The LENA Home Program

During a child’s first three years, talk is one of the most critical factors driving brain growth and kindergarten readiness. Low levels of adult-child verbal interaction in these earliest years are a key reason many children aren’t ready for school.

The LENA Home Program provides home visitors the platform to facilitate the Five Key Characteristics of Coaching (Rush & Shelden, 2005):

1. Joint Planning
2. Observation
3. Action
4. Reflection
5. Feedback

Current home visiting strategies shape the goal of preparing young children for success in life. But they vary in structure, implementation, data collection, and evaluation.

The “Talk to Me” partnership, implemented in Cherokee County, SC, set out to determine the impacts of the LENA Home program language development-focused curriculum emphasizing the key features of providing home visitors with objective feedback, joint data analysis, and goal-setting.

Implementation structure:
Year 1: 13 bi-weekly visits using LENA Home as a stand-alone curriculum
Year 2 & 3: 13 weekly visits using LENA Home as a stand-alone curriculum

Home visits lasted approximately 45 minutes each, and included the following components:
• Data collection and reflection using LENA reports
• Introduction of new language enrichment strategies, built around LENA’s Talking Tips
• Strategy review, modeling, and practice
• Goal setting using joint planning

Home Visitors report that the combination of technology-assisted feedback and face-to-face coaching sessions resulted in a powerful parent engagement model.

Parents had some initial concerns about having their child wear a LENA device and whether their reports would show. However, once parents received their first report, they were hooked.

“The LENA report makes you take a hard look at the quality of time you spend with your kids.”

Parents/caregivers made significant gains in adult words and conversational turns. The largest observed change in adult words and conversational turns is very surprising and is consistent with results observed in other LENA Home sites. Research indicates that parents for their 1st child were 43% higher than their 2nd child and were 50% lower than their 3rd child. The larger observed change in adult words than conversational turns is not surprising and is consistent with results observed in other LENA Home sites.

The frequency of shared feedback provided motivation for caregivers. Families with weekly goal setting saw adult words and conversational turns reflect averaged gains 30 percentile points higher in adult words count and 11 percentile points higher in conversational turns than families with more than 4 weeks between feedback.

What Parents Are Saying

Anonymous parent survey data included comments such as:

“I’m telling my brother he needs to do these things with his kids. He thinks this is what schools do, but I’m telling him no, you have to do it now because waiting till they’re older is too late.”

“My child comes up with new words every day.”

“I’ve learned to communicate better...my child comes up with new words every day.”

“Why didn’t anyone tell me this sooner?”

“For more information, contact: LENA® | 9250 Grand Avenue | Suite 1102 | Bexley OH 43209 | Telephone 866.637.0673 | www.LENA.org

How will the use of objective data improve our overall program outcomes?

How will the program outcome data provide transparent reporting to key stakeholders and funders?

How will we use this data for continued program refinement?

The “Talk to Me” partnership represents a community-wide commitment to students and families by measuring and addressing these early deficits to provide effective intervention during the most critical window for brain growth.

Cherokee County School District plans to continue this program and will analyze school readiness data of participating children in comparison to their peers whose parents did not participate in the LENA home program.

Lessons Learned

Case Study: Cherokee County School District

The LENA Home program

Building brains through early talk

Lessons Learned

Conversational Turns

Action

Conversational Turns

n=55

Conversational Turns

1st Recording

Observation

Avg. of Last 2 Recordings

Reflection

Avg. of Last 2 Recordings

Feedback

v. 20190614

Child-safe device worn
in a comfortable vest

Captured by a small,

the Five Key Characteristics of Coaching (Rush & Shelden, 2005):

planning process. This coaching cycle promotes capacity through continuous recognition and refinement of growth in adult behavior and child language development outcomes.

The LENA Home curriculum provides home visitors the platform to facilitate the LENA Home Program

Joint Planning

Observation

Action

Reflection

Feedback

Recording:
Adult words

Data & Feedback:

Management & evaluation:

Current home visiting strategies

show the goal of preparing young

children for success in life. But they vary in structure, implementation, data collection, and evaluation.

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