

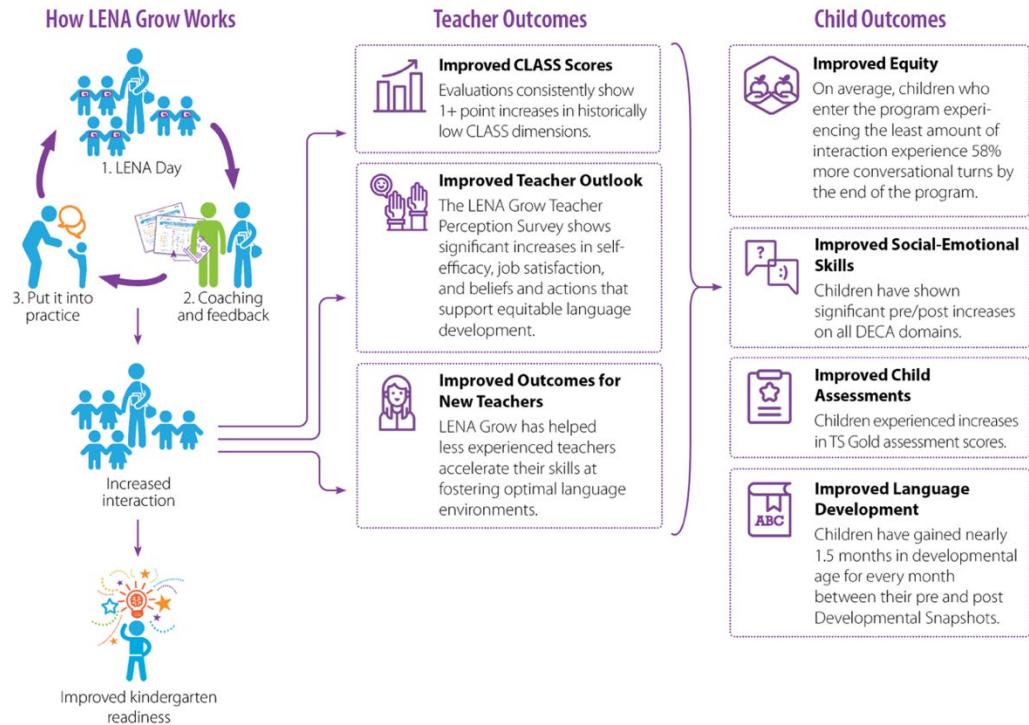


Alignment to FSU's 10 Components of Quality Care

What is LENA? LENA is a national nonprofit on a mission to transform children's futures through early talk technology and data-driven programs. LENA's early talk technology, sometimes referred to as a "talk pedometer" or a "FitBit for conversation," is the global standard for measuring early language environments, including conversational turns. Visit www.LENA.org or email info@LENA.org to learn more about how LENA Grow supports early childhood educators' professional development.

What are conversational turns? Conversational turns are among the most predictive metrics of child outcomes. They are simple back-and-forth verbal interactions between a child and an adult. LENA technology measures conversational turns with great accuracy and has been validated in eight languages. Peer-reviewed research from scholars at Harvard University, Columbia University, and other institutions has linked conversational turns to brain structure,¹ brain function,² reading skills,³ social-emotional development,⁴ and executive functioning⁵ early in life, as well as IQ scores and language skills in adolescence.⁶

What is LENA Grow? LENA Grow is a practice-based professional development program designed to help educators improve language environments equitably in infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms. LENA Grow is implemented in a variety of early learning settings throughout the U.S., including private child care centers, family child care homes, and Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Five-week reflective feedback cycles consist of LENA Days, during which children wear the LENA device, and coaching sessions, during which coaches introduce and model strategies that help educators increase interactive talk in their classrooms. LENA's technology measures conversational turns at the level of the classroom and individual child alike, providing data-rich feedback reports designed to facilitate a strengths-based coaching framework.



¹ "Language Exposure Relates to Structural Neural Connectivity in Childhood," <https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.0484-18.2018>

² "Beyond the 30-Million-Word Gap: Children's Conversational Exposure Is Associated with Language-Related Brain Function," <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617742725>

³ "Socioeconomic disparities in language input are associated with children's language-related brain structure and reading skills," <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13239>

⁴ "Language and socioemotional development in early childhood: The role of conversational turns," <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13109>

⁵ "Neuroplasticity associated with changes in conversational turn-taking following a family-based intervention," <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2021.100967>

⁶ "Language experience in the second year of life and language outcomes in late childhood," <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4276>

LENA Grow aligns to and strengthens 8 of the 10 FSU Components of Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers.

On the following pages, see further explanations of each component, as well as the core elements of LENA Grow.

FSU 10 Components of Quality Infant & Toddler Care		LENA Grow Professional Development Program: Core Elements						
Areas	Components	Research Base	Early Talk Strategies	LENA Room Reports	LENA Child Reports	Weekly Strengths-based Coaching	Weekly Goal Setting, Documentation, and Practice	Family Engagement
Foundations	2. Staff Well-Trained	√	√	√			√	
Relationships	4. Small Groups with Optimal Ratios			√	√	√		
	5. Primary Caregiving and Continuity of Care		√	√	√	√		
	6. Active & Responsive Caregiving		√	√	√	√	√	
Language & Learning	7. Curriculum and Individualization		√		√	√	√	
	8. Emerging Language & Literacy	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Family Support	9. Family Engagement & Cultural Continuity	√	√		√	√		√
	10. Comprehensive support Services				√	√	√	√

How LENA Grow Supports Each Component

2. Staff Well-Trained

LENA Grow helps teachers form a reflective practice habit that improves responsive caregiving and promotes continuous improvement. LENA grow motivates teachers to be active participants in their professional development. It helps them not only understand the *how* but also the *why* of what they practice, building skills in data literacy, goal setting, and child observation. Upon completion, teachers consistently report greater confidence and job satisfaction.

LENA Grow began as a program designed specifically for infant and toddler classrooms, with support for preschool classrooms added in the latest version. LENA Grow program outcomes include the following:

- A deeper understanding of the important connection between language interaction and early brain development.
- Strategies to increase quality interactions equitably, achieved through the reflective feedback cycle.
- Objective data on which times of day promote the most/least amount of interactive talk and which children experience the most/least amount of interaction.
- Guidance on how to interpret data and apply it toward setting goals for lasting positive behavior change.

The LENA Grow program sequence is designed with flexibility to support a program's continuous quality improvement goals. Two stackable five-week sequences can be delivered in a variety of ways, depending on the program and classroom needs: as a standalone five-week sequence, with both sequences back-to-back, or months apart. Completion provides 4.5 hours for LENA Grow 1 Essentials and 3.5 hours for LENA Grow 2 Insights.

The LENA Grow Coach Guide provides week-by-week guidance for each coaching session, including weekly coaching intentions, teacher learning objectives, "caring coaching" callouts to enhance a focus on equity and inclusion, and checklists for facilitating each session.

LENA Grow has the potential to reduce teacher turnover through increased teacher self-efficacy.⁷ Survey data consistently verifies 90+ percent of early childhood professionals report an increase in confidence and job satisfaction after completing LENA Grow, and 95+ percent either like or love the program and would recommend the program to other early childhood professionals.⁸

⁷ "Survey results suggest LENA Grow improves educators' professional outlook," <https://www.lena.org/teacher-perception-survey-results-lena-grow/>

⁸ "An eye-opening experience: Survey shows overwhelming positivity for LENA Grow among teachers and coaches," <https://www.lena.org/teachers-coaches-love-lena-grow/>

4. Small Groups with Optimal Ratios

The LENA Room Report and LENA Child Report provide a clear, hour-by-hour picture of how classrooms compare to national adult word count and conversational turn benchmarks. Using an accurate measure of adult words and conversational turns for a classroom, administrators can make decisions on how best to distribute staff resources to ensure optimal talk environments for all children across the day.

5. Primary Caregiving & Continuity of Care

During each five-week sequence, teachers use a reflective feedback cycle to interpret objective language data and to learn simple, research-based strategies to equitably increase interactive talk, thus creating a responsive, meaningful relationships with each and every child in their care.

6. Active & Responsive Caregiving

Through the reflective feedback cycle, LENA Grow strengthens teacher-child interactions, which are a foundation for classroom quality. Following best principles of adult learning, the LENA Grow feedback cycle provides opportunities for early childhood professionals to learn strategies to increase talk with children, through LENA's 14 Talking Tips and Conversation Starters; set measurable goals and practice strategies in their own classroom; and to reflect on their own performance and each child's experience through objective feedback reports. LENA's 14 Talking Tips, used throughout the program, aligns with the domains and dimensions of the Infant/Toddler CLASS assessment.⁹ Analysis shows LENA Grow helps improve CLASS® scores, especially within the domains of Responsive Caregiving and Engaged Support for Learning.¹⁰ LENA Grow has had positive impacts on children's social and emotional health, including improved DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) scores.

7. Curriculum & Individualization

Program evaluations have shown LENA Grow to support child assessment outcomes and increase the ability of early childhood professionals to individualize curriculum and set developmental goals that focus on promoting interaction and language development. Objective data on each child's language environment, along with individualized feedback sessions on how to interpret the data, supports teachers in setting goals for lasting positive behavior change. This results in positive outcomes for the young children they are supporting. LENA Grow classrooms have shown increases in TS Gold,¹¹ DECA,¹² and LENA Developmental Snapshot scores.¹³

⁹ "Increasing CLASS Scores for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers," <https://info.lena.org/hubfs/LENA-Grow-Alignment-with-CLASS.pdf>

¹⁰ "Early learning classrooms in Forth Worth ISD using LENA Grow increase CLASS scores," <https://www.lena.org/fort-worth-class-score-increase/>

¹¹ "LENA Grow: Coaching for impact in Sarasota County," <https://www.lena.org/lena-grow-coaching-child-care-sarasota/>

¹² "Research shows links between LENA Grow participation and social-emotional growth," <https://www.lena.org/research-shows-links-between-lena-grow-participation-and-social-emotional-growth/>

¹³ "Preliminary findings suggest LENA Grow accelerates language development," <https://www.lena.org/lena-grow-developmental-snapshot-preliminary-results/>

LENA data indicates that even in classrooms and environments that are highly interactive, many children spend large portions of the day in relative silence or language isolation.¹⁴ Even in settings that are considered high quality overall, assumptions cannot be made about each individual child's experience or about equity of access to interaction and learning opportunities. LENA's data shows the importance of seeing both child-level measurements and classroom-level measurements to ensure equitable outcomes. Children who begin the program in relative isolation see the greatest gains in interaction. LENA data shows that children who start the program experiencing fewer than 15 conversational turns per second experience a 58% average increase in conversational turn rates by the end of the program.¹⁵

8. Emerging Language & Literacy

LENA's strengths-based approach to improving language environments provides early childhood professionals a deeper understanding of the connections between language interaction and early brain development. LENA's 14 Talking Tips are research-based techniques for increasing early talk and supporting healthy language and social-emotional development. Three "active ingredients" power the 14 Talking Tips: creating joint attention, increasing conversational turn-taking, and then recasting.

In addition, LENA's Conversation Starters focus on various classroom routines, including personal care routines, transitions, mealtimes, indoor and outdoor play, as well as shared reading, literacy, and songs & rhymes. These practical strategies enhance the implementation of a variety of curriculum models. They also support children's developmental progression in emerging language and literacy.

9. Family Engagement & Cultural Continuity

LENA Grow offers the opportunity for early childhood professionals to engage families in two-way communication at each step of the program. The LENA Grow Teacher Guide embeds a family engagement component into each week of the program, including an activity to help teachers establish and track a family engagement plan. Family engagement materials highlight the classroom's weekly focus, encouraging families to extend similar interactive talk strategies into the home. Additional resources to introduce the program to families and to support family self-efficacy and confidence include a shareable slideshow and social media toolkit. Resources are available in both English and Spanish, and the 14 Talking Tips are available in seven languages. The LENA Child Report provides a window into the child's language experience in the classroom and can serve a tool to aid in ongoing school-home communication.

¹⁴ "QRIS and interaction: Do quality rating systems reflect individual experience?," <https://www.lena.org/qr-is-and-interaction/>

¹⁵ "LENA Grow Program Impact," <https://info.lena.org/hubfs/LENA-Grow-Program-Impact.pdf>

10. Comprehensive Support Services

Objective data reports provide both hourly counts and daily averages to support early childhood professionals in creating and achieving intentional, measurable goals for increased interactive conversation with individual children. LENA Grow's individualized Child Reports provide data that can support IEP goal setting and tracking.

What are the core elements of LENA Grow?

1. **Research base:** LENA Grow is rooted in over a decade of peer-reviewed research linking conversational turns to improved language, brain, and social-emotional development. Over 400 researchers and clinicians in over 40 countries have used LENA technology to study early language development.¹⁶
2. **Early talk strategies:** At each coaching session, teachers receive research-based curriculum materials that provide strategies for increasing interactive talk. Areas of focus include personal care, transitions, indoor play, outdoor play, mealtimes, shared reading, early math, early literacy, and songs & rhymes.
3. **LENA Room Report:** At each coaching session, teachers review the Room Report, which provides objective interaction data on overall room averages and child-specific averages. It quantifies the number of conversational turns in the classroom across the day.
4. **LENA Child Report:** At each coaching session, teachers review the Child Report, which provides a detailed view of each individual child's experience across the day, including hourly counts of interactions and child vocalizations that highlight further engagement opportunities for teachers. This report is also used to engage families in a conversation about their child's early talk experiences and language development.
5. **Weekly strengths-based coaching:** LENA Grow coaches provide 30-60 minutes of coaching each week. The Coach Guide supports them in bringing a strengths-based lens to the data analysis and goal setting conversation with teachers.
6. **Weekly goal setting, documentation, and practice:** At each coaching session, the teacher sets a specific and measurable goal for the coming week. The teacher then documents progress toward that goal as they practice integrating early talk strategies throughout the week, including the next LENA Day.
7. **Family Engagement:** A Family Talk handout is provided each week for teachers to send home. Teachers also spend one coaching session developing a family engagement strategy and making plans for how they will engage families in extending quality interactions into the home setting.

These elements work together to provide a cohesive, empowering professional development experience for teachers that drives meaningful and lasting increases in interaction. This change leads to more equitable language environments, higher CLASS scores, accelerated language development, and increased teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

¹⁶ "Where are LENA Programs?," <https://www.lena.org/where-are-lena-programs/>