

Title: Summary of state early childhood guidelines and standards for Dual Language Learners

Date: August 2014

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Question: >> Could you provide information on early childhood standards for Dual Language Learners (DLLs)<sup>1</sup>?

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Response:

All states now have early learning standards or guidelines<sup>2</sup> for preschool-age children, which outline expectations for children’s development and learning prior to kindergarten entry. However, they vary in the degree to which they include cultural and linguistic references (Head Start, 2013). Among the references to DLLs in the guidelines, there is great variability on the extent to which DLLs are discussed as well as different emphases on which pedagogical approaches should be used (Castro, Garcia, & Markos, 2013). In an online resource called *Snapshot of References to Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in State Early Learning Guidelines*, Head Start (2013) has summarized the extent to which states’ guidelines and standards include references to DLLs ages 0–5, ranging from separate guidelines for DLLs to no mention of DLLs at all (see Table 1). In this memo, we focus on the eight states which, according to Head Start, have separate standards for DLLs or separate sections for DLLs within their early childhood standards for preschool-age children.

The memo is organized into the following sections:

1. Summaries of state standards and guidelines for DLLs for the eight states with separate DLL guidelines or separate DLL sections within early childhood guidelines and standards
2. Table 1. Snapshot of references to DLLs in state guidelines and standards for preschool-age children
3. References

Citations are accompanied by excerpts or summaries written by the author(s) of the standards, and include a link to a free online version, when available. We have not evaluated the rigor of these standards, but provide them for your information only.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Dual Language Learners refers to young children (birth to age 5) who are learning more than one language. This term has been adopted by the federal Office of Head Start, the State of California, and many research institutions such as the Center for Early Care and Education Research-Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL). According to the Office of Head Start, “Dual language learners are children learning two or more languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language” (Office of Head Start, 2008). Elsewhere, DLLs are often referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs), Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Learners (ELs), Non-English Speaking, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Bilinguals.

<sup>2</sup> Titles for state guidelines or standards may include: guidelines, framework, standards, foundations, and/or indicators.

## **1. Summaries of state standards for DLLs in preschool**

According to Head Start (2013), three states (CA, KY, MA) have separate standards for DLLs. California and Massachusetts, as well as five additional states (AZ, ID, MS, NJ, and NY) have separate sections within their preschool guidelines that address issues related to DLLs and best practice in some detail. We have chosen to summarize these standards and guidelines as they represent the most comprehensive guidance for policymakers seeking to develop or revise their state standards to include DLLs.

### ***States with separate DLL guidelines for early childhood***

#### **CALIFORNIA**

*Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning—A Resource Guide* (Second Edition) (California Department of Education, 2009) (149 pages)  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psenglearnersed2.pdf>

*Excerpt:* A central goal of this resource guide is to emphasize the importance of understanding the dynamic forces that shape development and learning among preschool English learners. In this chapter a set of core beliefs has been presented for consideration in implementing the principles and practices introduced throughout the guide. An overall theme that runs through these core beliefs is that developing a fuller understanding of the English learner is an important first step in thinking about and creating effective learning contexts that maximize children’s language and literacy learning. A summary of the central points of each of the remaining chapters in the guide is presented as follows:

- Chapter Two describes English learners in California and discusses the crucial role that family members play in the language and literacy development of English learners. The ways in which home, school, and community contexts influence language development and literacy practices are also explained. Chapter Three continues to explore the various factors that often affect language development and literacy among English learners. Among those factors are the literacy skills children bring from their home language and the kinds of literacy practices in which they participate.
- Chapter Four describes the various paths to bilingualism, and Chapter Five provides an overview of how second-language acquisition occurs. The role that language plays in the process of learning is emphasized. Children acquire and use language as a tool to participate with others in their everyday activities across many contexts.
- Chapter Six presents the concept of code switching, by which a child can move back and forth between two or more languages. The chapter once again highlights the finding that children’s language and literacy development is influenced by factors within the child’s family, school, and community.
- Chapter Seven discusses working with English learners who have disabilities or other special needs, although most of the strategies suggested in other chapters can also be effective with this population. The reverse is also true; that is, many of the strategies for children with disabilities or other special needs are effective with English learners and preschoolers in general.
- Chapter Eight presents a set of recommended literacy practices for English learners. Because, like all other children, English learners have a range of interests and are motivated to participate in many different kinds of learning activities, they should be assigned literacy activities that allow them to learn about many different topics across a number of contexts. Being able to read influences a child’s ability to write and vice versa, and literacy activities

that allow young children to take on roles as both emergent readers and writers increase literacy development significantly.

- Appendices
  - Principles for Promoting Language, Literacy, and Learning for Preschool English Learners
  - Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines
  - Desired Results for Children and Families
  - California Preschool Learning Foundations
  - Transition to Kindergarten or Elementary School

## KENTUCKY

*PreK–K ELL Reference Handbook* (Kentucky Department of Education, June 2009) (60 pages)

*Excerpt:* The *PreK–K Reference Handbook* is an informative resource guide for all preschool and kindergarten teachers and instructional assistants, administrators, educational leaders, and family advocates who work in educational settings with English language learners (ELLs). It is organized around various topics that will assist staff in providing developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs of this population. It also includes information on family involvement and cultural considerations that impact learning.

*Table of Contents (condensed):*

- Introduction
- Cultural Considerations
- Communicating with Speakers of Other Languages
- Family Involvement
- Basics of First & Second Language Acquisition
- Educational Standards
- Strategies and Interventions for English Language Learners (ELLs)
  - Valuing Native Language and Culture
  - General Classroom Strategies
  - Preschool Instructional Strategies
  - Kindergarten Instructional Strategies
  - Resources
- Assessments
- Identification of ELL Students with Disabilities
- Common Questions and Answers
- Appendix

## MASSACHUSETTS

*Early Education and Care: Policies and Guidelines for Children Whose Home Languages are Other Than or in Addition to English* (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, November 2010) (57 pages)

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/eec/laws-regulations-and-policies/20101203-dual-lang-edu-policies.pdf>

*Excerpt:* The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) in partnership with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) contracted with the Collaborative for Educational Services in 2010 to develop language policies and practices that support best practices in early education and care programs serving children whose home language is a language other than English (referred to

in these policies as Dual Language Learners), from birth to 8 and their families, and for implementation by providers and programs throughout the mixed delivery system within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. EEC's vision and mission for this project is to create policies and recommendations that inform educators about recommended practices and approaches for use with dual language learners and their families, serve as a foundation for professional development activities, and assist educators to implement assessment and teaching practices that are supportive of dual language learners including children and youth with disabilities. The policy recommendations and practices also reflect supportive family engagement practices with multilingual families. This relates to EEC's commitment to ensure that all children have access to quality education programs and services. Further, these policies reflect an asset-based model in which all parents and children are regarded as valuable resources and their personal, cultural, language, academic, and world experiences are infused in early care and education programming.

*Table of Contents:*

- Introduction
- Statement of Need
- Considering the issues
- Who are dual language learners?
- Who are the educators and early child care providers of DLLs?
- What language development and learning environments have been found to be the most effective?
- Survey and site visit findings
- Early Education and Care Policies and Guidelines for children whose home languages are other than or in addition to English
- Inclusion of eight core competencies
- High quality language development, early literacy and learning environments for DLLs
- Professional development
- Identifying and assessing dual language learners
- Family engagement
- Resources
- Appendices
- References

***States with separate sections within their preschool guidelines that address DLLs***

**ARIZONA**

*Arizona Early Learning Standards* (Arizona Department of Education, May 2013) (1 page)

<http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/files/2011/11/arizona-early-learning-standards-3rd-edition.pdf>

*Excerpt:* The Arizona Early Learning Standards have been developed to provide a framework for the planning of quality learning experiences for all children three to five years of age. The standards cover a broad range of skill development and provide a useful instructional foundation for children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities. The standards are intended for use by all those who work with young children in any early care and education setting in urban, rural and tribal communities ...

- *Inclusive practices:* English Language Learners: All children have acquired knowledge as a result of the language used in their home since birth. The richer the home language and

background experiences, the easier it is for children to learn a second language. Children develop language much the same way they acquire other skills, along a continuum, at different rates, and with individual learning styles. Some children may experience a silent period while they learn English; other children may practice their knowledge by mixing or combining languages; still others may quickly acquire English-language proficiency. Each child's progress in learning English needs to be respected and viewed as acceptable, logical, and part of the ongoing process of learning any new skill. The language skills needed for young English language learners to become proficient in English are fully embedded in the Arizona Early Learning Standards. Using the standards to plan enriching experiences will enhance children's proficiency in English and enable them to become successful learners in Kindergarten – 12 schools.

## IDAHO

*Idaho Early Learning Guidelines* (Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, 2008) (1 page)  
<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Unknown/123008%20Cover%20Introduction%20and%20Framework%20with%20at%20a%20glance%20tables.pdf>

*Excerpt:* Every child has unique characteristics, developing and learning in the context of their family, culture, and community. In this light, Idaho's Early Learning Guidelines acknowledge and embrace the diversity and variation that exists among all young children. Diversity includes, and is not limited to, socioeconomic, cultural, racial, linguistic, ethnic, gender, abilities, disabilities and regional variations. The Idaho Early Learning Guidelines are not grounded in any single theoretical perspective or in any single cultural context; rather, they are based on scientific research from various theoretical perspectives, and are specifically intended to acknowledge and accommodate cultural differences. The Guidelines identify goals for young children's development that reflect the perspectives, values, and recommended practices of a diverse range of people, institutions, and communities throughout Idaho ...

Culture is defined as the customary beliefs and patterns of and for behavior, both explicit and implicit, which are passed on to future generations by the society they live in and/or by a social, religious, or ethnic group within it. Because culture is often discussed in the context of diversity or multiculturalism, people fail to recognize the powerful role that culture plays in influencing the development of all children. Every culture structures and interprets children's behavior and development. Parents are naturally part of the child's own cultural fabric. Effective teachers are familiar with the different cultures of the children they serve, especially those cultures that differ from their own. Recognizing that development and learning are influenced by social and cultural contexts sensitizes teachers to the need to acknowledge how their own cultural experience shapes their perspective and to realize that multiple perspectives, in addition to their own, must be considered in decisions about children's development and learning. Early childhood teachers need to understand the influence of sociocultural contexts on learning, recognize children's developing competence, and accept a variety of ways for children to express their developmental achievements.

Children are capable of learning to function in more than one cultural context simultaneously. Education can be an additive process and build on students' strengths. Likewise, children who speak only English benefit from learning another language and cultural traditions. The goal is that all children learn to function well in the society as a whole and move comfortably among groups of people who come from both similar and dissimilar backgrounds. Quality education not only prepares children to be members of their local communities, but also to be global citizens in an increasingly interconnected world. The Guidelines are specifically intended to accommodate, support and build upon individual family characteristics and cultural heritage, and connect those

with the best research and practice in early childhood education. In addition, efforts have been made to include the learning needs of children with developmental delays and disabilities, and children who have a home language other than English.

## MISSISSIPPI

*Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Guidelines* (Mississippi Department of Education, 2006) (3 pages) <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/curriculum-and-instructions-library/4-year-old-guidelines.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

*Excerpt:* Appendix A: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners (from the Florida Department of Education, adapted from the work of the California, Indiana, Nebraska, and Texas Departments of Education). As explained in the Learning Principles section of this document, it is well understood that children learn at different rates and with varying abilities and interests. The range of differences in learning rates and varying abilities increases in early childhood classrooms when diverse learners are included (e.g., children with disabilities, children whose native language is not English, and children of different cultures and ethnicities). Each child must be viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing for growth, raised in a cultural context that may impact the acquisition of certain skills and competencies. Adults who recognize and appreciate differences in children readily adapt instruction. Adapting instruction for diverse learners is similar but more extensive and necessary for satisfactory progress to be made ... Four-year-olds whose native language is not English are still learning their native language. For these children it is important to foster acquisition of their native language along with learning English. The goal for these children is to provide language- and literacy-rich environments that foster their mastery of the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines while they begin to acquire English. There will be times when they are learning English that these children may appear to lack proficiency in either language. This is a developmental stage that should be expected. With appropriate supports, most children whose native language is not English will be able to become proficient in both English and their native language. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), in its position statement, *Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity—Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education*, stresses how important it is that, in working with children, early child care providers:

- Recognize that all children are cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to the language and culture of their home
- Acknowledge that children can demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities in many ways
- Understand that, without comprehensible input, second-language learning can be difficult

Some general strategies that can be used in the early childhood classroom to support children whose native language is not English are listed below. Some of these may be similar to those used in helping younger children develop their language skills:

- Recognize that the child's native language serves as a foundation for knowledge acquisition
- Start with what children know—involve parents by asking them to provide a few important words in the language used in their home
- Use children's current strengths and skills as the starting point for new experiences and instruction; build on what they know to expand and extend their language skills
- Provide instruction in a manner that children can understand consistent with their proficiency level in English
- Interact in meaningful ways, and use language related to the immediate early learning situation

- Establish a consistent set of routines for children, and provide cues for what they should do, when
- Support communication by using words along with gestures or actions; use repetition
- Recognize that children may communicate nonverbally (through gestures) before they begin to produce words and phrases in English
- Help children listen purposefully to English-speaking teachers and other children to gather information about their new language
- Help children experiment with the sounds and intonation of the English language
- Help children increase their listening vocabulary and begin to develop a vocabulary of object names and common phrases in English
- Ensure that children are included in group activities
- Help children feel secure and competent to support interaction and communication with other children and adults
- Recognize that, the more opportunities children have to participate, the more their language and communication skills will develop.

It is important to note that although some phonological awareness skills appear to transfer between languages (i.e., skills in a first language help the child develop and demonstrate the same skills in a second language), some basic proficiency in English may be prerequisite to the development of phonological awareness in English for second-language learners.

### **NEW JERSEY (2 documents)**

*Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards* (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2014)  
(1 page) <http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/guide/standards.pdf>

*Excerpt:* Supporting Diversity–English Language Learners (ELL) and Multiculturalism. In public schools throughout the United States, the population of English language learners (ELL) has shown steady growth over the last decade. English language learners are comprised of many different ethnic and linguistic groups. In New Jersey schools, the vast majority of English language learners are native Spanish speakers. However, there are over 187 languages spoken in the public schools throughout the state, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Students who speak other languages at home, especially those students with limited English proficiency, have specific linguistic needs that must be addressed, that supports their optimal learning and development to ensure that they are provided a quality educational experience. It is important that administrators and teachers acquire knowledge of the stages of second language development; and developmentally appropriate strategies, techniques and assessments to maintain, develop and support the home language, and proficiency in English. Effective instructional practices that provide young English language learners with linguistic and cognitive support must be embedded within the context of age-appropriate classroom routines, hands-on activities and lessons. *Strategies for working with English language learners can be found in each section of the standards.* A strong home, school, community connection built on mutual respect and appreciation increases opportunities for learning and collaboration. Sensitivity to and support for diversity in culture, ethnicity, language and learning must be woven into the daily activities and routines of the early childhood classroom. It is essential for teachers to understand cultural variations and practices and to create a child-centered classroom that celebrates the diversity of all the children in the classroom. Various aspects of culture can have a direct effect on verbal and non-verbal communication, and it is vital for teachers to understand, embrace and celebrate the background and variations of all their students, particularly their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Young children are developing their sense of self and of others, within their families, classrooms and communities. The early childhood program must provide a variety of diverse materials, books, activities and

experiences that increase young children's awareness of similarities and differences in self and others. In order to facilitate a culturally responsive classroom, that nurtures, supports and enhances the learning of all students, it is critical that administrators and teachers engage in self-reflection and dialogue to understand their personal attitudes, uncover their biases, and develop cultural sensitivity and a willingness to learn about the variety of students and families within the early childhood program.

*Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines* (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2010) (3 pages) <http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/guide/impguidelines.pdf>

*Excerpt:* Supporting Dual Language Learners: When young children enter preschool, they are still learning all about language. The strategies and approaches that are used to foster language development have critical implications for lifelong literacy, academic achievement and school success. Language-rich classrooms that immerse children in oral language experiences and developmentally appropriate practices provide the optimal environment for fostering language development. Many young children entering preschool classrooms come from homes in which English is not the first language. These children, referred to as English language learners (ELLs), will be acquiring English as a second language. The linguistic and social needs of English language learners present challenges to monolingual teachers. Special consideration must be given to English language learners to help them feel welcomed, valued and accepted; and to provide the ideal foundation for their language and literacy development. Research in early childhood education and second language development emphasizes developmentally appropriate practices that are specific to three and four year olds, and addresses the unique needs of second language learners.

- *Bilingualism and biculturalism:* In the 21st century bilingualism should be a goal for all students. Schools must create learning environments that are culturally and linguistically relevant and that build upon the culture, language, strengths and practices of all the children and families that they serve. There are considerable benefits of knowing a second language, including: improved student academic performance, enhanced problem solving skills, increased cognitive tasks, better career opportunities, increased global marketability and biculturalism. Research in cognitive neuroscience indicates that bilingualism has a positive effect on social emotional development, also referred to as executive function, which is directly related to children's academic success. Additionally, knowledge of two languages deepens children's understanding of important mathematical concepts. Knowledge learned through one language paves the way for knowledge acquisition in the second language. Therefore, students who learn content in one language can be expected to demonstrate content knowledge in the second language once they acquire the language skills to express that knowledge. The long-term cognitive advantages of bilingualism will not accrue until students have sufficiently developed both languages ...
- *Support for the home language:* Most English language learners in the United States are enrolled in mainstream classes with general education teachers who lack the appropriate knowledge and strategies to teach linguistically diverse students. Preschool classrooms should be child-centered, and teachers must incorporate practices and perspectives that celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of all the children to foster the positive socio-emotional development of young children. It is critical that teachers provide support for children's home language in the preschool years because it impacts the child's basic language foundation and their ability to understand and grasp content knowledge. Classroom support for children's language occurs best in the context of natural interactions and environments. Preschool English language learners should be provided with daily activities and experiences that promote oral language development and phonemic awareness in both their home language (to the maximum extent possible) and English. This can occur through daily music and movement activities, including songs, chants, finger plays

and rhyming activities. Providing preschool English language learners with experiences that focus on oral language development in their native language helps to develop a strong foundation as they transfer learning in English; and research has shown that early literacy skills transfer from one language to another. These foundational skills are the precursors for reading and mathematics. Additionally, the child's first language is intricately tied to their concept of self, family and home; and when young children lose their first language they experience a separation from the cultural and social nuances of their families and communities.

- *Dual language Programs:* At the Department of Education, we strongly support dual language programs, in which students are engaged in “academic” work in both English and another language as an effective way to meet the needs of English language learners and close the achievement gap. Dual language programs integrate English language learners and English speaking students and provide instruction in English and the native language of the English language learners. They are an effective way to provide second language instruction through an immersion approach for both bilingual and monolingual English speaking students. Dual language programs provide content area instruction in both languages for a significant portion of the instructional time, in classroom settings that promote language and social equality with the goal of full bilingual proficiency for both native and non-native speakers of English. This model provides a win-win approach that is beneficial for all students. In this model, the goal is fluency in English and Spanish (or another language) for both monolingual English speaking students and for English language learners. Transitional bilingual programs are subtractive programs in which the student's first language is replaced with a new one and the first language is underdeveloped or lost. Dual language programs are additive bilingual programs, in which students learn a second language in addition to their first or native language. Dual language programs develop bilingual, biliterate and bicognitive skills in English and a second language which helps all participating students to maintain academic achievement at or above grade level after several years of dual language instruction. This programmatic structure also promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.
- *Screening and Placement:* The home language survey should be included at the time of registration for families whose first language is other than English. Any child who speaks a language other than English at home is considered an English language learner, in need of home language supports, even if he or she understands and speaks some English. The home language survey should be completed by the primary caregiver (with translators available, if and when needed). It is designed to help school administrators and teachers know how to best support the child and families. Additionally, as specified in Bilingual Code, “The district board of education shall also use age-appropriate methodologies to identify limited English proficient preschool students in order to determine their individual language development needs.” The home language survey should be followed up with an individual conversation between the teacher and the primary caregivers to develop a better understanding of the child's home language environment; and to help families understand the school district's linguistic, social-emotional and academic goals for the families. The home language survey and information gleaned from family conversations should also be used by preschool teachers to inform instruction that addresses the linguistic needs of each child. It is critical that teachers provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help English language learners learn English vocabulary and to also build comprehensible input. Preschool teachers should develop vocabulary and language goals and embed them in developmentally appropriate ways to ensure that English language learners are being taught appropriate vocabulary within the context of each lesson, activity or hands-on experience. The IPT and other English proficiency tests should only be administered at the end of preschool or for kindergarten entrance when determining optimal kindergarten placements. Any child who

speaks a language other than English at home is considered an English language learner, in need of linguistic supports, even if the child understands and speaks some English. Preschool English language learners should be placed in inclusive classrooms, with teachers that are cognizant of their social-emotional, physical, linguistic and academic needs. They should also have ongoing exposure to, and interactions with peers that speak their home language as and with speakers of English, because all children benefit from interactions with multiple language peers. Ideally, teachers and paraprofessionals should be informed of the languages of all students in the class, and should be provided with ongoing support via professional development, coaching and resources to best meet the needs of their linguistically diverse students.

- *Staff Qualifications:* It is important that teachers of English language learners acquire strong knowledge about the varied aspects of language in teaching. Teachers need to recognize the cultural aspect of language; and have a clear understanding of, and respect for the varied linguistic patterns of diverse children and families. This is essential to help children from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds make a smooth transition from home to school. Teachers of English language learners also need to understand dialectical usages of language and typical errors made by young children learning a new language, so that they can provide targeted support, via age-appropriate strategies to make language comprehensible. Teachers should understand the stages of language development, so that they can carefully and purposefully choose materials and activities that promote language development, and provide scaffolded support as needed. It is also important that teachers realize that all assessments are actually language assessments and are not necessarily representative of what young children, particularly English language learners know and can do. Therefore, it is essential that multiple factors are considered when assessing all children, especially young second language learners. Every attempt should be made to employ both a teacher and teacher assistant who speak both English and the second language of the bilingual children enrolled in their classrooms. There should be at least one adult in the classroom who speaks the primary language of the English language learners. In classes where there are significant numbers of second language learners, one adult should speak the home language of the majority of English language learners. Bilingual staff must be encouraged to use the children's home languages to provide a classroom environment with rich and explicit vocabulary instruction embedded in the context of developmentally appropriate activities to build comprehensible input, and promote expressive language. Teachers should also provide hands-on, small group literacy instruction focused on comprehension; and emergent literacy experiences in the home language, as well as rich exposure to both languages, including the use of props, pictures and real objects from real life used in classroom instruction. Schools must ensure that all staff members serve as good language models for all children by using standard and age-appropriate language. Non-bilingual teachers and teacher assistants should develop some basic communication skills in the home languages of the children in their classrooms. This should include both survival language and vocabulary and phrases that make the children feel welcomed and comfortable in the classroom. School districts should hire master teachers with bilingual expertise and/or bilingual certification and a strong background in early childhood education and developmentally appropriate practices. The bilingual master teacher is a resource for classroom teachers and should provide training in strategies and techniques to support first and second language development. The bilingual master teacher should assist the classroom teacher with bilingual labels for the classroom environment in the most common home language(s) of the children. Additionally, the bilingual master teacher should prepare a list of survival words and phrases, and general conversational phrases in the home languages of the children (along with the transliteration) for non-bilingual staff. Districts should adhere to the suggested master teacher/classroom ratio of one master

teacher for every fifteen classrooms for school districts with large numbers of English language learners.

- *Professional Development:* Professional development should be ongoing, developmentally appropriate and designed to provide classroom teachers and teacher assistants with knowledge of the stages of language development. It should incorporate engaging, child-centered strategies and techniques that support both first and second language development. Professional development should instill the importance of supporting the home language, and incorporate ways parents can support their children's literacy development. The professional development should include a focus on the acquisition of early literacy skills, including oral language development, phonological awareness and alphabetic principle in the context of different languages. The professional development should also assist teachers with instructional approaches that provide explicit vocabulary instruction, facilitate rich conversations, and utilize varying questioning techniques based on the children's level of English proficiency.

## **NEW YORK**

*New York State Early Learning Guidelines* (New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council and the New York State Council on Children and Families, 2013) (2 pages)  
[http://ccf.ny.gov/files/1913/9145/8901/Early\\_Learning\\_Guidelines\\_2013.pdf](http://ccf.ny.gov/files/1913/9145/8901/Early_Learning_Guidelines_2013.pdf)

*Excerpt:*

*Appreciating Diversity:* Some indicators for children:

- 1) Compares similarities or differences of others (e.g., height, hair color) in his/her circle of contact
- 2) Develops awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of own gender and cultural identity
- 3) Identifies gender and other basic similarities and differences between self and others
- 4) Demonstrates understanding that different individuals have different abilities and information
- 5) Includes other children in own activities who are of a different gender, ethnic background, who speak other languages, or who have special needs, with guidance
- 6) Asks questions about others' families, ethnicity, language, cultural heritage, and differences in physical characteristics

*Sample Strategies to Promote Development and Learning:*

- 1) Provide opportunities for child to describe own cultural and physical characteristics
- 2) Demonstrate and explain that one person may play different roles (e.g., father and employee)
- 3) Accept each child's unique expression of gender

Early childhood education plays an essential role in preparing young English language learners (ELLs) for later success in school. The youngest children seem born with an aptitude to learn multiple languages simultaneously, and research shows that young native speakers learn English as a second language in rich classroom settings with relative ease, provided that the teacher creates opportunities and experiences to support this. Also during this time, a child's young peers are highly effective teachers, modeling language and providing a safe climate for new English speakers to experiment with their new language in nonthreatening ways especially during free-play opportunities. In the beginning, supportive and nurturing teachers learn a few important words and phrases in the child's native/home language to help create an environment that is safe and trusting. Phrases about using the bathroom, parents, and food are most helpful. Children who have

a rich and supportive language environment in the classroom are likely to build proficiency in the second language more easily and quickly.

*Dual Language Acquisition:* Some indicators for children:

- 1) Demonstrates understanding that there are languages other than the home language (e.g., identifies sentence spoken in home language in comparison to one spoken in English)
- 2) Relies on nonverbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on nonverbal cues to communicate in home language
- 3) Focuses on the meaning of words rather than grammar in acquiring spoken English language competency
- 4) Follows linguistic rules of home language and constructs own rules for English
- 5) Uses sentences in home language and begins to use single word or telegraphic speech in English to communicate
- 6) If bilingual, adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking

*Sample Strategies to Promote Development and Learning:*

- 1) Help child develop reasoning skills through use of home language
- 2) Devise strategies that build a home-school collaboration to reinforce home language competency and promote learning English
- 3) Identify and explain patterns in errors of spoken English to help child acquire language competency (Note: do not correct child but guide child by example)

## **2. Snapshot of references to DLLs in state early learning guidelines and standards for preschool-age children**

This at-a-glance table, adapted from Head Start (2013), includes the information about where DLLs are referenced in state guidelines, and standards and supporting documents for preschool-age DLLs (Head Start included references for infants and toddlers, as well). For example:

- Three states (CA, KY, MA) have separate DLL guidelines for early childhood.
- Seven states (AZ, CA, ID, MA, MS, NJ, NY) have separate sections within their preschool guidelines that address DLLs and best practice in some detail.
- Four states (CT, KS, SC, TN) do not mention preschool-age DLLs.

**Table 1. Snapshot of References to Preschool-Age Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in State Early Learning Guidelines**

| State                | Separate DLL guidelines | Separate DLL section(s) within state early childhood guidelines | Introduction mentions DLLs | Mention of DLLs in Language/Literacy domain(s) | DLLs mentioned in other domain(s) | No mention of DLLs                  |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Alabama              |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Alaska               |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Arizona              |                         | X   |                            |  |                                   |                                     |
| Arkansas             |                         |   | X                          | X  | X                                 |                                     |
| California           | X                       | X   | X                          | X  | X                                 |                                     |
| Colorado             |                         |   | X Quality Standards        | X Building Blocks                              | X Building Blocks                 |                                     |
| Connecticut          |                         |   |                            |  |                                   | X                                   |
| Delaware             |                         |   |                            |  | X One preschool domain            |                                     |
| District of Columbia |                         |   | X                          |  |                                   |                                     |
| Florida              |                         |   |                            | X  | X                                 |                                     |
| Georgia              |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Hawaii               |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Idaho                |                         | X   | X                          |  |                                   |                                     |
| Illinois             |                         |   |                            |  |                                   |                                     |
| Indiana              |                         |   | X                          |  |                                   |                                     |
| Iowa                 |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Kansas               |                         |   |                            |  |                                   | X References to culture, but not EL |
| Kentucky             | X Reference Handbook    |   | X                          |  |                                   |                                     |
| Louisiana            |                         |   | X 4-year-olds              |  | X Pre-K                           |                                     |
| Maine                |                         |   | X                          | X  | X                                 |                                     |
| Maryland             |                         |   |                            |  |                                   |                                     |
| Massachusetts        | X                       |   |                            |  |                                   |                                     |
| Michigan             |                         |   |                            |  | X                                 |                                     |
| Minnesota            |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Mississippi          |                         | X 4-year-olds   |                            |  |                                   |                                     |
| Missouri             |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                                     |
| Montana              |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                                     |

| State          | Separate DLL guidelines | Separate DLL section(s) within state early childhood guidelines | Introduction mentions DLLs | Mention of DLLs in Language/Literacy domain(s) | DLLs mentioned in other domain(s) | No mention of DLLs |
|----------------|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Nebraska       |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Nevada         |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| New Hampshire  |                         |   | X                          |  |                                   |                    |
| New Jersey     |                         | X<br>Implementation Guidelines                                  | X<br>Standards             | X<br>Standards                                 | X<br>Standards                    |                    |
| New Mexico     |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| New York       |                         | X   | X                          |  |                                   |                    |
| North Carolina |                         |   | X                          | X  | X                                 |                    |
| North Dakota   |                         |   | X                          | X  | X                                 |                    |
| Ohio           |                         |   |                            | X<br>Reflection Tool                           |                                   |                    |
| Oklahoma       |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Oregon         |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Pennsylvania   |                         |   | X                          | X  | X                                 |                    |
| Rhode Island   |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                    |
| South Carolina |                         |   |                            |  |                                   | X                  |
| South Dakota   |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Tennessee      |                         |   |                            |  |                                   | X                  |
| Texas          |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Utah           |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                    |
| Vermont        |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Virginia       |                         |   | X                          |  |                                   |                    |
| Washington     |                         |   | X                          |  | X                                 |                    |
| West Virginia  |                         |   | X                          | X  |                                   |                    |
| Wisconsin      |                         |   |                            | X  | X                                 |                    |
| Wyoming        |                         |   |                            | X  |                                   |                    |

Source: Adapted from Head Start (2013). *Snapshot of References to Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in State Early Learning Guidelines* (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/cultural-linguistic/state-guidelines/snapshot.html>)

## References

Castro, D. (2011). *High quality early education for young dual language learners: What can be done?* Washington, DC: Public Policy and Research Department, National Head Start Association. Retrieved on July 15, 2014, from [http://www.nhsa.org/files/static\\_page\\_files/FFC09A23-1D09-3519-ADC0C184F88FE401/NHSA\\_Dialog\\_Briefs\\_V14\\_2\\_FA\[1\].pdf](http://www.nhsa.org/files/static_page_files/FFC09A23-1D09-3519-ADC0C184F88FE401/NHSA_Dialog_Briefs_V14_2_FA[1].pdf)

*Excerpt:* In this Dialog Brief, Dr. Dina Castro addresses the need to provide high quality early education for young DLLs. First, Castro reviews the variation in DLL early learning standards among federally- and state-funded early learning programs and explores how demographic, cultural, and environmental factors, the developmental characteristics of young DLLs, and early education practices affect the development of young DLLs. Second, Castro explains how research demonstrates the need to improve the quality of early learning experiences for young DLLs. Third, Castro presents a prevalent DLL classroom scenario and provides Head Start and other early learning practitioners, researchers, and policymakers with classroom-, program-, and systemic-level strategies to address the early education needs of young DLLs. Finally, Castro recommends expanding the definition of high quality education to include practices to address the needs of all children, including DLLs and explains how the Head Start Program is contributing significantly to that redefinition.

Castro, D., Garcia, E., & Markos, A. (2013). *Dual language learners: Research informing policy*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Retrieved on July 28, 2014, from [http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/FPG\\_CECER-DLL\\_ResearchInformingPolicyPaper.pdf](http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/FPG_CECER-DLL_ResearchInformingPolicyPaper.pdf)

*Excerpt:* In this paper, we describe the historical trends of both federal and state policy, focusing on the emerging research base related to DLLs and its role in informing policy and related practice in early care and education environments ... In the first section of this paper we provide the reader with a foundational understanding about DLLs. To do so, we present a conceptual framework that will lead to better understanding of both the development of DLLs and research on DLLs; findings from current research on DLLs' language and literacy; and the cognitive benefits of being bilingual. Together, these three areas serve as the foundation for improved understanding of how DLLs develop and learn. Together they also shed light on how research might best highlight federal and/or state/local policy pathways that influence DLL initiatives. In the next section of the paper we present an overview of the current policy system environment surrounding early care and education settings. In this section we highlight two federal legislative efforts related to early learning: Head Start and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, discussing the challenges that arise from the current disconnects between these separate PreK and K-12 governing efforts. In the third section of the paper we offer suggestions for how to better coordinate policies and practices aimed at supporting DLLs between and across early care education and K-12 settings. In the last section, we outline final suggestions for policymakers at the federal, state, and local level aimed at bettering research and practice efforts related to DLLs.

Espinosa, L. (2013). *Early education for dual language learners: Promoting school readiness and early school success*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved on July 15, 2014, from <http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/DualLanguageLearners.pdf>

*Excerpt:* This report contributes to the effort to identify the specific features of ECE programs that most effectively support DLLs. First, it offers a profile of DLLs, and outlines some factors that may affect their developmental and academic outcomes. Next, it takes a deeper look at the patterns of

achievement among this group, highlighting the varied outcomes across national origin and socioeconomic groups. The following section reviews the research on early care and education approaches that have been shown to support higher levels of language and literacy development and achievement for DLLs. Finally, the report identifies the main elements of a high-quality early childhood education program, and shows how these features can be integrated into programs for young DLLs. It also discusses barriers to implementing effective approaches. The concluding section makes several recommendations on policy and practice for ECE programs that prepare DLLs for successful entry to school.

Head Start. (2013). *Dual language learners in state early learning guidelines and standards*.

Retrieved on July 15, 2014, from at [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/state-guidelines/dll\\_guidelines.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/state-guidelines/dll_guidelines.html)

Office of Head Start. (2008). *Dual language learning: What does it take?* Washington, DC:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Retrieved on August 1, 2014, from [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Individualization/Learning%20in%20Two%20Languages/DLANA\\_final\\_2009%5B1%5D.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Individualization/Learning%20in%20Two%20Languages/DLANA_final_2009%5B1%5D.pdf)

*Abstract:* Suggestions and recommendations are provided in this report to better serve culturally and linguistically diverse children and families. Head Start service providers will find this information particularly valuable as it offers an in-depth look into the unique needs, challenges, and opportunities related to supporting bilingual and multilingual children. All information was pulled from a national needs assessment of Head Start programs, and its recommendations include both local and national best practices and approaches.

Office of Head Start. (2010). *The Head Start child development and early learning framework:*

Promoting positive outcomes in early childhood programs serving children 3–5 years old.

Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved on June 2, 2014, from

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Child%20Outcomes/HS Revised Child Outcomes Framework%28rev-Sept2011%29.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Child%20Outcomes/HS_Revised_Child_Outcomes_Framework%28rev-Sept2011%29.pdf)

*Excerpt:* The Framework outlines the essential areas of development and learning that are to be used by Head Start programs to establish school readiness goals for their children, monitor children's progress, align curricula, and conduct program planning. It does not provide specific benchmarks or levels of accomplishment for children to achieve during their time in Head Start. The Framework reflects the legislative mandates of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and current research in child development and learning. The Framework also reflects Head Start's core value to promote all aspects of child development and learning in early childhood programs.

Olsen, L. (2010). *Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners*. Long Beach, CA: Californians Together.

*Excerpt:* *Reparable Harm* was written to inform, motivate, and support state and district policymakers in addressing the alarming and urgent situation of a large group of students failed by our schools. It is based upon new survey data collected from 40 school districts throughout all regions in California, is informed by existing research literature, and draws upon inquiries conducted by leadership teams in high schools and districts throughout the state over the past four

years. Together, these sources provide an emerging and startling picture of students left behind, parents uninformed, educators unaware, and districts largely stumped about what to do. The publication includes a brief background on the emergence of Long Term English Learners, including data on the extent and magnitude of Long Term English Learners in California schools. It describes the unique needs of Long Term English Learners, how they are currently being served in California schools, and outlines promising practices piloted in some districts in the state. An analysis of the challenges facing districts in implementing effective programs provides a backdrop for a set of state policy recommendations.

## **Methods**

### **Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Search**

“Early learning guidelines” OR “early learning standards” OR “Early childhood guidelines” OR “Early childhood standards” AND “Dual language learners”

### **Search of Databases**

Google

### **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.

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