

SEEDS OF LEARNING

Collaborative Classroom

©SEEDS of Learning helps students become confident, capable readers through evidence-based, play-focused classroom interactions and instruction.

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OVERVIEW

The ©SEEDS of Learning (SEEDS) model is a research-based training and coaching program for educators. It is designed to ensure kindergarten readiness through balanced, high-quality, and play-based interactions that promote children's social and emotional development, as well as their literacy and language skills. SEEDS can be implemented by early childhood educators (infant/toddler and Pre-K/Transitional Kindergarten), parents, and coaches.



FluentSeeds, a part of Collaborative Classroom, trains and coaches educators in two domains: *how* to engage with students and *what* skills need to be taught. The *how* is rooted in relationships, so educators are trained to focus on five key areas to ensure intentionality and skill in educators' ability to build relationships with their students. The *what* is an evidence-proven set of developmentally appropriate interventions targeting the development of critical early and pre-literacy skills.

This multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) model is compatible with any curriculum, and currently serves around 4,000 educators and 31,000 students across 11 states. [▶ FluentSeeds Overview](#) [SEEDS of Learning Overview](#)

What Makes This Model Innovative?



Rigorous Learning

The SEEDS of Learning framework focuses on the Big 5 Literacy Predictors: oral language, phonological awareness, print concepts, alphabetic principle, and vocabulary to help ensure every student is ready for kindergarten.



Whole-Child Focus

SEEDS educators embed social-emotional learning and cooperative play within literacy-rich schedules to meet each child's needs.



Connection & Community

Educators use intentional affirmations to create a relationship-rich learning environment while also helping students feel loved, respected, and capable.

DESIGN

Goals

FluentSeeds is on a mission to ensure kindergarten readiness so all students can develop foundational literacy skills and see themselves as capable, lovable children.

Foundational Literacy Skills

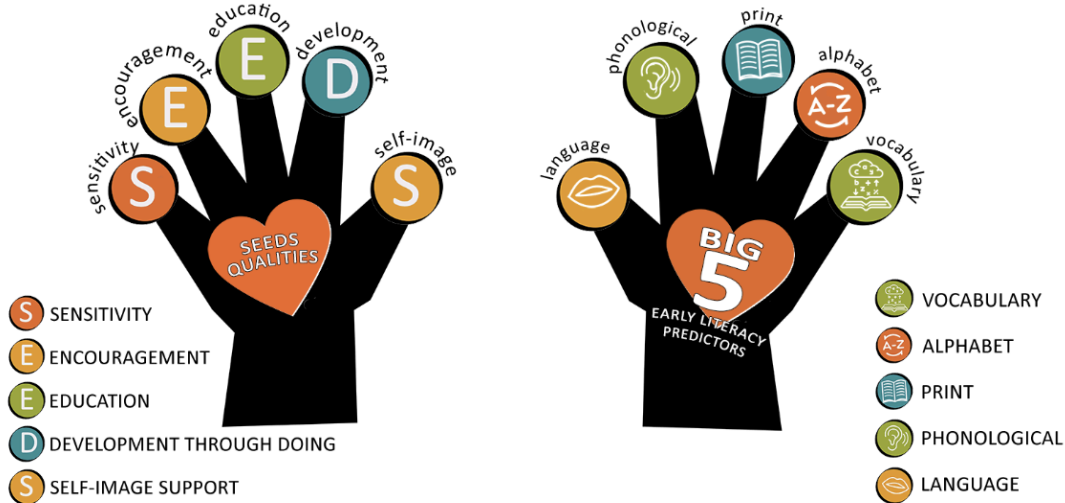
Effective teaching of the Big 5 early literacy skills (vocabulary, oral language, phonological awareness, concepts about print, alphabetic principle) helps children develop the knowledge and skills they need to become ready for kindergarten.

Positive Self-Image

Through consistent, meaningful relationship building, educators help children's sense of feeling loved, respected, and capable.

Experience

SEEDS is a professional development program focused on evidence-based early literacy that integrates multiple tiers of support to promote kindergarten readiness. In order to support student growth in early reading skill areas, educators are taught the SEEDS Qualities to engage and build meaningful relationships with students while also delivering explicit tiered interventions on the Big 5 early literacy predictors.



SEEDS Qualities

The SEEDS of Learning model hinges upon the creation and maintenance of relationship-rich environments with positive interactions between adults and students. SEEDS is an acronym for Sensitivity, Encouragement, Education, Development of Skills through Doing, and Self-Image Support that provides the roadmap for high-quality intentional interactions with students.

- **Sensitivity:** Being aware of children’s thoughts, abilities, and feelings through looking, listening, and asking questions.
- **Encouragement:** Creating a positive learning environment for children through use of intentional affirmations and positive non-verbal communication.
- **Education:** Children engage in daily routines to develop language and literacy skills, including all the Big 5 early literacy predictive skills, as well as social-emotional skills.
- **Development through Doing:** Children explore their world through hands-on learning, including conversation, reading, writing, and play interactions.
- **Self-Image Support:** Children feel loved, respected, and capable because the adults provide a balance of the other four elements.

These qualities are woven into every interaction with students throughout the day, big or small. SEEDS educators are given a toolkit of activities, scripted interactions, and interventions so they can choose the specific strategies that align with each child’s needs. The model first focuses on social-emotional learning and how to build positive relationships with students to set the foundation for safe, trusting relationships between educator and child, and helps mentally prepare students for thinking and learning.

Big 5 Literacy: Tier 1 Instruction

The SEEDS model can be integrated into any early childhood classroom, no matter which curriculum is used, and informs all daily interactions with students. SEEDS classrooms and schedules focus on learning literacy through play as a means of increasing the number of words children hear, the number of words in their vocabulary, and their ongoing ability to use their words to describe the world around them. Teachers create and integrate multiple interactions and activities throughout the day that help students develop the “Big 5” early literacy predictors: oral language and comprehension, phonological memory and awareness, book and print concepts, alphabetic knowledge, and vocabulary and meaning.

These literacy activities are always coupled with quality interactions to help develop warm, positive relationships between teachers and their students. Each day, all students in the classroom can expect to engage in activities such as:

- **Strive for 5 conversations:** Teachers greet students as they enter the classroom and ask open-ended questions that encourage 5 or more communication exchanges. These conversations provide opportunities for comprehension, vocabulary, and oral language, while also teaching social skills such as eye contact and taking turns.
- **Repeated read aloud:** Teachers read the same book multiple times. Each day, children hear the full story with a different instructional focus that helps them learn new vocabulary, make predictions, recall information, and watch and hear fluent readers.
- **Large group circle:** During this time, students gather together to do full-group activities, such as singing literacy-focused songs (Rhyme Song), engaging in the “What is it?” Bag activity (i.e., the teacher pulls theme-related objects out of a bag to support vocabulary, background knowledge, and oral language interactions), or having themed conversations that help children develop and extend their vocabulary and background knowledge (e.g., talking about basketball).
- **Sign-in activities:** Each student writes their own name – usually with the assistance of an adult – to increase print awareness and letter recognition.
- **Transition songs:** Students sing songs together that are grounded in early literacy skills, such as rhyming, alliteration, and letter names.

BIG 5 TRANSITION: RHYMING SONG



Use one-syllable words only.

**DOG, FROG, THESE TWO RHYME
DOG, FROG, THESE TWO RHYME
DOG, FROG, THESE TWO RHYME**

THEY SOUND THE SAME AT THE END!

Each daily activity is purposefully chosen to infuse joy, play, and reciprocal engagement between adults and children to help students develop their reading skills.

Big 5 Literacy: Tiers 2 and 3 Instruction

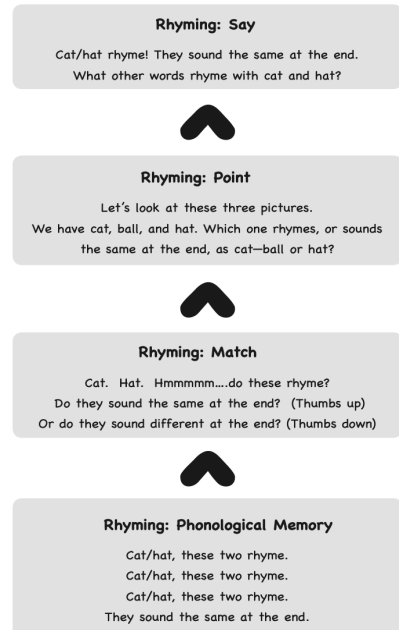
The SEEDS of Learning model is designed to support all learners. For SEEDS educators, this means understanding individual students' skills and knowledge by tracking formal and informal data on each student, and providing the necessary scaffolding to help each student build foundational literacy skills. Some students will benefit from Tier 2 interventions that are remedied through small groups and regular progress monitoring. A few students will benefit from Tier 3 intensive one-on-one learning plans.

Instruction in Tiers 2 and 3 builds on the activities and lessons learned during Tier 1 instruction. Because there are fewer students, teachers are able to provide more individualized support to students as they learn the target skill. Scripts with introductions, group and individual practice, and corrections are provided to teachers to help them chunk lessons with fidelity.

During Tier 2 and 3 instruction, teachers focus on a smaller skill within one of the Big 5 literacy predictors. Students engage in different activities based on their current skill level. For example, for phonological awareness, the teacher might be targeting rhyming as the skill for the day. After singing a rhyming song together, a student might **match** two words that sound alike (e.g., "you" and "shoe") by giving a thumbs up or down if they match or not. A second student, who has already mastered matching, might **point** to pictures that sound the same at the end, and a third student might be asked to **say** two words that rhyme.

Tier 3 interventions are intended to be one-on-one for 5–10 minutes each day. These interventions may take place before or after school hours, outside during recess, or during play centers, and may include family support. Teachers use intervention scripts that focus on students' individual needs. Tier 3 intervention activities and scripts are often very similar to Tier 2, but completed in a one-on-one setting.

PHONOLOGICAL MEMORY, MATCH, POINT, AND SAY



Supporting Structures

The techniques learned through SEEDS of Learning training and coaching help build educators' capacity to support early literacy instruction and do not require significant changes to a teacher's or school's daily schedule or overall operations.

SEEDS enables teachers to infuse their early childhood curricula with developmentally appropriate literacy interventions to target the development of critical early and pre-literacy skills.



**CURRICULUM,
INSTRUCTION, &
ASSESSMENT**

The SEEDS framework can be integrated with any early childhood curriculum. As a Tier 1 intervention, foundational literacy is infused across the classroom and informs all daily interactions with students.

Teachers are asked to collect benchmark data using standardized screeners, such as the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) to assess child status and change over time at three separate time points (fall, winter, and spring). These screeners are then used to identify which students would benefit from Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. During these assessments, teachers evaluate proficiency in vocabulary, letter names, rhymes, letter sounds, and alliteration. Data is formally collected again in the winter and spring to track progress, as well as regularly and informally monitored by the teacher and their coach.

SEEDS requires and builds a relationship-rich culture where students are able to safely learn, explore, and play while they develop their early reading skills.



**SCHOOL COMMUNITY
& CULTURE**

Schools that implement the SEEDS framework are encouraged to work to maintain high-quality learning environments as a means of helping students become confident, capable and joyful readers. School communities are encouraged to create cultures where:

- Educators create an environment that nurtures the health and development of each student.
- Routines are consistent and predictable and provide developmentally appropriate curriculum for students to explore deep learning.
- Students are able to safely explore and play in environments that reflect the students' identities.
- The physical environments include expected adult-to-child ratios, and adequate materials for all students to play and learn.



**ADULT ROLES, HIRING,
& LEARNING**

Teachers commit to professional development and coaching with FluentSeeds throughout the year.

Each participating educator receives 27 hours of training delivered through 9 separate sessions. During these sessions, adults learn more about the SEEDS method, as well as the explicit interventions designed to support literacy.

To ensure programs are implemented with consistency and integrity, SEEDS has a system of parallel processes built into habits of interaction, training and coaching: Administrators, Teachers, Parents, Assistants, and Tutors are valued and expected to participate in the students' learning, progress, and celebration, as well as attend all SEEDS training sessions. Each session is reinforced by consistent, twice-monthly coaching from an expert SEEDS-trained coach, which could be a FluentSeeds coach or another educator at their school who has been trained directly by FluentSeeds. Educators and coaches work together to use data to make decisions for each child to ensure that activities and support can be tailored to each child.

Additionally, partner representatives charged with managing SEEDS participants at each school (e.g., preschool site directors, K-2 principals) will meet with FluentSeeds coaches at least three times per year to discuss progress.

Daily schedules have literacy-focused activities embedded throughout the day.



SCHEDULE & USE OF TIME

In SEEDS classrooms, students experience literacy-rich activities from the moment their school day begins. These could include activities such as:

- Arrival: "Strive for 5" (open-ended) conversations with students
- Daily message: Talk, read, and write about predictable text together
- Tier 1 Small Group: Read aloud, phonological awareness, visual discrimination, etc.
- Big 5 Transitions: Singing literacy songs together during transition periods

Arrival and Departure
Sign-in
Mealtime
Large Group
Daily Message
Repeated Read Aloud
Tier 1 Small Group
Journal
Choice Time/Active Learning
Tier 2 or Tier 3
Big 5 Transitions
Family Engagement

FluentSeeds has developed multiple opportunities for training and coaching other critical community members.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Though the SEEDS model and framework shown here is specifically for early childhood educators of students in pre-K, Transitional Kindergarten, and Kindergarten, FluentSeeds also provides training, coaching, and materials for families, tutors, and community leaders who work with children from birth to grade 2.

Additionally, families can help support literacy skill development by asking about their school routines and engaging in behaviors like talking together, reading together, and delivering positive affirmations. FluentSeeds provides letter templates to parents that teachers might consider sending home to build on the in-class work.

Classrooms are designed to support warm, safe, and literacy-rich interactions for students.

The physical environment of the classroom is integral to the child’s daily experience. To implement SEEDS, each classroom has at least one wall space that is large enough for a child to write up and down (e.g., a whiteboard or SMART Board), as well as the space for students to sign in each day.



SPACE & FACILITIES

SEEDS classrooms may also include:

- Physical space for centers and play
- Clearly visible classroom rules and schedules
- Word and/or sound walls
- Students’ names written around the room
- Written vocabulary words at students’ eye level
- Theme-related books

During professional development sessions, SEEDS coaches help teachers understand how to maximize the materials, structures, and spaces already available to them.



TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

If schools or districts opt into virtual coaching, they will need access to specific technology that enables coaches to adequately engage with teachers.

Though schools have the option of choosing in-person coaching or virtual coaching, teachers who are being coached virtually will need access to laptops with video cameras, headphones, and high-speed internet.



BUDGET & OPERATIONS

Schools and/or districts should plan to budget for SEEDS coaching and training.

FluentSeeds offers onsite in-person training and coaching opportunities, as well as virtual training and coaching. Though costs vary depending on the approach, all schools generally benefit from a 3+ year partnership.

IMPLEMENTATION

Supports Offered

[FluentSeeds](#) offers the following supports to help schools build internal capacity as they implement the SEEDS approach. FluentSeeds uses a gradual release of responsibility framework to shift the cognitive load from their expert trainers and coaches to partner organizations, so their teams become confident, capable early literacy educators. [📄 Gradual Release Model](#)

Planting SEEDS: Modeling

Cost Associated



During the first phase of the partnership, educators are taught the relationship-based SEEDS framework to ensure intentionality and support educators' ability to build meaningful relationships with their students. Each educator participates in 27 training hours and 40 coaching hours.

Trainings are available onsite, virtually, and via e-learning, and dive into each the SEEDS of Learning frameworks. Train-the-trainer sessions are also offered for participants looking to facilitate SEEDS programming for other teachers, parents, family members, and caretakers.

[Learn More](#)

Reach

In 2023, across their programs, FluentSeeds served...

31,522

Students

1,893

Classrooms

616

Sites

13

States & DC

Impact

The impact of this model is felt by educators and children in communities across the United States. Over 95% of partners choose to renew their partnership annually.

In a randomized control trial study conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, researchers found that one year of SEEDS training helped their students achieve significantly higher end-of-year student literacy outcomes than they did before the SEEDS training the year prior.

[📄 NORC at the University of Chicago SEEDS of Learning Program Evaluation](#)

Across 26 Kidango preschools in the East San Francisco Bay Area, a single year of SEEDS training for educators was shown to produce statistically significant, positive improvement in student early reading skills. [📄 Promoting Child Outcomes through Continuous Quality Improvement](#)

- For 4 year olds enrolled in 2018–2019, students made, on average, learning gains of:
 - 8.2 months in letter sounds
 - 6.2 months in rhyming
 - 3.6 months in letter naming
 - 5.6 months overall literacy growth
- Compared with pre-pandemic indicators, students in SEEDS classrooms during the 2020–2021 school year demonstrated growth in all early reading skill areas with significant growth in vocabulary skills. [📄 Exploring COVID-19's Impact on Kidango Preschoolers](#)
- Positive outcomes were seen for children in all racial/ethnic subgroups, as well as for dual language learners.


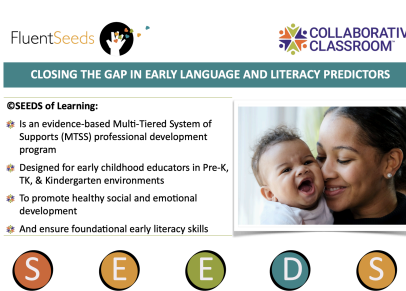
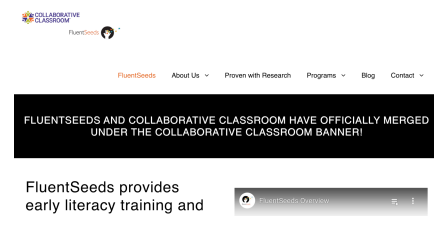
Contact

Emily Grunt

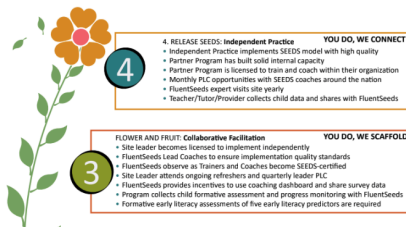
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RESOURCES

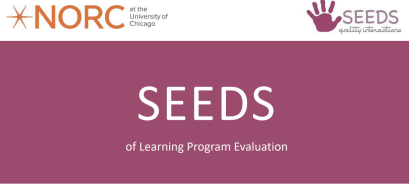
 <p>FluentSeeds Overview An overview video of FluentSeeds. <i>Note: FluentSeeds and Collaborative Classroom have recently merged under the Collaborative Classroom banner</i></p>	 <p>SEEDS of Learning Overview An overview of the SEEDS of Learning Model</p>	 <p>FluentSeeds The FluentSeeds website</p>
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FluentSeeds
OUR MODEL FOR GRADUAL RELEASE
 FluentSeeds' gradual release of responsibility framework purposefully shifts the cognitive load from our expert trainers and coaches to partner organizations, so their teams become confident, capable early literacy educators. Movement is determined within this gradual release model based on each organization's zone of proximal development: honoring their capacities, constraints and confidence with child data and the RTI (Response to Intervention) model for differentiated instruction for children.



[Gradual Release Model](#)

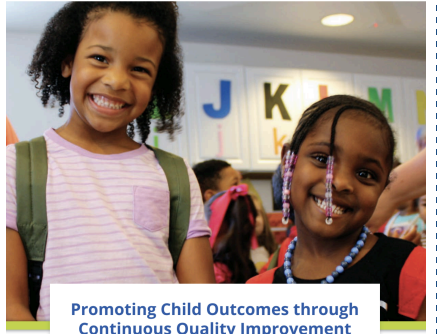
The SEEDS of Learning gradual release of responsibility framework



This brief presents the main study findings. See more about the study details in the section below. October 2, 2020

[NORC at the University of Chicago SEEDS of Learning Program Evaluation](#)

A research brief detailing the statistically significant impact that SEEDS has on early reading skills



[Promoting Child Outcomes through Continuous Quality Improvement](#)

A research brief outlining the positive impact of the SEEDS model on Kidango students

EXPLORING COVID-19's IMPACT ON KIDANGO PRESCHOOLERS

STUDY OVERVIEW and FINDINGS June, 2021



Did the onset of COVID-19 and interruption of in-person learning affect preschool students' early reading skills at the beginning of the 2020 school year?



When compared to pre-COVID-years, COVID did not reduce student early reading skills in fall 2020.



Previously enrolled students' fall 2020 scores were unaffected by COVID.

[Exploring COVID-19's Impact on Kidango Preschoolers](#)

A report detailing how the SEEDS model helped mitigate the impact of COVID 19 on Kidango preschoolers