

Why focus on early talk?

Conversational turns are such simple things — just serve-and-return interactions between an adult and a child.

What if all early childhood educators understood the potential impact of conversational turns? Among the benefits: improved brain development, executive functioning, social-emotional skills, language development, reading skills, and kindergarten readiness.

Those are all very big things, big enough to make an individual educator feel powerless. In reality, though, all those very big things come back to a single starting point: just one adult making a connection with one child through a conversational turn.

LENA Grow is designed to give early childhood educators the tools they need to improve language environments equitably and to truly connect with each and every child in their care.



Find out more

Conversational turns are linked to:

- Brain structure. [Read more!](#)
- Brain function. [Read more!](#)
- Reading skills. [Read more!](#)
- IQ scores. [Read more!](#)
- Socioemotional development. [Read more!](#)
- Language, executive functioning, and reasoning scores. [Read more!](#)



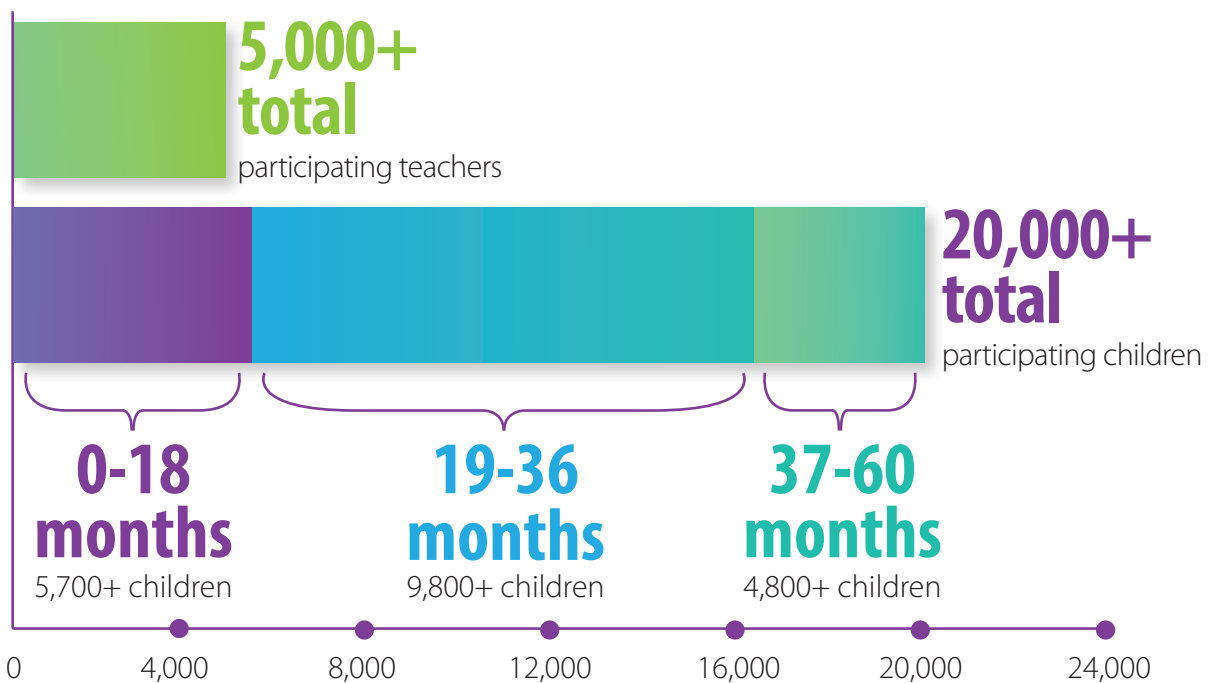
About LENA Grow

LENA Grow is an innovative, research-driven, practice-based professional development program designed to help infant, toddler, and preschool educators create equitable, robust language environments.

The program draws on LENA's widely validated "talk pedometer" technology. LENA Grow motivates educators, improves their professional outlook, gives them data-driven insights into individual children's experiences, and aligns with a wide range of QRIS and assessment tools that foreground the importance of adult-child interactions.

LENA Grow's reach

Since 2016, over 5,000 educators and 20,000 children in 29 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Australia, and New Zealand, have participated in LENA Grow. The program helps educators develop lasting skills so the true impact grows with every passing year.



Early childhood education is an intricate web. For each strand on that web, LENA Grow is both highly adaptable and easily scalable. What kinds of organizations partner with LENA to bring LENA Grow to their communities?



Child Care Resource and Referral services (CCR&Rs).
[Read more!](#)



Family child care providers.
[Read more!](#)



Head Start and Early Head Start organizations.
[Read more!](#)



School districts.
[Read more!](#)



State agencies and regional organizations.
[Read more!](#)



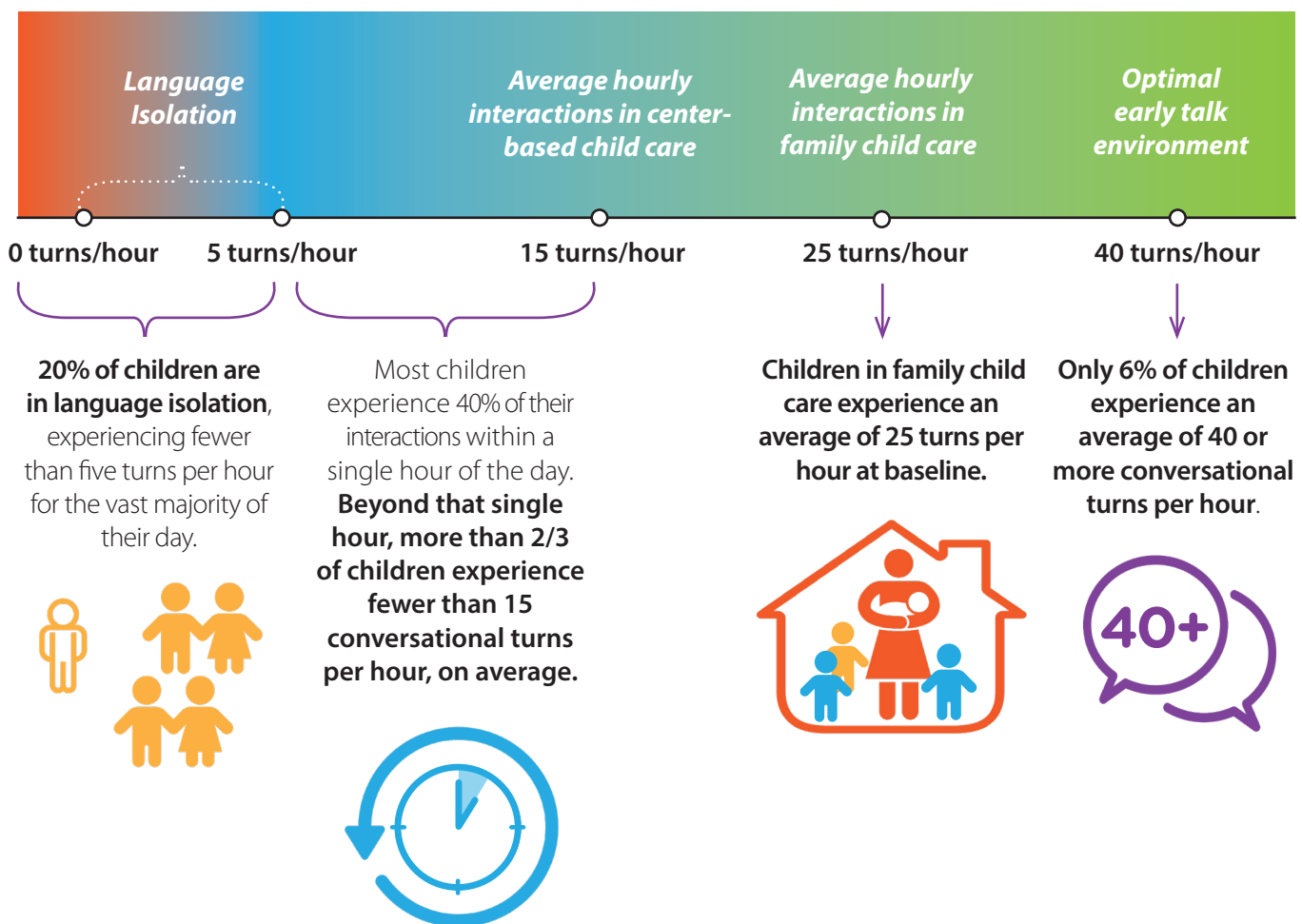
University-community partnerships.
[Read more!](#)

The need for LENA Grow

Improving early talk environments is among the easiest and most cost-effective ways to improve children's futures, yet research shows that children in child care settings:

- Experience the fewest conversational turns in the very age range (18-24 months) when they matter most. According to [peer-reviewed research](#), this is the age range when language environments are most predictive of long-term outcomes.
- Experience wide variability in interaction — meaning some children spend large portions of their day in language isolation, even in classrooms where other children are experiencing a high number of conversational turns.

And yet there's good reason to be hopeful. Incremental improvements in language environments can pay enormous dividends.



Every increase of two conversational turns per hour has a statistically significant impact up to 40 turns, and is associated with a one-point increase in Full Scale IQ 10 years down the line.

How do educators and coaches feel about LENA Grow?

According to surveys that LENA Grow participants voluntarily complete:

- 99% of educators would recommend LENA Grow to other teachers.
- 95% of educators say they either like or love the program.
- 92% of educators say they see positive changes in language development among the children in their care.
- 91% of educators report increased job satisfaction and confidence.
- 93% of coaches say that LENA Grow helps their relationships with educators and gets educators to open up and reflect.
- 89% of coaches say that LENA Grow increases educators' confidence.
- Only 3% of coaches say that they know of another program that's more effective at promoting professional development in educators.

Find out more

Watch a video about [a teacher at the Coalition for the Homeless](#) in Orlando, Fla., who participated in LENA Grow.

What state leaders, directors, coaches, and educators are saying

It became clear that the fit of LENA Grow was perfect for us. Our values encourage us first to value infant/toddler early care educators. This model says 'You caregivers, what you're already doing in your day, you're doing it – we just want to put words and numbers around it and give it back to you in a way that's readable.'

— Lisa Matter, program manager with Colorado's Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care initiative — [Read more!](#)

One of our teachers actually said, 'You know, I love this tool because it reminds me that I'm having meaningful interactions with these children and that it's helping them to grow,' which I just think is such a beautiful light bulb moment to see.

— Amy Kronberg, early learning consultant with Preschool Promise in Dayton, Ohio — [Stream the webinar!](#)

I've been coaching a long time. To have a different direction, to have it be so data-driven, has been just a different approach for me. It's been really exciting.

— Kathy Cestaro, coach with the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County, Fla. — [Read more!](#)

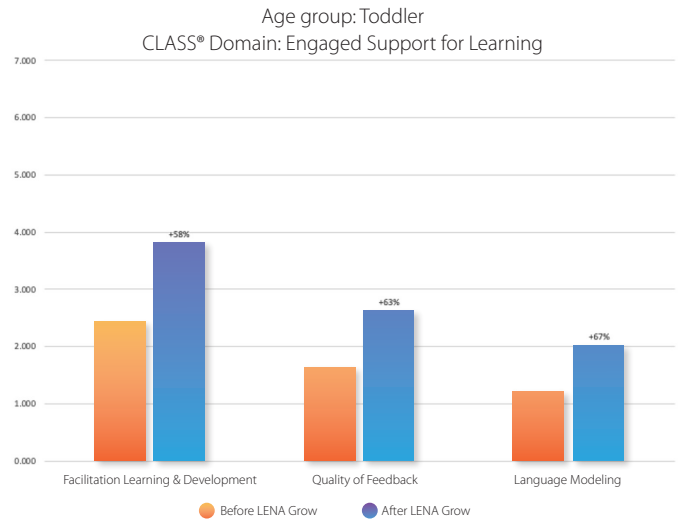
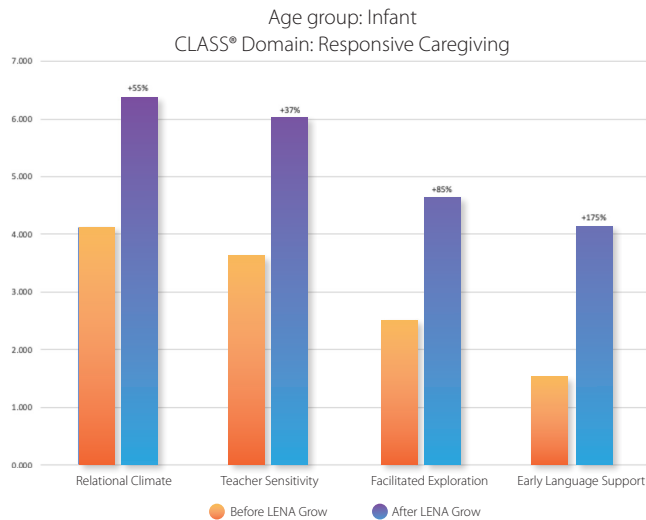
We were truly buying into this program for the kids. ... Those behaviors that sometimes caused the chaos really went away, because we're engaged and we're creating a family of learners in our classroom.

— Judy Berdan, educator at Marathon County Child Development Agency Head Start in Wausau, Wis. — [Stream the webinar!](#)

Improving CLASS® scores

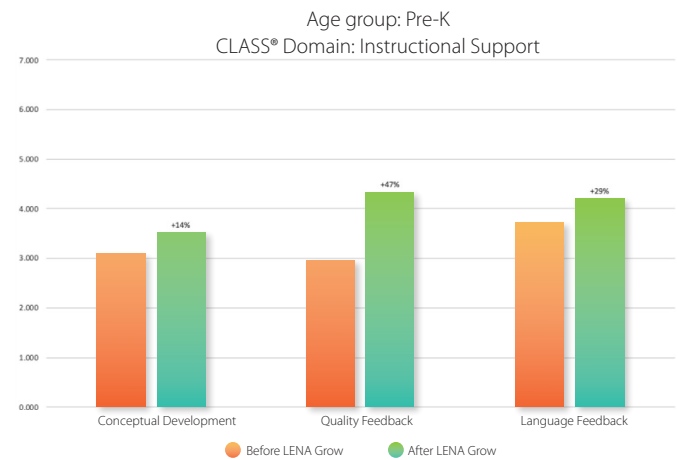
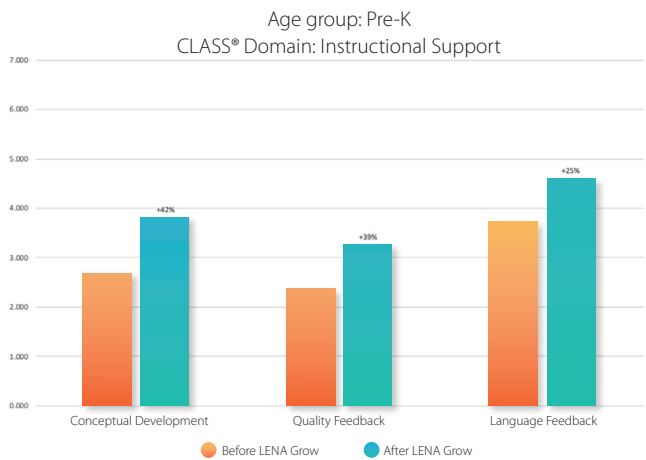
Moving the needle on CLASS® scores is no easy feat. However, there's growing evidence that LENA Grow does just that — especially within the domain of instructional support, where high scores are particularly difficult to achieve.

- The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County, Fla., 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. [Read more!](#)



- The Fort Worth Independent School District, Texas, raised its Instructional Support composite scores in pre-K classrooms by 30%, from 3.08 to 4.00. [Read more!](#)

- The Primary School in Palo Alto, Calif., raised its Instructional Support pre-K classrooms by 34%, from 2.89 to 3.87. [Read more!](#)



“Because the LENA Grow reports provided instant results that teachers could see, they gained more of an understanding of some of the CLASS dimensions and indicators. So teachers gained a better understanding of what a high-quality, interactive classroom looks like.”

— Lisa Austin, early childhood specialist at Fort Worth Children's Partnership

Improving outcomes across the board

It's not just CLASS® scores. Individual child assessments from LENA Grow classrooms show that conversational turns and positive benefits go hand in hand.

In Florida, the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County saw dramatic improvements in TS Gold® scores.

Of the children who started the program below “widely held expectations” (WHE), 50% moved to meeting or exceeding WHE at the end of the program. Those children experienced the greatest average increases in conversational turns of nearly 25 turns per hour. [Read more!](#)

Researchers at the University of Kansas used the Early Communication Indicator (ECI) to measure the program's effectiveness in infant and toddler classrooms. At baseline, 29% of children whose teachers participated in LENA Grow were “on track” in language abilities. At a six-month evaluation, 82% of those children were on track. There was no change in a comparison group whose educators did not participate in LENA Grow. [Read more!](#)



Equitable Interaction

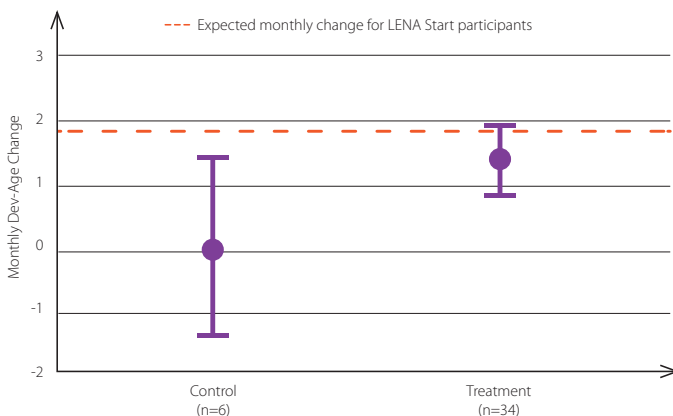
On average, children who enter the program experiencing the least amount of interactive talk experience **58% more conversational turns** by the end of the program.

What impact may LENA Grow have on language development?

Preliminary analysis using LENA's Developmental Snapshot shows that a sample of children in LENA Grow classrooms achieved developmental milestones at an accelerated rate compared to a sample of children who did not participate in the program.

- On average, children participating in LENA Grow during the COVID-19 pandemic gained nearly 1.5 months' worth of language skills in just one month's time.
- Children who started the program with below-average language skills gained 1.8 months' worth of language development for every month between their assessments.

Monthly Change in Developmental Age for Control and Treatment Group



Pre/post Changes in Snapshot Standard Scores for Those Below 50th Percentile at Baseline

