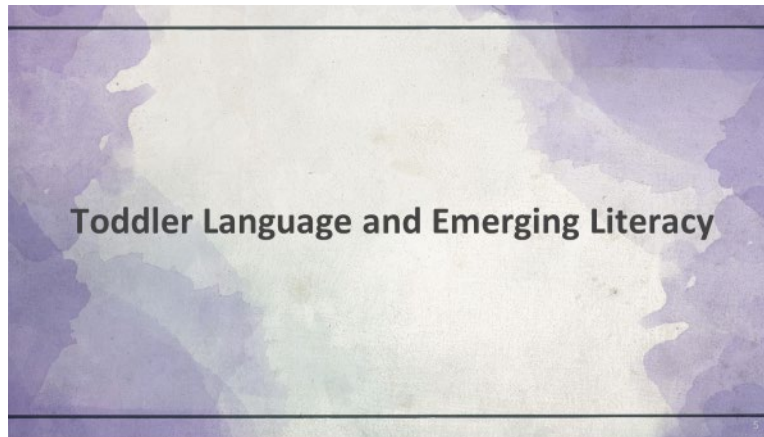
Before we examine the Toddler CLASS® in detail, it will be helpful to explore expectations for toddlers' language and emerging literacy.

Encourage participants to use the three questions on the slide to have a conversation about what they believe is most important for toddlers to learn for literacy development before they reach preschool.

Possible answers include:
- *Children can start learning about letters and sounds.*
- *Children can develop vocabulary.*
- *Children can learn how to handle books.*
- *Children can learn to sit and listen to stories.*
- *Children can learn to enjoy books.*

After about five minutes, have participants share their insights with the large group, and make notes of their responses on chart paper.

You all have a lot of good ideas about toddlers' literacy. We will refine this list as we learn about emerging literacy and how you can support it for the children in your classroom.

Let's take a closer look at how literacy is defined for toddlers.

LITERACY IS LANGUAGE

- Early literacy for toddlers, unlike for preschool age children, is less about print and written language.
- For infants and toddlers, literacy begins with learning and using oral language.
- Literacy begins to emerge when young toddlers first connect oral language to the content of simple books.
- Literacy develops further when older toddlers engage in more interactive exploration of books and stories.

Louisiana Believes

Language is the most important skill toddlers can develop to support their later literacy. While it is appropriate for preschoolers to begin learning about print – especially letters and their sounds – that type of knowledge is usually beyond the developmental capability of most toddlers. It is far more important to help toddlers develop and extend their **understanding of oral language**.

Literacy does begin to emerge when young toddlers first connect oral language to the content of simple books they share with parents and caregivers. **Literacy further develops when older toddlers engage in more interactive exploration of books and stories.**

Let's look at the Louisiana Early Learning and Development standards for a more detailed idea of what constitutes emerging literacy for toddlers.

Encourage participants to return to their seats.

Distribute the Language and Literacy: Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards handout.

Use the slide to point out the two columns for young toddlers and older toddlers so that participants can easily locate those on their handout.

With a partner, take a few minutes to read through the list of expectations for both younger and older toddlers in the area of language and literacy development. Notice how many of the standards are related to oral language and vocabulary development, storytelling, and language play. Also notice how few of these standards have anything to do with print.

You may want to also quickly look over the standards for three- and four-year-olds to notice when attention to letters and sounds begins. As you look over the toddler standards, compare the skills and knowledge listed her to the ideas you generated earlier.

After about five minutes, have participants share any new insights with the larger group. Participants should notice how the toddler standards include little attention to print or letters and sounds.

The standards quite clearly spell out what toddlers should know as they approach their third birthday. The question is, what do teachers need to do to help young children meet those standards? What kinds of teacher0child interactions are likely to result in children's language and literacy development?

We'll turn to the Classroom Assessment Scoring System for guidance.

Overview of Toddler CLASS®
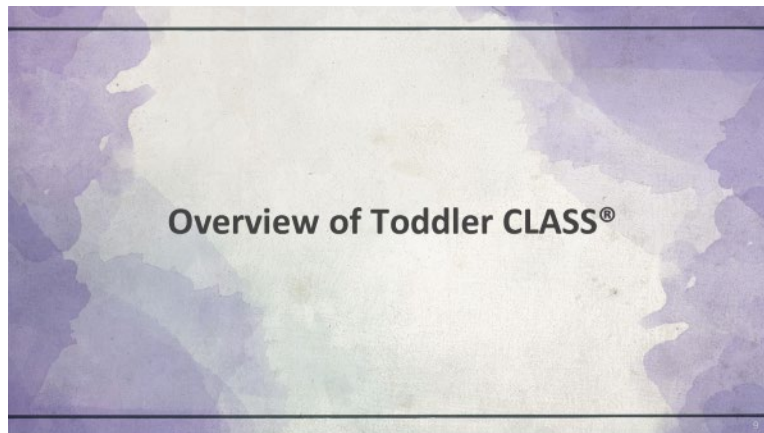
Most of you have probably had observers in your classrooms using the Toddler CLASS®. Let's do a quick review of the CLASS® tool that observers use.

Connections to the Toddler CLASS®
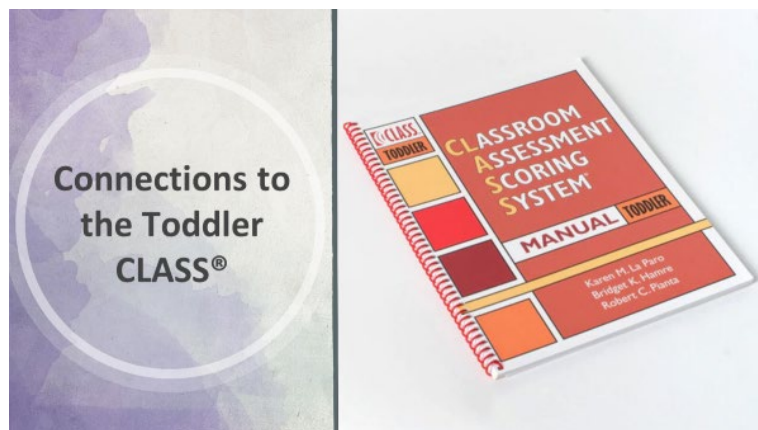
As you know, the CLASS® is the part of the Louisiana Early Childhood Quality Rating System that is designed to measure the interactions between children and teachers that research has shown to increase children's achievement. CLASS® scores are then used to guide professional development activities that lead to improvements in interactions between teachers and children and ultimately increase children's learning and development. We will do a quick refresher of how the Toddler CLASS® is structured. Then we will spend the remainder of the session exploring how to improve both your CLASS® scores and children's language and literacy learning in the context of book sharing.
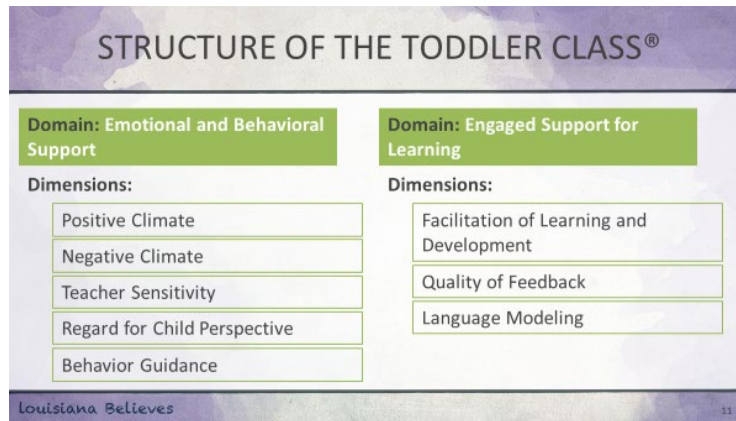
The Toddler CLASS® is comprised of two broad domains, **Emotional and Behavioral Support** and **Engaged Support for Learning**.

The first domain has five dimensions:
- **Positive Climate,**
- **Negative Climate,**
- **Teacher Sensitivity,**
- **Regard for Child Perspective,** and
- **Behavior Guidance**.

This domain is about how teachers make connections with children and help them feel secure as they interact with the teachers and other children in the classroom.

The second domain has three dimensions. This domain is more specifically about how well the teachers facilitates activities that support children's learning and development and connects and integrates learning. It is this domain that most directly supports language and emerging literacy, although the interactions that are part of both domains are interrelated and equally important to children's success.

Reflections

Take a few minutes to reflect on the kinds of interactions you have with children in your classroom that support their language and literacy development.

Be specific – jot down 3-5 things you do as part of your daily routines that encourage children to meet some of the early learning and development standards you explored earlier.

Encourage participants to reflect on their own practice and the kids of interactions they have with children that support language and literacy development.

Encourage them to be specific and jot down 3-5 things they do as part of their daily routines that encourage children to meet some of the early learning standards they explored earlier. Give them about five minutes for reflection.

First, we will briefly examine the Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain of the CLASS® to see how this domain relates to children's early literacy. Then, we will explore the Engaged Support for Learning domain of the CLASS® to examine the types of interactions and activities that will support language and literacy.

As we examine the CLASS®, reflect on the activities and interactions you already included on the list you generated earlier, and think about new things you might try.

Emotional and Behavioral Support
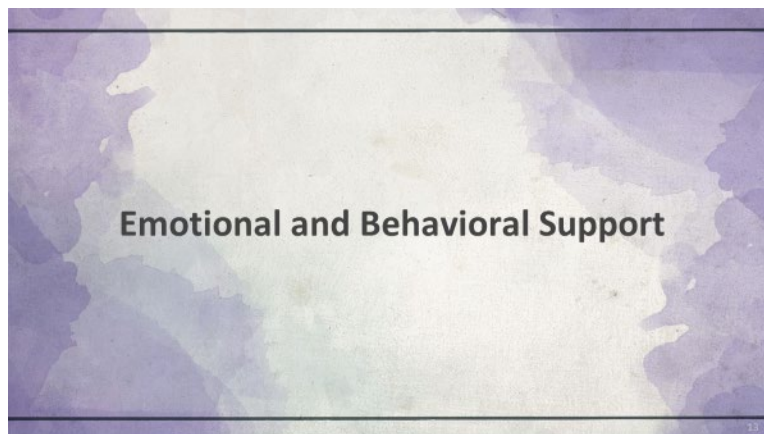
Simply having books available for toddlers does not guarantee that children will learn from them. The key to language and literacy development is the interaction between teachers and children. High quality interactions will call children's attention to books and encourage children to explore books on their own.

Sharing books with toddlers is different than reading aloud to preschool children. You will focus much more on pictures and oral storytelling than reading the print verbatim, especially with young toddlers.

Remember – for toddlers, literacy is about language, not print. It is also important to keep in mind interaction from the CLASS® Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain.

Specifically, **toddlers seek pleasurable connections**. This is part of **positive climate (PC)**.

Teachers also need to be sensitive to children's level of attention. Most toddlers will not sit still for you to read a whole book at once. **Toddlers need to move**. This is related to **teacher's sensitivity (TS)** to children's needs.

Teachers must demonstrate **regard for children's perspectives (RCP)**. **Toddlers will come and go** during book sharing as you hold their attention or as it is drawn to other activities.

Toddlers need guidance for book handling and listening to books. Behavior guidance (BG) will eventually lead to more engagement with books. Over time, and with positive guidance, they will learn to handle books gently and to sit so others can share the books as well.

Even in the brief interactions individual children may have with the teacher during book sharing, significant learning can occur.

Play the video linked to the slide. (Duration: 5:35)

Video link: youtu.be/A3ekM-GyKGE

Expand to full screen view so all participants can easily view the content.

As you watch this video, what do you notice about how this teacher has positive interactions with children, is sensitive to their needs, and follows their lead during this brief book sharing video?

Have participants take notes while watching the brief video of a teacher sharing a book with a group of toddlers.

After watching the video, lead the group is sharing the evidence they saw. Affirm any evidence the participants offer, and/or point out evidence of:
- *Positive Climate and pleasurable interactions – teacher and children smiling, children eager to participate with the teacher,*
- *Teacher Sensitivity – teacher is aware of all children in the group and responds to their bids for attention, children are very comfortable approaching the teacher to share the book with her*
- *Regard for Child Perspective – teacher allows children to come and go, teacher follows child's lead as he wants the puppet on his hand, not hers, teacher follows little girl's lead when she wants to count eggs in picture*

We will now turn our attention to the **Engaged Support for Learning** Domain of the CLASS®. As we reviewed earlier, this domain is about how well the teacher facilitates activities that support children's learning and development and connects and integrates learning.

It is this domain that most directly supports language and emerging literacy, and it will be the focus of the remainder of this training. We will review each of the dimensions of this domain and then return to the video one more time to look for evidence of how well the teacher incorporates the interactions measured by this part of the CLASS®.

Facilitation of Learning and Development is the first dimension of the Engaged Support for Learning Domain of the CLASS®.

This dimension considers how well the teacher facilitates activities to support children's learning and development opportunities. It also addresses how the teacher connects and integrates learning into activities and tasks.

This dimension of the Toddler CLASS® contains three indicators:
- **Active Facilitation,**
- **Expansion of Cognition,** and
- **Children's Active Engagement.**

Let's look at each of these individually.
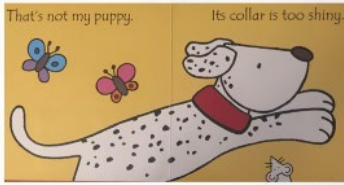
Active Facilitation has three specific behavior markers that indicate high-quality interactions.

The first is that a teacher **provides intentional opportunities for exploration and learning.** For example, when reading *That's Not My Puppy*, a simple tactile board book, the teacher may provide props related to the book as in the example here, in which the teacher has a toy dog and collar nearby to share with children.

The second behavior marker is that **the teacher guides exploration** by actively engaging children. She may do so by pointing out interesting pictures in books, or encouraging children to point to, or in the case of this tactile book, feel parts of the pages.

The final behavior marker is that **the teacher is involved in children's activities to support learning and development**. This means that the teacher does not simply observe as children explore book independently and does not just read aloud while children watch.

When sharing books, the teacher is actively involved, sharing ideas with children and eliciting their ideas as in the example here.

There are four behavior markers for **Expansion of Cognition**.

First, **the teacher provides and embeds information.** In this example, the teacher provides information about the concept of a dog's coat by encouraging the child to feel the coat, comparing it to the child's hair, and clarifying that it is his "hairy coat."

In addition, **the teacher relates information to children's own lives and experiences**. In this example, the teacher engages the child in talking about his own dog at home and what kind of collar that dog has.

Another marker is that **the teacher integrates concepts across activities and tasks**. In this example, the teacher connects the book to materials in other centers like dramatic play and animal sorting and counting materials.

The final behavior marker is that **the teacher encourages thinking skills**. Having children compare and contrast larger and smaller animals is one way to prompt thinking. Other ways to prompt thinking include asking children to make predictions, and problem solve.

The final indicator of Facilitation of Learning and Development is **Children's Active Engagement**. There are three behavior markers for this indicator.

The first is that children actively **manipulate materials**. In the context of book sharing, active manipulation may include children choosing books to read alone or for the teacher to share with them, or children bringing props or toys related to a book to the teacher or other children, for example.

Another behavior marker is **physical involvement**. Teachers can encourage children to actively engage with a book, for example by inviting them to point to and talk about pictures in a book, to help turn the pages, or to do motions related to the story.

The final behavior marker is **verbal involvement**. Here, the teacher encourages children when they name or talk about things they see in a book's illustrations, when they ask questions, and when they "read along" – repeating favorite words or phrases from the book.
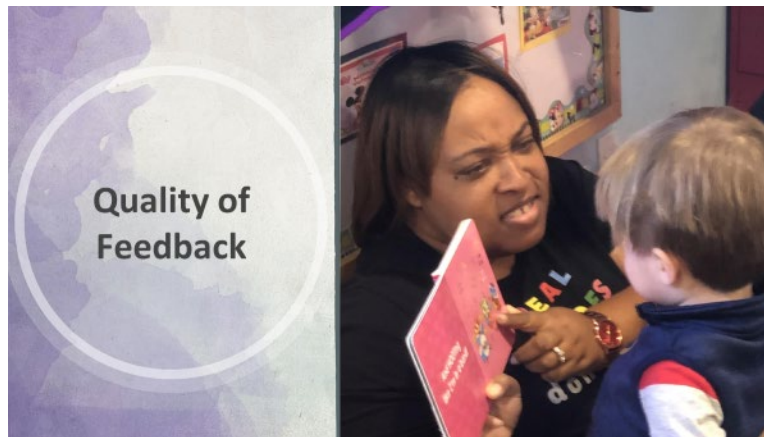
Quality of Feedback is the second dimension of the Engaged Support for Learning Domain of the CLASS®. It is primarily about the degree to which the teacher provides feedback in response to what children say and do that promotes learning and understanding and expands children's participation.

This dimension of the Toddler CLASS® contains three indicators:

- **Scaffolding,**
- **Providing Information,** and
- **Encouragement and Affirmation.**

Let's look at each of these individually.

SCAFFOLDING

- **Hints**
  - Are you looking for the mouse on this page?
  - I see the mouse, just his head by one of the ears. Can you find it?
- **Verbal or physical assistance**
  - I'll help you trace the bumblebee lines with your finger.
  - Let's count the bees together. (Counting as child points to each bee – one, two.)
  - What can you do if your dog's ears get too shaggy?
- **Prompting thought processes**
  - What can you do if your dog's ears get too shaggy?

louisiana Believes   27

Scaffolding refers to what a teacher does to build on what children can already do to extend their learning.
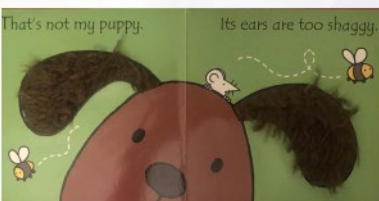
The behavior markers for scaffolding include providing **hints** to help children participate or engage more deeply with an activity. In this example, the teacher notices that the child is having trouble finding the mouse (something that appears on every page) and provides a hint to help the child find it.

The second behavior marker is offering **verbal or physical assistance**. In this example, the teacher notices the child attempting to run his finger on the lines showing the flight of the bumblebees and offers to guide his finger so he can be successful. Or when the child points to each bee and says. "one, one," she assists the child in counting "one, two" instead.

The final behavior marker is **prompting thought processes**. When the child says "shaggy" while feeling the ears, the teacher extends her thinking by asking the child to think about what can be done if a dog gets too shaggy.

PROVIDING INFORMATION

- **Clarification of concept of task**
  - Shaggy means the hair is long and kind of messy.
  - That's not the mouse. That's a bumblebee.
- **Expansion and elaboration**
  - Bumblebees fly – see, these bumbles have wings. The mouse doesn't fly.
  - Those dotted lines show where the bumblebee was flying.

louisiana Believes   28

Teachers can also extend children's learning by providing additional information in response to what children are attending to.

The behavior markers for **providing information** include **clarification of concept or task** and **expansion and elaboration.**

In this example, the teacher notices the child feeling the ears and saying "shaggy," and extends the child's learning by defining the word shaggy. When the child says "mouse," when pointing to the bee, she clarifies by telling the child, "That's not a mouse. It's a bumblebee."

The teacher in this example also expands and elaborates on what the child is paying attention to on this page with more information about bumblebees and the difference between the bees and the mouse, and an explanation of how the dotted lines function in the illustration.

The behavior markers for **Encouragement and Affirmation** includes the teacher **providing individualized feedback**, **specific feedback**, and **recognition of accomplishment or effort.**

Individualized feedback is tailored to what specific children are saying or doing, as in the example here. Teachers also need to be specific in their feedback, rather than offering general statements such as "good job" or "great." In this example, the teacher acknowledges a specific child action (feeling the ears) and helps extend the child's interest and attention.

Finally, the teacher in this example also offers recognition or children's accomplishment or effort. In this example, the teacher notices and acknowledge that the child is looking for the mouse on every page and encourages the child to keep looking for this one, then praising the child for his success.
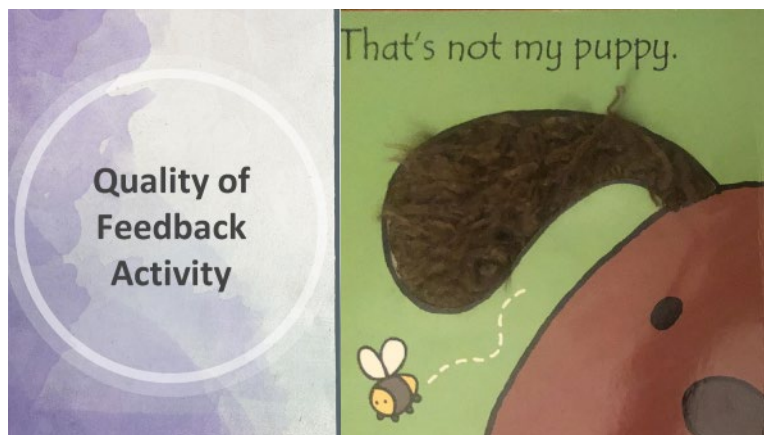
Distribute the Quality of Feedback Exercise handout.

Remind participants to use the page from the book displayed as they consider the children's actions or words in response to the book. Allow about five minutes for participants to write responses to the scenarios, then another five minutes to share ideas with a partner.

Language Modeling is the third dimension of the Engaged Support for Learning Domain of the CLASS®. It is primarily about the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language stimulation and language facilitation techniques to encourage children's language development.
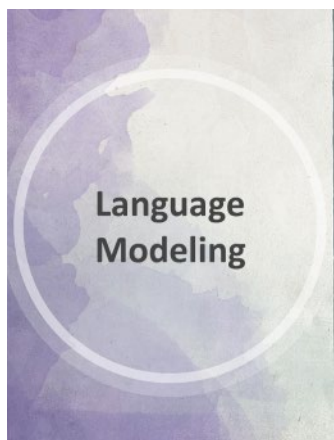
This dimension of the Toddler CLASS® includes four indicators:
- **Supporting Language Use,**
- **Repetition and Extension,**
- **Self- and Parallel Talk,** and
- **Advanced Language.**

Let's look at each of these individually.

SUPPORTING LANGUAGE USE

- **Back and forth exchange**
  - Teacher (T): Do you see the tail?
  - Child (C): (Points) Tail!
  - T: That tail is fluffy.
  - C: It's fluffy.
- **Contingent responding**
  - C: I saw that.
  - T: You have seen a dog like this one?
  - C: In the park.
  - T: You saw someone walking a dog like this in the park!

SUPPORTING LANGUAGE USE

- **Open-ended questioning**
  - What else did you see in the park?
  - Why do you think people take dogs to the park?

The behavior markers for **Supporting Language Use** include **back and forth exchange, contingent responding,** and **open-ended questioning**.
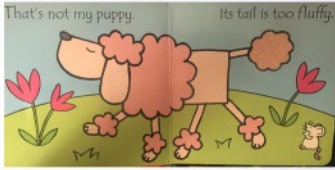
Back and forth exchanges are the same as conversations, although they may be brief. The idea is that the teacher and child take turns speaking.

Contingent responding occurs when what each person says is in direct response to what the other said. Notice in this example that the teacher response to what the child said with a question that the child answers, and then the teacher extends and clarifies, combining the child's simple three word utterances into a more sophisticated statement that contains both of the child's ideas.

Open-ended questioning refers to the teacher's use of questions that required more than a single word response. The open-ended nature of both questions in this example invite more extended conversation with the child as she is asked to describe what she saw in the park and think about why people take dogs to the park.

REPETITION AND EXTENSION

- Repeats
  - C: Puppy.
  - T: Yes, that is the puppy.
  - C: Fluffy.
  - T: The tail is fluffy.
- Extends/Elaborates
  - C: Fluffy.
  - T: This puppy's tail is fluffy. It's really soft.

That's not my puppy. *Its tail is too fluffy.*

Louisiana Believes 35

The behavior markers for **Repetition and Extension** include **repeating** what the child says as in this example, and **extending/elaborating** on what children say as in the second example.

Repetition and extension acknowledge the child's attempts to use language and extend what may be brief utterances from the child with more extensive language.

SELF- AND PARALLEL TALK

- The teacher describes own actions with language.
  - I'm just turning one page so we see the next puppy.
  - I'm counting the flowers. One, two, three!
- The teacher narrates child's actions with language.
  - You're feeling the fluffy tail. It's soft.
  - You skipped a page.

Louisiana Believes 36

The behavior markers for **Self- and Parallel Talk** include the teacher **describing own actions with language,** and **narrating the child's actions with language.**

Describing one's own actions with language is similar to thinking out loud. Self- and parallel talk both serve the purpose of overlaying language on concrete actions that you or the children are engaged in. Doing so helps children connect words to actions, leading to vocabulary development. Narrating your own actions or describing aloud what you see children doing, as in the example offered here, is not a natural language behavior for most of us and will take some conscious thought before this behavior becomes habitual.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE

- **Variety of words and/or descriptive vocabulary**
  - That's the dog's tail. It's soft and fluffy.
  - This dog has his eyes closed and his nose up in the air.
- **Labeling**
  - I see three red flowers.
  - There's the mouse.
- **Connection to familiar words and ideas**
  - That's the dog's paws. Paws are dogs' feet, like your feet. But dogs have four paws. You only have two feet.

Louisiana Believes   37

Use of **Advanced Language** serves the purpose of modeling more sophisticated language than toddlers themselves use in a context that helps them understand the meaning of new words.

The behavior markers for advanced language include using a **variety of words and/or descriptive vocabulary**, **labeling** objects or pictures, and making **connections between new words and familiar words and ideas**.

When a teacher uses a variety of words or descriptive vocabulary, she is providing words and language for child to use. She does the same when she labels an object that the children are handling, or pictures they are looking at in a book, as in the examples here.

Beyond just using the words in context to something the children are handling or looking at, it is best for children when new words or ideas are connected to concepts children already understand, as in this example in which the teacher compares a dog's "paws" to the child's own feet.

TODDLER BOOK SHARING

Louisiana Believes   Hold CTRL and click the picture to play video.   38

Now, you'll watch the same video we saw earlier of a teacher sharing a book with a group of toddlers. This time, you will watch and follow the ways the teacher demonstrates engaged support for learning. I will hand out a transcript of the video so you can follow along or refer back to some of the teacher's comments and questions to the children. Use the note taking handout to jot down anything you observe that represents dimensions in this domain of the CLASS®.

Distribute the Toddler Book Sharing Video Transcript and Engaged Support for Learning Note Taking handouts.
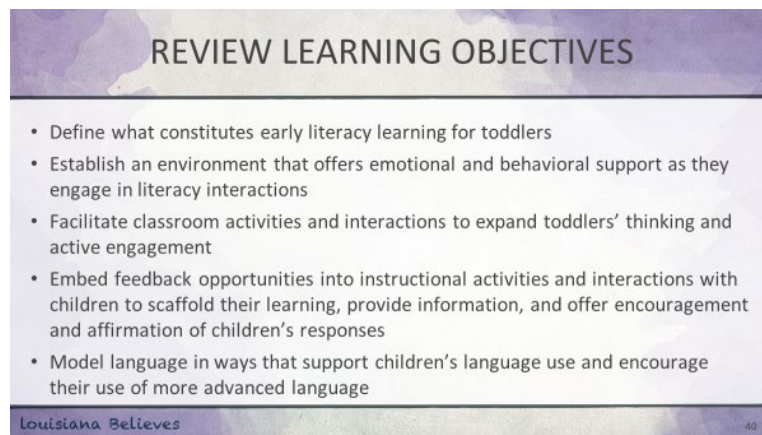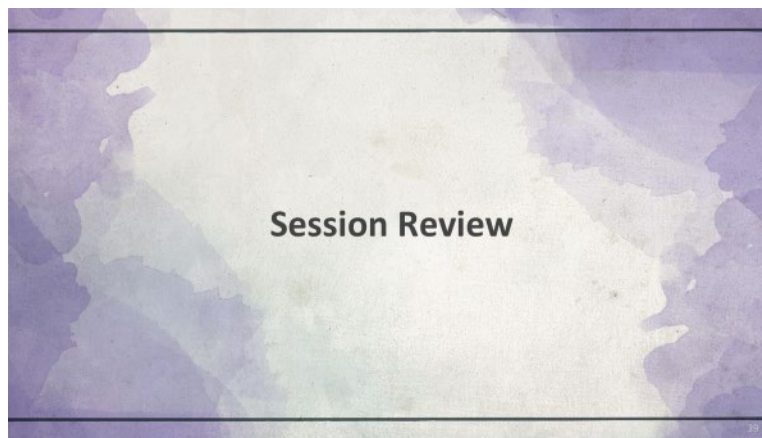
Play the video linked to the slide. (Duration: 5:35)

Video link: youtu.be/A3ekM-GyKGE

Expand to full screen view so all participants can easily view the content.

After watching the video, allow about five minutes for participants to review the transcript for evidence they may have missed while watching the video. Then, have participants take turns sharing the evidence they noted.

Use the Transcript of Toddler Book Sharing Video trainer's coded version of the transcript to guide the group discussion, affirming the evidence they found and pointing out anything they might have missed.

Session Review

REVIEW LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define what constitutes early literacy learning for toddlers
- Establish an environment that offers emotional and behavioral support as they engage in literacy interactions
- Facilitate classroom activities and interactions to expand toddlers' thinking and active engagement
- Embed feedback opportunities into instructional activities and interactions with children to scaffold their learning, provide information, and offer encouragement and affirmation of children's responses
- Model language in ways that support children's language use and encourage their use of more advanced language

Louisiana Believes

Review Learning Objectives.

Explain that for each statement, they will show a "thumbs up" if they think we covered the objective, a "thumbs down" if we did not cover the objective, and a "sideways thumb" if we partially covered the objective.

- **Define what constitutes early literacy learning for toddlers**
- **Establish an environment that offers emotional and behavioral support as they engage in literacy interactions**
- **Facilitate classroom activities and interactions to expand toddlers' thinking and active engagement**

- **Embed feedback opportunities into instructional activities and interactions with children to scaffold their learning, provide information, and offer encouragement and affirmation of children's responses**
- **Model language in ways that support children's language use and encourage their use of more advanced language**

Open the floor for participants' comments and questions.
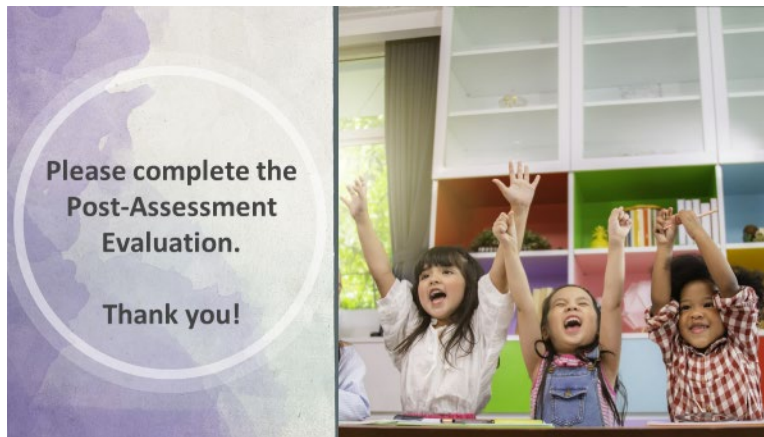
That brings us to the end of our time. Thank you so much for your attention and hard work today. Before you go, please complete the Post-Assessment Evaluation.

Distribute the Post-Assessment Evaluation.

When you have completed the evaluation, please fold it and leave it in the center of your table before you leave. I hope this has been valuable! If you have any additional questions, I will be available to talk further.

Thank you.

Post-Assessment Evaluation Guidance
- *Review the forms to identify the group's responses*
- *Compare the results and identify the areas in which participants expressed greatest growth and the areas in which participants might still need support*

- *Share results with Louisiana DOE representative to inform local continuing professional development efforts*