



## Partnerships for Early Learning: Story Time STEM Toolkits

### Pilot Information

**Partnerships:** Partnerships for Early Learning (PEL) is a project of INSPIRE, the UW Seattle College of Education's effort to advance student learning by designing and implementing systems, resources, and professional development opportunities for and with educators and school leaders. PEL supports collaborative work between the University of Washington Bothell, INSPIRE, King County Library System, and YMCA Powerful Schools.

**Purpose:** The purpose of PEL is to a) develop a set of resources for shared reading experiences exploring math and science concepts that can be utilized across informal and formal learning settings for young children (pre-K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade), b) design and implement professional development for educators to support these learning experiences, and c) gauge the impact of these resources on young children's learning in literacy, mathematics, and science. PEL aims to support early childhood educators and children's learning by:

1. Developing resources that advance cross-disciplinary learning and promote skill development through shared reading experiences.
2. Collaboratively implementing these resources alongside educators in informal and formal (K-3 classroom) settings, measuring their impact on planning, discussion, and conceptual understanding.
3. Increasing collaborative efforts among partner organizations and the knowledge for designing and implementing cross-disciplinary early learning experiences.

**Product:** PEL is developing resources, or toolkits, for shared reading experiences that explore math and science concepts through children's literature. Toolkits on a science theme, such as *food*, *water*, and *plants*. Each toolkit includes four read-aloud books, two resource books, guides for shared reading and discussion, and lists of additional activities and resources. These toolkits are designed to work within current shared reading, read-aloud, or story times. The ultimate goal is to engage children in the exploration of math and science concepts by experiencing and discussing children's literature. These experiences encourage children's engagement, thinking and learning.

**Pilot Test:** PEL is currently seeking partners to pilot test the toolkits. We are looking for partners who are willing to enact shared reading experiences, using the four read aloud books, to discuss and explore math and science ideas with children. The kits are designed to be flexible, with suggested prompts and questions, so we are looking forward to studying how educators use the toolkits in different learning contexts. We hope to work with pilot-test partners to study how the toolkits work with children in different settings. As part of the pilot, PEL researchers would observe shared reading experiences, take field notes, and talk with educators about the experience. We intend to use this feedback to revise and improve the toolkits as well as to inform the development of additional toolkits. Professional development on toolkit use will be provided to pilot test partners.

**Contact:** If you are interested in PEL, in helping pilot test the toolkits, or if you have questions, please contact: Annie Kirking at [kirkinca@uw.edu](mailto:kirkinca@uw.edu)