LENA®

Building brains through early talk

Increasing CLASS Scores for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

LENA's programs boost interactive talk between young children and their caregivers, complementing Teachstone's focus on improving teacher-child interactions. These interactions form the foundation for classroom quality while setting all children up for future school success.

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.
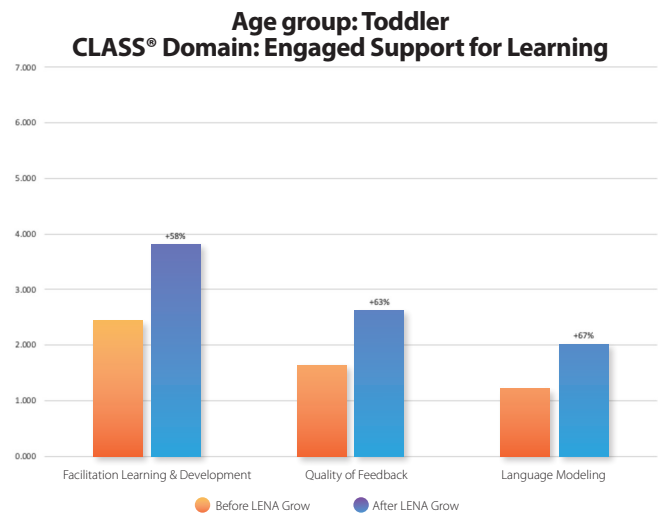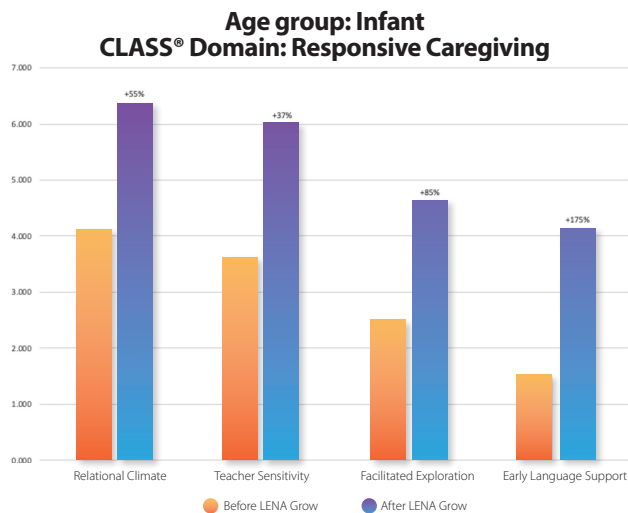

What is LENA Grow?

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.

LENA Grow and CLASS® Improvements

In 2016, LENA partnered with the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County (ELCEC), Fla., to pilot LENA Grow in 14 infant and toddler classrooms.
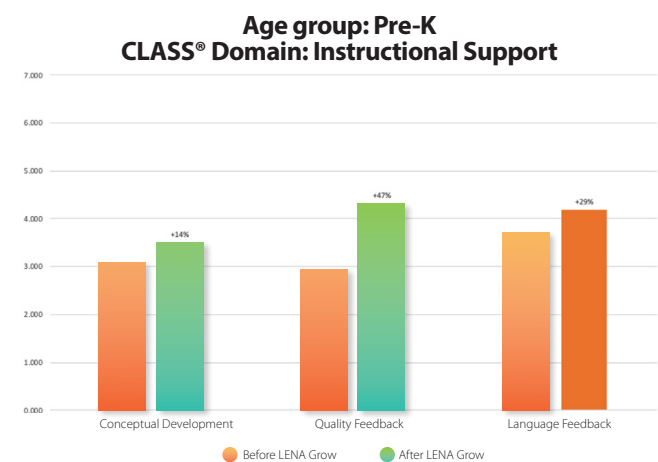
On average, ELCEC raised its infant classroom Responsive Caregiving composite scores by 80%, from 2.94 to 5.28, and its toddler classroom Engaged Support for Learning composite scores by 62%, from 1.73 to 2.80.

Age group: Infant
CLASS® Domain: Responsive Caregiving

Before LENA Grow • After LENA Grow

Age group: Toddler
CLASS® Domain: Engaged Support for Learning

Before LENA Grow • After LENA Grow

In 2018, the Fort Worth Independent School District, Texas, implemented LENA Grow in four pre-K classrooms. On average, these classrooms raised their Instructional Support composite scores by 30%, from 3.08 to 4.00.
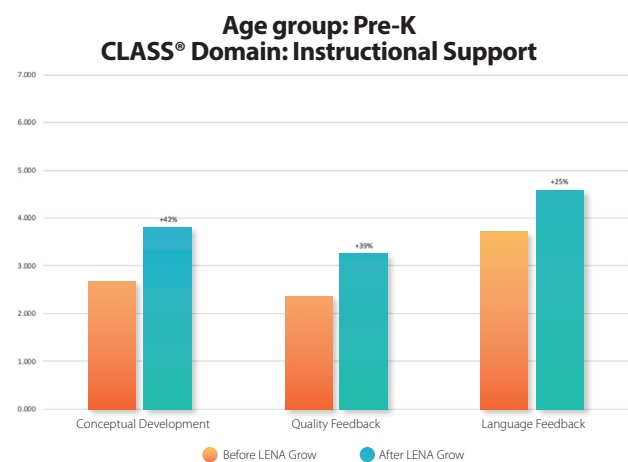
In 2019, The Primary School in Palo Alto, Calif., implemented LENA Grow in three preschool classrooms. On average, these classrooms raised their Instructional Support composite scores by 34%, from 2.89 to 3.87.

Age group: Pre-K
CLASS® Domain: Instructional Support

Before LENA Grow • After LENA Grow

Age group: Pre-K
CLASS® Domain: Instructional Support

Before LENA Grow • After LENA Grow

LENA Grow/CLASS® Alignment

LENA's 14 Talking Tips are research-based techniques for increasing early talk. They form the basis of LENA Grow's strengths-based coaching. The Talking Tips in each section below collectively support you in your efforts to continue improvement in your adult-child interaction as measured by CLASS®.

LENA Talking Tips	CLASS® Age Levels and Domains/Dimensions Alignment		
	Infant	**Toddler**	**Pre-K**
Talk about what you're doing and thinking	**Early Language Support:** (teacher talk) Describe classroom events, use complete and varied sentences.	**Language Modeling:** (self and parallel talk).	**Language Modeling:** (self-talk) Apply to what you are doing.
	Instructional Learning Format	Instructional Learning Format	Instructional Learning Format
Comment on what they're doing or looking at	**Facilitated Exploration:** (infant focused) Follow the infant's cue, support exploration.	**Language Modeling:** (self and parallel talk); (advanced language) labeling; variety of words and/or descriptive vocabulary.	**Language Modeling:** (parallel talk) Apply to what they are doing.
	Early Language Support: (communication extension) Provide words for infant's communication; expand and extend on infant's communications.	**Facilitation of Learning and Development:** (active facilitation) Teacher guides exploration.	**Advanced Language:** Comment on what they are looking at.
Name things that they're interested in	**Early Language Support:** (teacher talk) Verbally label objects.	**Language Modeling:** (advanced language) Labeling.	**Language Modeling:** May be advanced vocabulary.
	Facilitated Exploration: (infant focus).	**Facilitation of Learning and Development:** (active facilitation) Teacher guides exploration.	**Regard for Student Perspective:** Following child's lead.
Get down to their level: face to face	**Relational Climate:** (relational behavior) Proximity, eye contact, joint attention.	**Positive Climate:** (relationships) Physical proximity.	**Positive Climate:** Positive communication.
Touch, hug, hold	**Relational Climate:** (relational behavior) Affection.	**Positive Climate:** (positive affect) Physical affection.	**Positive Climate:** Positive communication.
Tune in and respond to what they look at, do, and say	**Relational Climate:** (relational behavior) Joint attention.		**Teacher Sensitivity:** Tune in to what they look at.
	Facilitated Exploration: (involvement) Join in experiences; (infant focused) follow infant's lead, support exploration; (expansion of infant's experience) encourage behavior.		**Regard for Child Perspectives:** flexibility and student focus; contingent response in conversation with student

Wait for their response	All CLASS dimensions		Language Modeling
Imitate and add words	**Early Language Support:** (communication support) Imitate or repeat sounds; (communication extension) provide words for infants' communication; expand and extend infants' communication.		**Language Modeling:** (repetition and expansion).
Take turns – don't do all the talking	**Early Language Support:** (communication extension) Model turn taking.		Language Modeling: Frequent conversation.
Repeat and add to what they say and do	**Early Language Support:** (communication support) Imitate or repeat sounds; (communication extension) provide words for infant's communication; expand and extend infants communication.		**Language Modeling:** Repetition and extension.
Follow their lead, do what interests them	**Facilitated Exploration:** (involvement) join in experiences; (infant focused) follow infant's lead, support exploration; (expansion of infant's experience) encourage behavior.	**Regard for Student Perspectives:** Flexibility and student focus.	**Regard for Student Perspectives:** Flexibility and student focus.
Encourage them, be positive	**Relational Climate:** (emotion expression) Smiling laughing, enthusiasm; (respect for infant's state) calm voice, gentle approach.	**Positive Climate:** Positive communication.	**Positive Climate:** Positive communication.
	Teacher Sensitivity	Teacher Sensitivity	Teacher Sensitivity
Be silly! Relax and have fun!		**Positive Climate:** Positive communication.	**Positive Climate:** Emotional connection, relationships or positive affect.
	Teacher Sensitivity	Teacher Sensitivity	Teacher Sensitivity