

Dual Language Learners & Home Language Procedure 0-5

Policy/Approach

Our approach to children's language acquisition is developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles. We provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition. Children develop best if they have continued opportunities for learning in their home language as well as developing skills in English. Communication with children and families will be in the family's primary or preferred language, through bilingual staff or interpreters, who understand and support each family's home culture.

Head Start Program Performance Standards:

1302.31(b)(2) Education and Child Development Program Services.

1302.33(c) Characteristics of screenings and assessments

1302.35(c)(4) Research-Based strategies and activities for children who are dual language learners that recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths.

1302.51(a)(1)(3) Parent activities to promote child learning and development.

1302.90(d) Communication with dual language learners and their families

1302.101(b)(2) Program Management and Quality Improvement.

Procedure:

Early Head Start and Head Start provides an ongoing coordinated approach to support continued development of each child's home language using the Planned Language Approach. This includes:

- 0-5 Assessment and Screening: Screening for children is completed in their home language with tools that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, ongoing, and completed by a person who speaks that language. Language neutral / language free assessment for cognitive, social-emotional and physical development is completed. Children's language development is assessed in their home language, as well as their English language acquisition (3 years and up).
- Early Head Start: For an infant or toddler dual-language learners; home visits, classrooms and socializations will include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language when there is a teacher with appropriate

language competency. Experiences are provided that expose the child to English.

- Head Start children will have a larger focus on language acquisition.
- Home visits and Conferences: Home Visits and other communications are conducted in the children and families' primary or preferred language and / or through an interpreter. Family conference forms include information on children's strengths in Spanish language and literacy as well as the acquisition of English. Individual goals for children who are DLL's include steps for maintaining home language at home and school.
- **Materials:** Written materials are translated into the family's home language. Classrooms are labeled in the primary languages of children in the class, including various postings and materials to reflect the current cultures, (e.g. books, alphabets, toys, artifacts, instruments, songs, etc.). **English: black ink; Spanish: blue ink; and other languages: green ink.** Activities are adapted to meet the needs of children who are DLL's (e.g. visual, picture schedule, etc.)
- Teaching principles: Each child and family's unique culture and ethnic background is supported, free of stereotypes or assumptions. Classroom staff members include qualified native speakers when possible. All classroom and home visiting staff will be trained and have an understanding that language learning happens when children have opportunity to hear and respond to language, are involved in back-and-forth conversations, are interested, and hear different words in meaningful ways. Staff will focus on research-based principals of promoting the "**Big 5**" which will lead to later school success:
 1. **Background Knowledge**
 2. **Oral Language and Vocabulary**
 3. **Book Knowledge and Print**
 4. **Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing**
 5. **Phonological Awareness**
- Parent Education: Teachers and Family Advocates promote and teach families about the importance of maintaining the home language for their child. Families will be informed of all procedures to support DLL in the classrooms.