

Supporting Language and Literacy Outcomes for Young Dual Language Learners



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Language (any language) is the Foundation for Literacy....and Literacy is Key



Strong Reading Skills (in English) are Essential for Academic Success in U.S!!!

*How do we accomplish
this goal when children
already have a
language that is not
English?*



Young Dual Language Population is Diverse and Growing

- More than 30% of all children in Head Start are Dual Language Learners (OHS, 2009)
 - More than 140 different languages in Head Start; more than 400 languages in U.S.
 - Spanish is most common home language (~80%)
 - Less than 16% of programs do not serve DLL
- In California 42% of all kindergarten children identified as DLL (2008)
 - In LAUSD 59% of all K children identified as EL
 - More than 80 different languages spoken in LAUSD

Dual Language Learners are “At Risk” for Low Levels Academic Achievement

- NAEP scores at 4th grade
- State achievement data
- California example

Reading Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity and Family Income (NAEP)

TABLE 1

Percent of 4th graders scoring below proficient and below basic on NAEP reading test, by family income and race/ethnicity: 2009

RACE/ETHNICITY ¹	BELOW PROFICIENT			BELOW BASIC		
	ALL STUDENTS	LOW-INCOME STUDENTS ²	MODERATE- AND HIGH-INCOME STUDENTS	ALL STUDENTS	LOW-INCOME STUDENTS ²	MODERATE- AND HIGH-INCOME STUDENTS
Total	67	83	55	33	49	20
White	58	76	52	22	38	17
Black	84	89	74	52	58	38
Hispanic	83	87	72	51	56	36
Asian/Pacific Islander	51	70	43	20	35	14
American Indian	80	85	69	50	59	34

¹ Categories exclude Hispanic origin. Results are not shown for students whose race/ethnicity was unclassified.

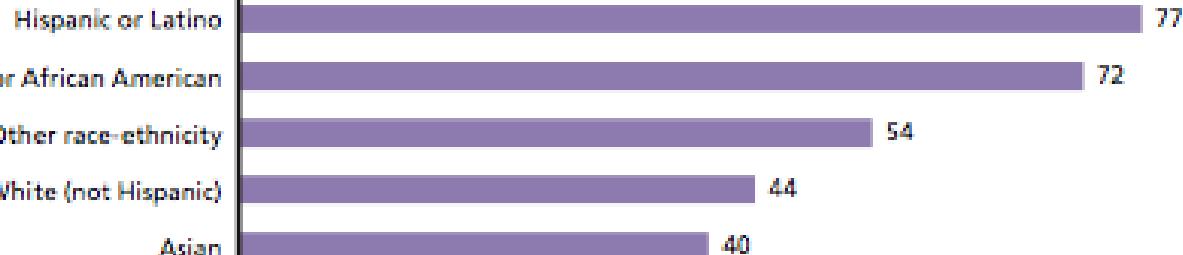
² Family income is measured using students' eligibility for the National School Lunch Program, a federally assisted meal program, sometimes referred to as the free/reduced-price lunch program. Free or reduced-price lunches are offered to students with incomes below 185% of the poverty level.

SOURCE Annie E. Casey Foundation analysis of data from the NAEP Data Explorer, available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>

Figure 2

Different Groups of Students Miss Achieving Proficiency by Widely Varying Amounts

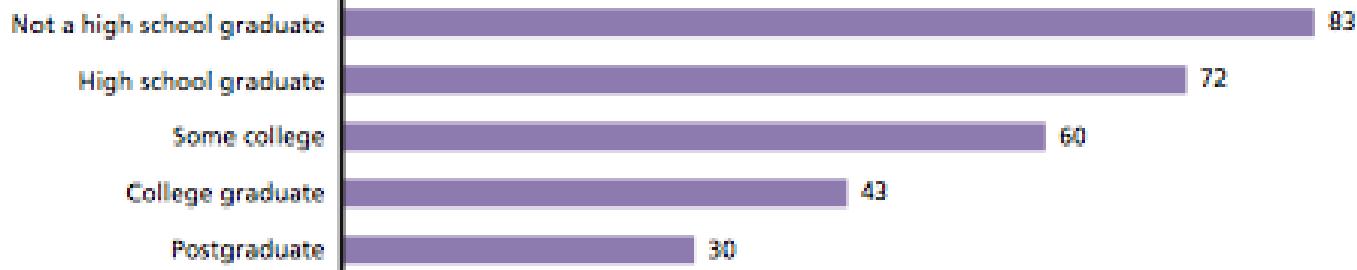
By Race-Ethnicity



By English-Language Fluency



By Parent Education



By Economic Status

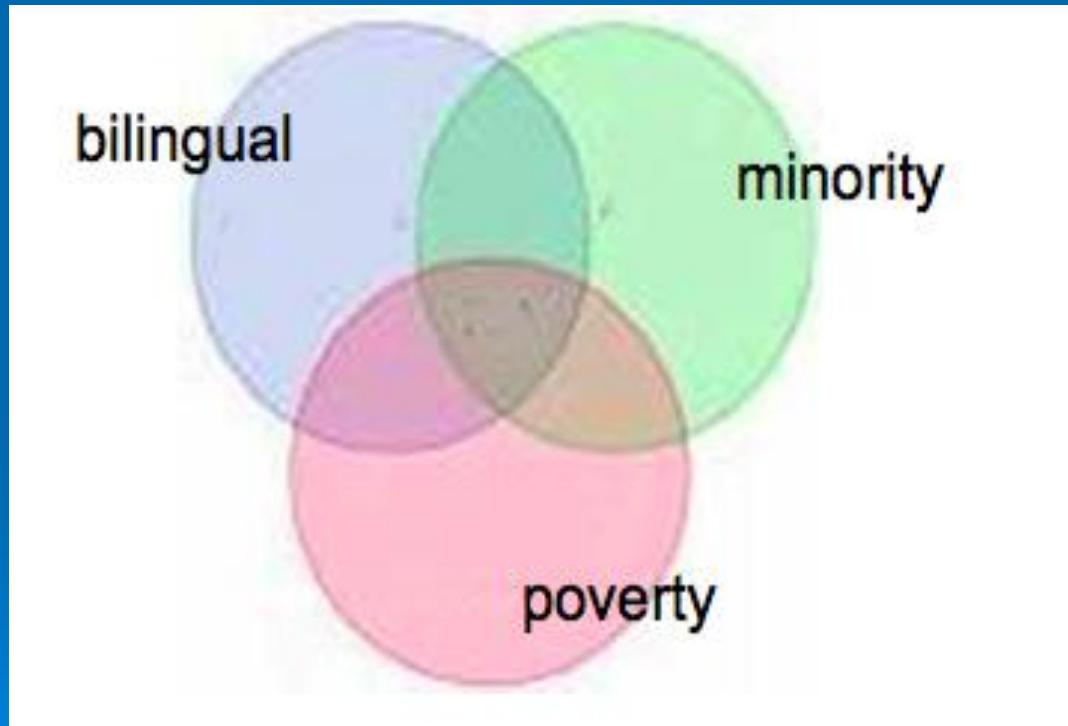


0 20 40 60 80 100
Percentage of third-grade students not proficient in English-language arts

SOURCE: Authors' calculations using 2007 California Standards Test data.

The Road to School Success for Dual Language Learners Begins with Knowledge about DLL Development

How Much of Achievement is Due to Language Status (DLL) vs Poverty vs Limited Learning Opportunities??



***Outcomes Related to Both Which
Language is Spoken in Home
and SES Level of Family
(ECLS-K data disaggregated by
language and SES)***

Having a second language is sometimes linked to higher achievement in English...ECLS-K data analysis.

Espinosa, et al., 2007

The combination of living in poverty and having limited access to early education increases the vulnerability of young DLLs to negative outcomes.

Castro, Espinosa, & Paez, (2011)

“Unfortunately, a comprehensive English Language Development (ELD) program which would facilitate English language acquisition for ELLS has never been articulated and evaluated. Present federal and state policies have had negligible effects in overcoming the ELL achievement gap, as shown by several recent studies....” (Garcia, 2010).

How Can Science/Research Guide Our Policies and Practices for Dual Language Learners?

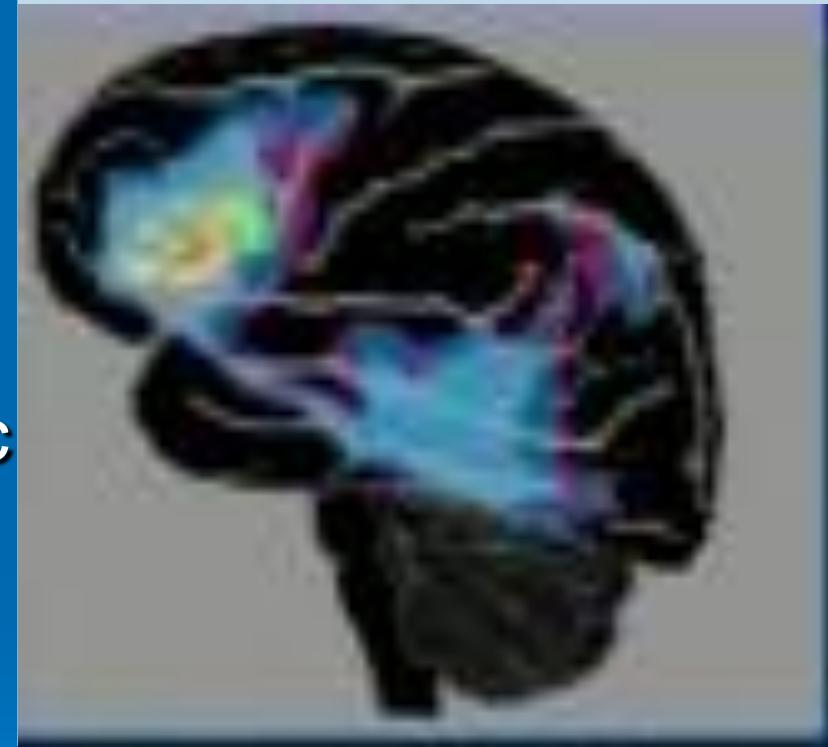
How persuasive is the research base?

Research for PreK DLL Children

- Recent Area of Concern: NCLB, Demographics, Impact of Preschool
- Few rigorous studies (recent research syntheses, metaanalyses)
- Measurement Issues
- Debate on Goals & Terms
- Must consider research from many disciplines
- Exciting New Infant Research
- Most reach similar conclusions
 - Great new research coming soon!!

At birth: ALL infants have the innate capacity to learn more than 1 language: human brains are hard-wired to learn language

- Can perceive all phonemes whether or not important in native language; Two linguistic systems develop; By 9-12 month “phonemic pruning” has occurred



- Language Specific Mapping during first year of life (NLNC)

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Children of Spanish-Speaking Immigrants Also Show Strengths

- More likely to have two parents and extended families
- Committed to school and have college aspirations
- Language Abilities (just not English!)
- Social-emotional competencies

Conclusions of “Best” Scientific Studies

- Using child's primary language or L1 promotes achievement in English, L2 (.2-.6 standard deviation in test performance)
- During early childhood years language development in home language AND English language development



Implications

- ALL young children *can* become bilingual
- Cognitive, Academic Benefits:
 - Metalinguistic
 - Enhanced prefrontal cortex development (attention)
 - Cultural competence
 - Identity and family connections
 - Financial, Professional, Global



**Input and Exposure
(Amount & Quality)
is Critical !!!**

How Do We Support Both Home Language Development AND English Language Development?

- First--- Good Early Childhood Practices Help Dual Language Learners:
 - Use rich language in extended interactions
 - Build on children's background knowledge & interest
 - Build deep understandings of vocabulary and language by embedding in meaningful interactions connected to what child knows and opportunities to use across multiple contexts
 - Find out what children know about concepts and words in any language and use to bridge into English

Implications for ECE Practices

➤ Good ECE Practices:

- Emotionally accepting and warm climate
- Incorporate culturally responsive strategies and materials
- Balance of direct instruction and child-initiated learning
- Opportunities for personalized instruction thru small groups and individualized lessons
- Peer learning opportunities

High Quality Early Childhood Practices Benefit Dual Language Learners, But are Not Enough!

QuickTime™ and a
Motion JPEG OpenDML decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Basic Program Features for Young Dual Language Learners

- Use of home language: ideally at least 50% of time (dual language models); English at least 25%
- Build on child's knowledge, interest concepts in home language
- Focus on relationship between two languages and on “transfer”

Additional Features

Focus on vocabulary, texts, and books

- Children as authors: seeing self in books
- Talking about books
- Meaningful and active engagement with books and writing
- Acting out and re-telling story narratives

Strong Parent Partnerships

Two-way relationships: family presence in classroom and extension of school goals in home

LAUSD Transitional Kindergarten Family Languages and Interests Survey

Today's Date: _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

CHILD'S NAME (first, middle, last): _____

Gender: Boy Girl Child's Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

1. Who are the members of your family? _____
2. How many family members live with you and child? _____
3. Who is the primary caregiver of your child? _____
4. What language does the primary caregiver speak most often with child? _____
5. What language did your child learn when he or she first began to talk? _____
6. Does anyone in your home speak an indigenous language? Yes No Identify: _____
7. Can you tell me what language(s) each of the following people in your household speak to your child?

	Only English	Mostly English, some other language (identify)	Mostly other language (identify), some English	Only other language (identify)
Mother (or you)				
Father (or you)				
Older siblings				
Grandmother				
Grandfather				
Aunt/Uncle				
Others, after school, community members				

8. What special talents or interests does your child have?

9. Who does your child play with most often?

10. What are your aspirations for your child?

11. What are your expectations for the Transitional Kindergarten year?

12. Do you have any hobbies or interests that you would like to share with your child's class?

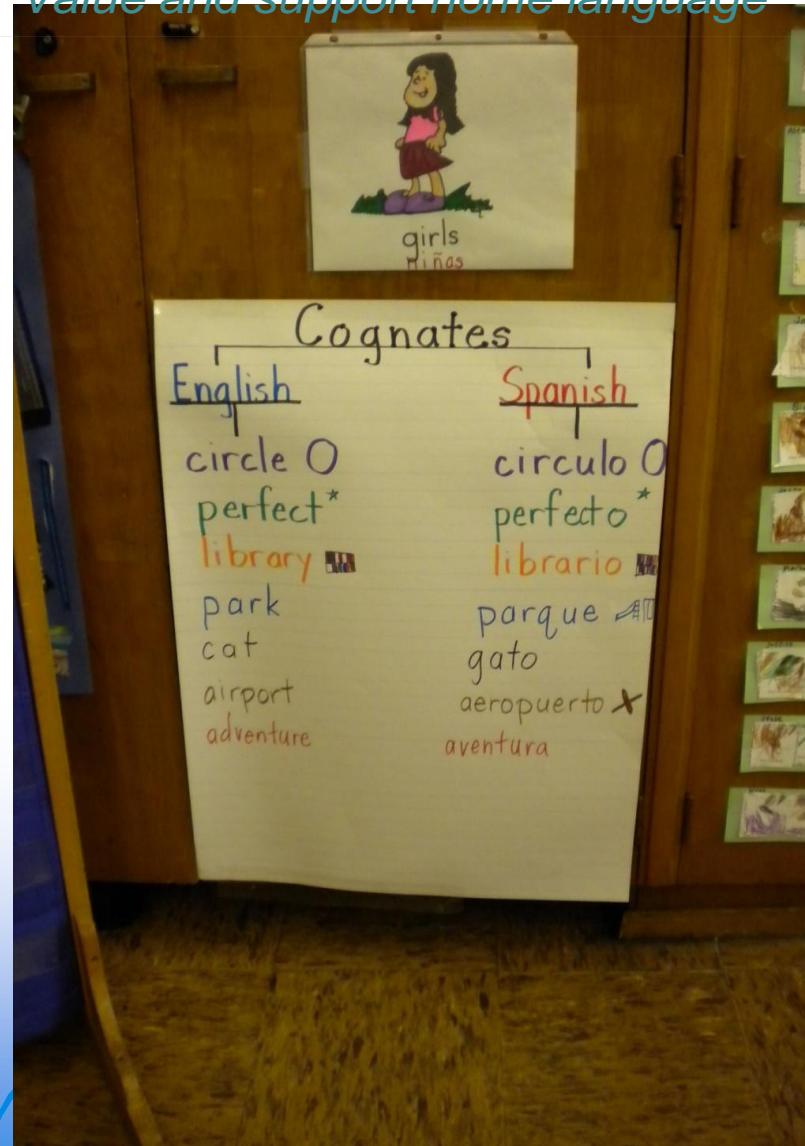
13. Would you be interested in volunteering in your child's class?
If yes, preferred day and time _____

Summary of Specific Strategies for Literacy for DLLs

- Pre-read text in home language
- Identify key words and build vocabulary systematically--skilled story book reading
- Use multi-sensory materials to build understanding of text (puppets, flannel boards, etc.)
- Use interactive reading methods (dialogic)
- Adapt expectations according to stage of L2 acquisition--use small group format!
- Provide opportunities for application & practice of new vocabulary
 - Castro, Espinosa, & Paez, (2010)

Environmental Supports

Value and support home language



“The conclusions of multiple research syntheses is that young DLLs need a combination of interactive and direct instruction approaches with direct instruction on word-level and text decoding skills embedded within interactive learning environments that are meaningful and contextualized to the students’ backgrounds.”

(Espinosa, 2011)

Programs Need To

- Develop explicit program goals for language development that can be monitored
- Design Individualized Language Plans for dual language learners that address progress in both languages and incorporate family, school, community resources
- Ensure maintenance of home language

We Need to....

- Operationalize our terms and offer concrete guidance for teachers, e.g., *California Preschool Curriculum Framework for English Language Development (2010)*
- Provide guidance on how to “*bridge*” from home language to English, how to use existing vocabulary (*por favor*)...to build English (*please*)
- Develop explicit activities that promote *oral language* goals...in both languages; select high priority vocabulary words

Resources for DLL Instructors and Supervisors

- Espinosa, L. (2010). *Getting it RIGHT for Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds: Applying Research to Improve Practice.* Pearson
- Genesee, F., Paradis, J., & Crago, M. (2004; 2010). *Dual Language Development and Disorders.* Brookes Publishing.
- Tabors, P. (2008 2nd Edition) *One Child, Two Languages :A Guide for Early Childhood Educators of Children Learning English as a Second Language.* Brookes Publishing.
- California Department of Education. (2007). *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning* Author.
3/15/2012

Conclusion

While the research on “best practices” for young Dual language learners is not as robust as we would like, it can offer specific, concrete approaches that will help improve outcomes. We know enough now to do better!

Thank You !!!

