

# Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards

## Introduction to Language, Literacy and Communications Domain



*“Amaani, my family child care provider, talks and sings with me and the other children in her care every day. I am three-and-one-half years old and go to her home with my little baby brother and several other children of differing ages. My family speaks English only but I love to listen to the lilt in Amaani’s voice when she talks with me in English and as she sings my baby brother to sleep with a song from her native Somalia. I hear different sounds and am learning some Somali words as well as some Spanish ones as my best friend, Gabriella, and her family speak that language. Amaani makes sure that we can all communicate with each other. My favorite times of the day are book times. Amaani has many different kinds of books and lets us look at them ourselves, reads them to us, and helps us understand the stories and learn new words. Sometimes we act stories out. Sometimes the story has a song that we sing or items that we can count. I really like the pictures in books about plants and animals and houses and big trucks. Amaani has markers and crayons that we can use to write and draw. I can make some of the letters in my name, Emily, but not perfectly. Amaani says that’s okay. That I’m learning just right for a three-, almost four-year-old. Gabriella can make her “G” but my little brother just makes marks on the paper. But Gabriella and me know which name cards belong to us and to the other children. We like to pass them out. When we do it right, Amaani claps and smiles.”*

Language, literacy, and communication skills begin in the very first months of life and strong development of young children’s skills and abilities depends on interactions with families, teachers, caregivers and friends. The expectations that are set out in the Minnesota Early Indicators of Child Progress (ECIPs) recognize that young children are developing foundational knowledge and skills that will lead to more rigorous academic study in the English Language Arts domain in the elementary school years. The alignment of the ECIPs with the Minnesota Academic Standards for Kindergarten is included and, as the kindergarten standards are revised, this alignment will be updated. The ECIPs provide guidance so that teachers and providers know appropriate expectations for young learners.

The Language, Literacy, and Communications domain includes four components:

1. Listening and Understanding; Receptive Language LLC 1-2
2. Communicating and Speaking; Expressive Language LLC 3-4
3. Emergent Reading LLC 5-13
4. Writing LLC 14



The subcomponents and indicators identified for the ages of birth through kindergarten entry address the specific expectations across the developmental spectrum.

- For infants, indicators focus more on the children’s receptive language and beginning communication skills with loved ones and caregivers. Interactions with books and early phonological awareness are seen within the context of relationships with caregivers.
- As toddlers grow in their capabilities to express themselves in words and phrases, vocabulary in their home languages is emphasized, both from the receptive as well as the expressive mode. Phonological awareness is seen in the ways that children engage with word play, songs and rhymes. As caregivers provide opportunities to interact with books and story-reading experiences, they help build initial concepts of print and early comprehension. Toddlers make initial attempts at writing as they scribble and draw with various writing tools.
- Preschoolers show their rapidly expanding vocabulary in the ways they can respond to adult directions and engage in conversations. They express their wants and needs more clearly and in greater complexity as their understanding of grammar and syntax grows. They show enjoyment in being read to and may read the pictures or retell the stories in books they know well. They begin to make sense of letters and print as they play with reading and writing and engage in word play with the sounds of language as they develop phonological awareness.

The domain of Language, Literacy and Communications is foundational to children’s development in all domains. Their development of oral language and the ability to communicate with others helps children function socially and in their daily lives. Their growing vocabulary includes the language of other domains. They incorporate mathematical and scientific terminology as they learn more about the world around them. They grow in understanding of roles and responsibilities as they engage in dramatic play and imitate family life.

Certainly reading and writing are important long-term goals in school experiences. The indicators in the ECIPs are designed to work toward those goals with the foundational skills appropriate for the youngest learners. It’s important for teaches and providers to remember that literacy in the early years is built on the foundation of oral language.

“Early literacy is an emerging set of relationships between reading and writing. These relationships are situated in a broader communication network of speaking and listening, whose components work together to help the learner negotiate the world and make sense of experience (Thelen & Smith 1995; Lewis 2000; Siegler 2000). Young children need writing to help them learn about reading, they need reading to help them learn about writing; and they need oral language to help them learn about both.” (Roskos, Christie, and Richgels 2004, 1)

*Resource:*

*Roskos, Kathleen A., James F. Christie, and Donald J. Richgels. 2003. Essentials of Early Literacy Instruction. Young Children, Vol. 58, No. 2: 52-60.*

## Domain: Language, Literacy and Communications: Cognitive

### Component LLC 1-2: Listening and Understanding; Receptive Language

Subcomponent	Birth to 6 months	6-15 months	15-24 months	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5, K-Readiness	K Alignment
<b>L1 Language comprehension:</b> Child understands the meaning of words and phrases (receptive) and uses those words and phrases to communicate effectively (expressive)	<b>L1.1</b> Turns toward and focuses on nearby adult caregiver who is speaking  <b>L1.2</b> Watches caregiver actions and gestures	<b>L1.3</b> Responds to nonverbal and verbal cues  <b>L1.4</b> Responds to conversation, questions, and requests  <b>L1.5</b> Responds to an object or action label such as ball or eat	<b>L1.6</b> Responds to increasingly complex sentences  <b>L1.7</b> Responds to descriptive language about objects, actions, and concepts	<b>L1.8</b> Shows understanding of questions and statements about people, objects, ideas, and feelings  <b>L1.9</b> Points to or places an object in/out, under/over and top/bottom when asked  <b>L1.10</b> Notices when adults use unusual or uncommon words	<b>L1.11</b> Responds to direct questions and follows simple directions  <b>L1.12</b> Points to or places objects before, after, above, and below based on verbal cues	<b>L1.13</b> Follows directions that involve two or more steps  <b>L1.14</b> Responds to increasingly complex prepositional directions, such as beside, around and next to	<b>K 0.8.1.1.d</b> Follows basic oral direction  <b>K 0.8.1.1.a</b> Follows agreed upon rules for discussions  <b>K 0.8.1.1.d</b> Follows basic oral direction

### Component LLC 3-4: Communicating and Speaking; Expressive Language

Subcomponent	Birth to 6 months	6-15 months	15-24 months	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5, K-Readiness	K Alignment
<b>L2 Social conversation:</b> Child meaningfully engages in talk	<b>L2.1</b> Coos and gurgles, babbles, and imitates facial	<b>L2.3</b> Uses sounds, gestures, or actions to communicate	<b>L2.5</b> Uses real or made-up words or signs to express	<b>L2.7</b> Uses sounds, signs, words, phrases for	<b>L2.10</b> Continues conversations with	<b>L2.11</b> Negotiates, shares, plans, and solves	<b>K 0.8.1.1.b</b> Continue a conversation through

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with others to express feelings, wants and ideas	expressions to caregivers <b>L2.2</b> Begins a conversation through body movements	and express needs and wants <b>L2.4</b> Makes different sounds in response to objects, people, or activities	basic wants and needs <b>L2.6</b> Adds to or extends conversations with others	desires and interests <b>L2.8</b> Begins to ask "why" questions <b>L2.9</b> Starts conversations with others	comments or questions	problems with others <b>L2.12</b> Asks and answers questions to seek help or get information	multiple exchanges <b>K 0.8.3.3</b> Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood
<b>L3 Vocabulary and syntax:</b> Child understands word order and grammatical rules	<b>L3.1</b> Imitates and repeats pitch and duration of caregiver sounds	<b>L3.2</b> Uses a few words or word approximations to represent concepts <b>L3.3</b> Names a few objects and people <b>L3.4</b> Imitates animal and other environmental sounds	<b>L3.5</b> Constructs simple two-word sentences (object and action) <b>L3.6</b> Rapidly increases use and number of sounds and words	<b>L3.7</b> Uses increasingly complex and varied vocabulary and language <b>L3.8</b> Rapidly increases use of descriptive words such as giant, scary, silly <b>L3.9</b> Uses verbs such as have, had, or will in everyday conversation	<b>L3.10</b> Uses short sentences to share information about experiences, people, places, and things <b>L3.11</b> Uses increasingly precise adverbs such as quietly, loudly, quickly <b>L3.12</b> Uses more new	<b>L3.14</b> Uses sentences that express logical relationships between concepts <b>L3.15</b> Uses increasingly specific words to name objects and their features and functions <b>L3.16</b> Shares information about experiences, people, places,	<b>K 0.8.4.4</b> Describes familiar people places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail <b>K 0.10.4.4</b> Identifies new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately <b>K 0.8.6.6</b>

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					and precise words  <b>L3.13</b> Correctly uses some past tense and irregular verbs (go, went, gone)	and things in sequence	Speaks audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, and responds to poems, rhymes and songs

**Component LLC 5-13: Emergent Reading**

<b>Subcomponent</b>	<b>Birth to 6 months</b>	<b>6-15 months</b>	<b>15-24 months</b>	<b>2-3 years</b>	<b>3-4 years</b>	<b>4-5, K-Readiness</b>	<b>K Alignment</b>
<p><b>L4 Motivation, engagement:</b> Child has an interest in and sustained attention for literacy acts</p>	<p><b>L4.1</b> Likes to be read to and shown pictures</p>	<p><b>L4.2</b> Makes sounds while looking at text or images</p> <p><b>L4.3</b> Points to a few pictures in books and in response to adult questions</p> <p><b>L4.4</b> Demonstrates interest and involvement with books and other print materials</p>	<p><b>L4.5</b> Relates an object in a book or print to the real object</p> <p><b>L4.6</b> Imitates reading</p>	<p><b>L4.7</b> Shows interest in both pictures and text</p> <p><b>L4.8</b> Asks for or picks out favorite texts</p> <p><b>L4.9</b> Focuses on a book while listening to the reader</p>	<p><b>L4.10</b> Shows persistence with longer and more complex narratives and informational text</p> <p><b>L4.11</b> Offers a personal response to stories read aloud</p>	<p><b>L4.12</b> Actively participates in reading activities with enjoyment and purpose</p> <p><b>L4.13</b> Retells familiar stories using the book as a guide</p>	<p><b>K 0.1.10.10</b> Actively participates in group reading activities with purpose and understanding including the appropriate selection of text for personal enjoyment, interest and academic tasks</p>
<p><b>L5 Phonological awareness:</b> Child is able to hear and understand the discrete sounds that make up language</p>	<p><b>L5.1</b> Looks at caregiver’s lips and face when caregiver is speaking</p> <p><b>L5.2</b> Pays attention to sounds in the environment and the spoken language from caregivers</p>	<p><b>L5.3</b> Shows interest in songs, rhymes, chants, and stories</p> <p><b>L5.4</b> Recognizes sounds used by speakers of child’s home language</p>	<p><b>L5.5</b> Imitates sounds heard in the environment</p> <p><b>L5.6</b> Identifies sounds heard in the environment</p>	<p><b>L5.7</b> Repeats different sounds in rhymes and familiar words</p> <p><b>L5.8</b> Distinguishes between spoken language and environmental sounds</p>	<p><b>L5.10</b> Shows interest in and associates sounds with words</p> <p><b>L5.11</b> Playfully explores sounds, words, and language, including</p>	<p><b>L5.12</b> Identifies and continues sound patterns in words</p> <p><b>L5.13</b> Plays with the sounds in spoken language, independent of meaning</p>	<p><b>K 0.3.0. 0</b> Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes)</p>

Subcomponent	Birth to 6 months	6-15 months	15-24 months	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5, K-Readiness	K Alignment
				<b>L5.9</b> Recalls previously heard words, songs, and rhymes	rhyme and alliteration		
<b>L6 Letter recognition:</b> Child recognizes the shapes of letters and recalls the names of letters	<b>L6.1</b> Recognizes familiar faces	<b>L6.2</b> Shows interest in familiar photos, pictures, and drawings	<b>L6.3</b> Recognizes familiar photos, pictures, drawings	<b>L6.4</b> Recognizes symbols, colors, and shapes	<b>L6.5</b> Points to and names some letters (especially in their own name)	<b>L6.6</b> Recognizes how features of a letter combine to make a specific letter  <b>L6.7</b> Differentiates between letters and other symbols	<b>K 0.3.1.1.(d)</b> Recognize and name all upper and lower case letters of the alphabet
<b>L7 Concepts of print:</b> Child understands the fundamentals of print, such as orientation, organization, and features of print	<b>L7.1</b> Explores books by grasping and bringing to mouth to suck and chew	<b>L7.2</b> Attempts to hold board books with both hands  <b>L7.3</b> Turns pages of board books	<b>L7.4</b> Turns book or text right side up	<b>L7.5</b> Identifies front and back of book  <b>L7.6</b> Demonstrates understanding that print has meaning	<b>L7.7</b> Looks at books or shares them from front to back	<b>L7.8</b> Recognizes some parts of a book and conventions of print  <b>L7.9</b> Knows that English print is left to right and top to bottom  <b>L7.10</b> Points to words and attempts to read, or asks, "what does it say?"	<b>K 0.3.1.1 (a-d)</b> Demonstrates understanding of the organization and basic features of print

<p><b>L8 Comprehension of narrative text:</b> Child understands the events and order of events in a story</p>		<p><b>L8.1</b> Pays attention to stories read out loud</p> <p><b>L8.2</b> Points to or gestures toward characters during reading</p>	<p><b>L8.3</b> Understands stories read or told</p> <p><b>L8.4</b> Talks about, gestures, or points to characters and events during reading or storytelling</p> <p><b>L8.5</b> Relates objects in stories to objects in the real world</p> <p><b>L8.6</b> Talks about characters and events during reading</p>	<p><b>L8.7</b> Asks and answers questions during story reading</p> <p><b>L8.8</b> Acts out, draws, or describes parts of a story</p> <p><b>L8.9</b> Can identify and describe basic information from the text</p>	<p><b>L8.10</b> Retells important information from a story</p> <p><b>L8.11</b> Tells simple stories and experiences about own life</p> <p><b>L8.12</b> Responds to and uses vocabulary related to key concepts in the text</p>	<p><b>L8.13</b> Predicts what will happen next in a story using words or drawings</p> <p><b>L8.14</b> Retells a story using a variety of media, materials, and props</p> <p><b>L8.15</b> Restates and describes the concepts from the text</p>	<p><b>K 0.1.3.3</b> With prompting and support, identify characters, settings and major events in a story</p> <p><b>K (0.1.2.2, 0.2.1.1, 0.2.2.2, 0.2.3.3)</b> With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details</p> <p><b>K 0.1.1.1</b> With prompting and support ask and answer questions about key details in a text</p>
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**Component LLC 14: Writing**

Subcomponent	Birth to 6 months	6-15 months	15-24 months	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5, K-Readiness	K Alignment
<p><b>L9 Writing conventions:</b> Child understands the forms and function of written language</p>	<p><b>L9.1</b> Grasps and squeezes a toy or object</p> <p><b>L9.2</b> Uses hands or feet to make a connection with objects or people</p>	<p><b>L9.3</b> Coordinates eye and hand movements and has control over grasp</p>	<p><b>L9.4</b> Uses small muscles to do simple tasks</p> <p><b>L9.5</b> Attempts to use a variety of writing tools such as crayons and markers</p>	<p><b>L9.6</b> Uses scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent thoughts and ideas</p> <p><b>L9.7</b> Demonstrates interest in writing as a way of communicating</p>	<p><b>L9.8</b> Uses letter-like symbols to make letters or words</p> <p><b>L9.9</b> Uses drawing to represent writing</p>	<p><b>L9.10</b> Writes own name, and words about things that interest them</p> <p><b>L9.11</b> Understands there are different purposes for writing, such as stories, lists, signs, etc.</p> <p><b>L9.12</b> Uses invented spelling</p> <p><b>L9.13</b> Uses words, pictures, letters, or letter-like symbols to communicate information and ideas, or compose original stories</p>	<p><b>K 0.6.3.3</b> Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened</p>