

Title: Engaging families of young English learner students

Date: August 2015

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Question: >> What does research say about how to engage the families of dual language learners (DLLs) and young English learner students in preschool and Kindergarten?

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### Response:

We have prepared the following memo with references on family engagement with families of dual language learners (DLLs) in preschool and young English language learner (ELL) students in kindergarten. The memo is organized in two parts:

1. Literature on family engagement for DLLs in preschool; and
2. Literature on family engagement for young ELL students in elementary school

Citations include a link to a free online version, when available. All citations are accompanied by an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the author or publisher of the document. We have not done an evaluation of the methodological rigor of these resources, but provide them for your information only.

### References

#### **Part I: Literature on family engagement for DLLs in preschool**

Farver, J. A. M., Xu, Y., Eppe, S., & Lonigan, C. J. (2006). Home environments and young Latino children's school readiness. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 21*(2), 196–212.

*Abstract:* This exploratory study examined the relations among characteristics of children's home environments and two school readiness skills: their oral language and social functioning. Low SES Latino mothers of 122 (65 girls; 57 boys) preschoolers (39–49 months (M=45.00; S.D.=5.40) completed questionnaires about their family demography, their home environments, and their perceived parenting stress. Preschool teachers rated children's social functioning, and children were administered the PPVT-R (or the TVIP). Results of path analyses showed that when controlling for children's age and factors that potentially influence children's opportunities for learning, the relation between parents' literacy involvement and children's PPVT-R/TVIP scores and social functioning was mediated by children's interest in literacy. In addition, mothers' perceived parenting stress was directly associated with children's PPVT-R/TVIP scores and social functioning. The findings highlight within-group variations in the home literacy environments of low SES Latino families.

Halgunseth, L. C., Peterson, A., Stark, D. R., & Moodie, S. (2009). *Family engagement, diverse families, and early childhood education programs: An integrated review of the literature*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children and The Pew Charitable Trusts. Retrieved on May 7, 2015, from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf>

*Excerpt:* A growing body of research suggests that meaningful engagement of families in their children's early learning supports school readiness and later academic success. Family engagement is often considered in union with children's participation in early childhood education programs. High rates of program enrollment among young children across several ethnic groups may be a possible reason for this trend. In 2005, 60 percent of children under age 6 spent some time in nonparental care arrangements: 62 percent of white children, 69 percent of black children, and 49 percent of Hispanic children were in such programs. As a means to supporting family engagement and children's learning, it is crucial that programs implement strategies for developing partnerships with families. These strategies should be appropriate for the diverse population programs serve and reflect a commitment to outreach. To address these issues, we will review the literature on family engagement that pertains to all young children across ethnic backgrounds and early childhood education programs.

LeFevre, A. L., & Shaw, T. V. (2012). Latino parent involvement and school success: Longitudinal effects of formal and informal support. *Education and Urban Society*, 44(6), 707–723.

*Abstract:* This longitudinal study examined the effects of formal (i.e., school-based) and informal (i.e., home-based) Latino parent involvement using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study. Both forms of support were significant predictors of student achievement; the impact of informal support was nearly as great as that of formal support. It was suggested that Latino students benefit from both methods of involvement, and both formal and informal parent involvement should be acknowledged and supported. This study fills a gap in the literature by discussing parent involvement as a multidimensional construct, looking at the effects of parent involvement in a sample of Latino secondary students, and viewing Latino parental involvement as a strength instead of something that is lacking.

Gelatt, J., Adams, G., & Huerta, S. (2014). *Supporting immigrant families' access to prekindergarten*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Retrieved on June 23, 2015, from <http://www.urban.org/publications/413026.html>

*Abstract:* Children of immigrants can benefit from attending prekindergarten, though they enroll less, on average, than children with US-born parents. This detailed report draws on interviews conducted with over 40 prekindergarten directors and staff, directors of early childhood education programs, and other specialists to present strategies for improving prekindergarten enrollment among immigrant families and English Language Learners. This includes strategies for outreach to support prekindergarten enrollment; helping immigrant families overcome language, documentation, and other logistical barriers when enrolling their children in prekindergarten programs; and building trust and good relationships with immigrant parents and designing immigrant- and ELL-friendly programs.

Halgunseth, L., Jia, G., & Barbarin, O. (2013). *Family engagement in early childhood programs: Serving families of dual language learners*. Sacramento, CA: State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care and the California Department of Education. Retrieved on May 7, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/dllresearchpapers.pdf>

*Excerpt:* This paper will review research on family engagement and its impact on the well-being of children who are DLLs. In general, the research literature highlights two important findings: 1) Strong connections between DLL families and schools are associated with important benefits for preschool-age and school-age children (Durand, 2011; Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Jeynes, 2012; Lin,

2003). 2) DLL families participate in their children's educational programs at lower rates than families whose members are not DLLs (McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008; Wong & Hughes, 2006). However, this body of literature includes few empirical studies, uses vague definitions of family engagement, and does not consider the unique challenges DLL families face when interacting with educational programs. Furthermore, a fairly large body of research on family engagement has focused on students in kindergarten to grade five, while relatively few studies have focused on preschool-age children. Since findings on children in kindergarten to grade five are relevant to preschoolers, we will include these children in this review and will identify throughout the paper the age group associated with each study.

Naughton, S. (2004). *The importance of family engagement*. Oakland, CA: Children Now. Retrieved on May 7, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED486411.pdf>

*Excerpt:* This brief focuses on issues related to engaging the families of ELLs in their children's preschool experience. Parent involvement in preschool programs can take many forms, and programs can use research-based strategies to overcome some of the barriers parents face in their efforts to be involved in their child's preschool education. A review of current research confirms the many benefits that children, parents, and programs gain when parents are involved in their child's preschool learning both inside the classroom and at home. This brief outlines research findings that highlight some of the challenges and effective strategies for engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families in their young children's education. California's current State Preschool Program and First 5 Commission grantees currently use some of these research-based best practices. Additionally, some local preschool programs in California communities and state preschool policies in New York, Tennessee, and Wisconsin offer innovative approaches to family engagement; California should consider these as it begins to build its own preschool for all system.

Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). *Dual language learning: What does it take?* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on May 7, 2015, from [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Dual%20Language%20Learners%20and%20Their%20Families/Learning%20in%20Two%20Languages/DLANA\\_final\\_2009%5B1%5D.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Dual%20Language%20Learners%20and%20Their%20Families/Learning%20in%20Two%20Languages/DLANA_final_2009%5B1%5D.pdf)

*Excerpt:* This assessment attempts to document how Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and American Indian Alaska Native Head Start programs have addressed the needs of young dual language learners and their families and where programs are struggling... While the focus of this assessment began with how best to support children in dual language acquisition—and thus how to enhance the knowledge and skills of staff and the capacity of programs to do so—it quickly became clear that that goal could not be reached in isolation from the families and the communities in which they live. Language learning for children affects all domains of learning and development. So, too, does the ability of program staff to communicate with and involve parents in the program and in their child's development. Access to community resources to support family needs is also integral to optimal child development and family stability—whether reaching out to community groups that can aid in translation and interpretation or in understanding a family's culture; accessing culturally sensitive mental health, medical, or dental care services; or growing up in a community that respects and values one's culture and its contribution to the rich fabric of the community. The focus of the assessment expanded to look at the family and community issues that ultimately affect optimal child development, communication with families, and access to community services.

Rous, B., Hallam, R., Grove, J., Robinson, S., & Machara, M. (2003). *Parent involvement in early care and education programs: A review of the literature*. Lexington, KY: Interdisciplinary Human Development Institute, University of Kentucky. Retrieved on May 12, 2015, from [http://www.academia.edu/4096180/Parent Involvement in Early Care and Education Programs A Review of the Literature](http://www.academia.edu/4096180/Parent_Involvement_in_Early_Care_and_Education_Programs_A_Review_of_the_Literature)

*Abstract:* A review of key issues and research related to parental involvement in child care and early education programs, with a focus on programs in Kentucky.

Vesely, C. K., & Ginsberg, M. R. (2011). Strategies and practices for working with immigrant families in early education programs. *Young Children*, 66(1), 84–89.

*Abstract:* This study explores how early childhood education programs engage immigrant families in their children’s learning, how programs learn about these families and incorporate their cultures into the classrooms, and what programs are doing in terms of their staff’s professional development related to working with immigrant children and families. The programs participating in this study represent the upper echelon of early education programs in the United States and Eastern Europe, some with greater resources than many other early education programs. However, their experiences provide insight into a variety of ways practitioners and researchers can work more effectively with young immigrant children and their families. More applied research, as well as discussions among early childhood education practitioners who work with immigrant families, is needed to continue to increase one’s understanding of successfully meeting the needs of immigrant families with young children around the world.

Weiss, H. B., Caspe, M., & Lopez, M. E. (2006). *Family involvement in early childhood education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. Retrieved on May 12, 2015, from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-involvement-in-early-childhood-education>

*Abstract:* This research brief synthesizes the latest research that demonstrates how family involvement contributes to young children’s learning and development. The brief summarizes the latest evidence base on effective involvement—specifically, the research studies that link family involvement in early childhood to outcomes and programs that have been evaluated to show what works.

WIDA. (2014). *Focus on the early years: Dual language learners*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from [https://www.wida.us/resources/focus/WIDA Focus on Early Years.pdf](https://www.wida.us/resources/focus/WIDA_Focus_on_Early_Years.pdf)

*Excerpt:* Our goal in this bulletin is to celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of our youngest language learners, their families, and the programs that serve them. We will offer

- Reflections from staff at Eagle’s Wing, an early care and education center in Madison, WI that embraces cultural and linguistic diversity and has developed effective practices for supporting young dual language learners and their families
- Tools to help you better understand children’s sociocultural contexts and levels of language development
- Essential background information about young dual language learners and WIDA Early Years resources
- Suggestions for supporting language development through play, the primary vehicle through which young children learn
- Connections for K–12 administrators and educators

## **Part II: Literature on family engagement for young English language learner students in elementary school**

Arias, M. B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times*. East Lansing, MI: The Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from

[http://greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy\\_Briefs/Arias\\_ELL.pdf](http://greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy_Briefs/Arias_ELL.pdf)

*Abstract:* This policy brief analyzes factors related to the implementation of effective parental involvement with English Language Learners (ELLs). As the largest growing segment of the student population, ELLs have increased in all states over the last twenty years. At the same time, parents of ELLs face daunting barriers as they try to become informed or involved in their child's school. These barriers, which include the inability to understand English, unfamiliarity with the school system, and differences in cultural norms and cultural capital, can limit parents' communication and school participation. Research supports the importance of parental involvement for improved student achievement, better school attendance, and reduced dropout rates regardless of socioeconomic background or ethnicity. Accordingly, and given the achievement gap between ELLs and English proficient students, it is very important to identify practices that may improve ELL parental involvement and thus student achievement. Yet many programs make little effort to promote ELL parental involvement, defining parental involvement only in terms of the schools' needs or in terms of a deficit-based perception of ELL families. This brief analyzes characteristics of the ELL student and parent population; barriers to ELL family engagement with schools; and characteristics of traditional and non-traditional parental involvement models.

Bang, Y-S. (2009). Family ties: Helping all families participate in school life. *Young Children*, 64(6), 97-99. Retrieved on May 12, 2015, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/helping-all-families-participate-school-life>

*Abstract:* Family involvement is an essential factor in U.S. schools, especially in the education of young children. The parents' role is critical in early childhood education, because moving from home to school is a major transition for children and families. Research supports the benefits of family involvement for children's future academic achievement, attendance rate, self-esteem, and school behavior. Despite growing awareness of the importance of parent participation and its clearly documented educational benefits, many schools still do not effectively welcome culturally and linguistically diverse families. A lack of understanding by some schools and teachers about these families' unique needs has often hindered their participation. This article provides suggestions that may guide educators in understanding and supporting the involvement of these families in their children's schools.

Carlisle, E., Stanley, L., & Kemple, K. M. (2005). Opening doors: Understanding school and family influences on family involvement. *Early Childhood Educational Journal*, 33(3), 155-162. Retrieved on May 7, 2015, from

[http://naulibrary.org/dglibrary/admin/book\\_directory/Early\\_Childhood/3653.pdf](http://naulibrary.org/dglibrary/admin/book_directory/Early_Childhood/3653.pdf)

*Abstract:* Family involvement in schooling can benefit young children, teachers, and families. Family involvement in schools can be influenced by both school-related and family-related factors. School-related factors include teachers' attitudes toward families, and school and teacher expectations. Family-related factors include ethnicity, prior school experiences, and family work schedules. Teachers who recognize and understand these influences can employ a variety of strategies to facilitate the involvement of families in the school experience of young children.

Caspe, M., Lopez, M. E., & Wolos, C. (2007). *Family involvement in elementary school children's education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. Retrieved on May 12, 2015, from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/family-involvement-makes-a-difference/family-involvement-in-elementary-school-children-s-education>

*Abstract:* This research brief synthesizes the latest research that demonstrates how family involvement contributes to elementary-school-age children's learning and development. The brief summarizes the latest evidence base on effective involvement—specifically, the research studies that link family involvement during the elementary school years to outcomes and programs that have been evaluated to show what works.

Cheatham, G. A., & Santos, R. M. (2011). Collaborating with families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds: Considering time and communication orientations. *Young Children*, 66(5), 76–82.

*Abstract:* Parents' involvement in their children's education influences the children's educational success and is regarded as best practice in early childhood. A critical component in increasing parental involvement is effective collaboration between teacher and family. This involves being friendly, honest, and clear; listening and providing information; being caring and respectful; and being sensitive about time management during meetings. The meaning and expression of these characteristics, however, may vary by culture. This article focuses on culturally based orientations of teachers and families—time orientation and communication orientation—both of which fall on a spectrum. They discuss culture-based understandings and behaviors related to time and communication that may present challenges to teachers trying to involve families in their children's education. They also suggest strategies to address those challenges.

Chen, C-T., Kyle, D. W., & McIntyre, E. (2008). Helping teachers work effectively with English language learners and their families. *The School Community Journal*, 18(1), 7–20. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from <http://www.adi.org/journal/ss08/ChenKyleMcIntyreSpring2008.pdf>

*Abstract:* Many classroom teachers across the United States feel unprepared to work with students and families who speak limited or no English. Knowing that schools are accountable for the achievement results of these students, teachers increasingly seek help. This article describes a professional development project designed to introduce K–12 teachers to effective strategies for enhancing the learning of English language learners and shares the results that occurred as the teachers placed greater emphasis on family involvement practices. The Sheltered Instruction and Family Involvement (SIFI) project introduced the teachers to research on the effects of family involvement on students' academic achievement and asked that participants develop plans for involving families more intentionally. Results of the project, documented in survey responses and in evidence shared at a culminating project event, indicated changes in many teachers' views and practices of family involvement. Teachers reached out to families in new ways and made their instruction more connected to students' background knowledge. They also acknowledged the challenges involved. Despite the challenges, however, the professional development experience led to practices that are more likely to help English language learners achieve greater academic success.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. D. (2004). *Involving Latino families in schools: Raising student achievement through home-school partnerships*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

*Book description:* The author provides practical strategies for cultivating communication with Latino parents and including the Latino family in developing sustained academic improvement.

Goodwin, A. L., & King, S. H. (2004). *Culturally responsive parental involvement: Concrete understandings and basic strategies*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from <http://www.pacer.org/mpc/pdf/CulturallyResponsivePI.pdf>

*Abstract:* This booklet explains that strong parental involvement in a child's education and school environment is essential to the success of the child and the school. It explores culturally biased beliefs many educators frequently have toward their students and their students' families, examining a variety of ways in which educators and parents can work together to benefit students. The booklet describes key assumptions of culturally responsive parental involvement (e.g., diverse cultural backgrounds of families demand new strategies to encourage parental involvement, parents want to be involved in their children's education, and partnerships are key to successful reform). Next, it examines common misconceptions (e.g., parents who do not visit schools, do not care about their children's education, good parental involvement looks a certain way, and all parents respond to the same strategies). Finally, it presents concrete steps for initiating culturally responsive parental involvement (e.g., inventory parents' concerns, perspectives, and ideas; plan a series of parent-teacher seminars or parent-teacher team building activities based on surveys of parent interests and needs; assign a family liaison; and develop a school cultural resources binder).

Durand, T. M. (2011). Latino parental involvement in kindergarten: Findings from the early childhood longitudinal study. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 33*(4), 469–489.

*Abstract:* Parental involvement in children's schooling is an important component of children's early school success. Few studies have examined this construct exclusively among Latino families. Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K), the present investigation (N = 2,051) explored relations between Latino parents' home and school involvement activities and their children's literacy skills, and the role of social capital in promoting parents' involvement practices. Regression analyses showed that parental involvement was a significant predictor of children's literacy skills above controls. Results also suggest that stronger communication with other parents may be instrumental in increasing both home and school involvement among Latino families, creating a possible avenue through which Latino parents might develop a collective voice within the school sector. Findings have strong implications for teachers, who may be well-positioned to facilitate opportunities for Latino parents to engage in authentic dialogue about their children's growth, learning, and school success.

Harvard Family Research Project & Boston Children's Hospital. (2013). *Family engagement in transitions: Transition to kindergarten*. Washington, DC: The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/transitions-kindergarten.pdf>

*Excerpt:* The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement has created a Research to Practice Series on the Family Engagement Outcomes of the Office of Head Start (OHS) Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. One in the series, this resource addresses the "Family Engagement in Transitions" Outcome: "Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments," and focuses on the transition to kindergarten. Aligned with Head Start Performance Standards, this resource presents a selected summary of research, promising practices, and program strategies intended to be useful for the Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) community.

Lee, J., & Bowen, N. K. (2006). Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(2), 193–218.

*Abstract:* This study examined the level and impact of five types of parent involvement on elementary school children's academic achievement by race/ethnicity, poverty, and parent educational attainment. The sample comprised 415 third through fifth graders who completed the Elementary School Success Profile. Hypotheses from Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital were assessed with t tests, chi-square statistics, and hierarchical regressions. Consistent with the theory, parents with different demographic characteristics exhibited different types of involvement, and the types of involvement exhibited by parents from dominant groups had the strongest association with achievement. However, contrary to theoretical expectations, members of dominant and non-dominant groups benefited similarly from certain types of involvement and differently from others.

Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2014). *Partners in education. A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory. Retrieved on June 23, 2015, from <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>

*Abstract:* This guide presents a new framework for designing family engagement initiatives that build capacity among educators and families to partner with one another around student success. Based in existing research and best practices, it is designed to act as a scaffold for the development of family engagement strategies, policies, and programs that are linked to student achievement and school improvement.

Souto-Manning, M. (2010). Family involvement: Challenges to consider, strengths to build on. *Young Children*, 65(2), 82–88.

*Abstract:* Educators have long known that family involvement is vital to children's success in school. Yet many teachers struggle to find effective ways to involve families in their classrooms. Often, the dilemma is due not to families' lack of interest but rather to time constraints and differing cultural expectations about the roles of teachers and families. In today's fast-paced society, teachers and families face competing demands for their time, energy, and resources. For an ever growing number of families, adults work and children attend early education programs. In trying to reach out to families and make classrooms inclusive places, caring and well-intentioned educators may unknowingly place additional demands on families. In fact, research shows time demands and cultural mismatch as two prevalent challenges to family involvement. To respond to these challenges, this article explores ways in which teachers can involve families while respecting the demands on their time and the expectations of diverse cultures. While this is not an exhaustive list of ideas, it provides a foundation for teachers to start imagining how to involve families in their children's educational settings.

St. Clair, L., & Jackson, B. (2006). Effect of family involvement training on the language skills of young elementary children from migrant families. *The School Community Journal*, 16(1), 31–42. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from <http://www.adi.org/journal/ss06/stclairjacksonspring2006.pdf>

*Abstract:* This quasi-experimental study (based on parent self-selection) examines the effects of a parent involvement program on kindergarten children's English language skills. This program was implemented as one component of a Migrant Even Start Family Literacy Program. The study was conducted at a rural Midwestern elementary school with 14 kindergarten children of families participating in the parent involvement training program, and 15 kindergarten children from families not participating. This study followed these children through the end of first grade. Findings indicate that by the end of first grade, children from families participating in the parent involvement training program scored significantly higher on language measures than children in the control group. This suggests that equipping migrant families with new abilities to nurture their children's language skills leads to positive language outcomes for their children.

Waterman, R. (2006). *Breaking down barriers, creating space: A guidebook for increasing collaboration between schools and the parents of English language learners*. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from [http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/fedprograms/dl/ti\\_parents\\_ellg\\_dbk.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/fedprograms/dl/ti_parents_ellg_dbk.pdf)

*Excerpt:* This document is intended to be a resource and a guide to a myriad of educators who serve English language learners (ELL) and their parents in the state of Colorado. Primarily, it is directed at district and building-level administrators, parent liaisons, and teachers.

Waterman, R., & Harry, B. (2008). *Building collaboration between schools and parents of English language learners: Transcending barriers, creating opportunities*. Tempe, AZ: National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, Arizona State University. Retrieved on June 9, 2015, from [http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/PractitionerBrief\\_BuildingCollaboration.pdf](http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/PractitionerBrief_BuildingCollaboration.pdf)

*Excerpt:* In many school contexts, school staff are also limited in their ability to welcome and include parents while working toward the shared goal of supporting ELL academic success. Barriers pertaining to language, school staffs' lack of familiarity with culturally and linguistically diverse families, and parents' unfamiliarity with U.S. schools can all impede effective parent-school collaboration. For parents of children with disabilities or those being considered for special education referral, the additional school structures and processes bring additional challenges. If school staff and immigrant parents could better understand and be equipped to address these barriers, then parents of ELLs, students, and school staff could experience increased collaboration and support. Therefore, the primary goal of this brief is to discuss these barriers and offer concrete suggestions to guide school staff to transcend them.

## Methods

### Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Search

("Family engagement" OR "family involvement") AND "dual language learners"

("Family engagement" OR "family involvement") AND "English language learners" AND "elementary school"

### Search of Databases

EBSCO Host, Google, and Google Scholar

### Criteria for Inclusion

When REL West staff review resources, they consider—among other things—four factors:

- **Date of the Publication:** The most current information is included, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- **Source and Funder of the Report/Study/Brief/Article:** Priority is given to IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols.
- **Methodology:** Sources include randomized controlled trial studies, surveys, self-assessments, literature reviews, and policy briefs. Priority for inclusion generally is given to randomized controlled trial study findings, but the reader should note at least the following factors when basing decisions on these resources: numbers of participants (Just a few? Thousands?); selection (Did the participants volunteer for the study or were they chosen?); representation (Were findings generalized from a homogeneous or a diverse pool of participants? Was the study sample representative of the population as a whole?).
- **Existing Knowledge Base:** Although we strive to include vetted resources, there are times when the research base is limited or nonexistent. In these cases, we have included the best

resources we could find, which may include newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, organization websites, and other sources

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educators and policymakers in the Western region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd. This memorandum was prepared by REL West under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-12-C-0002, administered by WestEd. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.