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Boston Listens: Vivian Paley's Storytelling/Story Acting in an Urban School District

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While there is a growing consensus about the importance of early childhood education (Guernsey, 2013; Mission Readiness, 2010), there is less agreement about the kinds of experiences young children should have once in a classroom. Many advocate for extended periods of child-directed play as the optimal way to promote children's development (Miller & Almon, 2009). Others argue for teacher-directed instruction to help children master specific literacy and numeracy skills (Bowman, 2012).

Forty years ago Vivian Paley faced this question about the best use of time when her school moved from a half to full day kindergarten program (Paley, 2011). Undertaking her first teacher research project, Paley considered three options for the extended school day: free play, teacher directed activities, and an activity that has become known as storytelling/story acting (ST/SA). In ST/SA a child dictates a story, which is then dramatized by the class. Paley found that ST/SA, by combining her students' love of stories and play with teaching guidance, was the best way she could promote her children's creativity, social and emotional development, and language and literacy skills (Nicolopoulou, McDowell, & Brockmeyer, 2006).

Paley has written about ST/SA in many of her 13 books (Paley, 1981; Paley, 1991; Paley, 1997). The MacArthur Foundation recognized her insights; she is the only early childhood educator and the only classroom teacher to have won the prestigious "genius" grant. Teachers around the world have embraced ST/SA. Houston (School, Literacy & Culture, n.d.) and London (MakeBelieve Arts, 2013) are notable in the large scale of their efforts. But to our knowledge, Boston is the first school district to make ST/SA in the curriculum.

At the heart of ST/SA is listening—teachers listening to children, children listening to their classmates, and children listening to adults—all in the service of a better understanding of each other's ideas and enjoyment of each other's stories. Hence the program's name: Boston Listens. During the 2012-13 school year Boston Listens was piloted in 50 Boston Public School (BPS) classrooms. ST/SA is part of the district wide kindergarten curriculum that is being phased in over the next two years.

This article describes:

- How ST/SA came to be incorporate into the BPS kindergarten curriculum;
- The details of the Boston Listens program;
- How ST/SA promotes learning;
- Challenges BPS teachers have encountered in implementing ST/SA (and strategies they devised to overcome them); and
- Efforts at cultivating understanding of the importance of ST/SA in order to sustain the program.

ST/SA in Kindergarten Curriculum

The impetus for the Boston Listens program comes from two sources: the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and student outcome data. BPS, like most districts across the country, has adopted the CCSS (National Governors Association, 2010). As a result, teachers at all levels need to do more to promote their students' critical thinking, creativity and communications skills. Recognizing this new reality as an opportunity, the director of the district's Early Childhood Department, Jason Sachs, began investigating ways to support young children's development in these areas. (See Appendix A: Connection to Common Core Standards)

At the same time, analyses of the impact of the dis-

trict's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten curricula suggested the need for change. For instance, BPS offers a limited number of pre-kindergarten slots, with a lottery determining eligibility. There are 110 regular education classrooms, serving 2,300 children. BPS offers full day kindergarten to all families who enroll. There are 250 kindergarten classrooms serving 4,300 children. While children in pre-kindergarten classrooms showed significant gains in academic and social development, the news from kindergarten was not as good; attendance there did little to improve children's academic achievement (Sachs, 2012). Classroom observations revealed the source of this difference. While pre-kindergarten students participated in engaging, active, developmentally appropriate activities, kindergartners spent much of their time in teacher- directed, whole group instruction or doing individual seatwork.

In November 2011 Dr. Sachs attended Vivian Paley's keynote address at the National Association for the Education of Young Children's annual conference. Inspired, he proposed including ST/SA in a new kindergarten curriculum his department was developing. He hired the author who, along with early childhood coach Marina Boni, spent the spring and summer of 2012 creating materials to support teachers in implementing ST/SA in their classrooms.

Long time early childhood educators, Boni and I drew on our classroom experiences as well as conversations with leading experts in ST/SA (Gillian McNamee of the Erikson Institute, Patsy Cooper of Queens College and Trish Lee of MakeBelieve Arts) to create these materials. Colleagues from the Democracy Inquiry Group, a Boston area teacher educator group, also provided input. Most centrally, the work of Vivian Paley guided us (e.g., Paley, 1991).

The result was a series of demonstration videos posted on the early childhood department's weebly (http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/index.html) and a document referred as the ST/SA "menu." The document outlined the key components of ST/SA and listed options about each component. Our use of the term menu was intentional. In the pilot phase we aimed to explore with teachers what would work best in Boston classrooms.

In September 2012 Vivian Paley came to Boston and spoke to the district's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers. Inspired by her talk, 50 teachers from 30 schools signed up for one of two monthly, year-long seminars on ST/SA. Boni and I facilitated one seminar and supported a group of teacher leaders (Jenny Goldstein, Megan Nason and Laura Shea) in facilitating the second. The seminars supported teachers' implementation of ST/SA and provided feedback about the program. Using the feedback, we created additional video resources and a teachers' guide to ST/SA. While the guide is more prescriptive than the menu (e.g., some options were eliminated based on experience), the guide maintains the ethos that teachers should adapt the program to best meet the needs of their children. There is also a cadre of teachers who stand ready to support their colleagues informally and formally (leading workshops) as the program goes district wide.

The Boston Listens Program

At the core of ST/SA is dictation and dramatization. Children tell stories to an adult who writes them down. At a group time the teacher reads these stories as children act them out. Thus, ST/SA has only a few material requirements: paper, a pencil or pen, and perhaps a clipboard. Many teachers also procure individual binders or notebooks for each child in their classroom. Dramatization requires an area where children can comfortably sit in a circle (or oval or square) with space in the middle for the "stage."

Three additional components were added to the Boston Listens program: adult stories, communication, and family engagement. What follows is a short description of each component. A detailed description of the entire program can be found in the Boston Listens Storytelling/Story Acting Guide (see http:// http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/guides.html).

Adult Stories

Adult stories provide models for children to draw upon—ideas about characters, plot lines, and narrative structure. Children will rarely copy these models directly, but rather mine them for ideas (Mardell, 1995). Adults telling stories help create a culture of storytelling, inspiring children to share their stories with classmates.

Adult stories can be based on personal experiences (children love to hear stories about the lives of their teachers), folk tales (e.g., *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *The Big Bad Wolf*, *Abiyoyo*), and imaginary tales that teachers create (e.g., a teacher's cat visiting school; the children solving mysteries). In *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, Vivian Paley (1992) describes how the unfolding tale of Princess Annabella captivated her kindergartners and supported their learning. Examples of adult stories, along with tips about telling stories, can be found on at http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/modeling-storytelling.html.

Supporting children's storytelling involves careful listening and gentle scaffolding. It is an opportunity to engage children one-on-one in a joyful activity. While some children will begin the year telling lengthy stories, other children's stories will be shorter. Even a one-word story should be celebrated and acted out.

Trish Lee shares a wonderful example of Eli, a child new to the country (and English) who, after several months of listening to classmates tell stories, and quietly watching other classroom activities, dictated a one word

story: Eli. Choosing to be the actor for his story, Eli took the stage. As the teacher read his name, he jumped into the air. It seemed this was Eli's way of announcing that he had arrived. Subsequently, he became an enthusiastic participant in classroom activities.

Child's Storytelling (Dictation)

During story dictation "teacherly moments" will arise—times when, because a child shows interest, adults can support children's literacy and language skills. A child may ask, "What do you call the people who live in the house next to you?" Teachers may point out punctuation (e.g., "I put a question mark here because the king asked a question"). However, it is critical that ST/SA not be turned into a phonics lesson. The adults' primary role in dictation is listener.

We recommend that stories should be limited to one page, allowing for more stories per day and for ease of dramatization. Other logistical considerations for taking dictation can be found at http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/dictation.html.

Story Acting (Dramatization)

to tell stories. It provides an opportunity for the class to create meaning around a text of great interest.

We advise asking the author of the story what character they would like to be in their story. After that, choose actors by going around the circle. Early in her career, Vivian Paley had the author choose the entire cast. However, she decided to change this practice when she observed that some children were asked to be actors far more than others. When a new character appears the teacher asks the child next in line, "Can you be the x?" Being expansive in the definition of characters (including a house, a forest or a car) allows more children to participate in the dramatizations. Teachers have found that rituals (e.g., ringing a bell) help focus the audience's attention on the dramatization. Discussions about the rules and rituals of dramatization promotes a democratic classroom culture. For advice on how to facilitate dramatizations see http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/dramatization.html and http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/the-wisdom-of-vivian-paley-and-trish-lee.html.

Treated as literature, children's stories can be the basis of valuable conversations. Teachers can ask children to share impressions about stories and make connections between them and other parts of the curriculum. Terms such as characters, setting, plot and suspense can be included in such conversations. Teachers can also ask what children enjoyed about performances and if they have any suggestions for the cast.

Communication

After stories have been told and dramatized, additional opportunities can be provided for children to enjoy stories and communicate their ideas. Teachers can print out story texts for illustration. These pages can be displayed

on a bulletin board, put into an ever-growing binder of classroom stories (that are read by children, teachers and guests to the classroom), or placed in individual portfolios. Stories can also inspire collage and painting and suggest themes for construction (see http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/communication.html for examples). Video and/or audio of dramatizations can also be made available. Children enjoy watching these performances and, if transcripts are available, can read along with the story as the recordings play.

Family Involvement

As children's first teachers, families can support children's learning through stories. Teachers can encourage families to tell stories at home (or on the train ride to school), listen to their children's stories, and invite family members to share stories at school.

It is useful for teachers to explain to families how stories support children's success in school. The BPS early childhood weebly includes a family friendly fact sheet, a sample newsletter, and a video for families explaining how ST/SA supports children's learning. The weebly also has details of a family story event held at the Blackstone School (http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/family-engagement.html).

ST/SA Promotes Learning

The philosopher Daniel Dennett (1991) writes, "Just as beavers build dams and spiders spin webs, people tell stories." Storytelling is a fundamental human endeavor. We tell stories to share information, impart lessons, entertain, process events and keep loved ones informed about our days. Children are attuned to stories, eagerly awaiting them to appear. And they are primed to tell them. They are also primed to play (Carlsson-Paige, 2008).

Because ST/SA is based on stories and play, two elements of the world most interesting to young children, it is very engaging. With engagement comes important developmental benefits. Others have thoroughly reviewed the literature on the benefits of ST/SA (Cooper, 2005; Cooper, 2009; Cremin, Swann, Flewitt, Faulkner, & Kucirkova, 2013). The three areas where ST/SA supports children's learning are: language and literacy skills, social and emotional development and creativity.

Language and Literacy Skills

A robust vocabulary is essential to reading comprehension and success in school (National Reading Panel, 2000). ST/SA provides a rich context for vocabulary development as children listen to and use words in authentic ways. Children may ask about the meaning of words, and teachers can suggest more specific vocabulary (e.g., "fur" instead of "cat hair"). It is not surprising that children who participate in story dictation (McCabe, 2010) and ST/SA (Cooper, Capo, Mathes & Gray, 2007) score higher than peers from comparable socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

Narrative abilities are also essential to success in reading and writing, and ST/SA provides a bridge between the contextualize speech of young children and the decontextualized language of books and writing (Snow, 1983). Most young children's speech is about the here and now. Children tell us "I don't' like *that,*" "I want *it*" and "he hit *me.*" Contextual cues—children pointing, adults surveying the environment and shared experiences—all support such discourse. The written word is a different type of language. It is decontextualized, offering no contextual cues to support understanding. And it is language about the then and there, taking us away in time and space. ST/SA is a step in the direction of decontextualized speech, generally set in the immediate context. However, ST/SA has contextual cues—tone of voice, gesture, and movement—all of which helps convey the meaning of words. In this way ST/SA acts as bridge between the dominant languages of early childhood to the more abstract language of literacy.

Indeed, narrative development has been found to be a strong predictor of success in reading and writing; four-year-olds with more advanced narrative skills become stronger fourth and eighth grade readers (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). McNamee (1987) found that participating in ST/SA promotes essential narrative abilities, a finding confirmed by Nicopoulou and Cole (2010).

ST/SA can also support literacy subskills such as print awareness and phonemic awareness (Cooper, 2005; Cremin, et al., 2013; Nicolopoulou, 2008). During story dictation, children notice the left to right and top to bottom movement of print. They attend to features of letters, their sounds and spelling of favorite words. Seeing print used for meaningful purposes, children involved in ST/SA are motivated to begin writing themselves (Nicolopoulou, 2008; Cremin, et al., 2013).

Social and Emotional Development

Some children come to school confident and ready to interact with peers. Others, because of shyness or special needs, are more reserved. ST/SA takes all children's ideas seriously. Their ideas become know and are celebrated. This increases children's confidence, and many teachers note that children are more willing to participate in discussions after a ST/SA program begins (Cremin et al., 2013).

ST/SA fosters a sense of belonging and social connections (Cremin et al., 2013). In *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*, Vivian Paley tells of a child who initially did not fit in. Jason was a child who stood apart from his classmates. Through participation in ST/SA Paley and Jason's classmates were able to forge bonds that brought

him into the classroom community. Chris Bucco, a BPS pre-kindergarten teacher found similar results with several children on the autism spectrum. ST/SA gave Chris an opportunity to provide the children strategies to enter into play that transferred into blocks and the dramatic play areas (Mardell, Fiore, Boni, & Tonschell, 2010).

Learning to self-regulate—to wait, take turns, and defer—is a major task of early childhood (Berk, Mann & Ogan, 2006). Self-regulation is important to latter school success (McClelland, Cook, Piccini, Rhea, & Stalling, 2012). ST/SA promotes self-regulation by providing a compelling reason to take turns and follow rules (e.g., for pretend hitting one must stay one arms length away) (Nicolopoulou, 2006). Children explain how ST/SA teach self-regulation in interviews on the BPS early childhood weebly (http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/storytelling.html).

Creativity

Eleanor Duckworth (2006) observes that, "The more we help children have their wonderful ideas and to feel good about themselves for having them, the more likely it is that they will some day happen upon wonderful ideas that no one else has happened upon before" (p. 14). From figuring out how to act out being a dinosaur or a flower to telling a meaningful, one word story, ST/SA affords numerous opportunities for children to have wonderful ideas and to feel good about themselves for having them. Cremin and her colleagues (2013) report that classrooms that begin ST/SA see a general increase in children's- innovative and original ideas.

A story told by Olivia, a five-and-a-half-year-old BPS kindergartner epitomizes the creative possibilities in ST/SA:

> Once upon a time there was a doctor. He had an experiment to do. He did it to the little girl. When she was a little girl she was laying on a railroad track and a train almost hit her. The doctor picked her up and saved her. He did the experiment. He let her sleep for five minutes because he needed to show her the real world. And he had to do that by taking her brain out. And when the little girl woke up her eyes were stretched open and her arms were shut out. It was like she was trying to touch something. And then when it was done she was all crazy. The pretend world is not like the real world. It's not all lovely. Instead, it's really horribly spritely. That's as much as I can explain. And then people in the town started seeing pictures on their walls and everything of pirates. And the pictures started moving. And then nobody saw most of the people ever again. Some say that the pictures ate them. But nobody really knew. That's the end.

Here Olivia seems to grapple with the concepts of reality and imagination, fertile ground for developing creativity.

Challenges and Strategies in Implementing ST/SA

The core components of ST/SA are straightforward—get a story and act it out. This simplicity belies the fact that listening is not always easy. During the pilot year of Boston Listens, teachers encountered challenges, and devised strategies to overcome them. These challenges included: repetitive stories, stories with violence, the appropriate level of scaffolding, and supporting children learning English and children with special needs.

Repetitive Stories

It is not uncommon for a child to tell multiple stories with a similar theme. Similarly, a group of children will tell the same type of story again and again. Some teachers worried this repetition was unproductive; that the children were stuck. For example, Laura Shea was concerned that so many of her children were telling ninja themed stories. On the other hand, Chris Bucco's worry was that many of her students were drawn to slapstick. On hearing this Laura remarked, "I'd kill to get a funny story."

For children, who are just learning story structure, repetition of a theme can be an important form of practice. Further, children may mimic the story themes of peers to connect with the group. Laura's quip helped teachers realize that the issue of repetitious stories was mainly an adult concern. Some teachers even embraced children's repetitive themes, bringing in books and helping children research princesses, ninjas and humor.

Violence in Stories

Even before Sandy Hook, the issue of violence in children's stories and play was controversial. Some children are exposed to violent imagery (and even real violence). In communities where guns and fighting are all too present, it can be disturbing to see children acting out shooting and killing. Yet many children are drawn to superhero play and violence, and these have long been features of their stories (see Pitcher & Prelinger, 1963).

It was not surprising that from the start children told stories with violence. Teachers had to make decisions about how to respond. Conversations in the seminars led to a consensus to allow stories with fighting and violence. Teachers understood that stories are a way children make sense of the world. They were swayed by Vivian Paley's argument that by helping children safely dramatize these stories, teachers help them learn that they control the story, not the other way around (see: http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/the-wisdom-of-vivian-paley-and-trish-lee.html).

However, this was not the end of the conversation.

Despite allowing such stories, discomfort on the part of many teachers remained. Some admitted they rushed through the dramatizations of stories with fighting and violence, and wondered if their students knew other themes were valued more highly. In February, Sarae Pacetta brought issue to the seminar along with a video of a dramatization of a superhero story she facilitated. Collective analysis of video helped Sarae and her colleagues gain a deeper appreciation of the learning occurring during such dramatizations. Not only did the boys involved not hurt each other as they pretended to battle, but they were involved in elaborate choreography that involved much coordination and thought (see: http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/the-wisdom-of-vivian-paley-and-trish-lee.html).

Scaffolding

Scholars of ST/SA note that the program aligns theoretically with the socio-constructivist learning theory (Cremin, et al., 2013). Creating a "zone of proximal development," the program provides support for children to develop a wide range of skills. Yet beyond writing down children's words, the teacher's role in dictation is subject to some debate.

Some maintain that teachers should simply act as scribes, and should not offer any instruction during dictation. They worry that questioning will undermine children's ownership (and ultimately their interest) in storytelling, and that children's narratives will develop without adult prompting. On the other hand, others see dictation as a wonderful opportunity for one-on-one instruction. Embracing what can be seen as the Baktinian idea of voice (Wertch, 1991), they believe that narrative development is enhanced through dialogue and questions. Those who hold the first position allow for clarifying questions. Those holding the second note suggest that dictation should never resemble a cross-examination, describing their approach as "gentle" scaffolding.

BPS teachers embraced the notion of gentle scaffolding, asking children questions that included: "Does anything else happen?" "What did x [a character] do then?" and "How did you feel when that happened?" They made sure only to ask a few questions per dictation session. Importantly, their questions were motivated by a genuine curiosity to better understand the child's thinking. Peers can also be present during dictation and their input can also serve as gentle scaffolding.

A complication to this practice is that narrative style is a cultural artifact; that a child's cultural background influences how they tell stories (McCabe, 1997). Teachers unfamiliar with a particular cultural style of storytelling may evaluate children's stories as underdeveloped or disorganized. BPS teachers feel it is important for them to learn about different narrative styles. Overall, they try to be cautious and not overly scaffold children's stories.

For the BPS teachers, the issue of scaffolding most often arose in their work with children learning English and children with special needs. Attention is now turned to these challenges.

Supporting children learning English and children with special needs

The non-verbal elements of ST/SA provide children learning English and children with special needs wonderful opportunities to participate in classroom life. In fact, ST/SA has elements experts recommend for curricula to support language learning—frequent opportunities to talk, connections to students' lives, an interesting topic and a tangible outcome (Haneda & Wells, 2012).

Yet the verbal aspects of ST/SA mean that the stories told will differ from native English speakers and typically developing children. And at the onset, some children will be hesitant to tell stories. Storytelling should always be a choice. Experience shows that overtime, almost all children choose to tell stories.

While it is important not to conflate learning English with a special need, the verbal elements of ST/SA mean that children learning English and children with special needs benefit from similar supports. These supports include:

- Accepting and celebrating short stories (one sentence or even one word).
- Adult stories. Children learning English often use their teacher's stories as models for their own tales.
- Prompts based on listening. By observing children at play and listening to their conversations, teachers come to know their students. When a child is having difficulty starting a story or expressing his or herself, teachers can make suggestions based on this knowledge.
- Visual props. Board maker images, "story stones," puppets and felt boards all provide images that children can use to "tell" their story, pointing to and manipulating images to explain their ideas.
- Going to the story. Children who are hesitant to tell a story may be creating wonderful tales in the block area or dramatic play. Teachers can go to the places children are playing to get their stories.

Further suggestions are on the BPS weebly (http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/boston-listens-seminar.html).

BPS teachers found that for children with limited English, these supports allow teachers and peers to help co-construct stories. Sometimes this co-construction involves teachers or peers giving suggestions to help

children start their stories. Other times it will involve providing words the child can't express.

Cultivating Understanding Among Stakeholders to Sustain the Program

ST/SA has a public relations problem—it is **fun**. In today's educational climate, where **rigor** is a key byword, those not familiar with early childhood development may wonder about the value of an activity based in story and play.

The problem is not unique to the United States. Researchers in England caution that despite teacher enthusiasm, sustaining ST/SA is a challenge because of curriculum pressures and changes in administration (Cremin, et al., 2013). These researchers recommend cultivating understanding among stakeholders (teachers, parents, administrators and politician/policy makers) of the value of ST/SA by (1) making clear alignments between ST/SA and the standards, (2) articulating how ST/SA enhances language and literacy development, and (3) creating materials specifically for policy makers explaining why ST/SA is important.

We believe that not only adults, but also children should be involved in making the case for ST/SA. Treating the children as citizens (Mardell & Carpenter, 2012; Krechevsky, Mardell & Romans, in press), who have expertise and valuable perspectives that should be part of civic discourse, we interviewed children, asking them what they learned from ST/SA. While not using academic language, the children talked about many of the benefits of ST/SA mentioned in this article: vocabulary development, self-regulation and creativity. (A video of the interview can be seen on the BPS weebly (http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/storytelling.html).

With the goal of making the children's learning visible outside the classrooms, the pilot year of Boston Listens concluded with a series of events intended to cultivate understanding of the value of ST/SA. On two Friday evenings the Boston Children's Museum hosted children and their teachers on the Kids' Stage (a child friendly theater in the Museum). A hundred children from 13 classrooms attended. Children dramatized selected stories to the delight of parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins and community members (see http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com/storytelling.html for a video of the children at the museum).

The video of children explaining what they learned through ST/SA played outside the theater. A family friendly fact sheet explaining the benefits of ST/SA was also available.

Boston school committee members, city councilors and state policy makers were invited to bring a story to the events for the children to dramatize. Through the invitation these politicians and policy makers learned of the program. Felix Arroyo, a city councilor and candidate for mayor, attended. He shared a story from his childhood that the children dramatized.

At the Boston Children's Museum with City Councilor Felix Arroyo

In the introduction to the performances the audience were told that while what they were going to see would certainly be cute, it was important to look beyond the cuteness. They were urged to think about what the children were learning by having to figure out how to be certain characters, coordinate their actions with other children, and take turns. They were also told that:

> All year children have been telling stories in their classrooms. They have been listening to each other and their teachers. Tonight is our chance to celebrate their expertise in telling stories and acting them out—their wonderful ability to play. Tonight is our turn to listen to them.

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Appendix A
Connection to Common Core Standards

Kindergarten

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

2. With prompting and support retell a familiar story.
3. With prompting and support identify characters, settings and major events in a story.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in a familiar story.

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes

2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

Production and Distribution of Writing

5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
6. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
   a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
   b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.
2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
3. Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.
5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Language Standards

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

Pre-kindergarten

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

MA.2. With prompting and support, retell a sequence of events from a story read aloud.

MA.3. With prompting and support, act out characters and events from a story or poem read aloud.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

MA.9. With prompting and support, make connections between a story or poem and one's own experiences.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

MA.3. With prompting and support, represent or act out concepts learned from hearing an informational text read aloud (e.g., make a skyscraper out of blocks after listening to a book about cities or, following a read-aloud on animals, show how an elephant's gait differs from a bunny's hop).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

MA.7. With prompting and support, describe important details from an illustration or photograph.

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes:

MA.2. Use a combination of dictating and drawing to explain information about a topic.

MA.3. Use a combination of dictating and drawing to tell a real or imagined story.

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

MA.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners during daily routines and play.

- MA.1.a. Observe and use appropriate ways of interacting in a group (e.g., taking turns in talking, listening to peers, waiting to speak until another person is finished talking, asking questions and waiting for an answer, gaining the floor in appropriate ways).
- MA.1.b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.

MA.2. Recall information for short periods of time and retell, act out, or represent information from a text read aloud, a recording, or a video (e.g., watch a video about birds and their habitats and make drawings or constructions of birds and their nests).

MA.3. Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

MA.4. Describe personal experiences; tell real or imagined stories.

MA.5. Create representations of experiences or stories (e.g., drawings, constructions with blocks or other materials, clay models) and explain them to others.

MA.6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English:

MA.1. Demonstrate use of oral language in informal everyday activities.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

MA.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, listening to books read aloud, activities, and play.