Engaging Dual Language Learners and Their Families in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Learning Environments

Soodie Ansari, San Mateo County Office of Education
Carola Matera, CSU Channel Islands
“It’s important for me to teach my children Spanish for communication and closeness. If they lose Spanish, I lose them.”

Parent Participant at ECLDI training, San Mateo County
How Does It Feel?

The only words you can use are the following:

- Straight line
- Curved line
- Top
- Bottom
- Right
- Left
our understanding of...
our views about...

CULTURE

LANGUAGE
BELONGING
Children
Families
Teachers
Community
Children

- Dual language learners
- English learners
- English language learners
- Second language learners
- New language learners
- Bilingual
- Limited English proficient
- Long-Term English learners
5 Great things about Multilingualism
Extra-Ordinary Learning
**Paths To Bilingualism**

- **Simultaneous Bilingualism:** child develops two languages at the same time (typically before age 3)

- **Sequential Bilingualism** (also known as successive bilingualism): child is learning a second language after the foundation for his first language has been established (typically after age 3).

- **Receptive Bilingualism:** child is able to understand a great deal more than he can produce in a given language.
Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Home Language Stage:

• When a child finds herself in a setting where others speak a language different from hers, often times she’ll continue speaking her home language, especially with other children, even if they do not understand.
• Child will eventually speak her home language only with those who understand it or stops using it all together.

Source: PFL guide & CPIN
Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Observational/Listening Stage:

- Observes what others do, paying close attention to how they behave in certain settings, and when they speak.
- Tries to connect what is said with what is happening (which is why use of visuals, props and cues are so critical during this stage).
- Child is typically quiet during this stage and uses nonverbal means to communicate. In home language environment, child tends to be more verbal.

Source: PEL guide & CPIN
Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Telegraphic/Formulaic Speech Stage:

• Child uses a few content or function words (e.g., “me out” or “Sara eat”)

• Child relies on familiar or repetitive ‘chunks’ or formulas, for example:
  ✦ “wanna ___,” (‘wanna play’ or ‘wanna go home’)
  ✦ “gimme ___,” (‘gimme book’ or ‘gimme juice’)

Source: PEL guide & CPIN
**Stages of Second Language Acquisition**

**Fluid Language Stage:**

- Use full sentences in a variety of contexts, but are still learning and expanding their knowledge of the new language.
- Demonstrate understanding of rules of the English Language.
- Use new language more creatively.

*Source: PEL guide & CPIN*
Supporting Learning & Development in Sequential DLLs

Stechuk (2012)
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Supporting Learning & Development in Sequential DLLs

Learning & Development

Age 3

Age 5

Birth

Full Access to Curriculum

Stechuk (2012)
Learning Language
Learning in a Language
• Children’s brains are wired to learn more than one language

• Learning and developing in more than one language does **NOT** delay growth nor development

• Instead, it promotes more efficient cognitive functioning, academic achievement and enhances learning English

• There are negative implications in losing the Home Language
• Monolingual teachers **CAN** support the child’s Home Language to promote learning

• Adapt the curriculum to respond to the unique needs of DLL children

• Small groups (mixed language levels)

• Introduce new vocabulary through stories
Social-Emotional Supports

• A Name is a Name, is a Name
• Facilitating Friendships (video)
• Acknowledgement vs. Encouragement
Video
Scratch paper reflection:

How do I learn about each child’s family culture, practices and values?
# Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Approaches To Engaging Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typically focus on helping families and communities become informed about and involved in school and educational activities.</td>
<td>Typically emphasizes reciprocal partnerships where schools learn from families and families learn from schools. This approach incorporates the cultural knowledge and strengths of families and their community into the curriculum, in addition to providing education and advocacy opportunities for families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can I develop awareness of my own cultural background?

How do I learn about each child’s family culture, practices and values?

How do I integrate this information to personalize my teaching & learning environment?

Why is all of this important?
Families’ Funds of Knowledge

- Learn about families’ skills and talents
- Build community amongst families
- Create more meaningful learning experiences for children
- Support children in seeing their families as contributors to their community
## Young Dual Language Learners: Gathering Background Information

**Child & Family Language Background & Experiences**

In order to support learning and development for children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs), early childhood staff need to understand children’s backgrounds and experiences with more than one language. Staff should gather information from each child’s parents and family, by gathering enough information to get the full picture of a child’s overall language background, practitioners can “put together the puzzle” of his/her languages and use this information for curriculum planning, individualizing and supporting continued progress.

### Considerations for Each Child:

- **Language background:** one, two, or more
- **Dual language development:** simultaneous or sequential
- **Language dominance**
- **Home language experiences**
- **English language experiences**
- **Individual characteristics of the child**

### Young Dual Language Learners: Gathering Background Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Possible Questions to Ask Parents and Families</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language background:</strong> one, two, or more</td>
<td>What languages does your family speak? How much experience (exposure) has your child had with these language(s)? Is your child growing up with two languages? If so, what are the languages? Can you tell me about your child’s use of English (if at all)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dual language development:</strong> simultaneous or sequential</td>
<td>Did your child grow up with two language from birth (simultaneously)? Did your child grow up with one language from birth, and then learn a second language after the age of two (sequential)? How old was s/he when the second language was introduced? About how much time does your child spend using the home language (speaking, listening, comprehending)? About how much time does your child spend using English (speaking, listening, comprehending)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language dominance</strong></td>
<td>Does your child use one of his/her languages more often than the other? When your child wants to communicate, which language does he/she use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home language experiences</strong></td>
<td>Who are the people in your child’s life who speak the home language to him/her? What are some experiences or activities your child has using language? (e.g., cooking with grandmother each evening in Chinese; doing weekend chores with father in Spanish) What experiences with early reading and writing has your child had in his/her home language?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>English language experiences</strong></td>
<td>Who are the people in your child’s life who speak English to him/her? (e.g., cooking with grandmother once a week doing weekend chores with father) What experiences with early reading and writing has your child had in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual characteristics of the child</strong></td>
<td>What are your child’s interests and favorite activities? Are there toys or things that your child especially likes to play with? Are there pretend play activities that your child likes? What does your child like to talk about? What does your child like to learn about? Can you give examples of experiences from the past that your child can recall and talk about?</td>
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**Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCCLR) - Email: NCCCLR@henried.org - Toll Free: 855-494-0331**
Language Development

Stories
Partnering with Families
La gallina café va 
caminando para agra

A chicken walking on the farm. Because he's looking 
for food like eggs. He's gonna eat the eggs. And 
then he's going to sleep."
Small is
and the man
looking for him
and crying.

The man
was not
the man.
abeja
Snail
butterfly
ant
spider
insects
What current strategies are you using to systematically support learning for DLLs?
Attention & Support
Mission Possible
"Los científicos dicen que estamos hechos de átomos pero a mí un pajarito me contó que estamos hechos de historias."

EDUARDO GALEANO
authentic conversations
authentic environments
authentic activities