



Alignment of **Texas Rising Star Standards** to ITSN Professional Learning Communities for Teachers

About ITSN Teacher PLCs

ITSN professional learning communities (PLCs) for teachers are an opportunity to connect early learning programs to quality training that is highly aligned to the Texas Rising Star Category 2 standards. PLCs are:

- Focused heavily on classroom practice, using exemplar videos to explore strong teacher-child interactions
- Facilitated in small groups of practitioners to encourage engagement and peer-to-peer exchange
- Designed to deepen understanding after completion of self-paced courses (courses required for some PLCs)
- Hosted virtually with multiple scheduling options
- Approximately 1–1.5 hours each
- Provided at no cost to participants or boards

Using This Document

We have created this alignment document to help mentors identify the most appropriate PLCs for the teachers they serve, depending on teachers' individual needs.

The ITSN highly recommends three PLC series because of their strong alignment to Category 2 standards: *Connect with Me: Promoting Social-Emotional Development*; *Talk with Me: Promoting Early Language Development*; and *Learn with Me: Promoting Cognitive Development* (coming soon).

In Table 1 on page 2, you can find the specific classroom strategies that are explored within each PLC in these three series. The far right column describes the areas of the Texas Rising Star standards that are most aligned to the PLC series.

On page 3, you can see how Texas Rising Star standards across four sub-categories are aligned to individual PLCs. Often, multiple PLCs will reinforce a specific standard. Additional PLCs that may be of interest to teachers and directors can be found on page 4.

On page 5, we describe the steps mentors can take to start referring teachers to PLCs!

Incorporating PLCs into Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIPs)

ITSN PLCs can be incorporated into CQIPs to support professional learning for practitioners who have goals set in related Texas Rising Star standards. When assigning PLCs to teachers, **we strongly recommend that mentors encourage teachers to participate in all PLCs within a given series**, as strategies across PLCs build on each other.

Mentors working primarily with directors also have the option to recommend site participation in the full ITSN Teacher Program, which provides teachers with ten PLC trainings. **We include more details about these two options on page 5.**

Contact Melissa.V.Bailey@uth.tmc.edu if you have any questions!

ITSN Specialist Program

Finally, if you are a mentor interested in delivering ITSN content directly to the practitioners you serve—either through virtual PLCs or face-to-face trainings—you can receive training and facilitation guides through the Specialist Network at no cost to you. Contact Melisa.L.Smith@uth.tmc.edu for more information!

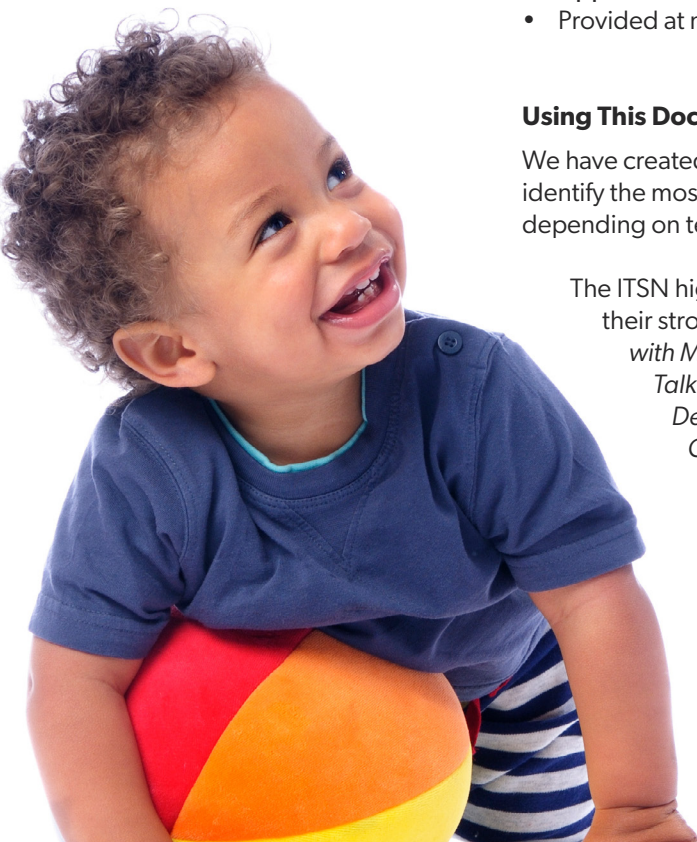


Table 1. PLC Strategies and Alignment to Texas Rising Star

Connect with Me: Promoting Social-Emotional Development PLC series			
Part 1 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express warmth and affection Use praise Label feelings Comfort children in distress Encourage back-and-forth play 	Part 2 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be predictable Redirect Follow consistent daily routines Help children share space Support turn-taking 	Part 3 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage talk about feelings Talk about connections between feelings/events Build emotional understanding Promote peer interactions 	<p>The <i>Connect with Me</i> series supports classroom skills across Category 2 standards, particularly the sub-categories of Warmth and Responsiveness, Play-Based Interactions and Guidance, and Support for Children’s Regulation.</p>
Part 4 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model prosocial behaviors Explain what comes next Provide cues for self-control Offer opportunities to make choices Help resolve conflicts 	Part 5A PLC, <i>Navigating Challenging Behaviors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying causes Prevention strategies Response strategies 	Part 5B PLC, <i>Navigating Challenging Behaviors, continued</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying causes Prevention strategies Response strategies 	
Talk with Me: Promoting Early Language Development PLC series			
Part 1 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labeling Describing Comparing Explaining 	Part 2 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking Narrating Thinking Aloud Rephrasing Extending 	Part 3 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking Questions Pacing Encouraging Conversations Inviting Participation Scaffolding 	<p>The <i>Talk with Me</i> series primarily supports items in the Language Facilitation and Support subcategory.</p>
Learn with Me: Promoting Cognitive Development PLC series (COMING SOON)			
Part 1 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sensory exploration Encourage observation Encourage effort and persistence Maintain children’s attention Encourage imitation 	Part 2 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how things work Talk about sequence Engage children in math activities Model/join in pretend play 	Part 3 PLC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote flexibility in thinking Model problem solving aloud Scaffold by simplifying Scaffold by adding challenge 	<p>The <i>Learn with Me</i> series supports items in Play-Based Interactions and Guidance and Language Facilitation and Support. It is perfect for teachers who are ready to use more sophisticated language and play strategies.</p>

Course Completion: Please note that these PLCs require course completion prior to participation. Instructions for accessing the courses can be found [here](#). A CLI Engage account is required, but signup is free.

Table 2. Detailed Alignment View

Texas Rising Star Standard <i>Note: Names of standards are abbreviated for readability</i>		Social-Emotional Series						Language Series			Cognitive Series		
		Pt. 1	Pt. 2	Pt. 3	Pt. 4	Pt. 5A	Pt.5B	Pt. 1	Pt. 2	Pt. 3	Pt. 1	Pt. 2	Pt. 3
Warmth and Responsiveness													
P-WRS-01	Warm, safe, and nurturing environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
P-WRS-02	Frequent positive nonverbal behaviors	✓			✓								
P-WRS-03	Patient, relaxed style	✓			✓	✓	✓						
P-WRS-04	Attends to children’s signals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
P-WRS-05	Responds promptly and sensitively	✓		✓	✓								✓
P-WRS-06	Adjust one’s own behavior	✓				✓	✓						✓
Language Facilitation and Support													
P-LFS-01	Listens and responds									✓			✓
P-LFS-02	Positive verbal responses	✓											
P-LFS-03	Uses language to add meaning								✓		✓	✓	✓
P-LFS-04	Communicates throughout the day							✓	✓	✓			
P-LFS-05	Uses descriptive language							✓			✓	✓	✓
P-LFS-06	Provides frequent opportunities to talk							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
P-LFS-07	Allows time to respond									✓			
P-LFS-08	Engages children in conversations								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P-LFS-09	Expands on children’s understanding								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P-LFS-10	Extends children’s language								✓	✓			
Play-Based Interactions and Guidance													
P-PBIG-01	Supports a playful attitude	✓		✓	✓						✓	✓	
P-PBIG-02	Expands on play	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	✓
P-PBIG-03	Provides guidance when children are working									✓	✓	✓	✓
P-PBIG-04	Facilitates social interactions with peers	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	
Support for Children’s Regulation													
P-SCR-01	Models/encourages emotional expression	✓		✓									
P-SCR-02	Provides explanations about feelings			✓									
P-SCR-03	Explains logical consequences				✓	✓	✓						
P-SCR-04	Encourages self-regulation with rules/routines		✓										
P-SCR-05	Demonstrates flexibility and tolerance for mishaps		✓		✓								
P-SCR-06	Recognizes rising tensions			✓	✓	✓	✓						
P-SCR-07	Assists in communication with peers	✓	✓	✓	✓								
P-SCR-08	Encourages children to assist with routines												

Table 3. Additional PLCs of Interest

In addition to the PLCs described above, the ITSN offers several PLCs that reinforce quality practices related to Texas Rising Star standards. These PLCs can be used to support directors' development of individualized staff trainings plans for their staff and support overall training hours for teachers.

PLC Series	PLC topics	Texas Rising Star Alignment
Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines (4 PLCs)	The ITSN provides four PLCs that correspond to the domains of the ITELGs: Physical, Social Emotional, Language, and Cognitive. Completion of each related course is required (Texas Infant Toddler and Three-Year-Old Guidelines Training).	These PLCs are a great way to engage teachers in facilitated discussion around the ITELG training, which is required for directors and recommended for teachers.
Grow With Me: Using Developmental Assessments (1 PLC)	This PLC supports best practices in developmental screening and referral for infants and toddlers using content from the Grow with Me course and CLI's Developmental Milestones Checklists. Completion of the related course is required. The course is part of the CIRCLE Infant and Toddler Teacher Training: "Play with Me" series.	The Grow with Me PLC may be helpful for teachers who need support understanding and using assessment tools, particularly if they are using developmental milestone checklists (P-PM-05).
Read with Me: Promoting Early Literacy Development (2 PLCs)	Part 1 PLC covers five strategies to promote children's early literacy skills: Read with Enthusiasm, Share Control, Invite Interest, Talk about Pictures, and Encourage Active Participation. Part 2 covers six additional strategies: Practice Fine Motor Skills, Point Out Print and Alphabet, Model Writing, Use Rhythm and Rhyme, Use Props and Extenders, and Link to Experiences. Completion of each related course is required. The courses are part of the CIRCLE Infant and Toddler Teacher Training: "Play with Me" series.	Although we do not explicitly align the Read with Me strategies to Category 2 standards, early literacy activities are an excellent way to facilitate language, vary instructional formats, extend playful learning, and foster warm relationships between teachers and children.
CIRCLE Activity Collection: Infant and Toddler (1 PLC)	The activity collection is a free online resource that provides a wide range of activities and video demonstrations across domains. This PLC discusses the importance of play-based learning and helps teachers become familiar with navigating the activity collection and selecting activities to incorporate into lesson plans. There is no related course for this PLC.	Using the activity collection may help teachers implement skills within <i>Category 2: Instructional Formats and Approaches to Learning</i> . For example, the collection includes ideas for both teacher- and child-directed play and how to use routines and transition times for incidental learning.
Family Engagement Series (2 PLCs currently, 2 more coming soon)	Part 1, Partnering with Families, explores broad-based partnership and communication strategies. Part 2, Play-Based Learning, is focused on promoting play-based learning at home through incorporating home-based activities into lesson plans. Completion of each related course is required. The courses are part of the Family Engagement Series on CLI Engage.	The Part 1 PLC strategies may support implementation of many family education and involvement components, and may be particularly useful for strategies to facilitate parent feedback (P-FI-01). The Part 2 PLC's focus on play-based learning aligns well with providing families with resources on growth and development (P-FE-02).

How Do I Help Programs Sign Up?

We have outlined two ways mentors can connect early learning programs to the ITSN teacher PLCs: mentor referral to specific PLCs or a recommendation for sites to join the ITSN Teacher Program. Choose the process that works best for you and the programs you serve!

Option 1: Mentor Referral to PLCs

This option might be best for mentors who frequently interface with teachers directly and want to closely align PLC participation to CQIP goals. In this option, mentors can refer individual teachers directly to the ITSN for specific PLC training paths.

- Mentors will share the training goals with teachers and a link to the [Teacher Intake Form](#). Teachers will then complete their own intake form. The teacher intake form is completed by the teacher so that ITSN staff can track participation in the program. **Completion of the form is only required once.**
- Mentors can include instructions to complete the form, as well as the hyperlink, within the program's CQIP the first time a PLC is assigned.
- The ITSN team will then support teachers to confirm or set up their CLI Engage account and have them attend an orientation.
- After the orientation, teachers are free to use the PLC calendar to select an available time slot that works with their schedule.

Option 2: ITSN Teacher Program

This option might be best for mentors who typically work with directors only, or who work with directors interested in a comprehensive training program for their teachers. The ITSN Teacher Program includes required participation in the four ITELG PLCs and six additional PLCs that can be chosen through collaboration between mentors and directors.

- Directors will complete a [Director Intake and Needs Assessment Survey](#) where they would select training topics of interest, based on their CQIP goals. Mentors can support directors in making these selections, if appropriate.
- An ITSN member will support the director and all participating infant and toddler teachers with the onboarding process so that they all gain access to courses and ITSN webinars on CLI Engage.
- Teachers will begin their training by completing the 4 ITELG PLCs in cohort groups, and once they've finished, work on completing six additional PLC topics, using the PLC calendar to sign up.

Quarterly Needs Survey

- The [Quarterly Needs Survey](#) asks mentors to provide a snapshot of the PLC topics they anticipate they will assign over the upcoming quarter, as well as an estimate of the number of teachers that will participate. Responses to the survey do not need to be exact.
- ITSN staff will use results from the survey to support planning of the PLC calendar. Completion of the survey helps ensure the availability of desired PLC topics for teachers.
- ITSN Education Outreach Manager, Melissa Bailey, will contact mentors each quarter to request completion.

Course Completion and Access

- Most PLCs are extensions of course material. The purpose of these PLCs is to deepen understanding of course concepts and then extend learning through self-reflection on practice, hearing from peers, and visualizing how to plan and practice new strategies. Course concepts are foundational to this process, therefore course completion is often a required component.
- All courses can be found on CLI Engage. Accounts are free to programs and teachers. Note that Texas Rising Star programs are eligible to access a greater number of resources on the platform through the TSR Online program. ITSN staff will help ensure teachers have the correct accounts.
- After an account is established, follow instructions for accessing and enrolling in self-instructional courses, found [here](#).
- The course names correspond to the PLC name. For example, the Talk with Me: Promoting Early Language Development, Part 1 course corresponds to the Talk with Me Part 1 PLC.
- Instructions and reminders are also sent to participants after they sign up for a specific PLC.