

In This Issue

Introduction	1
Families as Partners	2-3
Home Language Development	4-5
Language Policy	5
Language Supports	5-7
Reflection Tool	8
WIDA Early Years	9
References and Further Reading	10



MARCH 2015

WIDA | EARLY YEARS

Introduction

Four-year-old Alejandro and his family recently moved to the United States from Mexico. Seeking additional opportunities for their son to learn and play with other children in their new community, his parents enrolled him in the local Head Start program. Miss Leticia is his preschool teacher. Although Miss Leticia does not speak Alejandro's home language or share his family's culture, she has respectful and supportive practices in place in her classroom to effectively assist and instruct him. For example, "on a recent visit, I observed Alejandro referring to his own pocket-sized pictorial schedule," Robin Meade, HCS Head Start Education Coordinator, recounts. "He was playing at centers and he flipped through pictures on a ring, stopped at the 'draw pictures' card, and then went to the next picture, 'snack.' He brought the schedule to Miss Leticia, giving her a gentle tug on her sweater. Miss Leticia got to his eye level and spoke to him, gesturing 'eating.' When she asked, 'Are you hungry,' he smiled, nodded, and repeated, 'hungry.' She used self-talk and parallel talk as she took him by the hand to another peer, helping him use his picture schedule to invite this new friend to join him at the snack center. She facilitated both boys in getting crackers and juice ready at a small table. Once the boys were settled, she put paper and some crayons at the table. After telling them 'Have a good snack,' she moved on to support at other centers. The boys sat and ate together. They picked up on the cue to play together and when they finished snack they worked on drawings side-by-side with the teacher periodically checking in. Soon Alejandro's mom arrived and he went to her with hugs, a smile, and his drawing. He showed her the two figures he had drawn, pointing to the peer he had snack with and saying his name, Baakir."

Alejandro is one of more than 4 million children enrolled in early childhood programs in the U.S. who are actively developing their home language(s) while at the same time acquiring English. Young dual language learners (DLLs) develop multiple languages at different rates and in different ways. Some children begin learning two or more languages simultaneously at birth. Other children, like Alejandro, may learn English sequentially, adding English to their home language(s) upon entry to early care and education

(ECE) programs. Positive relationships with primary caregivers, consistent routines, child-initiated play experiences, and connections to family, culture, and the community provide the foundation for home language, English language, and identity development.

Practitioners in high-quality ECE programs, like Miss Leticia, intentionally plan for supporting and instructing DLLs. With support from their program leaders, practitioners in high-quality ECE programs recognize families of DLLs as partners who bring social, cultural, and linguistic assets to the classroom. They encourage home language use at home and in the program. They also implement language supports throughout the routines and interest areas in the classroom.

Our goal in this bulletin is to provide suggestions for effective practices in supporting and instructing young DLLs. We have included examples and reflections from staff in four culturally and linguistically diverse ECE programs in Massachusetts. What practices have these programs found successful in partnering with families? How and why do they support home language development? What supports do they have in place to support English language development? How do the leaders in these programs support staff members in their work with DLLs and families? We have included a tool on page 8 for the leaders and practitioners in your program to use as you continue to reflect on your own practices.

This Focus Bulletin is the second in a series. Please see *WIDA Focus on the Early Years: Dual Language Learners* (August 2014) for foundational information about DLLs, partnering with families, supporting home and English language development, and links to K-12 education.

Available at: wida.us/EarlyYears

Families as Partners

A family's greatest asset is knowledge of their children. Because we partner with families, they know they're going to be at a school that respects their culture and language."
~Hali Castleman, Lawrence Family Development Charter School, Lawrence, MA

Partnering with families is widely recognized as best practice in ECE programs. High-quality ECE programs build respectful, reciprocal relationships with families in an effort to support children's healthy development and learning. Families are an invaluable source of information about their children, homes, and communities. This information is critical in making classroom decisions and fostering positive relationships.

What does partnering with families of DLLs look like in practice?

We looked to four culturally and linguistically diverse ECE programs in Massachusetts to provide models. Within these four programs we found several commonalities with regard to partnering with families of DLLs.

All four programs

- Establish a welcoming, respectful environment
- Recognize that linguistically and culturally diverse children and families bring a unique set of assets that have the potential to enrich the experiences of all children, families, and practitioners
- Gather and incorporate important information about families' cultures, languages, goals, and expectations into the program
- Create a sense of shared responsibility that includes two-way communication, participation in decision-making, and negotiation of conflicts toward the achievement of shared goals
- Share knowledge of each child and his or her language development as part of daily communication and at planned conferences
- Regularly connect families with resources and services, based on identified priorities and concerns
- Are intentional in their use of both nonverbal and verbal communication.



HOW PROGRAM LEADERS SUPPORT FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS: Reflections by Massachusetts ECE Practitioners and Administrators

"Our parents are our resource...Each family is different. The languages and cultures are different...We came up with the idea to have a coffee time with them and learn about them. So, for example, we had all of the Arabic-speaking moms for coffee and conversation... That was a big lesson for me...As a result, we are now having our parents help us with our staff trainings." ~Beletu Agagaw, Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center

"Acorn works closely with families on supporting children's language development. Our program provides a series of parenting and home literacy workshops for parents in Chinese to explore cross-cultural childrearing and teaching practices, supporting bilingual children, the importance of using home language at home, and language development...We also partner with families to advocate for the language needs of children through community focus groups." ~Kathy Cheng, Acorn Center for Early Education and Care

"We invite parents in to come take a look at what we're doing, participate in an activity, or join us on a field trip so they can really get a sense of their child's day and see how the language is presented to them."

"Acorn also provides literacy and math kits for parents to take home. After they bring it home they do a journal. The parents can help the children write down what they think about the book and the activity, so children start to get the idea: this is language."
~ Co-Teachers Harriet Robinson and Kitty Cai, Acorn Center for Early Education and Care

"We make an effort to be out in the parking lot in the mornings and afternoons to greet families and say goodbye at the end of the day. It has helped a lot with the challenge of understanding each other's language ...Body language, smiles, and friendly, welcoming, warm greetings can go a long way." ~Anne Leister, Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center

“Invisibility erases identity and experience. Visibility affirms reality.” (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010)

Did you know that, despite the large amount of verbal communication we use each day, 70-90% of our communication is actually nonverbal? Nonverbal communication greatly impacts how others perceive our intentions. It includes body language, posture, proximity, facial expressions, eye movements, touching, gestures, appearance, and the environment.

DLLs and their families are constantly interpreting messages about their social identity in your program through nonverbal cues. If the staff, environment, and services are not respectful and representative of their cultures and languages, DLLs and their families may internalize that they “don’t belong” or that they are not important or valued for who they are.

Questions for Reflection: Partnering with Families of DLLs

- What are your personal beliefs about the contributions of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families in your program?
- Does your environment include visuals, books, artifacts, toys, and recordings that represent the languages, cultures, and family practices of the children in the program?
- Are you aware of your nonverbal communication and any covert messages you may be sending to children and/or families? Are your gestures and expressions friendly to a variety of cultures?
- Do all families understand the verbal and written messages you share? How do you know?
- Do the social activities within your program imitate those of the families? If they differ, how does your staff welcome the families into the environment?
- Does your program’s culture reflect the surrounding community?
- Does your program’s geographical location offer equal opportunities for all families to participate?

The ways in which our environmental, nonverbal, and verbal communication are interpreted may greatly impact our relationships with families, starting at the very first minute we meet them. When entering your program, what do DLLs and their families see and hear? Books, artifacts, music, and conversations that are representative of their cultures and languages? How are DLLs and their families greeted? In ways that are respectful of the families’

cultural norms or ways that reflect cultural norms in the U.S.? For example, in the U.S. it is generally expected that people use an impersonal, direct, and logical approach when speaking with others in a professional setting. Controlled nonverbal communication is also expected (e.g., keep a distance of approximately three feet). These norms may feel confusing or offensive to a person coming from a culture outside of the U.S. that places more focus on interpersonal relationships, personal information, facial expressions, and close proximity. The differences in behaviors between the two cultures may create misunderstandings and cause families to feel that they cannot get to know the staff. They may then have difficulty trusting, communicating, and working in a partnership. When communicating with families, program leaders and practitioners must take responsibility to learn and interact according to comfortable cultural norms.

What are simple ways for practitioners and program leaders to begin building relationships with families of DLLs?

- Show, through your environment and warm interactions, that you genuinely value linguistically and culturally diverse families.
- Tell about yourself and your family.
- Learn and use greetings in the families’ home languages.
- Speak clearly, but not loudly or excessively slowly.
- Use gestures, pictures, or props to support your message.
- Offer families multiple opportunities to hear the same messages.
- Allow longer response times.

As your relationships with your DLLs and their families progress, you may choose to ask children and family members questions to help you learn more about children’s sociocultural contexts and language development. It is also helpful to learn about the beliefs, values, and goals that families have for their children based on their cultures and experiences. It is important to work together with families to honor their goals within your program’s expectations for language development.

“A basic thing that you can do for children who are dual language learners and their families is to use body language: facial expressions and gestures.” ~Kathy Spencer, Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center, Quincy, MA



Home Language Development

“Contrary to common belief, the most important family contribution to young children’s second language learning is to help children develop and maintain their home language.” (Castro et al., 2011)

Language is one of the most important gifts that families give to their children. It is important that practitioners encourage the families they work with to speak with their children at home using the language in which they are most comfortable. Home language helps children connect to their families, cultures, and communities, learn about their world, and develop their sense of identity. It allows children to communicate their feelings and ideas with their families, build trusting relationships, and hear the structure and purposes of language. It supports children’s learning and development in all domains (e.g., Social- Emotional, Physical, Early Language and Literacy, Cognitive, and Approaches to Learning), and provides children with multiple skills and abilities to make meaning in a new environment. When family members use their home language, they are often able to share thoughts and ideas using more complex language than they could in English, allowing children to build a stronger foundation of concepts and vocabulary. This foundation supports children as they learn, write, read, and develop multiple languages.

Language use is specific to the context of the family’s language and culture, socialization patterns or social practices (e.g., greeting rituals, manners, values)—concepts that impact healthy social, emotional, and identity development. When children do not maintain use of their home language, there can be long term effects on the child’s development and his or her connection to family and community.

Supporting children’s home language(s) in the ECE setting means valuing the diversity that DLLs bring to the program, recognizing families as the child’s first teacher, encouraging home language use at home, allowing families to participate in the child’s educational setting in meaningful ways, and providing positive messages around dual language learning.



HOW PROGRAM LEADERS SUPPORT HOME LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: Reflections by Massachusetts ECE Practitioners and Administrators

“We try to dismantle the notion that using a home language is a deficit. We work with staff to express that the home language is instrumental in acquiring another language. A big part of the identity of children and families is their home language.”
~Robin Meade, HCS Head Start

“When new families first enroll at Acorn, they receive a one hour orientation with the director or assistant to go over the center’s policies and procedures. They also fill out the developmental history and a detailed language survey. This gives program administrators and teaching staff a better understanding of how parents and other family members use language at home, address possible language or developmental concerns, and identify language goals for their children.” ~Kathy Cheng, Acorn Center for Early Education and Care

“We look at the demographics of our community and try to recruit bilingual staff to fill some positions that will help us to accomplish our goals. We have bilingual receptionists, a family service worker, bus aide, and enrollment person who speak various languages. They are resources for us and are not afraid to jump their job descriptions to lend a hand.” ~Anne Leister, Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center

“We will hold a position open until we find a Chinese- speaking teacher... We don’t call the teachers ‘lead teacher’ and ‘assistant teacher.’ The Chinese-speaking teacher has an important role – to provide information about the culture. That means that the English speaking teacher needs to be a listener and understand that the Chinese teacher has a lot to teach.” ~Bernadette Davidson, Acorn Center for Early Education and Care

“For me, as the English speaker, of course the families will come to me first and say, ‘I want my child to learn English’...or they’ll notice another child acquiring English at a rapid rate, and I’ll say to them ‘Don’t worry. It will come. For some children it takes more time.’ “Don’t worry. Please use your first language. Build a foundation for them to learn the second language.” Co-Teachers Harriet Robinson and Kitty Cai, Acorn Center for Early Education and Care

Language Policy

One of the most important steps for any ECE program is to collectively decide on explicit language goals, develop a shared belief system and vision around language development and the assets DLLs and their families bring, and come to consensus program-wide on the desired outcomes. A well-articulated language policy with these elements can be used to guide decisions. Your policy might include answers to questions such as: Which language will be spoken by whom, when, and for how long? How will your program support home language development while children develop English? What resources are available in your program and community? Will services and instruction be mostly provided in English? If so, how will practitioners provide language supports and scaffolding in English?

Questions for Reflection: Language Policies in Your Program

- What does your program believe about the contributions of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families in your program?
- How does your program demonstrate that you value bilingualism and biculturalism even if you don't speak all of the languages represented?
- What are the policies regarding language in your program? How will you communicate your policies with families?
- How will families communicate their practices around home language and culture with the practitioners? What opportunities will they be provided to share this?
- How are you intentionally planning for home language use and support?
- How does your program encourage families to use their home language when talking with children at home?

Language Supports

“The underlying principle for young DLLs is that they need additional scaffolds and supports to comprehend the meaning of the lesson, because they are simultaneously learning the new language while also learning the cognitive and conceptual content. Even when [practitioners] cannot instruct in the home languages of the children, they can still provide this scaffolding and support” (Espinosa, 2013). Effective practitioners constantly ask themselves, “What do I need to do to make what I am saying, reading, or singing more understandable to the children?” They use what they know about each individual child, the stages of language development, and the WIDA Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Performance Definitions to make decisions and plan for receptive and expressive language learning. Knowing the context and purposes in which oral language is used at home also allows practitioners to better understand how to incorporate those uses into instruction.

WIDA Early Years divides language supports into three categories: sensory, graphic, and interactive. **Sensory** supports allow children to use their senses to help them access language and learning. Sensory language supports can be incorporated throughout learning activities, during transitions, and throughout the environment. **Graphic** supports (e.g., charts or visual schedules) support transitions, remind children of behavioral expectations, and support their learning through play. **Interactive** supports focus on providing interactions with peers and/or adults to support language development.

Language Supports for DLLs, Ages 2.5-5.5 (WIDA, 2014)

Sensory Supports	Graphic Supports	Interactive Supports
Real life objects	Charts	In pairs with partners
Toys	Diagrams	In small groups
Manipulatives	Graphic organizers	In a large group
Pictures and photographs	Graphs	Using cooperative group structures
Illustrations and drawings	Number lines	With the Internet (websites) or software programs
Magazines	Visual schedules	In the home language
Videos and films	Icons/symbols	With adult prompting/modeling
Demonstrations		
Gestures		
Models		
Music		
Costumes and props		

Language supports can and should be combined to meet children's language needs

HOW PROGRAM LEADERS SUPPORT STAFF IN PROMOTING BEST PRACTICE: Reflections by Massachusetts ECE Practitioners and Administrators

"One of the biggest things is to listen to staff about what their needs are...We've learned to have a bank of resources that we can call on. Sometimes this means printed and training materials in other languages, paying for a translator, or an interpretation by phone. We allow staff to accompany home visitors who are bilingual. This can help to enhance the relationship that is being built in the home. We have families that do not speak English as their primary language on our policy council. They give us feedback about how supported they feel and what their needs are." ~Anne Leister, Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center

"We believe that teachers need access to a college education. We get funding to provide career counseling (for example, where the schools are, how to get scholarships and books, how to get into school). Periodically we get funding to put a sub in the classroom to do mentoring. Mentoring is a big part of our program. Watching a mentor to try to learn how to do something is important. It is working with a peer and very different than working with a supervisor. We've taken both Chinese- and English-speaking teachers and worked with Wheelock College to provide a mentoring course. We have four professional development days. We do a lot of work to get grants to provide whole-school professional development around an area (e.g., math and science). ~Bernadette Davidson, Acorn Center for Early Education and Care

"We offer various trainings so our staff can learn about current research. Those who attend bring the training back to other teachers. We try to incorporate information about DLLs into all of the trainings we do."
~Robin Meade, HCS Head Start

"Close, frequent communication between team members is critical to ensure appropriate programming and service delivery. I help teachers use WIDA model performance indicators (MPIs) to plan their lessons. They are writing MPIs in Spanish and English."
~Hali Castleman, Lawrence Family Development Charter School

What do language supports look like in action in high-quality ECE settings?

Here are examples from four Massachusetts programs. The language supports observed in each interaction are highlighted with bold text.

Acorn Center for Early Education and Care at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (4-5 year olds)

It's choice time in the Dragon room. Four young boys have added their names to the Block Area **chart** and are selecting materials from the shelves. The teachers have **labeled** both the chart and the shelves in English and Chinese. This shows respect for the languages represented in the classroom while also providing literacy support.

One of the boys, Hao, begins a play scenario about a house fire. He invites classroom **volunteer** John to join him. John sits on the floor to **actively engage** with Hao. They work together to problem-solve how to save the people in the house. John intentionally **provides language** as Hao tests his idea to use a block as a ladder. "Can we use this one to slide down?...Does it fit? Uh-oh. It's too big...Do we have a flat block?" he asks, adding a **gesture**. "That one is smaller and skinnier..." John often **repeats** what he hears Hao say, **adding new words or concepts** when appropriate (e.g., "unstable" as another word for "falls down easy"). Hao yells into the building, "The fire's coming!" to warn the toy people. Finally, after much conversation, he and John come up with a solution to the problem: The people will ride out of the burning building on a donkey!

In addition to the variety of language supports above, the Dragon room teachers have also made **pictures, symbols, and books** available in the block center to support language and concept development and help children **connect to existing knowledge**.

Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center, Quincy, MA (2.5-3 year olds)

It's time for **music** and movement! The children and teachers are gathered in a circle. "Would you like green or orange?" Mariel asks, offering a child **two choices** of bells. With bells jingling around the circle, she begins group time. "OK, let's **practice!**" she says. Her teaching partner, Lizzie, provides an **auditory support**, a few familiar notes on the guitar to help the children identify the first song. They **model** the movements for the first verse (bells high in the air), and how the movements will "stop" (bells down on the floor). The children follow their lead throughout the song, using **gestures** to represent driving a firetruck, climbing a ladder, and squirting water from a hose. The children chatter with excitement. After this initial song, each child takes a turn choosing the next song to sing. They choose from a choice of **picture cards** which the teachers provide as **visual cues**. Mariel and Lizzie support the songs and fingerplays with **sign language, props, and/or words in the children's home languages**. The circle time routine closes the same way each day, with the goodbye song. The children and teachers sing "goodbye" to each member of the group, calling them by name and wishing them well until next time—a great way to build community among a diverse group of learners!

Acorn Center for Early Education and Care at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (2.9-3.7 year olds)

The dramatic play area in the Dolphin room is filled with **replicas** of food from all over the world. This shows respect for a variety of cultures. **Real objects** and replicas also provide the **concrete play experiences** that young children need to support their language development and development in all domains.

Ms. Harriet has joined the dramatic play area, and four young girls are “cooking” for her. Although the girls are DLLs, Ms. Harriet speaks clearly, succinctly, and at a natural pace. She **labels** many of the foods they present to her. “What am I eating? Hmm...I think it’s fish...and eggs... a spring roll...so many different foods to eat! What should I feed the baby?”

Meili talks about turnips, one of her favorite foods. “Do you remember the story we read about turnips?” asks Ms. Harriet, connecting the language to Meili’s **real life experience**. “You like turnips!” Ms. Harriet comments. When May struggles a bit to say, “I like butter,” Ms. Harriet replies, “I like butter, too!” She then provides an **orally modeled sentence structure** for the girls that they use to continue their conversation about the foods: I like _____. “I like cream cheese.” “I like bread.” When they encounter a food in the basket that they can’t identify (sushi), Ms. Harriet calls upon her co-teacher, Ms. Kitty, who joins the conversation as an interpreter in the **home language**. Ms. Harriet confides to Miss Kitty and the girls that she likes a lot of foods – but sushi is not her favorite!



“We must understand the ways in which our DLLs use language in order to understand their experiences and in turn understand where we must scaffold in the classroom.”

~Hali Castleman, Lawrence Family Development Charter School, Lawrence, MA



Rosemary and Archie Wahlberg Head Start Early Learning Center, Quincy, MA (3-5 year olds)

The walls are uncluttered in Mr. Chris and Ms. Kathy’s preschool classroom. Only essential items that support children’s learning hang there. Ms. Kathy refers the children to the **visual schedule**, noting that breakfast is over and it is now **book** time. Mr. Chris sits on the rug with a non-fiction book and immediately has six children clinging to him. Mr. Chris and Ms. Kathy apply best practice when it comes to reading with DLLs:

- Keep it short.
- Read in **small groups** when possible.
- Choose books carefully.
- **Talk** through the book or story, rather than reading it.
- Read the book **multiple times** throughout the week.
- Provide commercial and homemade books in **multiple languages**.
- **Expand the ideas** in the book to other centers in the classroom.
- Support **peer interactions** as children “read” to each other.
- Ask **questions** to expand children’s understanding.
- Provide **definitions** for complicated words, using terms the children can understand.

“What do you think that says?” Mr. Chris asks, allowing **wait time** for children to think about their responses. “Science! That says science! What’s Science?” The children look at the **photos** and begin to name things they see, representing various areas of science. Mr. Chris affirms their answers by **repeating** the words. He also uses language to **extend their knowledge**. “Woah! That’s a fish that kind of looks like an alligator. (Reading) This armored fish may have been the ancestor of amphibians who first left the sea to live on the land. Do you know what an amphibian is?” Mr. Chris keeps the cognitive level high while providing opportunities for children to hear and use developmentally appropriate academic language.

WIDA Focus on Early Years Programs: Supporting Dual Language Learners

Practitioners in high-quality ECE settings intentionally use supports to scaffold and extend DLLs' language development. They focus on the quality, quantity, and consistency of the language used (in both the child's home language and English) and ensure that any nonverbal language and messages in the environment are respectful of children and families. They also value and utilize what they know about each child's culture, development, and personality to intentionally plan for inclusion and language learning. These efforts are augmented through the consistent support of a knowledgeable and dedicated administrator who establishes systems and collaborates with practitioners, families, and the community.

Questions for Reflection: Partnering with Families of DLLs

- What are your personal beliefs about the contributions of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families in your program?
- Does your environment include visuals, books, artifacts, toys, and recordings that represent the languages, cultures, and family practices of the children in the program?
- Are you aware of your nonverbal communication and any covert messages you may be sending to children and/or families?
- Are your gestures and expressions friendly to a variety of cultures? Is your nonverbal language consistent?
- Do all families understand the verbal and written messages you share? How do you know?
- Do the social activities within your program imitate those of the families? If they differ, how does your staff welcome the families into the environment?
- Does your program's culture reflect the surrounding community?
- Does your program's geographical location offer equal opportunities for all families to participate?

Questions for Reflection: Language Policies in Your Program

- What does your program believe about the contributions of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families in your program?
- How does your program demonstrate that you value bilingualism and biculturalism even if you don't speak all of the languages represented?
- What are the policies regarding language in your program? How will you communicate your policies with families?
- How will families communicate their practices around home language and culture with the practitioners? What opportunities will they have to provide this?
- How are you intentionally planning for home language use and support?
- How does your program encourage families to use their home language when talking with children at home?
- Does your language policy include hiring staff members with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and providing professional development around dual language development?

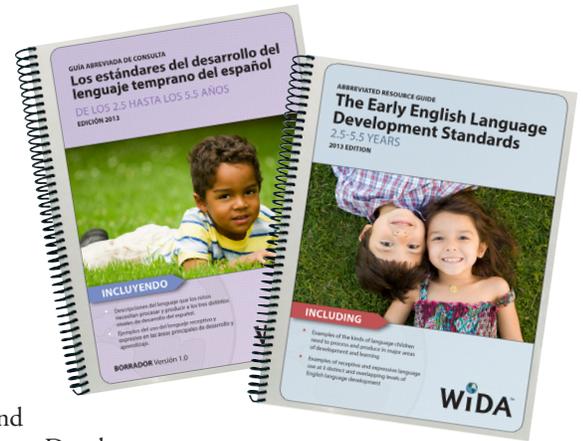
Questions for Reflection: Language Supports

- Is your nonverbal language consistent, obvious to children, and positive?
- How do you scaffold language with supports such as visuals, tools, or home language?
- How do you intentionally scaffold for language with verbal use of language (e.g., used of tiered questions or simplifying narrative)?
- Do you regularly use your state Early Learning Standards (ELS) and the WIDA Early English Language Development (E-ELD) standards to plan for language supports and instruction? If working in a Head Start, do you also use the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework?

About WIDA Early Years

The mission of WIDA is to advance academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse children and students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, resources, and professional development for educators.

WIDA recognizes that the educational resources and services developed to support K-12 practitioners are different than those needed to support birth to five settings. Therefore, WIDA is pleased to introduce a comprehensive set of resources and services designed to promote the educational equity of young DLLs, ages 2.5-5.5 years. These resources and services focus on building state and local capacity around early language development through state-level planning and evaluation, professional learning, technical assistance, and family engagement. WIDA Early Years also offers Early English and Early Spanish Language Development Standards, which correspond to states' Early Learning Standards (ELS), the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and the WIDA English Language Development Standards for Kindergarten through Grade 12. Although ELS include language development standards, WIDA Early Language Development Standards describe the language young DLLs need to process and produce within all areas of learning and development within ELS.



WIDA Early Years is currently developing a suite of assessment tools to help practitioners understand, support and monitor progress in language development over time. The tools are designed to be used within a variety of ECE settings, and can be easily incorporated into existing routines and learning activities. In addition, the assessment tools are designed to gather information regarding the language(s) DLLs have routinely heard and used in their primary environments, both past and present.

Program Leadership Coaching is also in development. This program builds the capacity of trainers to become coaches for ECE program leaders through an ongoing coaching model and continuous improvement cycle. Designed for sustainability, Program Leadership Coaching develops the coaches' skills to assist ECE leaders in making informed decisions related to instructional and programmatic improvements for DLLs and their families. Program Leadership Coaching consists of in-person and technology-based learning, interactive opportunities, and technical assistance, extended over twelve months.

Please watch for upcoming Focus Bulletins and visit the WIDA Early Years website for more information about initiatives that support DLLs: www.wida.us/EarlyYears or contact the Early Years team at EarlyYears@wida.us

Learning Language Every Day! An Activity Calendar for Children Ages 2.5-5.5 Years and Their Families

will be available for purchase in May! This large 2015-16 wall calendar is designed to support home language development and learning at home. It features full-color, child-friendly illustrations, suggested word lists, connections to Kindergarten expectations, and cut-out activity cards with developmentally-appropriate language-based activities.

A two-page calendar guide for practitioners accompanies each classroom set of calendars. This guide provides tips, resource suggestions, additional language-based activities, and information about home language development.

The calendar and guide will be available in six languages: English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

Order calendars for the families in your program at www.wceps.org/store/wida.





Wisconsin Center for
Education Research
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1025 West Johnson St., MD #23
Madison, WI 53706

Client Services Center toll free:
866.276.7735
help@wida.us
www.wida.us

STAFF

Judy Ballweg
WIDA Early Years Educator
Resources Project Manager

Julia Cortada
WIDA Educator Resource Developer

Editors:
Andrea Cammilleri
Assistant Director
Teaching and Learning
Rebecca Holmes, Editor

Design:
Janet Trembley
Wisconsin Center for
Education Research

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the staff in the
Massachusetts Early Education and
Care programs who graciously
shared their experiences and
expertise with us for this Focus
Bulletin:

Acorn Center for Early
Education and Care
Holyoke Chicopee Springfield
(HCS) Head Start
Lawrence Family Development
Charter School
Rosemary and Archie
Wahlberg Head Start Early
Learning Center

References and Further Reading

- Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age eight*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Castro, D., Ayankoya, B., & Kasprzak, C. (2011). *New voices, nuevas voces: Guide to cultural and linguistic diversity in early childhood*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Castro, D., Franco, X., & Gillanders, C. (2014). Learning words for life: Promoting vocabulary in dual language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 68(3), 213–221.
- Chumak-Horbatsch, R. (2012). *Linguistically appropriate practice: A guide for working with young immigrant children*. University of Toronto Press.
- Derman-Sparks, L. & Edwards, J. O. (2010). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Espinosa, L. (2013). *Early education for dual language learners*. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/early-education-dual-language-learners-promoting-school-readiness-and-early-school-success>
- Espinosa, L. (2010). *Getting it right for young children from diverse backgrounds*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Grady, M., & Kostelnik, M. (2009). *Getting it right from the start: The principal's guide to early childhood education*. National Association of Elementary School Principals/Corwin.
- NAEYC. (2009). *Where we stand on responding to linguistic and cultural diversity*. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/diversity.pdf>
- Nemeth, K. (2009). *Many languages, one classroom*. Silver Spring, MD: Gryphon House.
- Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC). *Program preparedness checklist: A tool to assist Head Start and Early Head Start programs to assess their systems and services for dual language learners and their families*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/cultural-linguistic/ProgramPreparedn.htm>
- Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC). *Strategies for supporting all dual language learners*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/dll-strategies.pdf>
- Passe, A. (2013). *Dual-language learners birth to grade 3: Strategies for teaching English*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf.
- Tabors, P. (2008). *One child, two languages: A guide for early childhood educators of children learning English as a second language*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- WIDA. (2013). *The early English language development standards*. Board of Regents at the University of Wisconsin System. Retrieved from www.wida.us/EarlyYears
- WIDA. (2014). *Focus on the early years: Dual language learners*. Board of Regents at the University of Wisconsin System. Retrieved from <https://www.wida.us/professionalDev/educatorResources/focus.aspx>
- WIDA. (2014). *The WIDA Can Do Philosophy*. Board of Regents at the University of Wisconsin System. Retrieved from www.wida.us/aboutUs/AcademicLanguage/
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners. (2013). *Serving dual language learners: Facts and tips*. Retrieved from www.collaboratingpartners.com/dual-language-learners-facts-and-tips.php