

The Personal Literacy Plan

Formal and informal assessments in an early-care setting can play a critical role in helping a provider individualize instruction and monitor the progress of individual children. But without some way of organizing, analyzing and centralizing the wealth of data that these assessments produce, many teachers find the information to be of limited value.

Ready to Learn Providence’s Early Reading First program developed Personal Literacy Plans, or PLPs, so that all of the data created from the formal assessments administered at the ERF sites would be more easily comprehensible. PLPs also provide a useful framework for teachers to document and monitor their students’ progress and share that progress with families.

Two formal assessments are administered at ERF sites – the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool (PALS-PreK) and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). The PLP developed at Ready to Learn Providence separates each child’s score as it pertains to sections of these formal assessments. Organized this way, the PLPs help teachers identify individual literacy-related trends in their classrooms and plan accordingly.

THE PLP IS ALSO A USEFUL MONITORING TOOL. TEACHERS, FOR EXAMPLE, can now track not only how many letters a child recognizes, but also which ones. And teachers now have a placeholder for the many forms of documentation that ERF encourages to create a more comprehensive view of the child’s early literacy development – audio recordings, portfolios, photo archives, children’s print work, teacher observations, etc.

In the development of oral language, ERF asks teachers to use tape recorders to document their conversations with students. Transcripts of these conversations, or excerpts from them, become part of a child’s PLP and, when analyzed, are used to inform future instruction. Some guiding questions in an analysis might be: “Could the child retell a story?” “Did the child use newly learned vocabulary correctly?”

THE PLP FUNCTIONS AS A REPOSITORY OR PORTFOLIO OF AUTHENTIC ONGOING ASSESSMENTS – work samples, informal assessments, photographs capturing key stages of growth, etc. Using these documents, teachers track a child’s activities and accomplishments on his or her PLP, noting success in subtopics such as letter recognition, letter sounds or rhymes. At a glance, the teacher now has essential information on each child’s literacy development.

ERF has found that PLPs also serve as a useful tool for teachers when reflecting on their own practice. Teachers often see as they



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complete these forms that they may be devoting too much time on an activity such as letter recognition but neglecting an equally important skill such as rhyming.

PLPs have proven to be useful for student reflection as well. It appears that when children are invited to review their PLPs and reflect on their own learning, the process motivates them to continue with similar activities. And with all of a child's documentation in one place, parent conferences tend to be far more productive.

THE PLP IS NOT AN ASSESSMENT TOOL. It is a monitoring tool that translates data into a teacher- and family-friendly document. The PLP serves as a catalyst for recognizing where each child is on the early-literacy continuum and for individualizing instruction for his or her emergent literacy development.

Ready to Learn Providence is a citywide initiative with the vision that all children in Providence will enter school healthy and ready to learn. With a coalition of nearly 2,000 individuals and partner organizations, the R2LP community represents the largest constituency in the state devoted to school readiness. R2LP is a program of The Providence Plan.

In 2004 R2LP received a \$2.9 million, three-year federal grant to create centers of educational excellence through Early Reading First. ERF is designed to change teacher practice as well as outcomes for children. In 2006 R2LP received a second ERF grant to work with four additional centers for three years.

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Sample pages from R2LP's Personal Literacy Plan

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