

Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English



Promising Futures

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

The Study



- Committee on Fostering School Success for English Learners of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
- A deep dive into the research literature, analyzing and making sense of information from many sources
- The report, from which I draw highlights focused on birth to eight years, is available in pdf format at no cost, from National Academies Press (www.nap.edu).

The Committee's Charge: Statement of Task



➤ Birth to Age 8 Focus

Explore the foundational elements of language development, developmental progress, school entry, and practices for early school success for young children who are Dual Language Learners.

➤ K-12 Focus

Examine structural factors and instructional practices, including dual language approaches, that can help ELs master grade-level content, as well as more demanding English language proficiency standards.

What Does The Report Address?



Children and adolescents, birth to age 21 (Grade 12), who are DLLs/ELs

- Demographics
- Language development
- Evolution of federal policy (1960s-2016)
- Factors that support learning and educational success
- Specific populations: children with disabilities, gifted and talented, homeless, migrant, indigenous heritage language learners
- Assessment of English proficiency
- Workforce needs – Teachers, Administrators, Allied Educators
- Recommendations for school success
- **Research agenda**

Terminology



DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER (DLL)

The term used by U.S. Office of Head Start for children, birth to age 5, learning two or more languages at the same time, as well as those who are learning a second language while continuing to develop their home language

ENGLISH LEARNER (EL)

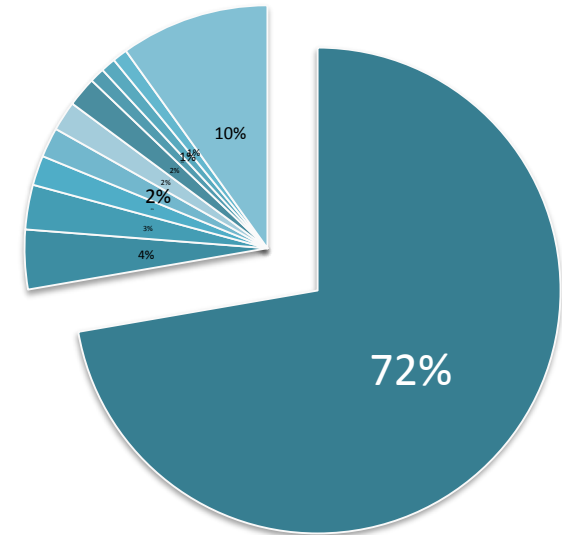
The term used in Federal legislation (ESEA, ESSA) for children, ages 3 through 21, enrolled in the U.S. school system, whose primary language is other than English and whose English proficiency level is not sufficient to allow them to achieve in classrooms where English is the language of instruction

Who are DLLs/ELLs?



- The majority are U.S. born:
 - ◆ 90% of 5-year-olds
 - ◆ 50% of 18-year-olds.
- 72% speak Spanish

- Spanish 72%
- Chinese 4%
- Vietnamese 3%
- French 2%
- Hindi & related 2%
- German 1%
- Korean 1%
- Arabic 1%
- Pilipino/Tagalog 1%
- Yiddish 1%
- Others 10%



What I Will Highlight



- Focus will be on birth to eight years, and on the critical connections that should be made between PreK/early education programs and the primary grades, PreK/early education-Grades 5/6 (Chapter 7 of the report)
- Issues in the report, which will not be covered by today's presentations

Challenges in Successfully Educating DLLs and ELs



- Diversity of DLLs and ELs in U.S.: SRCED Social Policy Report
- Poverty, parental education levels, immigration status and history of families, socio-political factors in communities, policy environment at state and federal levels
- Availability of programs and preparation of teachers to support and instruct DLLs/ELs in schools
- Lack of efforts to connect and align early education with primary (K-5/6 grades) education

Key Message of Report



All children have the capacity to learn 2+ languages.

Bi- and multilingualism are assets for all children and their communities with individual and societal benefits.

Consequences and Benefits of Bilingualism



- Despite smaller vocabulary in each language initially
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- Comparable vocabulary when both languages considered, and eventual parity with monolinguals in vocabulary size
- Improved executive functioning skills
- Communicative competence
- Possible delay of onset of dementia/Alzheimer's
- Economic, socio-cultural and familial benefits

Effective Programs & Practices



For Young Children, birth to age 5

For Elementary School students, grades PreK-5

For Middle School students, grades 6-8

For High School students, grades 9-12

Goals of Early Learning Programs for DLLs



- Develop young children's dual language competencies in English and home language
- Build on home language as foundation for learning second language and for preservation of home language
- Support families to engage in activities that foster dual language development and literacy engagement

Family engagement has positive benefits on language proficiency, social skills, test scores, and higher education enrollment rates.

Promising Practices for Birth to Five Programs



- DLLs, like all children, benefit from developmentally and culturally appropriate, quality early learning programs.
- Not all teachers can teach in all languages, but all teachers can learn strategies to support children's home languages as they learn English.
- Family members should be supported in using the languages in which they feel most competent.
- Family outreach by ECE programs, schools, and staff is critical.

Connecting Early Learning Programs with K-12



- ESSA provides guidance for connecting early learning with K-12 for all children.
- Becoming English proficient and acquiring grade-level academic content takes time, several years depending on instruction and student, and therefore, occurs over the grades from PreK into primary grades.
- More attention should be directed to how primary grades (K-5) build on early learning programs and develop academic language required for educational success.
- Vertical alignment teams (between the grades, PreK on) should meet regularly to focus on continuity of learning.

CONNECTING CONTINUED



- Regular time for teachers to meet across grades to discuss developing and implementing a coherent curriculum for DLLs during a grade and across all the grades, PreK-Grade5/6
- Professional development time focused on classroom instructional alignment for all students
- Use of formative assessments to guide teaching and learning during the school year
- Use of summative assessments to monitor progress over the school years

Characteristics of Effective Schools and Classrooms

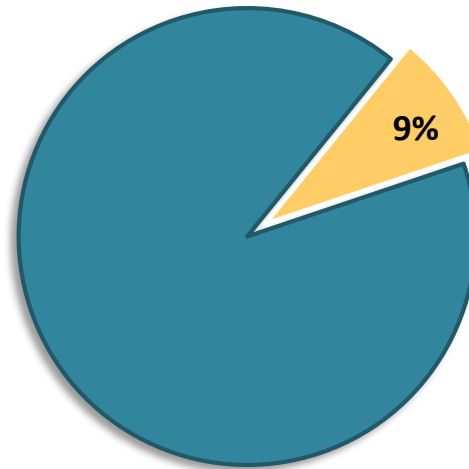


Promising Practices: PreK-5



- Key aspects of literacy taught explicitly
- Academic language developed through content area instruction
- Comprehension of core content supported by use of visual and verbal supports
- Peer-assisted learning opportunities implemented
- Structured small group academic support to process grade-level content utilized
- Home language, knowledge and cultural assets capitalized upon
- Screening for literacy challenges and progress monitored

DLLs/ELs with Disabilities



Identified as
having a disability

ELs: Disproportionately referred to and placed in special education.

- They are underrepresented at the national level (9% vs. 11%).
- Patterns of over- and underrepresentation at state and district levels and across disability categories.

DLLs/ELs With Disabilities



- Children do not get confused or overwhelmed by learning two languages.
- Code-switching is normal in all DLLs/ELs. It is not a sign of confusion.
- Learning two languages doesn't:
 - worsen or cause language-learning problems,
 - cause children, generally, to feel overwhelmed or overloaded,
 - reduce (but may increase) the chances of learning English.
- Parents should continue using their home languages with their children. When parents use the language in which they feel most competent, they provide the foundations for learning the second language.

American Indian Nations



- Recommendation 7: Local education agencies serving American Indian and Alaskan Native communities that are working to revitalize their indigenous heritage languages should take steps to ensure that schools' promotion of English literacy supports does not compete or interfere with those efforts.

Students' indigenous heritage languages are crucial to their social, cultural and emotional well-being and to the continuation of their communities' ways of life, just as English is crucial to their participation in the economic and political life of the larger society. Both languages are necessary for American Indian and Alaska Native youth to become productive members of their communities.

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Closing Remarks



This has been a brief overview of the highlights of the report. You can download a pdf of the summary, of chapters, or the entire report at the National Academies' website:

www.nas.edu/ELPromisingFutures

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