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**Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Toolkit
for English Learner Roadmap**

LEADING IMPLEMENTATION

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FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERIES OF CALIFORNIA ENGLISH LEARNER ROADMAP IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKITS FOR ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND COUNTY OFFICES OF EDUCATION, CONTACT:

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Californians Together is a statewide coalition of parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and civil rights organizations. Our member organizations come together united around the goal of better educating California's almost 1.1 million English learners by improving California's schools and promoting equitable educational policy.

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INTRODUCTION

California's Commitment to Early Learning and Dual Language Learners

In this third decade of the 21st century, California is on the cusp of exciting developments that signal a commitment to creating a system of early learning and care that centralizes the young dual language learners who now comprise the majority of young children in the state. Home to the nation's largest population of dual language learners (DLLs), these children now constitute 60% of all children under six in the state. A consistent, coherent body of research about dual language development and two major new state policies provide the framework for this work.

In 2017, the California State Board of Education unanimously adopted a visionary English Learner Roadmap policy that ended the previous "English Only" era and explicitly embraced preschool education as the foundational entry for effective education pathways to graduation and success for the state's dual language learners. Three years later, in 2020, the state adopted a historic Master Plan for Early Learning and Care to realize the vision of ensuring that all California children thrive physically, emotionally, and educationally in their early years through access to high-quality early learning and care resources and the development of an early learning workforce focused on advancing equitable outcomes for children explicitly calling out a commitment to Dual Language Learners. Together, these two policies define a new era for dual language learners' education and early learning — an era of great opportunity and high stakes.

California's commitment to the full participation, engagement, access, and academic success of dual language learners now begins when children enter our educational system. Universal Transitional Kindergarten for all four-year-olds—and the provision of early education services for three-year-olds who are income-eligible—represents a major expansion of the state's early learning system. California is poised to provide a solid foundation of quality early education to set all children on the pathway for later success.

For children who arrive in school with a language other than English, that quality early education must include:

> • *Constructing a robust response to them as dual language learners*
>
> • *Embracing their dual language identities*
>
> • *Supporting and leveraging their linguistic assets*
>
> • *Responding to the challenges of developing bilingually and learning in and through two languages.*

The CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

California Governor Gavin Newsom came into office committed to elevating the importance of early childhood learning and made fulfilling that promise a cornerstone of his administration. Early on, he declared:

> *"We will create a Master Plan for Early Learning and Care that will be rooted in lifting up California's children and families today, tomorrow, and into the future."*

A ten-year "Master Plan for Early Learning and Care" was drafted to overhaul early learning in the state and address what had been a complex and disjointed system with uneven quality and inequitable access. Created by experts and practitioners with public input, the Plan is organized into four goals: 1) Unify and strengthen programs and services to support children's learning and development; 2) Support children's learning and development by enhancing educator competencies, incentivizing, and funding career pathways, and implementing supportive program standards; 3) Unify funding to advance equity and opportunity; and 4) streamline early childhood governance and administration to improve equity.

Recognizing that the majority of young children in California are dual language learners, the Master Plan explicitly calls for the development of data systems to report language status, and the specialized training and development of the workforce to support the development of culturally and linguistically diverse young children. And —to eliminate bias—the Plan asks for updated early learning guidelines (e.g., learning foundations, curriculum frameworks, program guidance, etc.) to integrate and strengthen support for DLLs. The Master Plan for Early Learning and Care is a groundbreaking plan for reshaping our state's early learning system(s).

The two policies (CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the English Learner Roadmap) together serve as a potent umbrella for our state—underscoring a deep commitment to early childhood education, affirming the need to explicitly address the cultural and linguistic diversity of the majority of our state's young children.

The CA English Learner Roadmap Policy

Three years earlier, in 2017, a new CA English Learner Roadmap policy laid out a vision, mission, and set of four core Principles to guide programs, services, and practices statewide. When the California State Board of Education unanimously adopted the new English learner policy for the state's 1.1 million English learners (ELs), they responded to the definitive research about the importance of early education—writing a policy that broke with precedence to be a P-12 blueprint for the state. The preface to the policy reads:

> *"The new English learner policy explicitly focuses on English learners in the context of the state's efforts to improve the educational system, the quality of teaching and learning, and educational outcomes. It centers on standards, curriculum frameworks, assessment, accountability/school improvement, educator quality, early childhood/preschool, social and family support services, and parent/community involvement. Its purpose is to promote local capacity-building and continuous improvement in each of these areas and their interrelationship, based on evidence of effectiveness from local experience as well as the most current rigorous research evidence that speaks to the strengths and needs of the diverse population of English learners. The primary intended audiences are LEAs and the county offices of education, as well as other agencies that provide them with technical assistance. But every agency responsible for the education of children, including early childhood educators, institutions of higher education, credentialing bodies, and professional and advocacy organizations is also part of the intended audience. As a state whose prosperity depends on the success of immigrants and their children, we hope that each Californian can adopt this vision and our educational mission."*

It was a bold move to embrace the entire educational journey from preschool through graduation, made especially important because building coherence and alignment across those years is required in order for DLLs/ELs to receive the affirming, intellectually rich, and engaging, responsive instruction and meaningful access that will close historically persistent gaps and put them on the path towards graduation with the education they need to participate and thrive in a diverse 21st-century world. It was both a research-based decision and an equity commitment.

The P-12 EL Roadmap seeks to bridge what have been quite separate and disparate systems. The knitting together of the early education system and the K-12 system is still a relatively new emerging endeavor, necessitating reaching across differing governance and institutional structures, disparate histories, and pedagogical bases. The EL Roadmap faces the challenge of building understanding, creating a shared language, and developing approaches to implementation that are both aligned across 14 years of a child's education and are developmentally appropriate for the different stages of children's growth and authentically responsive to the various tasks and roles of schooling for different ages and grade levels of the students.

The two policies (CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the English Learner Roadmap) together serve as a potent umbrella for our state—underscoring a deep commitment to early childhood education, affirming the need to explicitly address the cultural and linguistic diversity of the majority of our state's young children, confirming our responsibility for meaningful access and equity, and calling for investments in building capacity and systems to deliver coherent and quality preschool/Transitional Kindergarten programs and services across our state.

PURPOSES OF THIS TOOLKIT

This Toolkit supports the implementation of the CA English Learner Roadmap policy as a framework to guide practice in preschools/TK across the state—enacting the commitments of the CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care to provide equitable access and quality care for dual language learners and utilizing the Principles of the CA English Learner Roadmap to guide practice. Realizing the commitments to research-based, evidence-based practices that underlie both the Master Plan and the Roadmap, this Toolkit also draws heavily upon the professional knowledge base in early childhood education and the dual language development fields.

CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (2020)

CA English Learner Roadmap Policy (2017)

• **Importance of early years with focus on Preschool/ Transitional Kindergarten**
• **Central focus on DLLs/ELs**
• **Bilingualism**
• **Home language and culture as assets**
• **Culturally/linguistically responsive practice**
• **Developmentally appropriate practice**
• **Access**
• **Investment in building capacity & workforce**
• **Family engagement**
• **System coherence**

• **Birth to age 5**

• **Mixed delivery system**

• **Preschool – HS graduation (ages 4– 18)**

• **Biliteracy as a goal**

• **Academic access standards-based**

This *Leading Implementation of the CA English Learner Roadmap in Early Childhood Education* is designed to support coherent, powerful, aligned implementation of the visionary and aspirational CA English Learner Roadmap policy by shedding light on what the EL Roadmap means for the early years of schooling. For school leaders who are now part of embracing preschools and early learning in what was previously defined as a K-12 system, new learning is required to lead and support developmentally appropriate programs and services for young dual language learners effectively and responsibly. For those early childhood educators leading and supporting a major expansion of programs to serve young children and families representing new levels of cultural and linguistic diversity equitably and inclusively, new learning is similarly required.

This Toolkit is meant to:

- Support preschool program directors and elementary school and district administrators responsible for preschool/Transitional Kindergarten programs to *understand and make meaning of the vision and four Principles of the EL Roadmap* in the context of early education settings to strengthen practices and programs and to build alignment and coherence across the P-12 system needed for English Learner/Dual Language Learner access and success.

- Offer early learning providers information and guidance about dual language learners and research-based approaches to supporting their learning and development in preschool programs and TK classrooms.

- Enable leaders to *utilize the EL Roadmap Principles* as a communicative and meaning-making bridge across what have been the different pedagogical ecology and language of the early education and the K-12 systems and between the frameworks and guidance documents for the early education field and those of the K-12 world.

- Provide tools and resources for program directors and administrators as leaders in their role of supporting *reflection, dialogue, shared meaning-making, and planning* to create the early education classrooms and preschool/TK programs that implement the EL Roadmap's four Principles, center dual language learners, and leverage, affirm, and develop their multiple language and cultural assets as part of healthy development and learning.

Who are Dual Language learners? Who are English learners?

California is home to the nation's largest population of DLLs/ELs. In California, children who are DLLs comprise 60% of the state's birth-to-five population, and 72% of the state's 1.1 million EL students are in the elementary school grades. In early childhood education work, the term "Dual Language Learner" or DLL is used to refer to children with a home language other than English. In the K-12 system, the term "English learner" is more often the term.

"English Learner" (EL) is the term used in the K-12 public schooling system for students with a home language other than English and whose English is not yet proficient enough to comprehend, access, and succeed in an English-taught schooling system without support. It is based on civil rights law, guaranteeing equal educational access and the right to services to overcome the English language barrier.

Dual Language Learner (DLL) is the term used in early childhood education for children, birth to age 5, who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. They may be learning two (or more) languages at the same time (simultaneous DLL) or start learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language (sequential DLL).

Multilingual Learner (ML) is an umbrella term that encompasses DLLs and ELs, as described above, and also includes any child/student developing two or more languages regardless of whether their home language is English or not.

Other terms are used as well, including the increasingly common use of **"emergent bilinguals."** Because the English Learner Roadmap is a policy rooted explicitly in the K-12 public education system's civil rights court cases and federal law pertaining to children who face a "language barrier to educational access," the EL Roadmap is called the "English Learner Roadmap," but the vision and set of Principles that comprise the policy all equally apply to DLLs.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This Toolkit is designed to support preschool and early elementary administrators and leaders in building their understanding of the EL Roadmap in early childhood education contexts and terms, in reflecting on practices in their own preschool/TK programs and identifying priority areas for action, in engaging others in dialogue about the EL Roadmap and serving DLLs centrally in early education programs, and for planning purposes. Throughout this Toolkit are:

Reflection Tools: These can be used by leaders individually to support their own thinking or by a team or small group as the basis for shared reflection and dialogue.

Planning Tools: These are meant to focus on action steps and to be used in the context of a team charged with identifying priority areas for action.

Readings: Information to build individual understanding of DLLs in the early childhood years can also be shared with others to fill in gaps in understanding and create a shared foundation for improving practices. Used in a planning team context, the readings (with discussion prompts accompanying reflection tools) are useful tools to stimulate dialogue.

References and Resource Lists: These are organizations, key documents, research sites, and other means for learning more.

A CLOSER LOOK: WHAT IS THE EL ROADMAP?

A New Policy for California P-12

The California English Learner Roadmap, passed unanimously by the State Board of Education in 2017 as the EL policy P-12, was a sea-change from previous state EL policies.

- It is **aspirational**, reaching far beyond the bottom-line compliance mandates of previous policies and committing our state to preparing English learners with meaningful access to an intellectually rigorous education that prepares them with the language and academic skills to thrive in a multilingual diverse 21st-century world.

- It is **Principles-based,** connecting all levels of the educational system (preschool through graduation) in making meaning of and enacting an aligned implementation of four core research-based Principles.

- It is **comprehensive,** addressing not only ELD instruction and language acquisition program models but all programs, services and components of schooling that "touch" English learners and play a role in EL success P-12.

- It is **research-based,** holding that our schools understand and implement the knowledge base about effective practices for English learners and dual language learners.

- It is **assets-oriented,** embracing the cultures and languages students bring to their education as a resource and gift for their learning and contributing to the learning of others.

- It is **longitudinal,** embracing the entire schooling journey from preschool through high school graduation.

And the EL Roadmap is a **state policy for a local control era,** committed to ensuring a guarantee of equal educational access but designed to do so through guidance to inform local policy, planning, and services. Thus, while there is a state *expectation* that districts and programs will implement the EL Roadmap, it is left to each local district and program to determine what that looks like and how to approach implementation. Therefore, it requires more intensive meaning-making, engagement, collaboration, and planning to implement.

These unique characteristics have important implications for leaders charged with implementing the policy.

- The EL Roadmap is a *comprehensive policy*—that touches almost all aspects of schooling and, therefore, requires the involvement of multiple roles, departments, and functions within the system. The English Learner Roadmap's broad scope applies at a school site, within a district, regionally in the support of county offices of education, and at the state level. Because of this comprehensiveness, the EL Roadmap requires that people and roles from across the system be involved in understanding the vision and Principles, make sense of how it impacts their specific sectors of work, and come together across those functions and roles to develop a shared understanding of the work and the interrelationships across the system. This complex undertaking succeeds where and when leadership creates the conditions and messaging that emphasize the importance of the shared endeavor.

- The EL Roadmap puts forth a vision and mission for California schools that leads through aspiration, reaching for the outcomes the state aspires to for English learners, and describing a set of research-based Principles to guide all levels of the system towards that promise. The extensive reach of the EL Roadmap, together with its aspirational call-to-action, makes implementation a long-term endeavor. It requires an enduring commitment of focus. Thoughtful planning about priority areas for starting the work and carefully designing metrics and processes for monitoring progress become essential. And creating systems and local policies aligned with the EL Roadmap is needed for sustainability.

- The EL Roadmap calls upon educators to implement research-based practices embedded within the Four Principles, which requires capacity-building. Creating the infrastructure for professional learning, building alignment and coherence, and investing time and resources to support meaningful changes in practice become essential in operationalizing the EL Roadmap. The EL Roadmap policy explicitly calls for these system conditions that make enactment possible. So, this policy seeks *structural changes,* not just strategy change; *systems changes* and not just instructional improvements.

- The EL Roadmap is an "assets-oriented" policy positioning students' cultures and languages as assets for their learning and reaching for bilingualism/biliteracy as outcomes of schooling is also, for many educators, a mindset and paradigm shift from what had been a pervasive English-Only era in California. While the early childhood education field has long held a commitment to affirm children's languages and cultures, the charge to leverage and develop bilingualism, to actively support home language as an asset for learning, is new to many—requiring new understandings, strategies, and commitments.

- The EL Roadmap commits to building a coherent, aligned educational journey from preschool through graduation for Dual Language Learners, recognizing the importance of building a solid early start through developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate preschool. It works in tandem with other major state commitments to early learning, such as the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.

And finally, the EL Roadmap is a call to action for all educators and is a state policy intended to inform all levels of the educational system, from preschool through graduation. The guidance from the State Board of Education written into the policy reads:

> *"[This policy is] intended to guide all levels of the system towards a coherent and aligned set of practices, services, relationships, and approaches to teaching and learning that together create a powerful, effective, 21st-century education for our English learners. Underlying this systemic application of the Principles is the foundational understanding that simultaneously developing English learners' linguistic and academic capacities is a shared responsibility of all educators and that all levels of the schooling system have a role to play."*

Thus, the policy is intended to support instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, assessment staff, classroom teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, etc., in developing the understanding of the vision and Principles and the capacity to implement. It is meant to be implemented at the classroom, program, school site, district, regional/county, and state levels. And it explicitly embraces preschool as the foundational start of a child's schooling journey. Note, however, that while the English Learner Roadmap as a research-based and visionary set of Principles speaks to and has relevance to the preschool/early childhood education world, the policy itself (and the State Board of Education) does not directly have jurisdiction over the many providers within the mixed delivery reality of early childhood education. Nonetheless, as a statement of effective practice, a vision of common direction and purpose, the EL Roadmap is a useful tool and guide for all programs for DLLs ages three to five.

In short, this early childhood through grade 12 policy is aligned with current research, declares biliteracy as a state goal, and calls for building systems and practices in DLL/EL early education aligned coherently to primary grades as pathways leading throughout the grade levels to high levels of English proficiency, full access to and mastery of grade-level standards, and opportunities to develop multilingual proficiency.

The EL Roadmap puts forth a vision for California that leads through aspiration, and describes a set of research based principles to guide all levels of the system towards that promise.

Text of the English Learner Roadmap Policy

The EL Roadmap policy consists of a vision, mission, and four interrelated research-based Principles articulated in the Guidance document adopted and approved by the State Board of Education in July 2017.

VISION: English learners fully and meaningfully access and participate in a 21st-century education from early childhood through grade twelve that results in their attaining high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade-level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages.

MISSION: California schools affirm, welcome and respond to a diverse range of English learner strengths, needs, and identities. California schools prepare graduates with the linguistic, academic and social skills and competencies they require for college, career, and civic participation in a global, diverse and multilingual world, thus ensuring a thriving future for California.

FOUR INTERRELATED PRINCIPLES

Four Principles support the vision and provide the foundation of the California English Learner Roadmap. These Principles are intended to guide all levels of the system toward a coherent and aligned set of practices, services, relationships, and approaches to teaching and learning that together create a powerful, effective, 21st-century education for our English learners.

1

PRINCIPLE #1
Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools

Pre-schools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities, and support the socio-emotional health and development of English learners. Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates. Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships.

2

PRINCIPLE #2
Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access

English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning and provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages.

3

PRINCIPLE #3
System Conditions that Support Effectiveness

Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, preschool) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities and utilize valid assessment and other data systems that inform instruction and continuous improvement; resources and tiered support is provided to ensure vital programs that shape the capacity for teachers and staff to build on the strengths and meet the needs of English learners.

4

PRINCIPLE #4
Alignment and Articulation Within and Across Systems

English learners experience a coherent, articulated, and aligned set of practices and pathways across grade levels and educational segments, beginning with a strong foundation in early childhood and continuing through to reclassification, graduation, and higher education. These pathways foster the skills, language(s), literacy, and knowledge students need for college- and career-readiness and participation in a global, diverse, multilingual 21st-century world.

LEADERSHIP: APPLYING THE EL ROADMAP TO EARLY EDUCATION

Implementing the EL Roadmap means building a sturdy foundation in early education as DLLs begin their educational journey. It is a task for early childhood program directors and preschool /TK providers, elementary school site principals, district leaders, and county office personnel. For leaders of this effort, this means weaving together what have often been separate and even silo-ed areas of practice and expertise:

- **The early childhood education field and systems,**
- **The K-12 school system's primary grades, and**
- **The world of English learner/multilingual education.**

Each of these has a major piece of the puzzle for designing and implementing effective and powerful schooling for young DLLs; neither alone brings sufficient expertise and understanding. The EL Roadmap Principles, written as a preschool through graduation policy, offers a vehicle for creating an integrated approach.

From Siloed & Separate to an Integrated System
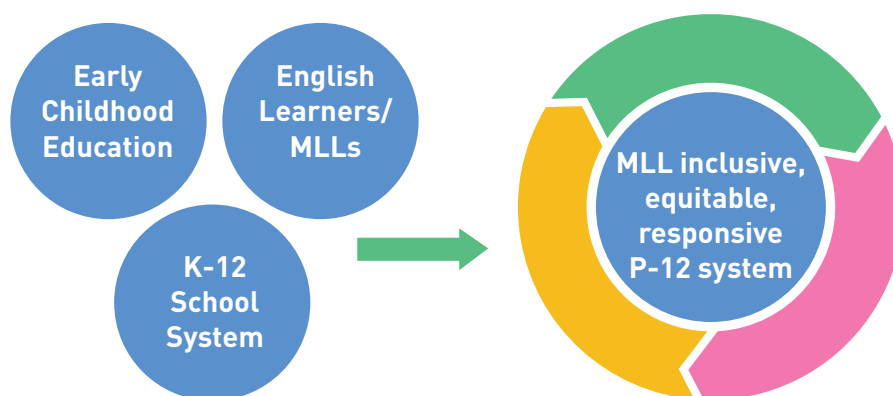
The Leadership Task

While the EL Roadmap was written as a policy covering preschool through high school with Principles general enough to apply across the P-12 range for multiple roles, the language of the EL Roadmap requires translation, interpretation, and meaning-making when applied to early education. The policy, therefore, expects the following of leaders:

- To **make meaning** of the EL Roadmap Principles through the lens of early childhood education practice, and be able to **articulate** the purpose (the "why") and the intent and content of the policy to diverse early education and community stakeholders informed by an understanding of developmentally appropriate practices and culturally and linguistically sustaining approaches for young children.

- To **lead implementation** of the EL Roadmap through a local process determining what those Principles mean for young dual language learners and the early education programs in the specific local context.

- To **bring together** adults who impact the children in early education programs/classrooms across diverse areas of expertise (EL expertise, early childhood education expertise, primary grades expertise) and across different roles (teachers, parents, service providers, administrators) and across systems (preschool, TK) to develop a **shared understanding** of how the EL Roadmap's Principles impact their work, and how together these groups can construct a powerful system of inclusive early schooling for DLLs.

- To engage stakeholders in selecting **specific relevant priorities for focus** from among the comprehensive reach of the EL Roadmap policy and engaging in a process of continuous improvement toward the vision and enactment of the EL Roadmap Principles.

- To provide the **time, support, conditions, and leadership messaging** about the importance of centering DLLs in a developmentally appropriate, high quality, assets-oriented aligned approach beginning in preschool/TK that will make it possible for the adults in the early education program to make meaning of and implement the EL Roadmap.

Making Sense of the Preschool Landscape in California (for TK-6 principals and administrators)

Young children in California access preschool and early learning services through multiple avenues. California has three main publicly funded preschool programs: 1) The California State Preschool Program (CSPP), 2) Head Start, and 3) Transitional Kindergarten.

1. **The California State Preschool Program (CSPP)** is the largest state-funded preschool program in the nation, providing both part-day and full-day services to three- and four-year-olds. The program is administered through local educational agencies, colleges, community-action agencies, and private nonprofit agencies. Some CSPP programs are on local district school districts – but not all.

2. **Head Start preschool** is a federally funded comprehensive program for income-eligible children, ages 3-5, that serves almost 90,000 children across the state.

3. **Transitional Kindergarten** is the newcomer to the preschool space – envisioned as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program serving four-year-olds within elementary school campuses.

In 2010, California implemented the Kindergarten Readiness Act, changing the Kindergarten entry date and establishing Transitional Kindergarten (TK), a new "developmentally appropriate" grade to serve younger learners. The 2015-16 state budget further clarified the law to allow school districts to enroll four-year-olds in TK even if they turn five after the December Kindergarten cutoff date, providing another local option to "get more children ready for Kindergarten."

In 2021-22, California defined a broad early system embracing many preschool options – including TK. It launched Universal Preschool (UPK) putting into action recommendations laid out in the California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care including a dramatic expansion of TK for all four-year-old children, with universal access to TK for all four-year-old children by the 2025–26 school year. The language promised that all four-year-olds would have the opportunity to attend a "high quality, developmentally appropriate TK program and to enter Kindergarten prepared to learn and thrive." The CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care envisioned TK as a bridge between preschool and Kindergarten, and Transitional Kindergarten was understood as and defined as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. By 2025–26, UPK (Universal Transitional Kindergarten and other preschool opportunities) will exist for all four-year-old children in California. This commitment to increasing access to high-quality universal preschool programs for three- and four-year-olds includes Transitional Kindergarten as part of a **mixed-delivery model** that provides equitable learning experiences across a variety of settings. UPK is the umbrella term that includes not only TK but also the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), the federal Head Start Program, and subsidized programs that offer a preschool learning experience and are operated by district and local community-based organizations and private pay preschools. Families with four-year-old children can choose which pre-K program to enroll them in, but TK is the only option that will be universally available and free of cost for all four-year-old children as part of California's public education system.

There are two quite different paradigms and perspectives about Transitional Kindergarten and where it sits. Each perspective has implications regarding the body of expertise and guidance drawn upon, the training and utilization of staff, governance and regulations – despite the fact that they serve the same population of children (4 year olds).

Two different perspectives drawing upon different expertise

"TK is preschool – just in a different setting"
UPK is preschool

Mixed delivery

NAEYC • Head Start • Planned Language Approaches • Master Plan for Early Learning. • Early Childhood Credential

"TK is the first year of a 2 year kindergarten"

Expansion of K-12 system

ELA/ELD Framework • EL Roadmap policy • Dual language program models and language acquisition models • Standards

California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations

Building a bridge across these two perspectives is essential to realizing the promise of a coherent and strong early childhood approach for California. Because of the dramatic expansion of what had been a K-12 system to be a TK-12 system now—and the state's commitment to UPK crossing mixed delivery systems—the landscape for preschool has shifted. TK formally (in education code) is an expansion of the K-12 system, the start of a two-year kindergarten and, therefore, the first year of a TK-12 system—setting a foundation that is aligned with what is to come. But TK serves four-year-olds as do other preschools outside of that system. TK is pedagogically part of the early learning and development field that understands the task of developmentally appropriate preschool education for four-year-olds as part of a continuum that begins with birth. There is an opportunity to envision support and learning for young children across this whole spectrum.

Throughout this Toolkit, the terms "program directors, administrators and leaders" refer to those who oversee, are responsible for, and direct preschool programs in all settings and delivery systems (including Transitional Kindergartens, CSPPs, Head Start, and other center-based programs). The term "teacher" generally encompasses all adults (e.g., lead teachers, assistant teachers, preschool providers) responsible for the care and education of children in a preschool program.

BRIEF OVERVIEW:

Making Sense of the TK-12 English Learner Education Landscape (for preschool directors and leaders)

The focus on English Learner education in the K-12 system derives from a civil rights framework protecting equal access and equality of opportunity for children who are not sufficiently proficient in English to fully participate in and comprehend English-taught schooling. Through federal law and civil rights court cases, K-12 schools are required to provide services aimed at overcoming the language barrier and ensuring access.

For over half a century, the field of English learner education has been built through amassing research on effective practices, development of model programs, establishment of teacher training and credential requirements, and installing an apparatus for monitoring progress and accountability. Written into federal law are protections related to providing access and teaching English. Encoded in California state law are requirements governing programs and services for English learners. English learners are assessed yearly on a test of English proficiency. All schools (beginning with Kindergarten) assess children with home languages other than English when they enter school, and those determined to have limited English proficiency are designated as "English Learners". The base required program in all schools for all English Learners is "Designated and Integrated English Language Development." Once ELs reach proficiency, they are "redesignated" or "reclassified" as English proficient and are monitored but no longer require services. While "English learner" is the label encoded in that system of laws and overcoming the English barrier is the explicit goal, there has also been a strong thread of recognition of the role of home language development, the efficacy of bilingual approaches, and the benefits of attaining bilingualism and biliteracy. In addition to English Language Development, some schools and districts may also offer "dual language" or bilingual programs, which is an option parents exercise upon enrollment.

Within school districts, designated roles comprise the infrastructure of EL expertise and commitment. District offices have someone responsible for "state and federal programs" accountability and implementation. Their title may or may not also include explicit mention of their EL related responsibilities—such as "English Learner or "Multilingual" or "Dual Language" Coordinator. School sites with large numbers of English learners may also have an EL Teacher on Special Assignment or an EL Coach who supports teachers in providing EL services, oversees the annual assessments, etc. Similarly, county offices of education have designated personnel who are sources of information, technical assistance, and professional learning related to English learners. The California Department of Education's Multilingual Support Division also provides educational services and technical assistance to assist local education agencies in ensuring all migrant, immigrant, multilingual, and English learner students receive equitable access to a meaningful education.

Federal Title III funding flows to districts specifically to support supplemental services for English learners. And, within the state's Local Control Funding Formula, there is additional funding for and emphasis on serving English learners. Each district's Local Control Accountability Plan outlines the use of those funds and local goals. LCAP funds can be used to support Transitional Kindergarten.

REFLECTION TOOL

How prepared am I as a leader to lead this work? Where are my strengths and my areas for growth?

Leading strong early learning programs for DLLs requires knowledge of English Learner policy, the early education field, and EL/DL expertise. Taking stock of one's preparedness is a helpful step towards leading. The resources listed on pages 157-159 of this Toolkit offer websites, publications and organizations that can be used to learn more.

Leadership Preparedness	I feel well-informed, have expertise	I feel generally informed and prepared	Not an area I know much about or have experience with	This is a priority for my own learning & development as a leader
ABOUT THE EL ROADMAP				
Familiarity with the Vision and Principles of the English Learner Roadmap.				
Strategies for engaging staff and stakeholders in making meaning of the EL Roadmap.				
Approaches for effectively leading implementation of a new policy requiring reflection, building shared direction, changing mindsets, and strengthening practices and structures.				
A map of current efforts, resources, & plans related to implementing the EL Roadmap in my district and region.				
ABOUT EARLY EDUCATION				
About early childhood education—the foundations, Principles, and what is meant by developmentally appropriate pedagogy and effective practices for three- to five-year-olds.				
The map of early education programs, services, and providers in my community and district—what's out there, who's who in the preschool mixed delivery landscape?				
Current and planned new initiatives expanding access to early education in our community and district.				
California's state vision, Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, and the state entities and policies impacting preschool.				
ABOUT DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS/ENGLISH LEARNERS				
Understanding of second language acquisition and development and bilingual/dual language development in young children.				
Culturally and linguistically responsive practices and assets-oriented affirming and equitable learning environments.				
A map of who's who and what's what in English learner/DLL education in our district and county/region.				
Knowledge of laws and policies related to educational access and equal opportunity for English learners—and their application to early education (P-3).				
OVERALL				
Understand how the CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the EL Roadmap connect as state frameworks and visions for preschool.				

NOTES

Which areas are priorities for my learning?

PLANNING TOOL: Bringing Together a Team

Developing a plan and approach for implementing the EL Roadmap in the early education years is complex. Don't try to go it alone! A leader cannot pull off effective planning and leading implementation of the comprehensive EL Roadmap policy on their own. A comprehensive reform like the EL Roadmap, especially when it cuts across what have been largely separate areas of expertise and function, requires leaders to construct a "table" and a team that brings together the perspectives, understanding, and expertise that together can shape a comprehensive plan for implementation of DLL responsive early education.

Consider the people in your school, community, district, and region who might have interest, perspective, and expertise to bring to the task of planning for DLL-responsive early education aligned to the EL Roadmap. As you think of people, place their names in the following categories/columns. Are there some areas where you need to investigate to identify who those people might be? Do you have all areas covered?

People with responsibility for implementing & delivering early education (Preschool – CSPP and other TK) programs/services	People with responsibility for implementing English learner/ DLL programs/ services	Partners with expertise in early education (e.g., COE, IHE, TA providers)	Partners with expertise in EL/DLL education (e.g., COE, IHE, TA providers)	Parent/family & community partners of/from our DLL/EL community

Implementing the EL Roadmap means weaving together what have been separate and even silo-ed areas of practice and expertise to construct a powerful system of early schooling for DLLs.

Things To Know/Consider in Putting Together a Team

For elementary school principals and TK-elementary district administrators:

The preschool programs and services that may be feeding into your TK/K classrooms (and maybe even on your campus) are not a single-delivery system. A mixed delivery system includes early care and education provided through various programs and providers in either home-based, community-based, or school-based settings. Home based settings include licensed family childcare and license-exempt Family, Friend and Neighbors caregivers. Community-based settings include childcare and preschool programs, private programs, non-profit programs, university-based programs, etc. School-based programs include state preschool (California State Preschool Program) and TK. The mixed delivery system also likely includes Head Start preschools (federally funded and under the jurisdiction of the national Head Start program). Across these varied delivery systems are differences in funding, enrollment processes, curriculum, staffing, services, and governance.

ACTION ITEM: List of preschool providers that feed into your Kindergarten

An anticipatory action item for leaders and administrators in the TK-elementary system is to determine which early education programs are within your geographic area and which feed into your kindergarten. Together, these comprise the preschool landscape to be embraced in building robust and coherent DLL early education.

Name of Program	Number of three- to five-year-olds in our attendance area currently being served	Type of delivery system (e.g., Head Start, family day care, private nonprofit, etc.)	The language, cultural, and demographic community served

For preschool directors and administrators:

For over half a century, the K-12 public schooling system has been building programs, services, and an infrastructure of guidance and expertise related to serving English learner students and addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. It is essential in building your team charged with leading EL Roadmap implementation for preschool that you construct bridges and create shared understandings for what have been separate early education and K-12 English learner worlds. It is helpful to know the structure of EL services in the LEA that your preschool program feeds into, and who the specific people are with EL expertise responsible for TK/Kindergarten English learner education.

ACTION ITEM: List of EL/DLL Personnel in the LEA into which your preschool program(s) feed:
Note: The exact titles may differ. Some districts may not have these roles at all.

Role	Name and contact info	Area of EL/DLL
District EL Coordinator *(May be labeled ML, Bilingual Coordinator, or Director of State and Federal Programs)*		
District EL Coaches or EL Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) serving primary grades/TK		
President, DELAC (District English Learner Advisory Committee) – a parent body		
District Dual Language Program Specialist		
County Office of Education English Learner Specialist *(may be labeled ML)*		

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for All Kids
www.californiaforallkids.chhs.ca.gov
Copy of the Master Plan, plus resources for implementation

CA English Learner Roadmap webpage (CDE)
www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm
Copy of the policy, plus resources to support educators as they implement the EL Roadmap policy

CDE Multilingual Support Division
www.cde.ca.gov>els
The Multilingual Support Division provides educational services and technical assistance to assist local education agencies in ensuring all migrant, immigrant, and multilingual and English learner students receive equitable access to a meaningful education

TK California
www.tkcalifornia.org
Information for teacher, administrators and parents about Transitional Kindergarten as a state program, including resources for implementation.

Head Start California
www.headstartca.org
Mission, vision, FAQs and resources for Head Start programs in California.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
www.naeyc.org
National organization for the profession of early childhood education. Website includes many resources and position papers.

> Together, the CA Master Plan for Early Learning and the EL Roadmap policy define a new era for DLL education — an era of great opportunity and high stakes.

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES
OF THE ENGLISH LEARNER ROADMAP

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A core responsibility of program directors and school administrators is building an understanding of the four core Principles of the EL Roadmap and what they mean for early education. In this section, each Principle is presented as it is written in the EL Roadmap policy, followed by an explanation/interpretation of the Principle in early childhood education terms, a set of readings relevant to making meaning and planning for implementation of the Principle, activities to engage teams in dialogue about the Principle, and tools for reflection and inquiry.

TEXT OF PRINCIPLE #1

"Preschools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities, and support the socio-emotional health and development of English learners. Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates. Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships."

A. The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.

B. Recognizing that there is **no single EL profile** and no one-size approach that works for all, programs, curriculum, and instruction and that each may be applicable to different EL student's characteristics and experiences.

C. School climates and campuses are affirming, inclusive, and safe.

D. Schools value and build strong **family and school partnerships.**

ACTIVITY: Reading for Understanding

Read through the text of Principle #1. Annotate as follows:

- **Highlight** any terms/vocabulary/phrases that resonate strongly with you (e.g., "affirming, inclusive, and safe").

- Put a **question mark ?** next to anything you don't understand or wonder about.
  EXAMPLE: "EL profile" ? What does that mean? What are the profiles?

- Place an **arrow** ⟶ alongside any phrases that you see as connected to a key element of practices and approaches already part of your early education efforts—and write what that connection is.

  EXAMPLE: "No single EL profile...responsive to different EL student characteristics..."
  Individual observation/assessments as the basis for instruction in our preschool.

NOTE-TAKER:

What resonates most with me and seems most important about Principle #1?:

_____

_____

Questions I have about Principle #1:

_____

_____

Connections I make between Principle #1 and other initiatives/efforts/practices:

_____

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Reading and Reflection: Eight Key Understandings About Dual Language Learners, Language Development, and Educational Access

Principle #1 is fundamentally about knowing who DLLs/ELs are, and building programs, classrooms and schools that embrace and respond to them. What does a leader need to understand as a basic foundation about language development for young children whose home language is not English and who are developing language in English in addition to their home language? What does a leader need to know about dual language development? The following reading, adapted from and echoing several key documents cited below, provides a starting place.

Eight foundational understandings about language, cognitive, academic, and identity development of young English learners/Dual Language Learners must be reflected in building a coherent system of developmentally responsive, appropriate, effective, and equitable programs, practices, and services in early education.

1. **Language development is a major developmental task of early childhood and is deeply entwined with cognitive development and social development (interaction).** Language develops in the context of learning, thinking, and interaction with proficient users of the language. Support for oral language development plays a crucial role in the quality early childhood education—for all children. The preschool years are critical for language development for all preschoolers but for Dual Language Learners, this process involves two (or more) languages, making it significantly different than for monolingual children. For DLLs, language and literacy development are fundamentally shaped by their multiple language worlds and their dual language brains. Therefore, effective approaches to supporting language development and early literacy for DLLs require attention to both languages.

2. **Children can acquire and have the capacity to learn more than one language simultaneously and achieve high proficiency in both languages. For DLLs, home language development is key to overall language development because their home language holds and stores their knowledge of the world.** Home language plays an important facilitative role in English language development, and contrary to some beliefs, does not impede English development. Conversely, there is a strong threat of language loss, harmful language disruption, and family disconnect when English learners are not supported to develop both their languages and bicultural identities. Learning two or more languages is a strength—but it is a complex and vulnerable process—especially in an English dominant world.

3. **Children who do not sufficiently understand the language of the classroom/program and of instruction are effectively foreclosed from participation and educational access.** When children are taught in a language they don't adequately comprehend, they are educationally disadvantaged, and gaps develop. Multilingual learners (MLs) benefit from high-quality instruction in both languages aligned with their language skills and background. As they enter the classroom with language backgrounds that may or may not be shared with their peers and teachers, it is the role of the teacher to learn about and understand best practices that they can use to promote these children's learning. To gain this understanding, educators must build their knowledge of dual language acquisition and instructional strategies that integrate content and language learning in both languages. In doing so, teachers cultivate an asset-based approach to instructing DLL children.

4. **To become sufficiently proficient in a new language for academic participation takes place over five to seven years, traversing ages, grade levels, and segments of schooling** during which aligned and consistent first and second language approaches, curriculum, instruction, and pedagogical support are needed or both access to the curriculum and language development is hampered.

5. **Bilingualism is an asset with significant benefits for all learners—and is a necessity for English learners who depend on bilingualism for participation in and access to their multiple language and cultural worlds.** The early years (0-8) are crucial for building the foundation for bilingualism. The linguistic, academic, cognitive, and sociocultural benefits of bilingualism are most likely to occur when a child achieves high levels of competence in both the home language and English. Such benefits make it clear that bilingualism should be actively fostered and celebrated.

6. **Language is a core component of culture and is central to identity. Culture and language are fundamental to how people live, speak, and interact in the world.** Culture and language are the foundation for how a child learns and thinks. The challenge of developing a healthy bilingual & bicultural identity begins as soon as a child enters a world in which their language, culture, national background, race/ethnicity are "minoritized." Thus, children require culturally and linguistically responsive support throughout their early years. Addressing the unequal status of languages and cultures and affirming the value of cultural and linguistic diversity with intentionality is essential. This approach also includes an intentional focus on cultural responsiveness and anti-bias education.

7. **Strong partnerships and two-way family communications are especially powerful for supporting DLL children.** Engaging in such communication in which teachers and families learn from each other can help build strong home-school partnerships. Families have assets and skills to bring to the classroom setting, and important knowledge about the child and culture and how their child learns to share with teachers, and teachers can share important information about the child's program-based learning with families. Making the bridge between home and the early learning program is an important support for young DLLs as they develop their competencies for participation in and across language and cultural worlds.

8. **A history of exclusionary policies and practices in schools, English-Only politics, and deficit-oriented perspectives about children and communities with languages other than English have left residual beliefs and practices that produce unequal access and educational opportunities for ELs/DLLs.** Attention to the English-Only and "deficiency" mindsets and beliefs about bilingualism and English learners, as well as to countering the practices that reflect those beliefs that may linger in a community, program, and school requires vigilance, clarity of messaging, advocacy, and commitment to create the assets-oriented schools our DLLs need to thrive.

CITATIONS/RESOURCES

Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice.
www.cde.ca.gov>mleleducation

A 2020 publication from the California Department of Education containing the following chapters (among others)

> *Linda Espinosa and Jennifer Crandell, "Early Learning and Care for Multilingual and Dual Language Learners Ages Zero to Five"*

> *Laurie Olsen with Martha Martinez, Carla Herrera and Heather Skibbins, "Multilingual Programs and Pedagogy: What Teachers and Administrators Need to Know and Do"*

Multilingual Learning Toolkit
www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org

A P-3 Framework: Centering English Learners
www.seal.org

REFLECTION TOOL: How well understood and acted upon are the eight understandings in my program/school/district?

Read each statement of "understanding" and consider the degree to which you see it reflected in the practices and beliefs of your early learning program.

The Understanding	Well understood and ingrained in practice	General understanding —some practices reflect	Some understanding, not reflected in practice	Not understood or acted upon	Strong counter-beliefs & practices	Don't know
Developing language is the major task of early childhood. Support for oral language development is crucial.						
The development of language for DLLs necessarily involves two languages— different from monolingual development.						
Children have the capacity to develop two languages simultaneously—but it needs support.						
When students are taught in a language they don't adequately comprehend, they face barriers to participation, are educationally disadvantaged, and gaps develop unless teachers intentionally and proficiently use strategies to address barriers.						
To become sufficiently proficient in a new language for academic participation takes place over a period of five to seven years.						
Bilingualism is an asset– and is a necessity for DLLs who depend on bilingualism for participation in and access to their multiple language and cultural worlds. The early years (0-8) are a crucial time for building the foundation for bilingualism.						
DLL children require culturally and linguistically responsive support throughout their early years P-3. Addressing the unequal status of languages and cultures, and affirming the value of cultural and linguistic diversity with intentionality is essential.						
Strong partnerships and two-way family communications are especially powerful for supporting ML children.						
In the context of lingering English-Only and "deficiency" mindsets and beliefs about bilingualism and English learners, it takes work to undo practices reflecting those beliefs. This requires vigilance, clarity of messaging, advocacy, and commitment to create the assets-oriented schools DLLs need to thrive.						

MAKING SENSE OF PRINCIPLE #1
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TERMS

Several key documents and frameworks in the early childhood education field speak directly to Principle #1 (Assets-Oriented and Student Responsive) of the EL Roadmap. Any implementation of the EL Roadmap Principle #1 does well to crosswalk and connect to those important field resources that anchor the early childhood education field with regards to equity and culturally sustaining practices—and that speak to the deep relationship between families and children including the roles of home language and culture. These include: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Core Values and Equity Statement, Head Start's Multicultural Principles, the Anti-Bias Education goals and resources, and the California Preschool Program Guidelines issued by the California Department of Education.

A. NAEYC's Core Values and the Equity Statement

> *"We shall care for and educate children in positive emotional and social environments that are cognitively stimulating and that support each child's culture, language, ethnicity, and family structure."*
> *(NAEYC Profession's Code of Ethics)*

ACTIVITY: For each of the two elements of Principle #1 of the English Learner Roadmap listed on the chart below, read the corresponding excerpts from the NAEYC Equity Statement and Core Values (supported by NAEYC's "Developmentally Appropriate Practice," which is further discussed under Principle #2 of the EL Roadmap). To what extent do these mirror each other? In what ways does the NAEYC guidance help to understand the EL Roadmap more clearly in the context of early education? How can referencing and engaging people in the NAEYC guidance to the field be helpful in building a bridge of shared understanding across the preschool, TK, and kindergarten/primary grades about an aligned approach to serving DLLs and a coherent implementation of the EL Roadmap's Principle #1?

Elements of the ELR PRINCIPLE #1	NAEYC
Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships. Schools value and build strong **family and school partnerships.**	**NAEYC Core Values:** Educators should "...recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society." **NAEYC Equity Position Statement:** **Establish Reciprocal Relationships with Families** ***Embrace the primary role of families in children's development and learning.*** Seek to learn about and honor each family's child-rearing values, languages (including dialects), and culture. Gather information about the hopes and expectations families have for their children's behavior, learning, and development so that you can support their goals. ***Uphold every family's right to make decisions for and with their children.*** If a family's desire appears to conflict with your professional knowledge or presents an ethical dilemma, work with the family to learn more, identify common goals, and strive to establish mutually acceptable strategies. ***Be curious, making time to learn about the families with whom you work.*** This includes learning about their languages, customs, activities, values, and beliefs so you can provide a culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining learning environment. ***Maintain consistently high expectations for family involvement, being open to multiple and varied forms of engagement and providing intentional and responsive supports.*** Ask families how they would like to be involved and what supports may be helpful. Families may face challenges (e.g., fear due to immigration status, less flexibility during the workday, childcare, or transportation issues) that may require a variety of approaches to building engagement. Recognize that it is your responsibility as an educator to connect with families successfully so that you can provide the most culturally and linguistically sustaining learning environment for each child.

Elements of the ELR PRINCIPLE #1	NAEYC
Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in **safe and affirming school climates.** The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning, and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in **culturally responsive curriculum and instruction** and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.	***Communicate the value of multilingualism to all families.*** All children benefit from the social and cognitive advantages of multilingualism and multiliteracy. Make sure families of emergent bilinguals understand the academic benefits and the significance of supporting their child's home language as English is introduced through the early childhood program to ensure their children develop into fully bilingual and biliterate adults. ***Create a Caring, Equitable Community of Engaged Learners*** • Ensure that all children see themselves and their daily experiences, and the daily lives of others within and beyond their community, positively reflected in the design and implementation of pedagogy, curriculum, learning environment, interactions, and materials. • **Recognize each child's unique strengths and support the full inclusion of all children—given differences in culture, family structure, language, racial identity, gender, abilities and disabilities, religious beliefs, or economic class.** Help children get to know, recognize, and support one another as valued community members. Take care that no one feels bullied, invisible, or unnoticed. • **Develop trusting relationships with children and nurture relationships among them while building on their knowledge and skills.** Embrace children's cultural experiences and the languages and customs that shape their learning. Eliminate language or behavior that is stereotypical, demeaning, exclusionary, or judgmental. • **Design and implement learning activities using language(s) that the children understand.** Support the development of children's first languages while simultaneously promoting proficiency in English. Similarly, recognize and support dialectal differences as children gain proficiency in the Standard Academic English they are expected to use in school.

Young children thrive when families and staff partner closely to support home languages and embrace families' cultures and traditions.

B. Head Start's Multicultural Principles

ACTIVITY: For each of the two elements of Principle #1 of the English Learner Roadmap listed on the chart below, read the corresponding excerpts from Head Start's Multicultural Principles and "Culture and Language" Guidance. To what extent do these mirror each other? In what ways does the Head Start guidance help us understand the English Learner Roadmap more clearly in the context of early education? How can referencing and engaging people in the Head Start guidance to the field be helpful in building a bridge of shared understanding across the preschool, TK, and kindergarten/primary grades about an aligned approach to serving DLLs and a coherent implementation of the EL Roadmap?

ELR PRINCIPLE #1	HEAD START
Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships. Schools value and build strong **family and school partnerships.**	**Head Start "Culture and Language" Guidance:** Families are their children's first educators. From birth, families nurture their children to be healthy and successful in school and in life. Head Start and Early Head Start program staff share these goals and partner with families as they work to meet these goals. There are unique ways in which these partnerships matter for children who speak languages other than English. Young children thrive when families and staff partner closely to embrace families' cultures and traditions. Head Start programs put into practice an equity-focused mindset in several ways. They implement anti-bias and nurturing environments. They promote protective and supportive factors for children's and family's health and wellbeing. **Head Start Multicultural Principles:** Culturally relevant programming requires staff who both reflect and are responsive to the community and families served.
Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in **safe and affirming school climates.** The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning, and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in **culturally responsive curriculum and instruction** and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.	**Head Start: "Culture and Language" Guidance** Head Start programs are committed to providing equitable access to comprehensive services that prepare children for school and life. An important part of this commitment is recognizing and respecting the culture and language of the children and their families. Programs provide educational opportunities, systems, and policies that position each child to reach their highest level of learning and life potential. Programs do this while emphasizing children's cultural and linguistic strengths and holding high expectations for all. Young children thrive when families and staff partner closely to support home languages and embrace families' cultures and traditions. **Head Start Multicultural Principles:** • Every individual is rooted in culture. • The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of the program are the primary sources for culturally relevant programming. • Culturally relevant programming requires learning accurate information about the cultures of different groups and discarding stereotypes. • Every individual has the right to maintain their own identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society. • Effective programs for children who speak languages other than English require continued development of the first language while the acquisition of English is facilitated.

ACTIVITY FOR C & D BELOW: For each element of Principle #1 of the English Learner Roadmap listed on the chart below, read the corresponding excerpts from Anti-Bias Education. To what extent do these mirror each other? In what ways does the Anti-Bias Education frame help to understand the EL Roadmap more clearly in the context of early education? How can referencing and engaging people in the Anti-Bias Education framework be useful in building a bridge of shared understanding across preschool, TK, and kindergarten/primary grades about an aligned approach to serving DLLs and a coherent implementation of the EL Roadmap?

C. Anti-Bias Education

ELR PRINCIPLE #1	ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION
Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in **safe and affirming school climates.** The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning, and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in **culturally responsive curriculum and instruction** and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.	**Anti-Bias Vision:** All children and families have a sense of belonging and experience affirmation of their personal and social identities and their cultural ways of being. **Anti-Bias Goal:** #1: Teachers will nurture each child's confident personal and social identities; Children will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride and positive social identities.

D. California Preschool Program Guidelines

ELR PRINCIPLE #1	California Preschool Program Guidelines *(Guiding Principles for Supporting Young Dual Language Learners)*
Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships. Schools value and build strong **family and school partnerships.**	Strong and mutually respectful partnerships with families with young DLLs enhance the learning and development of young DLLs. Respect for the culture, values, and language preferences of families with young DLLs will benefit young DLLs adjustment to preschool.
Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in **safe and affirming school climates.** The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning, and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in **culturally responsive curriculum and instruction** and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.	DLL's knowledge and strengths in their home language must be recognized and built upon in the preschool curriculum.

ACTIVITY: Drawing from and using phrases from NAEYC, Head Start, Anti-Bias Education framework, and the California Preschool Program Guidelines, as well as relying on your own interpretation and understanding of the Principle through the lens of early childhood education, write a short description of Principle #1 of the EL Roadmap in early childhood education terms you might use in explaining the Principle to the early childhood education workforce.

Making meaning of Principle #1 for the early childhood education setting:

Shortly after passage of the EL Roadmap, the non-profit organization Catalyst (then called The Advancement Project) brought together early childhood educators to make meaning of the new state policy. One of the results was to rewrite each of the Principles in terminology and language that resonated in the early childhood field. Now available from the Catalyst website, the paper describes Principle #1 of the EL Roadmap in the following way:

ECE (Early Childhood Educator) Indicators for Principle #1 from Catalyst:

- *Early childhood educators provide strengths-based practices that promote nurturing and enriching environments, support bilingualism, and make meaningful family and caregiver connections*

- *Early childhood and early elementary educators intentionally and consistently provide culturally and linguistically responsive practices that support continued development of the home language and English language acquisition.*

- *Educators build on the relationship between socioemotional development and second language learning.*

- *Educators promote and maintain affirming and inclusive school climates that strengthen and sustain meaningful family engagement and ongoing partnerships.*

BREAKING IT DOWN: Knowing Our Dual Language Learners

"Preschools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities..."

Principle #1 of the EL Roadmap describes a vision of preschools that are *"responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities, and support the socio-emotional health and development of English learners."* Fundamentally, this involves a developmental approach, which is a key facet of high-quality early learning. Dual Language Learners are young learners who happen to come from homes in which languages other than English are spoken. Their "dual language-ness" is an important part of who they are, but first and foremost, they are young children, and effective preschools are built on an understanding of how children learn and develop and then responding to where each child is in their developmental process.

As further defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, developmentally appropriate practice involves *"promoting each child's optimal development and learning through the design and implementation of learning environments appropriate for young children that are strengths-based, play-based, and take an integrated approach to joyful and engaged learning."* Educators implement *"developmentally appropriate practice by recognizing the **multiple assets** young children bring to their learning as unique individuals and as members of families, communities, and cultures. **Building on each child's strengths** and taking care to not harm any aspect of each child's physical, cognitive, social, or emotional wellbeing—educators must be able to design and implement learning environments to help all children achieve their full potential **across all domains** of development and across all content areas—**in their own time, their own way.**"*

The curricular and instructional implications of a developmental approach are discussed in more depth under Principle #2 of the EL Roadmap. But several key concepts of developmentally appropriate practice go to the heart of Principle #1's commitment to being child-responsive and to own responsibility for a child's socioemotional and healthy development. Key understandings at the heart of developmentally appropriate practice include:

Development is holistic. *There are various domains of development (physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, socio-emotional) and the domains are integrated. The general progressions of development and the trajectory and stages of development are* natural. *Humans are wired to develop along these trajectories— but they do so at different paces, in different ways. Thus, development must be understood as* individual *and as* cultural.

Development is not a lockstep ladder. *It is more like a wave—with forward spurts, backpedaling to incorporate, periods of rest and little new apparent growth, and then spurts. Young children's demonstrated abilities and skills are also often fluid and vary from day to day based on individual or contextual factors. Any single point of assessment is not adequate to gauge a child's development.*

Development is variable. Within any specific *age*, there is wide variation between children, and variation in development within and across domains. Development occurs at different rates from child to child and at uneven rates across different areas for each child. Age is not an adequate construct for defining developmental needs or readiness.

The implication for preschool programs is that in addition to understanding the domains of child development and the general trajectories of growth, teaching and support for the development of young children has to be based upon knowing each child, their family, and culture. Teaching has to be flexible and responsive. And a preschool classroom and program must prepare for and respond to a range of needs. This is why observation and assessment are such important tools for preschool teachers, as is close communication with families.

Beyond the general commitment to being child-responsive, Principle #1 calls for programs to *"value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education..."* and to build upon the assets students bring as a foundation for learning. To do either of these—to be responsive and to build upon what they bring— requires knowing who the children and families in your programs are and what they need.

At the program level, this involves assembling demographic information, understanding basic typologies and implications of those typologies, and having ways to hear from and engage with children and families in ways that reveal who they are via their experiences, aspirations, and dreams. At the teacher level, this involves ongoing engagement with children and their families in ways that invite and seek to know more about who they are and how they interact with the program. In fact, one of the Teacher Performance Expectations for an Early Childhood Education (ECE) credential in California states "knowledge of the demographics, cultural, linguistic and SES backgrounds of children and families" as part of being able to engage and support all young children in development and learning (Teacher Performance Expectations TPE #1).

By definition, DLLs have languages other than English. While the vast majority in California are Spanish-speaking, close to 100 languages are spoken across the state—and the particular mix of languages and cultures represented among the children you serve are unique. The cultural, national, and ethnic information is less often considered. Yet DLLs are either immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants—coming from every corner of the world and representing many cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Often, this means that their family experience and norms are rooted in another nation and culture.

The cultural and linguistic diversity of the children and families in California is vast. Some families have arrived here to escape wars and political repression; others seek to reunite with family or pursue work and better opportunities. Some arrive joining existing communities of their language and cultural group—able to find stores and foods that are familiar, services and community entities that reflect their experience. Others, however, find themselves in communities with little that is familiar or accessible. Our preschools play a pivotal role as institutions that can reach, embrace, and support children and families with culturally and linguistically responsive relationships and services in learning environments that incorporate and build on children's home cultures and languages and offer connections to the services and supports that families need in transitioning across cultural and language worlds. This begins with learning about who they are.

The TK-12 system includes basic demographic and assessment data such as English language status determined by an English language assessment (the ELPAC), reports of languages spoken as provided by parents on the Home Language Survey, and ethnicity. All of this is part of the state's student information data system used for planning on multiple levels and for accountability and equity analyses. There is no formal system or guidance related to what additional information should be sought or how it might be elicited by TK-12 teachers and educators to know the children and families they serve.

In California State Preschool Programs, a set of instruments and protocols for gathering information about language has been recently added. And in other preschools and early childhood education programs, there is an emphasis on knowing the families and knowing and responding to the cultural and linguistic realities of the children in their care. However, there exists no single overall guidance or set of instruments to collect such data.

> **In addition to understanding the domains of child development and the general trajectories of growth, teaching and support for the development of young children has to be based upon knowing each child, their family, and culture.**

CHART: Data Collection Instruments in Use in Various Early Learning Settings

	TK –12 System	California State Preschool Programs	Data Collection to Identify DLLs
Purpose	Required process to determine EL status for purposes of triggering the right to supports and services, and to assess level of English proficiency to inform instruction.	Required process to determine DLL status and inform the staff of language experiences.	Approach to inform staff of language experiences for purposes of planned language approach.
Instrument Method	A four question Home Language Survey. The English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPAC).	Family language instrument to determine status. Family Language and Interest Interview.	Interviews based on "Gathering/Using Information on Family Languages": Six areas of focus.

HEAD START on Gathering/Using Info on Family Languages as a Basis for Informing Language Supports

One of the Head Start Multicultural Principles (1991) states, "Culturally relevant and diverse programming requires learning accurate information about the cultures of different groups and discarding stereotypes." It expects all program staff to take responsibility ("individual responsibility") to acquire accurate information about the cultural groups in their community and warns that "stereotypes and misinformation interfere with effective Head Start program services." For program directors and administrators, the responsibility is to create opportunities for program staff to reflect on their own experiences and beliefs (including assumptions and beliefs that are stereotypical and may influence their work with families and communities" and to build the mechanisms through which program staff have the opportunity to learn and gain accurate information about the families and communities they serve. Those mechanisms could include, for example:

- *Time dedicated to engaging in family interviews, with translation supports.*

- *Identification of and a network of established relationships with trusted and authentic community leaders who can serve as informational resources about the community.*

- *Establishment of a Community of Practice for staff to meet and reflect, share their own language and cultural histories/stories, read articles about the cultures and languages and communities they serve, and discuss.*

As part of guidance for developing Planned Language Approaches for DLLs, Head Start issued, "Gathering and Using Language Information that Families Share," suggesting that early childhood programs should involve learning about six areas related to language for each child in their care:

- *Language background (one, two, or more)*

- *Dual language development*

- *Language dominance*

- *Home language experiences*

- *English language experiences,*

- *Individual characteristics of the child.*

Specifically, the guidance urges early childhood education programs to ask question such as these:

- **Language Background:** What languages does your family speak? How much experience (exposure) has your child had with each language? Is your child growing up with two languages? If so, what are the languages? Can you tell me about your child's use of English (if at all)?

- **Language Dominance:** Does your child use one of their languages more often than the other? When your child wants to communicate, which languages do they use?

- **Home Language Experience:** Who are the people in your child's life who speak the home language? What are some experiences or activities your child has using language? What experiences with early reading and writing has your child had in their home language?

- **English Language Experiences:** Who are the people in your child's life who speak English with them? What are some experiences or activities your child has using English? What experiences with early reading and writing has your child had in English?

- **Background:** Did your child grow up learning two languages from birth? (*simultaneous*) Did your child grow up with one language from birth and then learn a second language after the age of two (*sequential*)? How old was s/he when the second language was introduced? Does your child use one of their languages more often than the other?
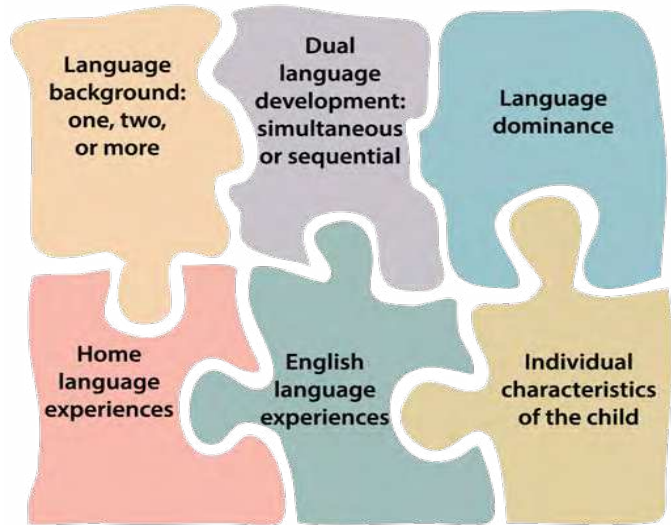
This information helps staff know which languages to assess and support, understand the family's preferences and beliefs about language, informs curriculum planning and teaching methods and the kind of language supports the child may need for participation and comprehension.

In addition, Head Start's Multicultural Principles include one specifically speaking to the information to be gathered about the families and communities. Principle #10 reads: "Culturally relevant and diverse programming and practices are incorporated in all systems and services and are beneficial to all adults and children," and suggests the following reflections for program staff related to Culture in the Lives of Families:

1. **What cultural groups live within the service area of your program?** What do you know about the lifestyle, immigration history, health beliefs, communication style, etc., of each cultural group? What do you know about the different ideas for raising children held within these cultural groups? How did you learn this information?

2. **What skills and behaviors do parents in your program value in their children?** How might their personal backgrounds or other experiences influence their thinking?

3. **What systems or strategies does your program currently have in place to obtain additional information about the cultural groups in your service area?** What else could be done to learn about the cultural groups in your service area

4. **In what ways do your program's systems and services reflect information about the cultural groups in your service area?** Have the demographics of your service area changed recently?

California State Preschool Programs: Determining DLL Status in California

Consistent and formal approaches to determining "DLL" status help with program planning and provide a means of monitoring issues of access. California has made it a priority to institute a data collection approach to identifying dual language learners in early education. As of 2023, two instruments are used in CSPP preschools for this purpose, the Family Language Instrument and the Family Language and Interest Interview.

The Family Language Instrument uses just four questions to determine DLL status—questions asked of parents/ guardians for every child enrolled in the program. The four questions that determine DLL status include:

1. **Which language(s) does your child hear at home?** This includes the language(s) spoken by parents, grandparents, siblings, extended family, or others living within or visiting the home.

2. **Which language(s) does your child hear in their neighborhood and community?** For example, with friends and neighbors, at church, or at after-school programs. This is to demonstrate language exposure not to measure language proficiency.

3. **Which language(s) does your child understand?**

4. **Which language(s) does your child speak?**

According to the CDE guidance, "The purpose of this instrument is to identify and understand each child's language background in order to support and strengthen their language development. When adults understand children's past experiences with language(s), they are able to build upon those experiences and better support children's development, by affirming and fostering the child's home language and culture to support them in becoming multilingual and multi-literate in both English and their home language(s). This information will be used to inform and plan program curriculum, develop strategies used in the learning setting, create professional development opportunities, and to strengthen family partnerships to improve support for dual language learner (DLL) children."

It is important to note that determinations made for preschool dual language learner status based on the results of this instrument are distinct from the English learner (EL) designation in the Transitional Kindergarten through 12th grade (TK-12) system. Dual language learner identification in preschool does not establish EL designation or secure EL services in TK-12. Students enrolled in TK-12 go through the English learner identification process, including completion of their district's home language survey (HLS) and English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) upon entry to Transitional Kindergarten (TK) or kindergarten, as required by state and federal law.

CDE advises using the following verbiage to reassure and address parents and families concerned about the implications of DLL identification in preschool and the relationship to English learner status in TK-12.

"Identification of your child as a dual language learner in CSPP means that your child will benefit from additional support from the program in order to develop their home language and English language skills. This identification will serve them only in preschool and is different from any identification process or program supports a child might receive as an English learner in Transitional Kindergarten (TK) or kindergarten."

Family Language and Interest Interview (for all DLLs)

The purpose of this interview is to support relationship building with families with children identified as dual language learners and learn more about each child's experiences with language. When adults understand children's past experiences with language(s), they are able to build upon those experiences and better support children's development. The interview is meant to support program providers in:

- *Building a relationship and trust with the child's family member(s)*

- *Learning about children's past experiences with language(s) in order to best support their optimal progress and development.*

- *Helping families understand the benefits of multilingualism and the important role of the home language in supporting English development.*

- *Encouraging families to continue developing their child's home language in the home.*

- *Having a better understanding of the different languages and cultures in the classroom to make program-wide decisions on resources (e.g., purchasing books in the different languages represented by children and families).*

Information from interviews with families is used to inform program curriculum, strategies used in the learning setting, professional development, and to strengthen family partnerships to improve support for dual language learner (DLL) children. It's also an opportunity to support a family's understanding of the benefits of multilingualism (e.g., "There are many benefits of being multilingual and we want to highlight how continuing to strengthen the home language will help strengthen your child's education.") CDE guidance is that for any child who is identified as a DLL, CSPP providers should offer families resources on the benefits of strengthening home language and ideas for what they can do at home to support their child's language development after the interview takes place.

(1)

Family Language and Interest Interview Questions

1. *What are your child's interests and favorite activities? (For example, does your child have favorite stories, books, and songs?)*

2. *What are some strengths you see in your child that we can build on? (For example, do they like to build things, do art, etc.?)*

3. *How can we help support your child's language and development at home? (For example, books to read at home, materials, activity ideas…)*

4. *Young children love to talk, read, sing and are able to learn all the languages around them. Which language(s) does your child speak the most at home?*

5. *We want to best support your child's language development and understand what language(s) they speak with family members. What language(s) does your child us to speak with their siblings, grandparents, and other family members?*

6. *Which language(s) does your child speak the most overall? This would be inside and outside of the home combined.*

7. *In what language would you prefer to receive written communication from us? (While we would like to be able to accommodate all requests for written communication in a parent's requested language, our program may not be able to translate written communication materials into that language.)*

8. *In what language would you prefer us to communicate verbally with you? (While we would like to be able to accommodate all requests for verbal communication in a parent's requested language, our program may not be able to offer translation into that language.)*

The questions for families recommended by Head Start and the questions included in the CA Family Language and Interest Interview can be used by any early education program to inform staff about the language experiences of the children in their care.

> **RESOURCE:**
> **"DLL Identification Guide: For CSPP Providers", February 2024.**
>
> **Available on www.californianstogether.org**
>
> A helpful resource to ensure that DLL identification is a positive experience for providers, emphasizing the important role it can play in building strong relationships with DLL children and families. It covers basic DLL identification principles, effective family engagement strategies, objectives of the Family Language Instruction and Family Language and Interest Interview, and valuable insights into using data for DLL services.

For program directors and administrators, the responsibility is to create opportunities for program staff to reflect on their own experiences and beliefs, and to build the mechanisms through which staff have the opportunity to learn and gain accurate information about the families and communities they serve.

My favorite thing about TK is
pl pf

My favorite thing about TK is
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Paul
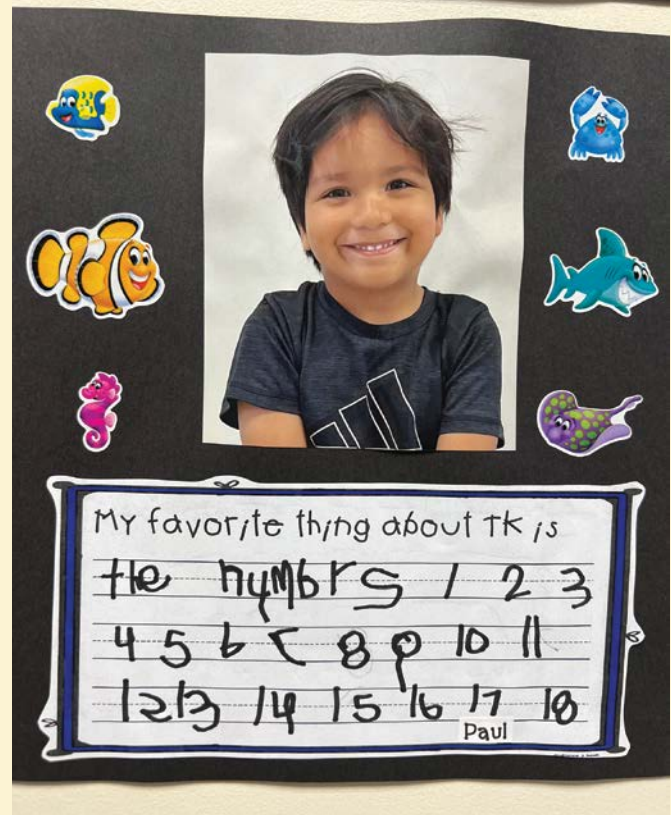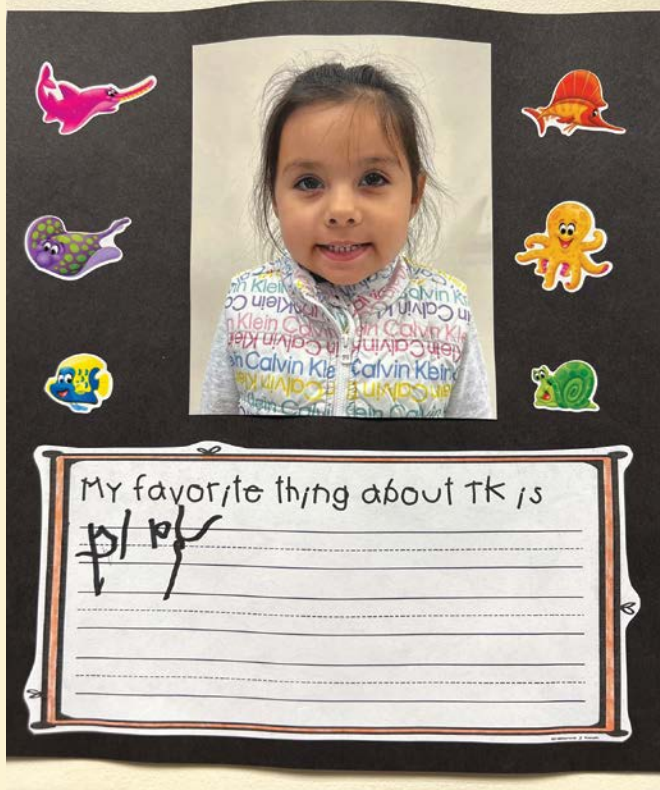
TEAM ACTIVITY: What Do We Know About Our DLLs?

Gather what existing data there is for the preschool program. This should include any data from enrollment forms, initial assessments, or family interviews. Compile it to construct a profile of the classroom(s) site and overall program. Include, for example:

- *The number of children with a home language other than English.*

- *The number of children in homes where English is not spoken.*

- *A list of languages spoken in the homes of the children served in the program.*

- *The Nationality/Cultural Identity, Ethnic Identity (self-reported) of families/children in the program.*

Share this information with the group. Then, ask the team as a group to share what additional information they know about the DLLs in the program. Chart their responses. Prompts might include, for example: "What do we know about the family's home countries? What do you know about their immigration experiences? English use in the home? Expressed language goals?

After five minutes of sharing and compiling information, identify any remaining questions:

- *What additional information would you/we like to know about the languages and cultures of the children and families we serve?*

- *What would it help us to know?*

- *What kind of support do we and our teachers/staff need to understand more about the cultures and language experiences of the children and families in our program?*

- *In what ways does this information help us respond to our children and families?*

REFLECTION TOOL: How Prepared are We to Learn About the Cultures and Languages of Our DLLs?

It's helpful to take stock of how prepared your preschool program is to learn about, know about, and respond to the cultural and language experiences of the children and families in the program.

How we learn about our DLLS	This is solidly in place.	We have some of this in place.	Happens to some degree...but it is not a formal part of our system practices.	Not happening.
We systematically collect information from families about their home language, language experiences, culture, and nationality.				
We have a means of assessing children's language development in and across their language(s) using culturally and linguistically valid instruments.				
The information we collect from families about their home language, culture, and nationality is shared with staff in a timely and useful manner.				
We have staff who speak the languages of and are from the cultural communities of the families and children in our program and are able to serve as cultural liaisons and communicators with families in their home language.				
Resources are available for teachers related to learning about and understanding the cultures, languages and experiences of the cultural, national, and language groups in our program.				
We have translators and culturally and linguistically proficient resources with expertise to help our program communicate with and respond to families and children in culturally and linguistically responsive ways.				
(Paid) time is provided for staff to be able to engage in family interviews—with translation support as needed.				
Our staff (front office, teachers, etc.) is thoroughly versed in and knows about Plyler v. Doe and the rights of students (regardless of immigration status) to attend schools and receive services, and they are aware that staff cannot ask about immigration status.				
Our staff is aware of how immigration experiences and status can impact the lives, needs, and school engagement of children and families.				
We have established a Community of Practice network for our staff to reflect together, share their own language and cultural stories, and discuss the cultural dynamics serving the families and children in the program.				
We proactively meet with families (utilizing translation/interpreters when needed) to invite families to share their children's gifts, strengths, and aspirations for their children's learning and language development.				

ACTIVITY: The Impacts of Immigration Status on Children and Families

Most dual language learners are born in the United States but have at least one immigrant parent. Many are immigrants themselves. This means that many DLLs and their families are impacted by a complex political system governing immigration that determines rights, eligibility, working conditions for families, and social stability in the United States. Furthermore, according to the Education Trust West, 250,000 undocumented students are enrolled in California schools K-12, and approximately 750,000 live with an undocumented parent—adding to family stress and difficult circumstances. These conditions are part of the context in which young children are developing.

This activity can be used to raise awareness among staff about the impacts of immigration status on DLL children and families.

1 **STEP ONE: TEA PARTY WITH "DID YOU KNOW?" CARDS**

Begin with the set of cards printed below. Each has a reading from a researched report. Hand out one card with a "Did you know?" statement on it to every TWO people. As a duo, each pair should read their card, and talk about what it says. It will be their job to SHARE the information on their card with others by moving around the room. Each duo meets up with another and explains their cards to each other. After THREE exchanges, return to the whole group.

2 **STEP TWO: TABLE GO-AROUND**

Each person weighs in with a statement. "I am aware of these circumstances (or circumstances like these) impacting some of the children and families in our program. I have noticed _____." OR, "I have not noticed and am not aware these things are impacting any children in our program."

3 **STEP THREE: WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLES OF EDUCATORS**

As a whole group, brainstorm the role of early childhood educators in responding to the impacts of immigration on children and families. (In facilitating the discussion, note the following points showing some of the things it would be good to have on the list).

Reassure children that they are safe at school.

- *Be explicit to children that they (and their families) are welcome at school.*

- *Offer comfort to students when frightened—acknowledge that whatever it is, is scary.*

- *Conduct trauma-informed practices.*

- *Offer help for children dealing with separation. (e.g., making drawings, sending letters, bringing photos of loved ones they are separated from to hang on the classroom wall)*

- *Recognizing behaviors that might indicate fear/upset (e.g., watching for aggression, dramatic play among young children, caging, bullying, name-calling).*

- *Provide resources and referrals for families (e.g., legal counsel, housing, food)*

- *Create a plan with the family in case parents are detained. Who will pick up the child? Who should be contacted?*

- *Create signs for the walls that declare the preschool is a SAFE ZONE that welcomes immigrants.*

- *Interrupt comments of staff or other adults/parents that might contribute to the children of immigrants feeling threatened or unsafe at school.*

- *Use children's books that represent the experiences of immigrants—and provide opportunities for children to see their experiences mirrored in literature.*

CARDS FOR THE ACTIVITY

CARD 1: DID YOU KNOW

Undocumented parents and their undocumented children face the constant threat of deportation because they entered the United States illegally or entered legally with visas but remained in the U.S. after the expiration of their entry permits. In addition, many families with undocumented immigrant parents are known as "mixed-status" families because while the parents may be undocumented, some of their children may also be undocumented children who immigrated with their parents, and there may also be U.S.-born citizen-children. Many undocumented immigrants with children are detained and deported. All of their children (regardless of the child's immigration status) are impacted—and are at risk for negative outcomes when the families are fractured and destabilized by arrest, detention, and deportation. These children have higher levels of depressive symptoms and emotional problems (e.g., negative mood, physical symptoms, and negative self-esteem), more anxiety, and fear. Their health can be impacted as a result of disruption of family routines and resources. Even living under a cloud of the deportability of their parents has a negative effect on children. There is often a constant sense of vulnerability to losing a parent and a home if parents are arrested, detained, and deported.

CARD 2: DID YOU KNOW

Families may look to teachers and administrators for answers to questions related to immigration issues. For this reason, it is important that educators have access to accurate and updated information that will make it easier to address questions and concerns when they arise. Having referral information to legal services is also important. Another central topic related to school settings is the government policy of "Sensitive locations." Many schools have reported drops in attendance and enrollment related to parent concerns about immigration enforcement occurring at or around schools—with ICE officers rounding up parents when they drop off their children. Teachers should know that their settings are considered "sensitive locations," meaning immigration enforcement activity should not be happening near schools. Few schools have internal policies for dealing with ICE agents who try to enter their facilities. They also don't know if they are legally obligated to admit immigration agents without a warrant. Consequently, they can't assure immigrant families that the center is a safe place. All educators should become familiar with related local/state laws and should stay current with updates on this topic.

CARD 3: DID YOU KNOW

Children in immigrant families may be experiencing a number of situations that cause stress, anxiety, and trauma. This can impact their healthy development, social interactions, and motivation. Children may be feeling anxiety or fear about:

- *Losing a parent (such as the case of Sophie Cruz, a five-year-old who slipped past security during Pope Francis's 2015 visit to Washington, D.C. to give him a letter expressing her fear that her parents would be deported).*
- *An unexpected or lengthy separation.*
- *Having to move to a new country if a parent is deported.*
- *Losing a friend.*
- *Family members' stress, anxiety, or depression.*

Children may also have experienced a traumatic event, such as:

- *Witnessing a loved one's arrest.*
- *Being separated from a parent during interrogation.*
- *A forced and/or lengthy separation from family.*
- *Detention in an immigration detention center.*
- *Coming into contact with immigration enforcement officers.*
- *An arduous journey to this country.*

In addition, the situations children's families are facing may have an impact on whether children's basic needs are being met.

CARD 4: DID YOU KNOW

In June 2018, a large immigration raid left dozens of young children stranded at day care centers and schools in Ohio when parents had been detained and were unable to pick up their children. Staff scrambled to find relatives and emergency contacts to determine what should be done with the children. This example underscores the importance of having updated emergency contact information and a plan in place to care for students whose caregivers/parents/guardians are detained during the day. Putting protocols in place for these situations improves the chance of finding an appropriate caregiver for children and being able to reassure students that the adults in their lives (teachers, staff, and family) are prepared to be sure they will be cared for. Schools should work with families to ensure there is Emergency contact information on file and Family Plans for care for students stranded following detention.

CARD 5: DID YOU KNOW

In 2018, researchers reported that educators and early childhood providers around the country have observed more stress, anxiety, and behavioral difficulties in the immigrant children they serve, such as: "aggression, hyperactivity, and separation anxiety" and "symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as frequent crying, trouble sleeping, and increased anxiety." This correlates with findings by the American Psychological Association (APA) that, "Children whose undocumented parents have been detained or even deported… experience in the short term, frequent crying, withdrawal, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns, anger, anxiety, and depression." According to the report, educators and families have also reported:

- *Decreased engagement and participation in the classroom, fear of police, and actions to protect relatives from police.*

- *Children as young as three (both immigrant and U.S. citizen children) expressing fears about being separated from a parent.*

- *These changes can impact children's healthy development, both physically and emotionally, their confidence and self-esteem, and their identity. The APA notes that, "Over time, these (stresses) can lead to more severe issues like post-traumatic stress disorder, poor identity formation, difficulty forming relationships, feelings of persecution, distrust of institutions and authority figures, acting out behaviors and difficulties at school."*

CARD 6: DID YOU KNOW

"Far too many children in this country already live in constant fear that their parents will be taken into custody or deported… No child should ever live in fear. When children are scared, it can impact their health and development." (American Academy of Pediatrics Statement on Protecting Immigrant Children, 1/25/2017.)

When families include members with undocumented immigration status, this can create fear of separation from loved ones, produce psychological stress, and add economic hardship. Children often worry when adults around them are worried or when they hear news reports or adult discussion they do not understand. They can become distressed when the adults who care for them are experiencing their own emotional reactions. Parents worry about the effects on their children and how to manage children's emotions and behaviors. Some families have already experienced separation when a parent migrates before the rest of the family, often leaving children in the care of other family members. Children can live in constant fear of separation, even if they have not experienced separation in the past or do not know anyone who has been deported. Separation between parents and children can be traumatic with emotionally harmful lasting adverse effects. Fear and stress, particularly prolonged exposure to serious stress, known as toxic stress, can interfere with children's emotional development, capacity for learning at school, and regulation of feelings. The good news is that research shows that, even under stressful conditions, supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress.

① Valuing and Building Strong Family Partnerships

"Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships."

Having information about the languages and cultures of the children and families in the program is only a start—the foundation for the important task of valuing, building upon, and responding to those realities. A strength of the early childhood education field has always been the fundamental recognition that children are parts of families, and that relationships with families are an essential aspect of quality early care and education. The knowledge and understanding of who the children and their families are is the foundation for the implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive practice and learning environments.

The reciprocal is equally valid. Through the creation of affirming, culturally, and linguistically responsive classrooms and schools, educators come to know their children and families in a more powerful way. The partnership between families and programs is the bedrock of effective practice—and it must be built as a two-way relationship, invited by, supported by, and embraced by the preschool program staff.

There are three components to effective family-program partnerships. These include:

   1. *The provision of family support and family education services,*

   2. *Mechanisms through which families and staff are engaged in partnering to shape the programs and services children receive, and*

   3. *Creating curriculum and learning environments that embrace the cultures, languages, and families of the children in the program.*

Family Support and Family Education

Early childhood education programs are positioned uniquely to be a source of information about family support—a vital role for immigrant families in need of culturally and linguistically accessible and responsive services and resources. During the fantastic but vulnerable years of parenting young children, immigrant parents are also having to negotiate a new culture and environment. As a conduit to services, and as a support for parents of young children, preschool staff can play a pivotal role if they have the preparation, skills, information, and understanding. Programs that take this role seriously, provide support to both staff and to parents in building that powerful partnership for the development of thriving, healthy bicultural, bilingual children. This includes:

   • *Building awareness among families about early language development, the benefits of bilingualism, and the importance of continued home language development for family cohesion and children's success in school and life.*

   • *Providing family engagement, educational programs, and resources in the home languages of families and/ or making translation services available.*

   • *Offering resource and referral mechanisms to connect families to culturally and linguistically accessible and responsive services, including health, legal, housing, and other supports.*

   • *Delivering training, materials, and coaching for staff toward their understanding of the cultural contexts of early learning and development, the realities, and stresses of immigrant families in transitioning into a new cultural landscape, and then teaching skills for building strong respectful relationships across cultures and languages.*

   • *Supplying translation resources to support two-way communication.*

Mechanisms To Engage Families and Staff in Planning and Partnership

Families have critical information about their children that program staff need in order to be responsive and supportive of the child's development. And families have a right to be involved in shaping the care and education of their children. Effective programs have formal mechanisms to support the engagement of families with staff in planning. These mechanisms include:

- *Proactively meeting with families (utilizing translation/interpreters when needed) to invite families to share their children's gifts, strengths, and aspirations for their children's learning and language development*

- *Providing information about various approaches to language development for dual language learners, and practices to seek input from families to guide planning language approaches used for the instruction of DLLs*

- *Meeting regularly with families to discuss overall progress, discuss results of screenings and assessments and teacher observations along with implications for support and instruction—and to discuss how families can support the child's development at home*

- *Providing specific information about dual language immersion, bilingual, and English-instructed pathways in the K-12 system prior to kindergarten enrollment—with information for families about pathways to bilingualism and the long term academic implications of the choice of a kindergarten language pathway*

- *Instituting frequent opportunities (with translation is needed) to check in with families about their satisfaction with the program, to hear their observations and perspectives surrounding their child's experiences in the program, and to elicit their ideas and suggestions.*

- *Offering translators and culturally and linguistically proficient resources with expertise to support staff in communicating with and responding to families and children in culturally and linguistically responsive ways.*

- *Enabling DLL preschool parents' participation in the district's DELAC (District English Learner Advisory Committee) to represent the interests and needs of DLLs in district planning and decisions about use of resources, etc.*

The Family Role, Cultural Presence in the Curriculum

The learning environment of the early education program, and the curriculum itself communicate who belongs and who may be on the margin or invisible. Whether a child sees people like them in the books, on the walls, in the stories that are told—whether a child hears their language and can use their language in the program—all of this is noticed and plays a role in feeling connected, in being able to use their resources for learning, and in establishing status. An effective and inclusive and equitable preschool program ensures that families have a place in the classroom, and that a child's culture and language have a presence in the curriculum. While it may not be feasible for a specific preschool classroom to operate bilingually in all of the languages of the children, all preschool classrooms can invite and affirmatively establish the presence of family, culture, and language. This includes:

- *Curriculum that promotes the parent role as child's first teacher, through incorporating experiences that highlight family traditions, culture, and values—essential in creating affirming, inclusive environments for all children and families—and by inviting and supporting home-school connection activities as part of the curriculum.*

- *Books in the languages of the families and children in the program are available in all preschool classrooms, available for family loan, and used to invite family members to come read to children in the class in their home language.*

- *Wall displays and photos that feature the families in the program and reflect the cultural and community life of the families.*

- *Trainings, materials, and coaching for staff in how to incorporate family experiences, cultures, and home languages into the curriculum.*

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Preparing Early Childhood Education Staff for Family Engagement and Partnership

Recognizing the importance of building partnerships between early education staff and families, the California Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) credential explicitly outlines the competencies and knowledge required. The Teacher Performance Expectations articulate the need to understand the role of family in the development and learning of children, the need for skills to work collaboratively with families, and the importance of teachers' understanding of the interactive and integral role of family and culture and community on children's development.

While the TPEs are written for preservice preparation, the competencies are helpful for all program directors and administrators to be aware of in the screening and selection of teachers and in coaching and providing professional learning and support to existing staff.

Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs): ECE Teachers

TPE 1: Engaging and Supporting All Young Children in Development and Learning

Element 1.e: Describe the demographics and the cultural and linguistic background and perspectives of the children and families served within the early childhood setting.

Element 1.f: Apply knowledge of children, including their prior experiences, interests, and social-emotional learning needs, their background knowledge ("funds of knowledge"), and cultural, language, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to engage them in learning.

Element 1.g: Communicate and collaborate in partnership with families in a culturally appropriate and responsive manner to support young children's development and learning.

TPE 2: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Young Children's Development and Learning

Element 2.a: Establish positive home relationships with young children and positive relationships with children's families.

Element 2.i: Explain how an effective home-school-family connection supports children's development and learning.

TPE 4: Planning Instruction and Designing Developmental and Learning Experiences for All Young Children

Element 4.k: Develop specific plans for engaging and partnering with families in supporting children's growth and development.

REFLECTION: Reflect upon the strength of your preschool/TK program staff with regards to these competencies. Consider areas that may benefit from professional learning or coaching for individuals, or collaborative dialogue and sharing among staff.

> **Key to the English Learner Roadmap Principle #1 is the notion of assets-oriented schooling. Fundamentally, this approach centralizes, celebrates, and leverages the cultural, personal, linguistic assets children bring to their schooling.**

MULTILINGUAL LEARNING TOOLKIT (Early Edge)

Resources on Family Engagement

A section of the Multilingual Learning Toolkit (www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org) offers resources (videos, articles, vignettes) related to six evidence-based strategies for family engagement. These resources can be used with staff to deepen understanding and suggest actions that can be taken to strengthen family partnerships.

1. Gather information on each child's language/cultural background from parents upon enrollment.

2. Talk with families about their language and learning goals for their child. Ask families to share their thoughts on the child's bilingual development and how this may relate to their goals.

3. Provide families with information on home language development and the benefits of bilingualism and encourage them to continue to speak their home language to their child.

4. Partner with families to provide varied opportunities for them to come to the classroom to share their language and culture.

5. Provide parents with children's learning activities to support home language development and connect the curriculum with learning at home.

6. Partner with families in identifying topics or ideas that are of interest to the child and incorporate these in curriculum planning.

FRESNO LANGUAGE LEARNING PROJECT

Resources on Family Engagement

The website of the Fresno Language Learning Project includes useful resources on family engagement in the section on "Developing Authentic Partnerships with Families of Dual Language Learners: a Toolkit for Educators of Children Ages Birth to Five."

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REFLECTION TOOL: Building Strong Family Partnerships

Read each of the elements listed in the Tool and consider the degree to which these practices for building strong family partnerships are enacted in your program. Reflect on which might be important areas for growth.

How We Build Strong Family Partnerships	This is solidly in place.	We have some of this in place.	Happens to some degree...but it is not a formal part of our system practices.	Not happening.
Our staff understands and values the important role of family in child development and learning.				
Our staff regularly reaches out and communicates with our families.				
We have adequate formal mechanisms to support two-way communication with our families (e.g., translation supports, routine communications).				
We have staff who can speak the languages of our children and families.				
We provide resource referral information to our families to culturally and linguistically accessible and appropriate services.				
We provide information and messaging and explicitly build awareness among families about early language development, the benefits of bilingualism, the importance of continued home language development.				
We provide family engagement, educational programs, and resources in the home languages of our families and/or make interpretation services available.				
We provide training, materials, and coaching for our staff in understanding the cultural contexts of early learning and development, the realities and stress of immigrant families in transitioning to a new cultural landscape, and the skills for building strong respectful two-way relationships across cultures and languages,				
We proactively and regularly meet with families to hear their perspectives on their children's gifts, strengths and their own aspirations for their child's learning and development.				
We meet regularly with families to discuss overall progress, discuss results of screenings and assessments and teacher observations along with implications for support and instruction—and to discuss how families can support their child's development at home.				
We provide specific information about dual language immersion, bilingual, and English-instructed pathways in the K-12 system prior to kindergarten enrollment.				

How We Build Strong Family Partnerships	This is solidly in place.	We have some of this in place.	Happens to some degree...but it is not a formal part of our system practices.	Not happening.
For TK, we pursue having DLL parents participate in the district DELAC to represent the needs and interests of DLLs in district planning.				
Our curriculum incorporates home-school connections and highlights family traditions, culture, and values.				
Books in the languages of the families and children are available in the classroom, available for family loan, and are used to invite family members to read to children in the classroom in their home language.				
Wall displays and photos feature the families in the program and reflect the cultural and community life of the families.				

NOTES ON PRIORITY AREAS TO ADDRESS:

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The partnership between families and programs is the bedrock of effective practice—and it must be built as a two-way relationship, invited by, supported by, and embraced by the preschool program staff.

WHAT A CARING COMMUNITY LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATORS

To create a true caring community of learners, educators need to consider the child's point of view as well as their own, as described in the following table.

From a Child's Point of View	From an Educator's Point of View
My teacher cares about me, really listens to me, and likes me.	I show respect and warmth to all children through appropriate physical affection, using a soothing tone of voice, smiles, and laughter. I listen carefully to children's feelings and ideas with attention and respect.
I feel like I belong. My identity, language, and culture are valued and represented in the classroom. I feel free to use my home language throughout the day.	I greet children personally when they arrive, call each child by name, and talk with children at their eye level. I use key phrases in the child's home language or speak it myself. I arrange to have proficient speakers of DLL' home language(s) in the classroom to interact with and conduct some activities such as book reading. I accept DLLs' use of their home language and build on their language strengths.
I feel proud of my family and they are welcome in my school.	I greet families warmly. I display family photos. I conduct home visits or, if parents prefer, meet privately with them at a comfortable site such as a library or local community center. I listen to families with attention and respect.
	If necessary, I arrange for interpreters when a family does not speak English.
	I actively seek out information about each family's language use, language preferences, cultural values, special talents, and availability for joint activities.
My teacher knows me well. They are aware of my abilities, strengths, interests, and needs.	I engage in individual conversations with children throughout the day. I get to know children by carefully observing them and developing a relationship with their families. For DLLs, I enlist a proficient speaker of child's home language to help me understand the child's strengths and needs.
I feel safe, secure, and happy.	I hold a child's hand, smile, or pat a child lightly on the shoulder depending on what is comfortable for the individual. I make sure DLLs are not excluded from activities and interactions because of their limited English skills.
I'm not scared. No one bullies me.	I protect each and every child and have zero tolerance for bullying.
I have friends.	I help children who are isolated or lonely connect with at least one other child. I intentionally partner DLLs with other children who have more developed bilingual abilities.
I am challenged and I am learning.	I expect children to succeed. I acknowledge their effort and accomplishment with verbal feedback, smiles, hugs, high-fives, or thumbs-up.
My teacher still likes me even if I don't always remember the rules or if I sometimes do the wrong thing.	I acknowledge and support children's positive behavior, especially those children who tend to demonstrate challenging behavior. I take time to nurture individual relationships each day. I make a special effort to engage with DLLs even though we may not share a common language.
I play, explore, discover, wonder, and experience joy every day.	I begin each day anew, genuinely enjoy children, and delight in their accomplishments.

Based on: Bredekamp, S. (2020). Effective Practices in Early Childhood Education: Building a Foundation, 4th ed. New York: Pearson.

Valuing and Building Upon Cultural and Linguistic Assets DLLs Bring in Safe and Affirming School Climates

Children learn best where they feel safe, supported, and affirmed, where they are provided with support for developing social skills, and where they can engage respectfully with each other. Because early childhood education settings are often among children's first communities outside the home, the character of these communities is very influential in children's development—particularly so for children whose family culture and language may not be the dominant one in the preschool program. This is where children learn how they can expect to be treated, and develop their own understandings of status, place, and belonging.

In developmentally appropriate practice, educators create and foster a community of learners. The role of the community is to provide a physical, emotional, and cognitive environment conducive to development and learning for each child. Each member of the learning community is valued for what they bring to the community; all members are supported to consider and contribute to one another's wellbeing and learning.

Building self-identity and skills for social interaction and learning appropriate school behavior are major developmental tasks for young children. A safe, affirming environment helps children understand and respect differences, learn the vocabulary for social interaction, and value diversity. Classrooms that are focused on building strong, caring, and affirming relationships foundational for learning include the following:

- *Pictures, posters, books, and realia that reflect the cultures and languages of all of the children and families in the program.*

- *Explicit teaching of language and vocabulary for expressing feelings, supported by opportunities to problem solve and interact respectfully with peers.*

- *Facilitated discussions focusing on children's concerns, addressing social dynamics, and creating forums for talking about feelings, interests, problem solving, etc.*

- *Focus on pro-social, inclusive behaviors by teaching, emphasizing, and acknowledging clear standards of respectful supportive social behavior and norms.*

- *Explicit emphasis on the value of bilingualism, which supports the use of children's home language to talk about their identity, their families, and their culture.*

- *Children are invited, supported to share—and helped to develop the language to express their feelings, ideas, and needs.*

- *Families are welcome in the classroom, and there is active two-way communication between staff and families. Teachers have and take time to build strong relationships with families.*

Key to the English Learner Roadmap Principle #1 is the notion of assets-oriented schooling. Fundamentally, this approach centralizes, celebrates, and leverages the cultural, personal, linguistic assets children bring to their schooling. It stands as a specific and clear juxtaposition to DLLs' schooling, which for too long has been characterized by a deficiency paradigm—compensatory and intervention approach—and the erasure or marginalization of the languages and cultures, family, and community experiences children bring. To borrow from the Anti-Bias Education framework, it stands as "a commitment to supporting children who live in a highly diverse and yet still inequitable world." It is a commitment to reject the harmful emotional, psychological, economic, and social impacts on children stemming from societal prejudice and bias. By strengthening the child's sense of self, family, and identity, by recognizing and embracing their gifts, and by providing the schooling that enables them to leverage all that they bring to uplift their continued growth, we foster learning and development.

Responsiveness to Culture and Language Supports Children's Learning

Children's engagement and motivation to learn is increased when their social and learning environment fosters their sense of belonging, purpose, and agency. Curricula and teaching methods should build on each child's assets by connecting their experiences in the school or learning environment to their home and community settings and by embracing and affirming their language and culture. Culturally, linguistically responsive, and sustaining practices are essential in high-quality "intellectually rich" early education classrooms.

First, this means a commitment to building strong home-school partnerships. Effective programs build strong home-school partnerships and support parents as a child's first teacher. Linguistic and cultural congruity between home and school supports children's development. Two-way partnerships between home and school are essential to creating that congruity—drawing upon the families' knowledge, expertise, and cultural capital as assets. While the educational involvement of families is important in children's lives throughout their schooling years, in the early years of development, family culture, home language and family engagement are absolutely central for healthy development. Young children learn best in a safe, affirming environment that respects and integrates the home culture, and language, recognizes the key role of a child's culture and language in their development, and supports young children in bridging across and integrating home and school contexts.

Second, children should be able to feel themselves as part of a supportive, respectful, and affirming community in their classroom and school—with each child a valued member of the learning community. This means that children need to be supported to learn about and feel comfortable with human diversity, to explore similarities and differences, to treat each other with value, and to engage in building a learning community that is fair and inclusive.

Third, children should be able to see themselves in the curriculum, in the classroom, in the body of and building of knowledge as they learn about the world. Multilingualism and diverse cultures must be valued and visible—on the classroom walls and in the learning materials and books. Family pictures and cultural items from children's homes should take their place in displays, along with a wealth of children's' books representing the different cultures and languages of the children and families in the school. This is a fundamental issue of equity, inclusion, and social justice for all children.

The early childhood education field has historically embraced the notion of affirming children's families as a central principle. Family was central. Then came recognition of identity. The inclusion of affirming the child's culture and language is more recent. And California's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) credential, and revised TPEs now call for "culturally and linguistically responsive" curriculum and practices. Agreement on what that means, or how to operationalize affirming children's cultures or providing culturally and linguistically responsive practices remains a task for the field. The EL Roadmap now sets into state policy the basic Principle of assets-oriented approaches to P-12. Implementing the EL Roadmap requires exploring the meaning of "assets-oriented" schooling, connecting it to the early childhood education field's notions of affirming children's culture and of culturally and linguistically responsive practice, and identifying the path to realizing the vision in programs across the state.

READING: What Is Assets-Based Pedagogy?

Children possess a wealth of knowledge and resources accumulated from life in the home when they arrive in early learning programs. These wellsprings of knowledge are embodied in children's and families' languages and represented through their beliefs, values, internalized rules, and expectations—in other words, their culture. Each child brings with them the accumulated and historically developed body of knowledge that is critical to their wellbeing and their cultural and linguistic identity. And their home language is the vehicle through which children develop relationships with others and is the means by which they understand their role in the home, community, and larger society. Their language is a major vehicle for connecting, for building relationships, for learning. Creating preschool programs that support DLLs is not just about conveying messages that their diverse languages and cultures are worthwhile; it must also be about constructing opportunities, building relationships, and engaging children in learning where they are encouraged and able to use their language and cultural resources in the process of participation in the preschool world. The English Learner Roadmap uses the term: "assets oriented."

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) weaves this notion into its definition of developmentally appropriate practice. Educators implement developmentally appropriate practice, "by recognizing the **multiple assets** young children bring to their learning as unique individuals and as members of families, communities, and cultures." NAEYC views development as individual and cultural, citing culturally and linguistically inclusive and responsive approaches as core to developmentally appropriate practice.

The EL Roadmap evokes assets-based pedagogy in the same way–a teaching approach that embraces the assets (the experiences, the knowledge, the ways of seeing and understanding) that children bring as the foundation for continued learning and development. It is akin to "culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining" practices. These are all explicit alternatives to deficit-oriented teaching approaches that position the languages, cultures, and identities of children as either irrelevant or as barriers to learning. It is based upon brain research on the importance of connecting new knowledge/ideas/concepts to existing knowledge, on the neuroscience of language development in dual language learners. It importantly builds upon decades of critical theory and research on the role of cultural relevance for students whose experiences and cultures have traditionally been excluded from the curriculum.

Decades ago, Geneva Gay coined the term "culturally responsive teaching" to define an approach that emphasizes, "...using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them." Culturally responsive teaching is an approach that challenges educators to recognize that, rather than deficits, students bring strengths into the classroom that should be leveraged to make learning experiences more relevant to and effective for them. Culturally Responsive Teaching is an approach that leverages the strengths that students of color bring to the classroom to make learning more relevant and effective. A major goal of Culturally Responsive Teaching is to reverse patterns of underachievement for students of color. Culturally Responsive Teaching requires teachers to recognize the cultural capital and tools that students of color bring to the classroom and to utilize their students' cultural learning tools throughout instruction. The addition of "linguistically responsive" recognizes that children's home languages are assets for learning as well, and that culture and identity are deeply entwined with one's language. Central to culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy as an anti-deficit approach is building upon the student's own linguistic and cultural wealth.

> **Creating preschool programs that support DLLs is not just about conveying messages that their diverse languages and cultures are worthwhile; it must also be about constructing opportunities, building relationships, and engaging children in learning where they are encouraged and able to use their language and cultural resources in the process of participation in the preschool world.**

As "culturally responsive teaching" has found its way into standards for the teaching profession, it has tended to hone in on a set of particular competencies analyzed by New America in state policies in 50 states describing the pedagogical knowledge and skills expected of all teachers. (New America, March 2019, Culturally Responsive Teaching: a 50-state survey of teaching standards.)

1. *Reflect on one's cultural lens—Specifically, state standards ask teachers to analyze their cultural backgrounds and worldviews, recognize biases they may hold and their effect on relationships with students and families, and recognize how common societal "isms" (e.g., racism, sexism, and classism) can influence their attitudes.*

2. *Recognize and redress bias in the system*

3. *Draw on students' culture to share curriculum and instruction—and use the student's background as a resource to learning.*

4. *Bring real-world issues into the classroom.*

5. *Model high expectations for all students.*

6. *Promote respect for student differences.*

7. *Collaborate with families and the local community.*

8. *Communicate in linguistically and culturally responsive ways—understanding how culture influences communication, honoring, and accommodating home languages*

Those expectations and competencies are written for all grade levels—and in many cases, were not specifically defined for early childhood education. However, the research and understanding underlying culturally and linguistically responsive teaching does extend to the youngest learners. At a very young age children begin to develop a sense of self, and a recognition of how others see them. In the first year of life, children pay attention to differences and similarities among the people in their world. They observe what does and doesn't matter to the important adults and peers in their lives and build concepts about themselves and others. By around age two, they also begin to absorb attitudes and responses based on differences. They notice status—including how other people react to hearing the use of their home language, seeing their skin color, or sensing their culture.

A young child may try to cover the mouth of their Mama who is speaking Spanish to an English-speaking teacher or may refuse to answer to a parent or grandparent in the family language. They try to make sense of what they see and hear. It matters what messages they receive about their identities, about their family, about their language and skin color. The arrival into preschool is a major step in this journey—a social environment outside their family. The degree to which a child sees themselves reflected (or invisible) is powerful. How their cultural ways of being and the language they speak are embraced and used is powerful. The manner in which they are helped to make sense of and make their way in this new, more diverse environment sets the path for how they will be able to interact with people different from themselves, how empathetically they will build relationships across differences, whether school feels like a place they belong, and what their relationship will be to their family culture and ways of being.

Early childhood education settings—including centers, family childcare homes, and schools—are often among children's first communities beyond their families. These settings offer important contexts for children's learning. They should be environments in which children learn that they are valued by others, learn how to treat others with fairness and respect and learn how to embrace human differences rather than ignore or fear them.

The goals for young children in early childhood education, as explicated by Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves include:

- *Children will show confidence and pride in their family's cultural identity, language, ways of practicing daily life, traditions, and heritage.*

- *Children will comfortably use their home culture knowledge and home language within their early childhood program.*

- *Children will feel that they belong and are valued, whatever their home culture.*

- *Children will develop the skills to thrive in the culture of the school and the larger society.*

The role of early childhood educators is then (according to the Anti-Bias Education framework) to promote each child's construction of personal and social identities, support children to develop comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds, foster each child's capacity to identify bias and recognize unfairness and injustice, cultivate each child's ability and confidence to stand up for oneself and others in the face of bias and be able to act against prejudice. Suggestions for operationalizing this kind of practice include:

- *Incorporate strategies that promote equitable social interactions related to language and cultural differences.*

- *Provide language models in the home language that prevent language loss.*

- *Demonstrate a respect for bilingualism and different cultural priorities.*

- *Incorporate the strengths of the family culture into program practices and curriculum.*

- *Integrate books and materials that reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children served and keep such materials visible throughout the learning space ("Visibility of a child's culture conveys the message that the child and their family are "real" and that they matter.")*

- *Provide intentional support for home language—recognize bilingualism as a strength and message it.*

- *Use instructional strategies and materials that specifically support dual language learners.*

- *Center curriculum on families (cultural identity and diversity exist for young children in the context of their home cultures), exploring the ways families are both the same and different. Use families' home cultures to individualize the curriculum.*

The California Practitioners Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities adds to this understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining education with the following:

"Culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining education stems from an understanding that California's schools exist in a world that privileges some groups over others, based on race, skin color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, English language proficiency (ELP) level, and socioeconomic status as well as other factors. Culturally and linguistically sustaining education is vital for the social-emotional development of all students but especially students of color and English learners because it works to validate their cultural and linguistic knowledge and brings it into the norms and practices of school culture. English learners—whether they are typically progressing, have been identified as long-term English learners, are recently arrived immigrant newcomers, or are migratory—should hold the same place of privilege in the school community as any non-English learner student. Schools that work to bring equity to the classroom and comprehensive social-emotional development to the entire school and that help students create cultural congruence with their school environment are in a better place to serve students. Students whose voices and experiences are heard, respected, and validated are better able to engage as full members of the school community."

The task of the early childhood educator and program is to begin the children's journey in our schooling system by building from their strengths and enabling them to bring their entire repertoire of brilliance to their learning.

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REFLECTION TOOL: Aspects of Assets Oriented and Culturally/Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Having read the selection above on "What is Asset-Based Pedagogy?", envision a preschool classroom and learning environment that exemplifies "assets-based" approaches. What would it look like? What feels most important to you that you would see or hear in such an environment?

Where and how are the terms "assets-based" or "culturally and linguistically responsive teaching" being used in your community of early childhood educators, in your program, and your district? What, in general, is meant by the use of those terms? Is it clear what actions and strategies are implied by the use of those terms?

Consider the following elements of what might be included in how people understand the terms "assets-based" and "culturally and linguistically responsive teaching." Which are generally included in the approaches and understandings in your program? Are any missing from the dialogue and focus in your program/district?

Aspect Of Assets Oriented and Culturally and Linguistically Responsive/Sustaining Pedagogy	Clearly included	Perhaps implied, but not explicit	Definitely not included	Don't know
Recognize the need to actively counter patterns of bias, structural or systemic barriers, marginalization, or invisibility for the languages and cultures of children in the schooling system and early care (e.g., challenge low expectations; hire staff with the languages and from communities of the children).				
Infuse material into the curriculum in the languages and represent the cultures of the children/families in our program.				
Use strategies that provide support for barriers to participation, comprehension, or engagement (e.g., use visuals to support children whose language is not English).				
Equalize the status and build respect and comfort across differences in languages, and cultures of groups of children (e.g., actively engage children in developing skills of empathy and understanding; provide active messaging about the value of diversity, bilingualism, appreciation of culture, and norms of no bullying or teasing related to language, culture, etc.).				
Support the development of home language and build cultural identity and connection.				

NOTES:

Aspects of assets-based and culturally sustaining pedagogy to discuss with my staff:

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Socioemotional Health of Young Dual Language Learners

"Preschools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities, and support the socio-emotional health and development of English learners." (From the CA English Learner Roadmap Principle #1)

The EL Roadmap explicitly calls for supporting the socio-emotional health and development of English learners. By making this part of the "Assets-Oriented and Needs Responsive" Principle #1, the EL Roadmap policy recognizes there is a relationship between socio-emotional health and the ways in which a child's home language, and culture and family are embraced in school. The kind of support DLL children receive to feel comfortable—to feel included, seen, valued, and respected in a preschool program—sets the foundation for building self-confidence and a sense of socio-emotional wellbeing. In addition to the caring and nurturing relationships that are the basis of creating an emotionally safe preschool experience for all children, DLL children need specific support (particularly in programs that are English instructed) to scaffold their participation in activities, their comprehension of what is going on, and to process the emotional aspects of facing a language barrier to understanding and being understood. Furthermore, children's socioemotional health is closely connected to the conditions of their families. Thus, the role preschool programs can serve in supporting families (see the section on Family Engagement) as well as welcoming and affirming families into the life of the program also supports the healthy socioemotional development of children.

Increasingly, there are curricula for preschool programs and professional learning resources for staff focusing on socio-emotional learning and development for young children. Few of these yet address the particular needs of DLLs related to the development of bilingual and bicultural identities, the cultural process of being in programs that may differ from their home culture, the role of language, and the realities of immigrant transition. Therefore, administrators and directors must provide resources for the following:

- *Ensure staff understanding of the process and stages of second language acquisition/development and strategies for supporting DLLs comprehension and participation in programs that are English-instructed/English-run.*

- *Build staff understanding of culture shock and the development of bicultural and bilingual identities among young children—and strategies for supporting the development of strong, healthy bilingual, bicultural identities.*

- *Support staff in paying attention to creating opportunities and facilitated support for DLLs to meaningfully participate in peer social interaction and for all children to build friendships and relationships across language differences.*

- *Set expectations for support staff with strategies so they provide children the language to be able to understand and talk about language differences, to understand that languages children don't understand are not just sounds but are meaningful, and build program norms around no teasing related to language, accents, etc.*

- *Create program practices that provide opportunities for children who speak the same language to serve as peer support for each other.*

- *Throughout the program, encourage children to freely use whatever language resources they have to express themselves—their home language, a mix of home language and English, etc.*

MULTILINGUAL LEARNING TOOLKIT (Early Edge)

Resources on Socio-emotional Development and MLLs

This section of the Multilingual Learning Toolkit offers resources (videos, articles, vignettes) related to five evidence-based strategies for socio-emotional health and development of MLLs. These resources can be used with staff to deepen understanding and suggest actions that can be taken to create safe and affirming programs and classrooms in which DLLs are supported and included.

Source: www.multilinguallearning21st century.org

1 Affirming and Protecting Home Language and Supporting Bilingualism

"The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are assets...to be valued and built upon....in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages." (CA English Learner Roadmap Principle #1)

From the vision and mission and throughout the EL Roadmap Principles, there is reference to the crucial role of students' family languages and cultures in their schooling and to the need to provide opportunities to develop multilingualism. Why is this so? Certainly, there are benefits of bilingualism—for all students, with particular import for English learner students. Bilingualism has:

- **Economic benefits.** Many career opportunities are available to people who communicate well in English and other languages—both in the United States and around the world. California in particular, as a major Pacific Rim economy, needs people with biliteracy skills and cross-cultural competencies to work in and fuel our economy, strengthen our social cohesion, and enrich the quality of life in our communities.

- **Social benefits.** Being bilingual offers students the opportunity to develop relationships across cultures.

- **Family benefits.** For students who speak a language other than English (LOTE) at home, maintaining and developing that language supports communication across generations and enables students to participate actively in both/all of their language worlds as bridge builders and translators. Family relationships can break down when children no longer can communicate effectively in their parents' language—a common pattern among EL students educated only in English.

- **Brain and cognitive advantages.** The development of skills in two or more languages has been found to enhance brain-functioning and long-term cognitive flexibility.

- **Educational benefits as well.** Higher proficiency levels in two languages are associated with higher levels of performance on achievement tests, particularly those related to language and literacy, and improved academic outcomes.

Beyond those general benefits, home language matters for DLLs! A child's home language is intrinsically linked to identity, family connectedness, and cultural pride. DLLs come to school with knowledge in their home language(s) and from their home culture(s) that enriches not only their classroom community but also their own cognition and learning potential. But what happens to them in once in school spells the difference between whether these benefits accrue or not. When their languages and cultures are welcomed, acknowledged, affirmed, and invited as assets into schools, children are more likely to feel they belong. When those conditions are not present, there can be negative impacts on engagement and connection to the school, learning, and family relationships.

Without support for the development of the home language, DLLs are likely to lose their home language and fail to experience the significant advantages that bilingualism and biliteracy can deliver.

The California Preschool Foundations (2023) prefaces the "Language and Literacy" domain section with the following statement: *"A growing body of research concludes that multilingual learning is a strength that can significantly contribute to many skills, including children's academic, cognitive, language, and social skills. Children's home language development also supports their English language development, as a strong foundation in one language transfers when learning another. In addition, encouraging children's **home language** development supports their positive cultural and linguistic identity development and strengthens ties with their families and communities. Research affirms the importance of seeing multilingualism as a strength, as it supports a child's skills and knowledge in all their languages."*

It is vital for educators to understand, whether they work in a multilingual program that explicitly builds students' home language skills or in an English-only environment, that the student arrives with their language and culture. They bring their language with them—as part and parcel of how they think, how they see the world, and who they are. For students in any classroom (whether it is a bilingual or an English-instructed classroom), their home language and culture are present in their thinking, learning, feeling, and interaction. The home language is there— either being ignored, overlooked, and undermined by their schooling experience or being welcomed, supported, and utilized as a resource for themselves and others. Helping students grow and access their full potential as multilingual and multicultural learners requires careful, active, and intentional support from educators—especially in settings where English is the sole or primary language of instruction.

Bilingualism does not occur "naturally" or automatically. Rather, it has to be cultivated and nurtured by educators who see the value for their students and communities. In fact, for most children who arrive in our preschools with a language other than English, the journey will be a subtractive one, replacing their home language with English and never developing or actually losing their home language. With the vision of the EL Roadmap in mind, schools should be moving toward increasing opportunities for students actually to develop biliteracy skills. In fact, the default expectation in preschool education in California is that children will be supported in dual language development—and the preparation of an early childhood education workforce as demonstrated in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credential TPE's calls for competency in supporting young children's dual language development.

However, shortages of bilingual teachers can make delivery of a real bilingual preschool experience a challenge. In those cases, even without a bilingual/dual language program, preschools can support positive attitudes about bilingualism. Affirming and inviting the presence of students' home languages and cultures into a school is part of equalizing the status of students' identities. Without vigilance, the prestige, status, and power of English can result in undermining, or devaluing students' languages and cultures. It can result in a subtractive learning environment that undermines the goals of sociocultural competence and equity, and therefore the loss of the cognitive skills children need to succeed in an academic world. It is critical to proactively and actively convey the message that languages other than English are of equal value and that students who speak those languages as their home language are respected as equally talented peers. Attention must be paid to equalizing the status of diverse cultural/linguistic communities is essential, especially when those communities are accorded unequal status in the society at large.

For teachers, this means using pedagogies of inclusion, creating equity-oriented structures, and building students' skills of respectful collaboration in order to encourage all students' equal participation. They need to have books, materials and posters, making visible the different languages of the students. The entire school campus should intentionally celebrate bilingualism and promote the value of languages other than English. Bilingualism can be celebrated vigorously. Valuing language and valuing cultural diversity go hand in hand. Consistent efforts to support interactions and the building of friendships across language and cultural groups of students and their families create opportunities for students to have authentic interactions across cultural realities.

> **They bring their language with them - as part and parcel of how they think, see the world, and who they are. The home language is there - either being ignored and undermined by their schooling experience or being welcomed and utilized as a resource for themselves and others.**

READING: Loss of Family Languages—Should Educators Be Concerned?

"The dilemma facing young dual language learners and immigrant children may be viewed as less a problem of learning English than of a primary language loss. While virtually all children who attend American Schools learn English, most of them are at risk of losing their primary language as they do so.

"In one sense, primary language loss as children acquire English is not a new problem. Few immigrant groups have successfully maintained their ethnic languages as they became assimilated into American life. As they learned English, they used it more and more until English became their dominant language. The outcome in earlier times was nonetheless bilingualism. The second generation could speak the ethnic language and English, although few people were proficient in both languages. The loss of the ethnic language occurred between the second and third generations because second generation immigrants rarely used the ethnic language enough to impart it to their own children. Thus, the process of language loss used to take place over two generations."

"The picture has changed dramatically in the case of present-day immigrants. Few current second-generation immigrants can be described as bilinguals. Ordinarily, we assume that when children acquire a second language, they add it to their primary language, and the result is bilingualism. But in the case of most present-day immigrant children, the learning of English is a subtractive process, with English quickly displacing and replacing the primary language in young first-generation children of immigrants. The result is that few immigrant children become bilinguals today by learning English. Over the past 25 years, this process of accelerated language loss in immigrant children and families has been documented repeatedly.

"Accelerated language loss is a common occurrence these days among immigrant families, with the younger members losing the ethnic language after a short time in school. The loss of the family language by the children has a great impact on communication between the adults and the children and ultimately family relations. The adults do not understand the children, and the children do not understand the adults. Father, Mother, and Grandmother do not feel they know the children, and do not know what is happening in their lives. What happens in families where parents cannot communicate easily with their children? What happens when the major means of socializing children into the beliefs, family values, and knowledge base of the family and cultural group is lost? If the parents know any English, often they switch to that language and, while their capacity to socialize the children becomes somewhat diminished, they are nonetheless able to teach their children some of what they need to learn. But it is not easy to socialize children in a language that one does not know well. It takes thorough competence in a language to communicate the nuances of a culture to another. Can parents keep informed of what is happening to their children when the children no longer understand the family language? Can parents maintain their roles as authority figures, teachers, and moral guides if they are not listened to? Does it matter that children lose their family language as they learn English as long as it does not interfere with their educational development and success in school? I think it does.

"For immigrant children, learning English as a second language and dealing with school successfully are just one set of problems to be faced. Hanging on to their first language as they learn English is an equally great problem. Hanging on to their sense of worth, their cultural identities, and their family connections as they become assimilated is a tremendous problem for all immigrant children. What is at stake in becoming assimilated into the society is not only their educational development but their psychological and emotional wellbeing as well. The question we educators need to consider is—what role are the schools playing in the process?"

ACTIVITY:

Engage families in conversations about their child's continued use of the home language. What do they notice about whether and how their child is exhibiting attitudes about the status of the home language and the status of English? What do they notice about their child's choice of which language they use and which language they respond to in various contexts?

REFLECTION: Throughout the School

Consider the following. Honoring home language starts in the front office, echoes throughout the hallways and campus of a school, is driven home in the classroom, and dwells always in the attitudes and utterances of the people in the school community. What does this mean to you? How can "honoring home language" starts in the front office? What does that look like? And how does it echo throughout the hallways and campus? As you prepare to engage in the following self-assessment reflections, think about what you would hope to see and hear in the front offices, halls, and classrooms of a preschool program or TK/primary grades campus that is evidence of valuing the students' languages and cultures.

Jot down your thoughts about what you would see and hear.

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REFLECTION TOOL: Valuing the Cultures and Languages of Children and Families

Preschools/TK that seek to know their children and families and create climates that are inclusive ensure that children and families see themselves reflected and affirmed in the life and curriculum of the program and are provided support for bilingualism. This tool supports program directors and administrators in considering the various structures and practices in the life of the program and classroom that enact the commitment to valuing the cultures and languages of the children and families. You may choose to use this tool for your own reflection, or engage staff in a collective use of the Tool to promote shared understanding and identify common priorities.

Indicator/Example	Not present, not happening, not addressed	Aware of this, but it's not a focus but not explicit	Working on this, but still a lot to do	This is a strength	Not sure; needs inquiry, clarification
Create A Climate in Which Children See Themselves Reflected and Affirmed					
The languages of our families/community are visible in the welcome messages and information on the walls/in the halls of our site.					
Children's names are correctly pronounced throughout the program.					
We have books in our library and curriculum in which our children see themselves reflected—and materials that are authentic and correct about the cultures and national/ethnic communities.					
Celebrations regularly embrace and feature the cultural and language communities of the families and children we serve.					
We have a mission, vision, or other formal statements about who we are as a community that specifically embrace our linguistic and cultural diversity as an asset and reflect a commitment to equity.					
We have a network of cultural community members whom we call upon for support in building cultures into the curriculum and for help understanding the communities in which our families and children live.					
Leadership and staff have received professional development related to cultural and linguistically responsive and sustaining pedagogy and approaches.					
It is our explicit goal that our children develop a prideful and knowledgeable sense of identity about their own culture and language—and their social identities.					
When new immigrant or refugee communities enroll in our program, we engage in learning sessions to understand the new children's/families' backgrounds.					
A Climate Supportive Of Bilingualism					
We have an explicit vision or mission statement affirming the importance of bilingualism, language diversity, and multiculturalism.					

Indicator/Example	Not present, not happening, not addressed	Aware of this, but it's not a focus but not explicit	Working on this, but still a lot to do	This is a strength	Not sure; needs inquiry, clarification
Our preschool has signs, posters, and other visual forms that underscore that we value multiple languages and bilingualism.					
Our preschool does not tolerate comments that are anti-bilingual, anti-immigrant, or racist.					
Teachers intervene with positive messages when they hear children display shame or embarrassment about their home language.					
The development of home language is encouraged and prized, and children have opportunities to utilize their home language in their learning.					
Teachers encourage expression in the child's most comfortable and chosen language— enabling language choice.					
Our preschool provides workshops for families on the importance of supporting home language development and strategies for doing so—as well as the content of what is occurring in school.					
Our classroom library includes books and materials in our children's languages.					
Supporting Dual-Language Development and Biliteracy					
Our preschool offers a planned language approach that supports the development of bilingualism.					
We have staff with bilingual skills to teach and support children in their home languages in addition to English.					
We have relationships with Dual Language immersion programs in the district that our preschool children may articulate into—and work collaboratively to build a coherent pathway from preschool through to biliteracy.					
We honor and showcase bilingual and bicultural skills—including offering a CA Pathway to Bilingualism award to children using two or more languages.					
We assess children's dual language proficiencies through parent reports, staff observations, and language assessment instruments in order to inform caregiving and instruction, as well as guiding and strengthening parent engagement strategies.					

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Additional Resources for Developing Biliteracy at Home:

The First 5 California Everyday Opportunities for Speech, Language, and Literacy Development web page provides tips for parents on how to build literacy skills in young children. This page can be viewed in English or Spanish.

The First 5 California Multiple Languages in the Home, Benefits and Myths web page explains the benefits of learning two or more languages at home and provides tips on how to expand dual language skills. This page can be viewed in English or Spanish.

The U.S. Department of Education Early Learning: Talk, Read, and Sing! web page includes fact sheets on the benefits of bilingualism, tips for parents of young children, and other resources in English and Spanish.

The ¡Colorín, Colorado! For Families web page includes resources and tips for parents including information on helping children learn to read and on raising bilingual kids, among other topics. This page can be viewed in English or Spanish.

PRINCIPLE #1 SUMMARY NOTES:

Note aspects of your program that you feel are particularly important and strong enactments of Principle #1 (knowing your DLLs, building family-program partnerships, affirming, and valuing cultural and linguistic diversity) that should be celebrated:

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Note aspects of your program that you are particularly concerned about and that might be a focus for pursuing implementation of the EL Roadmap Principle #1

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Note high priority areas to learn more about:

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PRINCIPLE #2:
INTELLECTUAL QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION AND MEANINGFUL ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Role of Program Administrators and School Leaders in Supporting High-Quality Instruction and Meaningful Access in Early Education

Principle #1 is the foundation for learning—speaking to the caring and affirming relationships between teachers/ staff and children, to the classroom culture and program climate of safety and belonging, to the embrace of family and culture and a child's home language. For young children, the motivation and ability to learn is impacted when their learning environment promotes belonging and a sense of safety and when teaching methods are developmental and build on their assets, connecting their experiences in preschool to their home and community and drawing upon their languages and cultures. Thus, Principle #2 of the EL Roadmap, "Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access," builds upon Principle #1 as it turns explicit attention to teaching and learning and developmental support, to meaningful access to the curriculum, and to providing relevant and developmentally appropriate curriculum. While Principle #1 is the foundation, it is not sufficient to support learning. High-quality early education has to include:

- *Intentionality in creating developmentally and culturally/linguistically appropriate learning environments that invite exploration, play and inquiry and that build upon the knowledge and resources that children bring to their learning.*
- *Thoughtfulness about building and utilizing a curriculum focusing on the content and skills it is important for young DLL children to master.*
- *A commitment to equitable and full access for DLLs.*
- *A pedagogy that respects and leverages the way young children learn and, specifically, the way in which the dual language brain processes new learning.*

In leading implementation of Principle #2, it is essential that preschool/TK program administrators and school leaders understand the nature of how young DLL children learn and the hallmark indicators of quality instruction that respect and nurture the intellectual drive of young children and the contexts in which they learn. For those leaders whose roots and foundation are in the K-12 system, this includes knowing how the intellectual development of young children differs from a more traditional model of "academic rigor" that is so prevalent in the K-12 system. Those K-12 school leaders seeking to embrace the early years of schooling and who recognize the importance of a powerful early start must find ways to reach across to the knowledge base about early childhood development for their own learning and to be able to lead the effective preschool/Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten experience that DLLs require for their learning. Be the learner who seeks out the substantial world of research and professional leadership resources on quality early education. Be the force that stems tendencies to push down developmentally inappropriate academic models of learning in the preschool and kindergarten years.

For those whose background and positioning are in early childhood education, look to the K-12 system to understand why and how the education of DLLs must be focused on overcoming language barriers and creating access to curriculum and to learn from the half-century and more of efforts to build a pedagogy around second language and dual language development. Seek to understand the language and academic access demands DLLs will face in the primary grades, and the research on the kind of preschool language development that will set them up to thrive in elementary schools. Reach across into the substantial expertise in the K-12 system about first and second language development and to understand the linguistic and academic demands that early education should set the foundation for.

Principle #2 provides a framework bridging preschool and the K-12 years, but it requires meaning-making with a lens of the development of young DLLs and attention to the contexts of what have been siloed preschool and primary grades education systems.

> • *Be the bridge that sets a table bringing together early childhood educators and primary grades educators.*

> • *Facilitate dialogue, coherence, alignment and shared vision across the early education and primary grades in the service of EL/DLL student success.*

Text of Principle #2

Principle #2: Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access

English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning as well as provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages.

A. Language development occurs in and through content and is integrated across the curriculum, including integrated ELD and designated content-based ELD

B. Students are provided a rigorous, intellectually rich, standards-based curriculum with instructional scaffolding for comprehension, participation, and mastery.

C. Teaching and learning emphasize engagement, interaction, discourse, inquiry, and critical thinking—with the same high expectations for ELs as for all.

D. ELs are provided **access to the full curriculum** along with the provision of EL supports and services.

E. Students' **home language** is (where possible) understood as a means to access curriculum content, as a foundation for developing English, and is developed to high levels of literacy and proficiency along with English

F. Rigorous **instructional materials** support high levels of intellectual engagement and integrated language development and content learning and provide opportunities for bilingual/biliterate engagement appropriate to the program model.

G. English Learners are provided choices of research-based language support/development **programs** (including options for developing skills in multiple languages) and are enrolled in programs designed to overcome the language barrier and provide access to the curriculum.

ACTIVITY: Reading for Understanding

Read through the text of Principle #2. Annotate as follows:

Highlight any terms/vocabulary/phrases that resonate strongly with you as an early childhood educator (e.g., "developmentally appropriate" or "overcome the language barrier").

Put a **question mark ?** next to anything you don't understand or wonder about (e.g., "intellectually rich" or "instructional scaffolding").

If there are areas of concern because you're not sure how this applies to young children in early childhood settings, place an **asterisk *** next to the section (e.g., "standards based curriculum," "developed to high levels of literacy").

Place an **arrow** ⟶ alongside any phrases that you see as connected to a key element of practices and approaches already part of your early education efforts—and write what that connection is (e.g., "engagement, interaction, inquiry," play-based, relationship-based, hands-on).

NOTE-TAKER:

What resonates most with me and seems most important about Principle #2:

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Questions I have about Principle #2:

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Concerns about applicability to young children and early childhood education settings:

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Connections I make between Principle #2 and other initiatives/efforts/practices:

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BREAKING IT DOWN: Principle #2 and Preschool/TK Learning for DLLs

Principle #2 of the English Learner Roadmap describes schooling in which Dual Language Learners engage in "intellectually rich" learning experiences, are provided a rigorous curriculum, afforded high expectations, and given rigorous instructional materials that support high levels of intellectual engagement. And the Principle also clearly states "developmentally appropriate learning experiences." While the commitment to rigor too often has resulted in a tendency to "push down" academic practices from elementary grades into the primary grades and even into Preschool/TK, this is a far cry from what developmentally appropriate learning should be. So, what does "intellectually rich" learning experiences mean for our youngest students?

What does effective instruction, teaching and learning for DLLs look like in a developmentally appropriate preschool or Transitional Kindergarten classroom? And what does it mean to focus on the assets and needs of DLLs in planning and providing high-quality preschool instruction? This section of the Toolkit discusses key elements of Principle #2 through a lens of effective early childhood education practice for dual language learners.

A. First, what does it mean in preschool contexts by: "English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences"?

This first declaration of Principle #2 speaks to the intellectual quality of what gets provided in early childhood education—calling for "intellectual richness," asking educators to embrace the learning potential and linguistic genius of young DLLs and countering what have too often been low expectations, watered down or deficiency-oriented biases and approaches to serving culturally and linguistically diverse children. Too often the fact that DLLs might not speak English has been interpreted as a lack of intelligence. And, too often, the incredible brightness and intelligence of young children has not been recognized or respected. Intellectual richness is about creating the environments that engage the young mind in exploring and making sense of the world, encouraging, and building upon their natural curiosity. It is purposely coupled with the call for **"developmentally appropriate"** learning experiences that honor, leverage, and support the ways young children learn and the ways the dual language brain processes learning in those early years. This is in part to ward off "push down" academic approaches that can too easily pervade the expansion of early education programs into the TK-12 system—but is also about heeding the substantial research and knowledge about child development and early learning processes.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice for Early Education

Understanding the processes of child development and basing practice upon that understanding is a key determinant of the quality of a program. There are multiple professional sources defining "developmentally appropriate practice", but many in the field rely upon the seminal work of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC defines "developmentally appropriate practice" as methods that "promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning. This means that educators recognize the multiple assets young children bring to their early learning as unique individuals and as members of families and communities. Building on each child's strengths—and taking care not to harm any aspect of each child's physical, cognitive, social, or emotional well-being—educators design and implement learning environments to support children's growth across all domains of development and across all content areas—in their own time, their own way."

DOMAIN: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT—APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Children are born eager to learn; their young brains are wired for learning. They take delight in exploring their world and making connections. Their young minds are actively making sense of the world around them, seeking meaning, acquiring the language and the physical skills to engage with the world in ever more complex ways—

experimenting and exploring. Learning engages young children in every possible way! They use all of their senses and competencies to relate new experiences to prior experience, to understand and create meaning.

The cognitive capacities that develop in the age 3 -5 range include the capacity to focus and pay attention (to people, things, the environment). They develop symbolic thinking—the capacity to use objects to represent other objects and to engage in symbolic play. And they increasingly are able to make connections—using their emerging inquiry, observation, and investigative skills to explore cause and effect as they piece together an understanding of how the world works. There are three important elements of how young children learn that are particularly relevant for preschool teachers and staff.

TANGIBLE, CONCRETE, EXPLORATORY LEARNERS

Young children are concrete thinkers. They learn through their senses—how things smell, taste, feel, look. They are young scientists—exploring the world to discover how things work. Inquiring. Observing. Manipulating. Trying things over and over to test their budding understandings of the world. This means they need the opportunities to engage directly with the world. A preschool environment that supports this learning is one that provides the building blocks for such discovery: realia, things that can be touched and manipulated, opportunities to return to those materials over and over. And because they need the opportunity to touch—learning is up close. Small groups. Individual access to materials. Sufficient materials so children can pursue their own individual thought and trials and efforts. They learn when they are given the autonomy and agency to interact with the world. And they learn by observing others – watching closely how other humans do things.

PLAY-BASED LEARNERS

Play is a primary context for learning for young children—at the heart of their processing of the world. Play (e.g., self-directed, guided, solitary, parallel, social, cooperative, onlooker, object, fantasy, physical, constructive, and games with rules) facilitates young children's development and learning—as both the context for their learning and the process of making sense of the world. They need daily, sustained opportunities for all types of play to develop their physical competence, to explore and make sense of their world, learn how to interact with others, develop problem solving abilities, and develop language. Even if not called "play," pedagogical approaches such as inquiry learning, project-based learning, making, and tinkering, inventing, and exploring, collaborative problem solving, constructivism, and individual investigation—all share the understanding that young children learn through having the autonomy and agency to interact with the world, to approach problems, make hypotheses, and explore potential solutions—all in an environment that invites such interaction. Children maximize their attention spans as they focus on self-selected and self-directed activities. They make their own choices, engage with other children, and spend time in their own thoughts. Play and learning are seamless. The preschool TK environment sets the stage by providing a play-based environment that is rich with materials connected to the topics and themes in the curriculum, thus enabling children they have encountered in the curriculum. Dramatic play also offers the opportunity for students to practice language.

INTEGRATED, THEMATIC LEARNERS

As young children take in, experience, and make meaning of the world, they do not make distinctions between domains of learning (physical, cognitive, social, etc.) or make distinctions between math, language, science, and music. Their learning is integrated. Their young minds are actively working to make meaning and to make connections. They experience the world and build knowledge in an integrated process of constantly gathering information and striving to make sense of it. Their exploration of the world, and the meaning they are making about the world is based on using multiple ways of knowing and making connections. Learning occurs as children make connections between new experiences and prior experiences. Their brains do not yet separate the world into different "disciplines" or subjects. Domains such as math, science, social studies, the arts, language arts do not exist in isolation from each other. Young children build knowledge in and across all of those domains. Integrated thematic curriculum provides an overall umbrella with many different ways "in," different ways to engage, and varied aspects to learn about the topic. As they are building understanding and concepts and schema, and as they are developing the language to comprehend and engage with a topic, it can be disruptive to

a child's concentration and learning to experience a classroom in which the schedule moves them too abruptly from topic to topic. Young children need opportunities to keep "working" their emerging understandings. They need practice with the language and ideas. They are looking for connections, confirmations, and ways to make sense. A curriculum that marches them from topic to topic, from one activity to another unrelated activity, disrupts their learning process. Integrated thematic curriculum enables multiple ways "in" to a topic—the opportunity to look at it from many different angles, through different lenses—and supports the kind of immersion that young children's brains seek. To be read books about it, to engage in dramatic play, to have the opportunity for hands-on manipulation to explore, to look around for all the connections within their preschool and at home and in the community. Young children learn best when the concepts, language, and skills they encounter are related to things they know and care about, and when the new learnings are themselves interconnected in meaningful, coherent ways. Themes, then, should have some meaning and interest to children, with some connection to their lives and their world.

DOMAIN: LANGUAGE PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Young children are wired to develop language! They are driven to name their world to expand ways to express themselves in language. And this is closely related to the brain functions of creating categories and concepts to make sense of the world. Language and cognition go hand in hand. They are developing vocabulary and gaining increasing skill and experience in using language to express needs and requests, and to reject ("No!"), acknowledge, greet, solve problems, describe, narrate, etc. They are working to master pronunciation so they can be understood. And they are absorbing how the language is structured – how words are put together to form sentences, to ask questions, to explain. Over the preschool years, children learn to use increasingly complex language. Because language is a key vehicle for communicating with others, language development is also closely connected to social development, and to socioemotional growth. Children need the language to express themselves, their ideas, and their voice. They need to develop the vocabulary that allows them to name and understand the world with precision and expressiveness. They need language to participate and interact with others.

Language is central to learning. Building oral language should be a central goal during the preschool years. They learn language primarily from exposure to people using the language. So the more expressive adults are in the use of language, and the more they actively engage children in the back and forth of language, the more children develop linguistically. The adults in a preschool/TK environment should model and seek to help children develop complex, expressive, precise vocabulary in the interpersonal, socio-emotional and content realms. This means teachers need to be intentional about key vocabulary they want children to have as they plan thematic units and lessons—and then to utilize a variety of materials and strategies to model the language, to expose children to and to teach these words (e.g., photographs, visuals, realia, drawings, demonstrations, experiential activities.) It means staff need to model, provide and teach children a wide range of vocabulary to express emotions and engage in meaningful interactions with each other.

Children need multiple opportunities throughout the day to practice and use their new and emerging vocabulary and to hear the vocabulary used in context—and time, of course, in dramatic play to try out language on their own terms. The adults in a preschool/TK program play the essential role of being a language model—using vocabulary expressively and purposely so children hear it in context. They are thoughtful about modeling and supporting children in using expressive and precise vocabulary to talk about their feelings, their needs, their ideas, and to problem solve—providing opportunities for dialogue and discussion about social issues and conflicts, and guidance in using language as a developing skill of problem solving. Interactive read-alouds provide opportunities to pause and think about words, to define words, and for children to hear the words being pronounced. Adults play the essential "sportscaster" role of narrating what is happening—giving words and language to describe what children are doing and experiencing.

Dual language learners have the added advantage of a language system other than English as they are also developing English. The goals of language development for DLLs should include the development of powerful expressive language for all of their cultural/language worlds—so support for their emerging bilingualism is crucial. In addition, the development of language for a dual language brain is more complex than for a monolingual brain. The new language and literacy system is developing in the presence of and in interaction with an existing language system. Supporting children to use all of their linguistic resources, and also encouraging them to make discoveries about the relationships between their languages is an important early development towards proficient bilingualism and biliteracy. Emerging bilingual children should be supported to become aware of (and proud of) their own bilingualism and how the two (or more) languages are the same and different. This means the preschool staff should:

- *Affirm and celebrate the value of home language and bilingualism.*

- *Bring in materials, songs, and resources to create a presence of the home language in the program (linked to the curriculum themes, etc.).*

- *Wherever possible, emphasize use of staff, community, and families to engage DLL children in using home language in conversation and activity.*

- *Provide family/parent education and engagement in supporting home language development and bilingualism.*

- *Encourage children to use all of their language resources.*

- *Learn (and teach) all children key vocabulary and phrases in all languages of children in the program.*

- *Offer explicit support in learning English for children for whom it is not a home language.*

- *Recognize that children who are not native speakers/users of English need support for comprehension and participation in order to learn and "belong" in a program that is English taught.*

DOMAIN: LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Literacy is language in print form—and so the development of oral language is part and parcel of early literacy development. The more oral language a child has, the stronger the foundation for learning to read and write. Early oral language powerfully contributes to later reading comprehension and competence as writers. As children develop oral language, they are gaining early phonemic and syntactic awareness. For young children, this occurs through hearing the language from strong adult models, being supported and provided multiple opportunities to produce the language in the context of relationships and exploring and learning about the world. Early literacy for three-and four-year-olds is primarily about building a rich base of oral language, developing awareness of the sounds of languages (phonological awareness), absorbing basic concepts of print (left to right, front to back, top to bottom sweep of how print is organized, etc.) within a print-rich environment, developing a literacy identity ("books are for people like me"), and becoming actively and joyfully engaged with the printed word through read-alouds and dictating what they want said and seeing it turn into print. Immersion and exposure/access to print is a powerful component of early literacy. Through this engagement, children learn how books are handled, that print and symbols on the page carry meaning, and that print is organized into units like letters and words. Early literacy education is primarily about supporting rich oral language, providing frequent access to books, and reading children high-quality and interesting books with expressive language, inviting children to dictate and see their words turn into print. The kind of direct reading instruction and focus on isolated, discrete reading skills that one might see in later grades is what many associate with early literacy, but is not appropriate for most three- and four-year-olds in preschool/TK classrooms.

DOMAIN: SOCIO EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Socio-emotional development is a specific domain of child development—but is closely related to and sets a foundation for development in the physical, cognitive and language domains. It's the process through which children acquire the capacity to understand, experience, express, and manage their emotions, in which they develop a sense of themselves, and develop the capacity to cultivate meaningful relationships with others. Three- and four-year-olds are in a crucial developmental phase for developing positive self-concept and awareness, managing their emotions, and learning social skills based upon empathy and caring. The development of self-awareness and self-confidence is major task for them.

In supporting children's development, and managing a preschool/TK class, it is vital for teachers to understand that children feel their emotions physically—that their emotions are felt and expressed physically. How a child feels emotionally impacts their openness and capacity to learn as well. Until the emotional state is addressed, children can't focus, pay attention, or regulate behavior. And so, one role of the preschool/TK staff is to create an environment and be active as supporters for children's emotional safety. A developmentally supportive early learning classroom creates a climate for children in which they feel safe (their body, their feelings, their things, their identity) and are helped to feel their value and competence.

A social aspect to learning develops over time as children develop empathy, self-control, and social skills. This is linked to neurological development—the ability to view themselves and to recognize themselves as distinct from others, to exert self-control, pay attention and focus, be able to "read" and understand other people's behaviors and feelings, and problem solve. For young children, relationships are a primary locus of such learning. Caring, attentive adults who notice/listen to and respond to who children are and what they need are foundational elements in supporting healthy development. Humans are social beings. And child development involves becoming socially competent. For DLLs, living in and across what might be quite different cultural and language worlds of home and preschool/TK, it is particularly important that their teachers embrace and affirm the ways children express and engage emotionally.

The creation and maintenance of a caring community of peers and a supportive social environment significantly influence how learning occurs. For this to happen, there needs to be explicit teaching of language to express feelings and identify emotions. Part and parcel of socio-emotional development is acquiring a basic vocabulary for labeling and communicating emotional experiences.

Skills for participating cooperatively and constructively in group activities develops over time and can be a challenge especially for younger children. It is important that young children have the opportunity to choose their level of interaction whenever possible.

- *Limit the size of a group to maximize learning for young children.*
- *Help children develop the vocabulary to describe and talk about their emotions.*
- *Support children in learning skills of empathetic, collaborative interaction with their peers—and build skills of group participation.*
- *Leverage children's natural interest in what other children are doing—to provide models and invitations toward learning.*
- *Pay attention to the physical as an indication of children's emotional needs and state.*
- *Ensure that children have the opportunity to choose their level of interaction whenever possible—respecting the potential for emotional and cognitive overload beyond their developmental level.*
- *Actively create a climate and community where children can feel their bodies are safe, their things are safe, their feelings are respected and safe, and they belong.*

DOMAIN: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

A major domain of development for preschoolers is physical growth, development of physical capacities, and increasing control of their bodies. Physical capacities develop dramatically in the first five years of life—large gross movements such as running, jumping, and climbing, and fine motor skills such as cutting, buttoning, zipping, feeding, holding, and directing a pencil or crayon. Children have to develop spatial awareness and body awareness—how their bodies fill space. They need to develop endurance and strength. Physical development is closely correlated with brain development. As children develop physical control (large motor, fine motor), it shapes what they are able to do and how they interact with the world. Conversely, they develop physical capacities through interacting with and in the world. Young children experience and learn about the world with their whole bodies. Children learn through movement. Engaging in movement promotes attention, memory, and overall brain development. Motion and rhythm support learning. They express themselves with their whole bodies. Thus, physical development is inter-related with the socio-emotional realm and the development of social capacities. Issues of space and facilities are handled differently in TK classrooms from many preschools in other delivery systems. TK program administrators may need to pay especial attention to being sure there is sufficient "move around" space and types of space to accommodate the active needs of four-year-olds, and that the daily schedule accommodates sufficient time for free-movement play.

For DLLs exposed to or immersed in English in preschool/TK movements become an aid to comprehension and expression – a form of expression that does not rely solely on language. The use of routine movements to represent actions, directions, and meaning, is a major support to DLLs as well as to other young children still mastering language. Physical movements are a bridge across languages. Children's motor abilities in preschool are correlate with their intellectual skills when they reach elementary school. Movement in early years helps the brain develop and become better organized. **Implications for teaching include:**

SUPPORT PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

- *Respect young children's need to move.*
- *Provide children with opportunities for free movement.*
- *Preserve active motor play as a prelude to times when they need to be attentive to learning.*
- *Strategically schedule outdoor time just prior to group time.*
- *Give children space to support gross motor development and provide opportunities to manage emotions.*
- *Ensure adequate active play.*
- *Schedule movement breaks.*

HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP PHYSICALLY:

- *Play self-regulation games involving movement like "Stop and Go," and "Red Light, Green Light."*
- *Construct scaffolded physical challenges.*
- *Build exercise and physical education into daily routines.*

USE THE POWER OF PHYSICAL MOVEMENT TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- *More parts of the brain are being activated when children combine movement with language—so add movements when teaching content.*
- *Movement aids comprehension, particularly for DLLs—teach vocabulary with movements associated, build comprehension of text such as "let's stomp like the angry bear!" and "show me what the rabbit did next."*
- *Teach new vocabulary and concepts with physical demonstration and accompanying movements.*
- *Use hand motions/movements along with words to represent standard routines, directions and actions.*

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Must Be Culturally Inclusive and Appropriate

A general understanding of child development and overall high-quality practice in early education classrooms, while necessary, is not sufficient to promote the development of Dual Language Learners effectively—especially in the domain of language development and identity development. This is why the NAEYC definition of "developmentally appropriate practice" states that to be developmentally appropriate, practices must also be culturally, linguistically, and ability-appropriate for each child. DLLs are navigating becoming bicultural, bilingual children—with the skills, understandings, and competencies to function and thrive in and across their multiple cultural and language worlds. They engage in this learning with the cultural and language resources they have developed since birth within the context of their families and communities. To support development that builds upon those cultural and linguistic resources and that supports them to thrive in and across their multiple cultural and language worlds, DLLs need additional instructional adaptations and language supports beyond generic quality practices. They need learning environments and relationships that embrace and nurture their home cultures and languages in addition to English, and they need educators who are knowledgeable about the process of second language acquisition and understand what typical and healthy development looks like for children growing up with more than one language and across different cultural realities.

Healthy identity development depends upon children feeling they (their individual beings, their culture, language, family, and community) are "seen" and embraced. Children need to hear and be given an image of themselves and who they are as profoundly accepted and a part of the preschool community—including their language, culture, and family. This involves direct affirmations and frequent positive messaging, as well as ensuring that the real experiences and identities of the children and their families are present in and represented in the classroom. This speaks to creating the conditions for socioemotional safety and a sense of belonging, healthy identity development. The brain is wired to make connections between what one knows and what one is learning. The background knowledge children bring from their family, culture and community is the foundation for their new learning. The degree to which what they know and the assets they come with are leveraged and activated strengthens new learning. The degree to which the new learning is relevant to their lives beyond the preschool program impacts interest and engagement. Relevant curriculum builds this. In a culturally and linguistically inclusive and supportive preschool/TK program, the following occurs:

- *The assets children bring (family/cultural customs, experiences, and perspectives) are used as tools for learning, curriculum, and instruction.*
- *Home language and bilingual development are actively supported.*
- *Materials are authentic to and inclusive of the families, cultures, languages, and communities of the children in the program.*
- *Explicit and frequent messages affirm children's emerging development and new learning.*
- *The physical environment of the program includes visuals and materials that are familiar to children and reflect the cultures and communities of the children.*
- *Invitations to children and families encourage sharing of their stories and experiences.*
- *Strong partnerships with families are nurtured.*
- *Home-school connections related to curriculum and theme are promoted.*
- *Thematic units include and embrace explicit connection to children's cultures, languages, and communities.*
- *Adults in the program actively seek out understanding of childrens' cultures and communities, and explicitly model interest and their own learning about languages and cultures other than their own.*

Finally, culturally and linguistically inclusive practices recognize the historical and persistent realities of unequal status of culturally and linguistically diverse children and communities, and actively work to counter those attitudes and impacts. This involves 1) vigilantly watching for and monitoring equity in access and participation,

2) intervening and countering expressions and attitudes of exclusion or bias (including children's own development of shame or embarrassment about their own families and cultures and languages), and 3) implementing Anti-Bias approaches throughout the program. The California's Teacher Preparation Expectations for the Early Childhood Credential states: "Teachers/staff must be aware of their own potential implicit and explicit biases and the potential impact on their expectations for and relationships with children and families." One important role, then, for program directors and preschool/TK leaders is to engage and support teachers in building this awareness.

The development of little children over their first six years of life is amazing! Creating the preschool/TK environments to support that development across all domains and for all children in appropriate and culturally/ linguistically inclusive, sustaining ways is a complex and oh-so-important endeavor. It involves planning relevant curriculum, designing the environment to foster engagement, inquiry, and hands-on learning, forging respectful and caring relationships, and implementing and adapting differentiated instructional strategies that support a range of learning preferences and developmental needs. Often "modifications" and "adaptations" are thought of as accommodating those who "can't" yet adequately perform to the standards of some "norm." Actually, developmentally- and culturally/linguistically- appropriate practice is the opposite. It recognizes the normative wide range and beauty in how human beings develop—and ensures the conditions and supports for development within that wide range. Our expectations need to recognize these little geniuses busy making sense of the world in their own ways and in their own time, leveraging all of the assets of their individual being to master the capacities needed to engage in the world as part of the human family in and across cultural and language worlds.

The art and skill of early childhood educators is in being able to offer diverse groups of children the choice of multiple ways to engage and participate, to support their individual and developmentally fitting ways of learning, to provide scaffolded supports for comprehension and expression, to help children understand respectfully and lovingly their own competence and worth. The goal is to do so as part of joyful learning—expressed as a key element in NAEYC's definition of developmentally appropriate practice.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Centralizes Relationships

Developmentally appropriate practice for young children centralize relationships as a foundation for learning— and for DLLs, those relationships must be affirming and inclusive of the child's language, culture, and experiences. In building strong early education programs, relationships matter. Relationships with others are at the very center of young children's lives. They depend on others for their survival and care, and they look to the people around them to learn about the world and what it means to be human. They learn through interactions with others by observing what others do and say. Children turn to trusted relationships for explanations, encouragement, modeling how to do things, and how to learn. Trusted, affirming relationships provide the safety and context for exploration, inquiry, and learning. Caring, respectful, affirming relationships are foundational to learning. Safe, affirming, caring relationships are the base from which children engage with and explore their world. Quality early education that enables children to learn and thrive prepares them for both academic and social success. As such, preschool/TK experiences must include an emphasis on establishing relationships and building an affirming and safe environment that embraces the child's culture, family, and identity.

Language is an essential component of relationships. It is in and through relationships with others that children learn vocabulary, how language is used for different purposes in different contexts, and within the cultural frames of their family and communities. In a powerful, language-intensive early grades classroom, language continues to be learned and practiced and is given meaning within relationships with peers and adults. An emphasis on conversation, storytelling, sharing ideas, and expressing feelings becomes the mechanism of language development—and an engine for developing socio-emotional health and a means of relating to others. This is true for all children, but particularly so for young children and for DLLs in settings where they are expected to function in a language other than their home language.

Thus, developmentally appropriate practice for DLLs centers around relationships and calls upon staff to affirm and embrace the cultures and languages of the children and families in their care in the design of curriculum and delivery of instruction, leveraging and utilizing the cultural learning tools and resources that children bring to the classroom. This includes selecting books and instructional materials that incorporate representation of the children's lives, cultures, and languages—and actively countering biases and stereotypes. It involves building relationships and norms across the program of respect and welcoming of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

THE OVERALL ENVIRONMENT

In a high-quality preschool /TK classroom, the environment matters. The role of preschool/TK teachers is to create a content-rich, play and inquiry-based learning environment, with encouragement and support for children to explore—and to surround children actively and intentionally with a content-rich, culturally affirming, language-rich context and accompaniment to their exploration. Developmentally appropriate learning occurs when the environment is designed, planned, and set up to nurture exploration and where children are given the opportunities and choices to interact with that environment. It has to be planned, designed, and stocked appropriately. Some people may see the environment as insignificant. But for preschool/TK teachers, parents, and educators, the environment is something that needs to be considered a high priority. It is the environment that invites curiosity, activates learning, and offers the building blocks for learning. For DLLs, this is particularly important, because the physical interaction with the environment—the tangible hands-on experience—often transcends their level of language proficiency to comprehend explanations offered in English. The environment can definitely bolster comprehension and language development, and communicate inclusiveness.

A hallmark, then, of both developmentally appropriate practice and the "intellectual quality" of instruction is the degree to which the environment, instruction and curriculum are all designed to support children as active meaning makers making connections and drawing upon all that they already know and understand – through all domains of learning (physical, language, socio-emotional, relational) and utilizing all of the cultural and linguistic resources and assets they bring.

Summary

Children are born eager to learn; they take delight in exploring their world and making connections. Their young brains are wired for learning as they actively make sense of the world around them, seek meaning, acquire the language to engage with the world, experiment, and explore. DLLs are doing so in and across the cultural and linguistic worlds of home and school. They are developing language, absorbing culture, observing how the world interacts—and seeking to make connections across what are often significantly differing contexts. What learning and understandings apply at home? What learning and understanding apply in preschool? What bridges and connects the two? This is what it means to develop as a bicultural child.

In the first eight years of life, the brain grows faster than at any other period of life. Quality early education creates the environment and relationships to facilitate, honor, and nurture this learning. The degree to which early learning programs support children's delight and wonder in learning reflects the quality of that setting. The degree to which preschools/TK classrooms are inclusive and embrace children's languages and cultures also is key to the quality of learning that will occur. Educators who engage in developmentally appropriate and culturally inclusive practice foster young children's joyful learning, support the natural process of exploring and making sense of the world, and provide a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning. For DLLs, recognition that children are developing and navigating in and across multiple cultural and language worlds adds additional layers to what it means to apply developmentally appropriate practice—requiring that programs build learning environments inclusive of the cultures and languages of children, build respectful and full partnerships with their families and communities, support children in creating the schemas that facilitate cross-cultural development, and incorporate strategies that affirm and celebrate children's increasingly sophisticated competency in bridging diverse contexts.

B. Beyond those general "developmentally appropriate practice" principles, what does the EL Roadmap mean when it describes: *"These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning"* and *"Language development occurs in and through content and is integrated across the curriculum"*?

Beyond calling for general principles of developmentally appropriate practice that already includes the notion of "integrated learning" (see above), the EL Roadmap as a state policy for the education of DLLs additionally and explicitly calls for the integration of language development, literacy, and content learning, for language development to occur in and throughout the curriculum. This aligns directly with the developmentally appropriate practice of integrated learning but speaks more specifically to curricular and instructional implications. To understand curriculum integration begins with understanding **WHAT** is being integrated.

Language Development

Young children are driven to develop language. By the time young children enroll in preschool, they already have years of having developed language that had meaning and purpose and place within their family, culture, community. The task of early childhood educators is to support, enhance, and nurture their continued language development and—for those children coming from a language world other than English and are encountering a new language and a new language universe—to support them as dual language learners.

First, they need the WORDS/ VOCABULARY to label their world and express their needs and feelings and thoughts to understand what they are hearing. They need a wide vocabulary that is content specific and expressive. They need a variety of words because their vocabulary is their tool for understanding and interacting with the world. And it is way in which the brain processes information and thought. Language and cognition go hand in hand.

Second, they should master LANGUAGE PRACTICES. That includes everything from why and how language is used (its purposes) to using it themselves and learning what's appropriate, what's not, and what constitutes conversation, etc. These language practices often include mastering the differences between home and school and learning what's acceptable in one place or with one generation versus another. It also means learning standard routines and social conventions in the language (which could be different from culture to culture).

Third, they must be able to produce the language (LANGUAGE PRODUCTION) and pronounce it clearly enough so they can be understood—because the purpose of language is to have a voice, to express, to be understood. For ELs in a new language, this can be tricky because the sounds and the pacing in one language are different from another. They have to home in on the sounds of the new language, distinguishing the sounds of English. This is part of becoming a dual language user in and across language worlds.

Fourth, they should be aware of LANGUAGE STRUCTURE—how the language works, how language is structured and put together, and how it is structured for different purposes/functions. As children develop language, they go from simply naming things to putting the words together into sentences, into questions—into the STRUCTURES of the language. From just "cookie" and "me"—to "I want a cookie." And then mastering the language functions such as the language of description, compare and contrast, negotiation, and cause and effect. (e.g., "If I'm good, can I have a cookie?") and to combine phrases and sentences with a variety of word forms. As the California Preschool Foundations (2015) puts it, the developing skill is "to use language with increasingly complex words and sentences and forms." Language structures are particular to each language, so for DLLs, it's both a matter of learning the structure and function of the new language and understanding through their emerging bilingualism that different language systems may have differing linguistic systems.

(2)

Fifth and finally, we want the children to be ENGAGED in language, for their own expression. In other words, children need to develop as USERS of the language. This includes, for young DLLs, making choices about which of their language to use when and how. Translanguaging is a new term to some people. It basically means encouraging and supporting students to use all of their linguistic resources—and giving them the right to express themselves in whichever language and mix of languages they choose or need to express themselves. They may have words for some things in one language but not in the other. And language, especially language related to expressing thought and expressing self, should involve choice in language.

How Can Early Childhood Educators SUPPORT Language Development?

A major role of the early childhood educator is to support the oral language development children need to engage in their world, learn, and express themselves. The strength of a child's oral language development is the basis of cognitive development and thought—an essential element of developing social connections—and the foundation for academic learning and literacy. For DLLs, oral language is developing in and across two languages and has to be supported by the preschool program. This includes language models and language engagement in both languages to the extent possible, the invitation and support for children to use both of their languages, and engaging in cross-language connections and comparisons that enable children to exercise and leverage their dual language brain. Young children absorb and acquire language just by listening. However, if they are not actually using and producing the language, it doesn't become a tool for their own uses and expression. Oral language should be central focus in a high-quality early education classroom. This means teachers need to invite, support, and engage children in extended conversations—and create risk-free environments for children to use both their emerging English and their home language.

The Preschool Learning Foundations for Listening and Speaking focuses on the development of spoken and signed language. It addresses how children develop **vocabulary and grammar,** as well as their knowledge of how to use language to interact with others, communicate in meaningful ways, and learn about the world around them.

> *Children learn language every day, all day, in rich and varied interactions and learning experiences. These experiences occur in the child's home language(s) or English during regular routines and activities that support the growth of vocabulary and grammar. Children learn through practice, such as having conversations with adults and other children and expressing their thoughts and opinions.*

The following chart lists early childhood educators' major roles and strategies in supporting oral language, describes the roles/strategies and their purpose, and offers program directors and administrators suggestions on what to look for in their preschool classrooms.

DLLs are navigating becoming bicultural, bilingual children—with the skills, understandings, and competencies to function and thrive in and across their multiple cultural and language worlds. They engage in this learning with the cultural and language resources they have developed since birth within the context of their families and communities.

CHART: Oral Language

Role of ECE Educators; Strategies	Description and Purpose	For Program Directors and Administrators
Model Language	Significant, particularly for DLLs is that teachers are language **Models.** Children learn language by hearing it spoken. They mimic what they hear. They learn vocabulary, the sounds of a language, and patterns of how language it is used by listening to users of that language. They learn to say the words they hear others using. So, it is critical that the adults in a classroom understand their crucial role as a language MODEL and leverage that role by using expressive, complex, precise, wonderful, and varied language. To the extent possible, language models should be available in the child's home language as well as English.	Pay attention to the expressiveness, complexity of language that staff are using—and the amount of talking staff are doing. Encourage staff to see themselves as language models and to be intentional about their language use.
Narrate	Staff should give voice/words to actions and thoughts by thinking out loud (e.g., "I'm going to go turn on the light because it seems kind of dark in here" or "I'm thinking everyone seems a little tired, so I'm going to go pick out a really fun book to read-aloud to you"). Staff should explain the steps to their own actions and describe what they see children doing (e.g., "I see you've put the biggest block on the bottom, and the medium size block on top of that, with the tiniest block on the top!") Children learn from hearing staff talk. They develop vocabulary and make the connection between thought and language.	Listen for staff giving voice and words to what they are doing and what they see children doing.
Have Conversations With Children	A key role of staff is to engage children in the back and forth of listening, speaking, exchanging, and having conversations. This also involves facilitating conversations, helping children learn to engage in conversation, and supporting children in the essential social aspect of language. This develops the practice of conversation and underscores a major purpose of language. In the process of conversation, recast what children have said and expand upon it.	Listen and watch for staff engaging children in multiple back-and-forth exchanges. Watch for structures that facilitate conversation (e.g., "Turn to your partner and tell them….")
Teach Vocabulary & Name/Label the Environment	Young children are curious and driven to name their world, often asking, "What's that called?" Or upon hearing a word, "What does that mean?" In response to their queries, and because there is vocabulary we want them to know, one aspect of supporting language development is teaching vocabulary. Staff should be intentional about selecting the vocabulary children need to understand, and talking about what they are learning. They will be teaching the words children need for enhancing social relationships and expressing their feelings. Staff need strategies to introduce vocabulary, to give those words meaning, and to give students practice in using the vocabulary. They need to actively use and model the vocabulary and pay attention to children's use of it. Explicitly naming and even labeling the environment supports vocabulary development. The explicit teaching of vocabulary should include, whenever possible, a comparison to the vocabulary in the home language.	Listen for the expressiveness and explicitness of the vocabulary children are learning and using related to what they are learning and to talk about their feelings and thoughts. Look for printed names and labels throughout the classroom. Listen for the invitation for children to express vocabulary in their home language—and for staff pointing out (and children discovering) cognates and comparisons across languages.

Role of ECE Educators; Strategies	Description and Purpose	For Program Directors and Administrators
Interactively Read Books Aloud	Reading aloud to children is profoundly about listening to language. Children hear the rhythm and sound of the language. Stories, narratives, and information are communicated through the reading. Words are helped to have meaning through pictures and visuals. When coupled with pauses to talk about what is being read, to point out and define vocabulary children may not know, to engage children in summarizing, predicting, and reacting—to share their thinking, to retell—an interactive read-aloud is a powerful vehicle for learning and developing language. Staff should comment on the text and ask questions about the text so children are engaged in talking about what they have heard (promotes listening and comprehension) and are able to use the language and vocabulary from the book immediately.	Look for plentiful use of interactive read-alouds, with a diverse range of types of books (informational, silly, narrative, fairy tales, etc.) and books in various languages. Also, pay attention to how children are engaged in talking about the books and how vocabulary is given meaning.
Chant and Sing	Chants and songs provide active practice for young children in producing language—aided by the rhythm of the chant and additionally by the melody of the music. Inserting key vocabulary and concepts related to the thematic content being learned/explored supports vocabulary development.	Listen for singing and chanting. Watch for engagement of all children—including DLLs—in producing the language. Pay attention to the relevant vocabulary and content-connection of the songs and chants.
Question/Prompt	A key role of staff is to ask questions and provide prompts for children to speak. In order to stimulate children's talking, they encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings. For DLLs, it is helpful to provide sentence starters and sentence frames to support them in responding, and provide examples that prompt their thinking by modeling how to talk about an issue.	Watch for supports (such as sentence frames, examples, sentence starters) when the staff pose questions or prompts for children to talk.
Play With Language	Engaging children in playing with the sounds of language supports their production of oral language, builds phonemic awareness of the sounds of language, and is fun! Rhyming games, making up silly words, embellishing words, even gibberish conversations help build the "muscle" of the back and forth of conversation – and invite children into the practice of oral language.	Do children appear to be having fun with language?
Engage Children in Thinking About Language	DLLs have the wonderful resource of two (or more) languages. Developing their meta-linguistic awareness and cross-language skills leverages those dual language resources and increases overall linguistic competency. Engage children in discovering what is the same and different about their languages – helping them become language detectives. Elicit the vocabulary in their home language for things they are encountering in the preschool classroom, and encourage them to compare and contrast the two languages.	Look for and listen for evidence that children are using vocabulary from both their home language and English – and that staff are engaging children in language comparisons and cross-language discoveries.

Content Learning/Cognitive Domain

Content learning is about knowledge, concepts, and ways of understanding the world. Traditionally approached in schools as "subjects" or "disciplines," this includes, for example, math, social studies, art, and literacy. Proactively building children's conceptual and factual knowledge of the world is a central role of schooling—including preschool—to teach and help children learn pertinent and relevant things about the natural world, the social world, and themselves. By building knowledge of the world in early childhood, educators are laying the foundation critical for all future learning. The topics and themes focused on in the preschool curriculum should be interesting to children and important to know about—things that are relevant and accessible for children to engage with and that can be made tangible and accessible through hands-on learning opportunities.

These content knowledge and concepts, and the learning skills are often described in early education curriculum guides as "foundations", while in Transitional Kindergarten and the K-12 system they are called "standards." These describe the knowledge and content we want children to learn, and they address the skills and competencies of being learners and thinkers. This is a matter of both developing HOW THEY LEARN (cognitive process) and WHAT THEY LEARN (content). In developmentally appropriate preschool classrooms, young children learn through inquiry, investigation, observation, mimicry, observation, and making connections—through play and imagination. They learn independently and collaboratively with their peers. What they learn depends upon what they are exposed to, what they encounter in the preschool environment, what teachers present them with. In preschools, it may be up to the teacher/director/program to determine themes and content, it may be a product of a purchased curriculum, or it may be an emergent curriculum pedagogically driven by children's interests. In Transitional Kindergartens, the curriculum may draw upon a combination of Preschool Foundations and Kindergarten grade- level standards – in California expressed in the newly revised Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations. Regardless of how the themes and topics are identified, children learn through all of the experiences and material teachers expose them to about the world, how things work, social dynamics, and about the natural world.

In this process, children learn not only content but also how to think. They learn about cause and effect, quantification, and sequencing, and they develop both the cognitive conceptual grasp and the language that accompanies it. They ask "Why?" and bring their curiosity and their prior knowledge as the basis for making connections and making sense of new material. Dual language learners often have some knowledge encoded in one language and other knowledge in another language—depending on where they learned about it, and who they have spoken with about what they are discovering about the world. Content learning bridges the languages, and children often use both of their languages in discussing a topic. Content learning also bridges cultural contexts. How they chat about their knowledge of a topic, their experiences related to the theme, and the ways of thinking about and knowing about something are products of their culture. For young DLLs, learning about the world across cultural contexts and being encouraged to draw upon their multiple funds of knowledge are important elements in piecing together a bicultural lens on the world.

How can early educators support learning content? And what does language have to do with it?

The linguist Courtney Cazden wrote, "Language is learned not because we want to talk about language, but because we want to talk about the world." While some children just enjoy producing the sound of language (including nonsense words, silly sounds, etc.), language is primarily learned in connection to learning about the world and in the process of codifying that knowledge—learning the words to label the world and talk about it, developing the words to express thoughts and communicate with other people. Language is inextricable from cognitive development. It is how knowledge and concepts are codified in the brain. Language that has purpose and meaning is related to, motivated by, and given meaning through a young person's engagement with the world and what they are learning and encountering. Just as their brains are wired for language, they are wired to learn about the world to make sense of the world.

When Principle #2 of the EL Roadmap calls for "full access to standards-based and relevant curriculum," it is concerned squarely with content—and that requires language. The following chart lists the major roles and strategies of early childhood educators in the development of content knowledge, describes the meaning and purpose of those roles/strategies and offers program directors and administrators suggestions on what to look for in their preschool classrooms.

CHART: Content Learning/Cognitive Domain

Role of ECE Educators; Strategies	Description and Purpose	Notes for ECE Program Directors and Administrators
Teach Thematically	Building on the Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations, thematic units are developed in which language-rich pedagogy and literacy development occur in and throughout the curriculum. Thematic units are built around relevant and provocative science, social studies, and arts topics with intentionally planned infusion of oral language development, and literacy skills. This provides the content context for language and literacy development, builds background knowledge so essential for literacy, and provides the connections ELs need to strengthen comprehension and literacy engagement. Language and literacy develop in the context of learning and constructing knowledge. Themes are of sufficient duration to allow for attention to children's interests and curiosity and to build the vocabulary and language children need to engage with the content.	Provide planning time, materials, and resources (and coaching) to support building thematic units that are content-rich and language rich. Look for children using content-specific vocabulary in talking about what they are learning. Ensure teacher/staff familiarity with the Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations. Message the importance of children learning meaningful content.
Realia And Manipulatives **Research And Inquiry Centers**	Children learn through direct interaction with the environment. This means that the environment must include things they can touch, manipulate, and see up close. An aspect of the development of their understanding of the topic and the world occurs through THINGS—realia and manipulatives. Find ways to give children close-up, direct experience with what they are learning about. Important for all young children, this is particularly essential for comprehension for the DLLs whose language access is still restricted, and a crucial support in providing meaning that supports vocabulary and language learning. Creating research and inquiry centers within the classroom provides a space where the realia is available to investigate, with tools to support investigation (e.g., magnifying glasses, rulers to measure, picture books with realistic visuals).	Provide the budget and support so the learning environment can be rich with realia and manipulatives that bring the topic to life and make the learning tangible. Look around the room and see if it is evident what the children are learning and that they are engaging with content. Notice if there are centers and places with realia for children to investigate.
Learning Activities	Learning occurs through experience. A critical part of a content-rich curriculum is the activities and experiences the teacher sets up, creates, and engages students in that bring them up close personally with whatever they are learning—field trips, exploration, experiments, etc.	Provide resources and support for field trips, visitors, and learning activities.

Role of ECE Educators; Strategies	Description and Purpose	Notes for ECE Program Directors and Administrators
Questions and Prompts to Spark Thinking	Children's thinking and cognitive development is facilitated by the presence of someone who asks questions that cause them to wonder, stimulate their thinking, and encourage their powers of creative thought and analysis. Because thought and language are closely related, asking children to ponder and put their thoughts into words actually stimulates more and deeper thinking. "What do you see? What do you think is happening? Why do you think…" "What does this connect to?" The power of questions is key to content and knowledge development. Because they are best done in the child's strongest language, the questions might require staff to support family members in querying their children. And children are always invited to answer in whichever language they choose.	Pay attention to the extent and level of questions posed to children to ensure they stimulate creative and critical thinking.
Explanation as Source of Information and as a Model of Being a Learner	Another important role for teachers/adults is simply being there with explanations, to answer questions, to respond to what children are asking —and also to direct them to and provide them with the resources to FIND and DISCOVER answers. This means staff are both important sources of information and knowledge and are models of where to turn to find out answers to things one doesn't know. "Let's find out" is an important response to children's curiosities and wonderings—modeling being a learner.	Support teachers with resources for their own learning about a thematic topic. Provide resources (books & media, list of local resources, in multiple languages, etc.) that enable teachers to be both a source of and seeker of information.
Dramatic Play Linked to the Theme	Young children process the world and learn through dramatic play. They need environments for dramatic play related to what they are studying. Create these as models of labs or environments where engagement in the topic would take place. An "Ocean Unit" might include boats, a map of the ocean, scuba diving equipment, a fish aquarium with real or pretend fish, etc., and be set up as an "Oceanographer's Lab." An Insect Unit might include creating a beehive in the corner children can crawl into, insect wings they can put on, some bug specimens and magnifying glasses, posters of insects, etc. For a Farm Unit, create an animal corral. For a Community Helper's Unit, the dramatic play area may become a post office or a fire station. These are opportunities for students to literally put themselves into the scene, play with it, make it their own.	Provide resources to support the creation of thematic-related dramatic play areas.
Books and Media	A critically important resource for learning is through books and media. These are sources of information to help answer children's questions and deepen/broaden their understanding. Books and media with realistic visuals and informational materials are particularly successful in introducing them to new worlds, ideas, and experiences.	Provide resources and support in identifying and purchasing high-quality informational books and media for the classroom.

Role of ECE Educators; Strategies	Description and Purpose	Notes for ECE Program Directors and Administrators
Home School Connections	The topics worthy of thematic units exist out in the world, not just in the classroom. Because DLLs' strongest language is their home language, and because parents/families have knowledge of the world to add to learning, the home school connection is important. Teachers should engage families in talking with their children about the topics being studied, sharing their experiences, eliciting from children what they are learning and wondering, and providing the vocabulary **in their home language** for talking about the subject that will provide cultural context and perspective on the topic. Support for frequent home-school connection activities is important for all children. For DLLs, these activities become a meaningful bridge across their cultural worlds, and a source of dual language development as they engage in talking about a topic both in their home language in the home-school environment and in English at preschool.	Offer translation and coaching support for teachers in designing home-school connections. Provide support for families (in their home language) to know about the topics being learned in the program and to facilitate the connection activities.
Emergent Curriculum	Children's curiosities are the strongest drivers for learning and cognitive development. To the degree possible, flexibility in curriculum pacing and materials should allow for following their curiosity by dwelling more on what interests them – bringing in materials and books and experiences that respond to their questions and delights.	Provide teachers the flexibility to deviate from the pacing and sequencing of curriculum to accommodate children's interests. Provide resources for supplementary materials and to support experiences that respond to emerging interests.

Early Literacy

LITERACY is language in print form.

What components of early literacy are needed to set children on the path to becoming proficient readers and writers?

Reading and writing skills are built upon a foundation of oral language and dependent upon vocabulary and the background knowledge that gives meaning to words. Young children are just developing the oral language that will later be the basis for their literacy. It is not developmentally appropriate for most four-year-olds to provide direct instruction in reading and writing. Instead, a high-quality preschool builds precursor skills and engages children actively and joyfully with books by reading aloud to them, providing plentiful access to books, and talking about books – and with opportunities to "write" what they have to say. Teachers invite children to draw pictures, narrate, and tell their stories—which an adult can then write down so children see their words and thoughts turning into print. Children in preschool programs are helped to build awareness of the sounds of language. And a major foundation for literacy is immersing them in multiple ways in the delights of books. Print access and joyful engagement with print in preschool are important socializers and precursors to becoming readers and writers.

The CA Preschool Learning Foundations point to three components of early literacy:

1. **Foundational Literacy Skills:** This strand addresses skills that contribute to children's future reading and writing development. These skills include phonological awareness, knowledge of alphabetics and print, and understanding of the concept of print.

2. **Reading:** This strand focuses on children's interest in and engagement with literacy, as well as their understanding of stories and informational texts that are read to them.

3. **Writing:** This strand focuses on children's beginning abilities to communicate ideas through writing.

For children to become readers and writers, four things are essential in the early years.

First, they need to develop ENGAGEMENT (ACTIVE engagement) with print in both reading and writing. Although preschoolers are not yet being instructed in reading and writing, they need to understand the many purposes of print, and to feel a sense of connection between text and their own interests and needs in life. They need to discover that, "This is something for ME" and develop motivation and interest in literacy. Three- and four-year-olds are the perfect age for finding the amazing gift that books can be in our lives, and the fantastic understanding that writing letters on a page can be a way of expressing what they think and feel. They need to experience the delights and the gift of the printed word—to experience that books are vehicles for entertainment, enlightenment, and for learning information. They need to see and feel books as relevant to who they are and what they are interested in, and to see themselves in books (including their languages. To feel that books are connected to their world, are relevant to their world, and belong in their world. With luck, they will see themselves as writers and people "like them" as authors. Many data points positively correlate the degree of immersion and engagement with books in the early years with students who will become proficient and active readers and writers. Engagement with print is directly related to access to books—making literacy a basic survival skill and a matter of equity.

Second is AWARENESS (of print and text). For the little ones, awareness comes first. They perceive that those symbols—those marks on the paper—represent sounds and words. They demonstrate awareness of letters in their environment and show alphabetic awareness. For DLLs, there is the additional awareness that letters may have different sounds in different languages and that there are some graphemes that exist in one language and not another. But awareness is also about how text works, how it's structured, and how it is different from oral language.

Third, are the CODE-BASED SKILLS—the precursors to the **SKILLS** of reading and writing–which for young children include concepts of print, attentiveness to print, beginning letter knowledge, and phonological awareness. These form the basis for later word/letter recognition and decoding, fluency, morphology, and etymology that are developed in later grades.

Fourth is COMPREHENSION. Code-based skills are a partner to developing comprehension and meaning-making skills, which means children have to learn strategies for **COMPREHENSION** (prediction, summarizing, making connections, etc.) Comprehension skills do not wait to be learned until after code-based skills are honed. The two develop simultaneously and in relationship with each other. For young children, these comprehension skills can be developed in the course of interactive read-alouds and conversation about books.

The research on young children points to utilizing the preschool years to build language in the context of learning and play, to socialize children into literacy practices, and to focus on precursor skills that build a solid foundation for their later success as readers and writers. These include 1) emphasizing the creation of a rich oral language and wide vocabulary in both home language and English, 2) developing an active and positive engagement with text (with books), 3) attending to the development of phonological awareness in and through both languages, 4) building a sense of identity related to literacy, and 5) introducing skills for making cross-language connections (attending to the similarities and differences between home language and English—the sounds, vocabulary, pacing, etc.).

Literacy engagement and instruction should be developmentally appropriate. Critical literacy skills, such as phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge are developed through rhymes, active games, and hands-on materials. Literacy development is supported by print-rich environments, with many different types of written materials, such as books, posters, toys, signs, and labels, in English or the home language. It is important to read to children every day from storybooks and informational books and to support interest in literacy by offering materials for children to explore on their own and engage in songs, rhymes, and wordplay. Books that represent children's own cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds are especially valuable, as they can engage children's interest in reading and support their comprehension. And, books that expose children to new experiences, and that respond to their emerging interests are important for establishing the notion of books as wonderful resources for learning. Engaging families is essential. A preschool program that supports this kind of early literacy engagement deploys a variety of strategies, as explained in the following chart.

CHART: Early Literacy

Role of PK/TK Teacher; Strategies	Description and Purpose	For the Program Director and Administrator
Interactive Read-Alouds	Interactive read-alouds are a well-researched and powerful approach in early literacy development that can provide children with frequent (even daily) immersion in the world of books. This is how they discover what books have to offer and gain a sense of the purposes of print. Basic foundational concepts of print develop from this interaction (i.e., seeing the fronts and backs, turning pages, that the letters on the page represent words that can be read-aloud, etc.) Read-alouds are how children's interest in books develops, which enable immersion that isn't filtered by the child's own proficiency level in reading. A read-aloud is also a social endeavor. By commenting on the text, and asking questions about the text, staff provide children with opportunities to process what they have heard and make connections (key to reading comprehension). While reading aloud, staff can point to text and track text, underscoring basic concepts of print (L to R, sweep, etc.).	Invest in a variety of books that are engaging read-alouds. Build partnerships with local libraries to keep a steady supply of such books available for classrooms. Offer staff professional learning in compelling, interactive read-aloud approaches.
Engagement in Select Precursor Foundational Skills	Most young children are not yet attending to print and are not ready for reading instruction. However, some systematic attention to the development of phonological awareness is helpful (hearing and manipulating sounds in spoken language at the word level, syllable level, onset rhyme and phoneme level—including blending, segmenting, and deleting sounds). And intentional focus on concepts of print is also paramount (how text works, letter sounds, letter names). This can be included in the daily schedule with a short focus on those foundational skills paired with more frequent focus in context and connected to knowledge building.	Avoid purchasing and expecting teachers to use a large quantity of unrelated curricula, with each requiring a set amount of time daily, that focus on instructing discrete and isolated foundational skills (e.g., a phonemic awareness curriculum, an emergent early writing curriculum, and an alphabet curriculum). *Remember that skills develop in relationship to each other and in context.*

Role of PK/TK Teacher; Strategies	Description and Purpose	For the Program Director and Administrator
Frequent and Multiple Opportunities to Engage with Books	To become readers, children need plentiful access to and opportunities to engage with books—all kinds of books! Varying the genres is essential so children learn the different purposes of books (entertainment, fun and silly books, absorbing stories, informational text to LEARN about things, fantasy to invite imagination and possibility and creativity, fairytales with instructive lessons about life, biographies to become acquainted with people and the amazing things they have done with their lives). The more varied the TYPES of books, the more reasons children learn to turn to books—and the more they become aware of different structures of textual language.	Invest in books!
		Watch for how accessible books are in the classroom (e.g., Do children have free choice time to look at books? Are there scheduled read-alouds daily? Are the books readily visible and available?)
	Opportunities could include whole class read-alouds, small group read-alouds, read-alouds in the child's language with staff or visitors, a "center" or shelf of books related to the knowledge-building/theme being learned, trips to the library to select books, home-loan/family-loan program.	Support a family literacy program, or workshops for families in reading to their children.
	Class libraries are critical for access to books. Research consistently points to ACCESS to books and immersion in books as key factors in the development of literacy and a determinant in whether or not children actually become active readers and writers. Class libraries should provide varied and diverse books readily available to children.	Become familiar yourself with children's literature, and share your favorites with teachers, staff, parents, and children.
Talk About Books	It's important to talk about books- whether in the course of interactive read-alouds (which involve talking about the book, pausing and reflecting, and thinking about the book, making connections between self and the text thus deepening the experience) or asking children questions about books they are looking at, or sharing with children your own reaction to a particular book.	Encourage staff to think ahead (before reading a book aloud) about the kind of questions and prompts they might ask to engage children in talking about books—and to plan for the scaffolds that will support DLLs to participate.
	It's in *talking about* the books that meaning-making and comprehension are broadened—and comprehension skills are partially built.	At staff meetings, select a new or favorite children's book to read aloud and discuss with staff. Everyone likes being read to, right?
	In *talking about the books,* the children enhance meaning-making by making them their own, articulating their personal interpretations and connections, and learning from others.	
	And, in *talking about books,* children make the vocabulary and language their own.	
Diverse Book Selection	**Book selection** is crucial to engage children, to build a sense of connection and motivation to become readers. Books should include multilingual authors, diverse experiences, expressive language, and a variety of genres. Children should be able to see themselves in books—to recognize that, "I have a place in literature." "Books pertain to people like me." "Books speak to me and my life and my family and my culture."	Look for (and purchase) books that reflect the cultures, families, languages, and experiences of the children and community served by your program.
	Book selection can ensure that children have exposure to wide experiences beyond their own. Ensure children have access to books in their home languages that they recognize that literacy applies to their language as well as to English.	Learn about sources of children's books and bibliographies of children's books that specifically reflect diversity and equity—and share those with staff.
	These books also give DLLs a vehicle to be engaged with their families and community in and through books. Selecting books for the expressiveness and beauty of the language is also meaningful as we socialize children to view language as a vehicle of expression.	Pay attention to whether staff are reading diverse books with children—and to the use of books with expressive wonderful language.

Role of PK/TK Teacher; Strategies	Description and Purpose	For the Program Director and Administrator
Model Writing	Writing is the sister skill to reading—the encoding and expressive and productive partner to decoding. Just as teachers serve as oral language models and model reading with read-alouds, they need to model the act of writing and the purposes of writing. During the day, staff should create ways to write in front of children and sound it out as they write so children are witnessing the action of letters becoming words that represent oral language. While most children are not yet reading the print, through witnessing writing, they are learning that those marks on the page represent sounds and words. They are learning concepts of print (left to right). They are seeing that writing has purpose.	"This is how we write," you say, picking up a pen or pencil and paper. "And this is how words get into these books," you say, pointing to the books around the room.
Writing Centers	Children need opportunities to be writers. Early writing is drawing and scribbling, followed by some letters. They do not need instruction or coaching in writing "correctly." Writing centers should provide the equipment children need to engage in "writing" (paper, pencils, envelopes, stickers, stamps, etc.). This is where they have the free-choice opportunity to represent meaning on paper using scribbles, marks, drawings, letters, characters, or words—depending on their developmental level towards becoming writers. They are given imaginative invitations to use multiple kinds of materials in "writing" and forming letters (e.g., chalk, shaving cream (!), clay, etc.).	Support the creation of free-choice writing centers in the classrooms, along with enticing (writing-is-fun!) supplies.
Dictation	It's paramount that children see their own words turn into print. Dictation is the process in which an adult "takes down" the words that the children want to have represented on paper. It models, "I'm listening to you." It may be describing details of a drawing they have made, or telling about an experience they have had, or just a story. It is a powerful lesson in early literacy for children to see their own thoughts and words turned into print. They learn concepts of print (letters represent sounds and put together form words; print moves from left to right) and the activity drives home that one of the purposes of literacy (in this case WRITING) is to capture what we have to say so others can read it. Dictation is a powerful socialization into literacy for young children to author something that gets written down. In dictation, staff should not try to "correct" what children have said. Write down DLL's exact words, which often include translanguaging.	Look around the classroom walls for children's "writing," drawings, and dictation. Read them aloud to underscore that what gets written can be read and let the "author" know you have read their writing and that you have listened to them. Taking dictation is an excellent role for a volunteer in the classroom. Offer a workshop for volunteers, parents, and family members on taking a child's dictation.
Cross-Language Connections	As bilingual books are read, as staff write in front of children, and families take dictation from children, teachers and staff find excellent opportunities for drawing attention to cross-language connections. Point out the difference in pronunciation and the sounds of the two languages and draw attention to when the same letter may be pronounced differently across the two languages. What's the same? What's different?	

Role of PK/TK Teacher; Strategies	Description and Purpose	For the Program Director and Administrator
Color Coding	In dual language and bilingual classrooms where both English and another language are regularly used, it is helpful to color code the languages when text is being written out so children can distinguish which phonological system to apply. Color coding (and paying attention to "color-blind" hues) is also supportive of the messaging that two different languages are in use in the classroom, and that they have literate forms.	Look for the presence of print in the classroom in different languages and for color-coding.
Family Book Loans & Family Literacy Programs	The more children have books in their lives, the better. And the more they associate books with people they love and with familiar environments, the closer children will identify with becoming a reader. Furthermore, for DLLs, the opportunity to be engaged with books in their home language is greatly enhanced if they have books at home. Programs can facilitate this with family book loans, by supporting family connections to local public libraries, and through offering workshops for families in strategies such as interactive read-alouds and dictation.	Establish family book loan programs. Offer workshops for families in interactive read-aloud strategies and taking dictation.

The Integration of Language, Literacy, and Content:

Thinking and understanding are made possible through language—through having the words to codify thought. Intellectually rich early education classrooms are alive with language! And, because quality early education classrooms are developmentally appropriate, children learn through active hands-on, play-based, project-based, inquiry-focused opportunities to engage with their world—and develop language as part and parcel of naming and exploring their world all day long. Language is woven into all aspects of the school day. Everything that happens in a school day is an opportunity for language development.

Language development needs to be occurring across the curriculum, across the day. For young children in particular, learning and language occur through making connections. Young children also develop language through play and social interactions. Language and content are deeply interconnected—the purpose of words is to be able to label the world, talk about the world, describe the world, and share ideas. And so, children develop language most effectively situated in the context of authentic and hands-on content learning experiences where they are actively exploring and making sense of new language and concepts. Language-rich pedagogy and literacy development occur in and throughout the curriculum. This may be accomplished through thematic units built around relevant and exciting science, social studies, and arts topics in preschool. It may also be accomplished through an intentionally planned infusion of oral language development and the study of content into the curriculum for each of these domains. These approaches provide the content context for language development. Language develops in the context of learning and constructing knowledge.

An integrated curriculum is a complete curriculum—including and intertwining science, social studies, math, and the arts—in addition to integrating intentional language focus and explicit and direct language arts instruction. Based on their knowledge of the Preschool Foundations or grade level content standards and topics that are meaningful and engaging, teachers design the learning environment and its activities to promote subject area knowledge across all content areas as well as across all domains of development.

By learning and hearing about topics, talking about and synthesizing what they are learning, and making observations, children develop key vocabulary and conceptual understanding and learn the structures and forms of language used to talk about specific content. Children learn the language of hypothesizing, observation, and description as they talk about ladybugs, the weather, planting seeds, community helpers, etc. Rather than relegating language development solely to a language arts time of the day or "letter of the week" lessons on a carpet, teachers focus on intentional language development as they engage children in learning content and as they create thematic connections across the curriculum. Teaching thematically enhances comprehension, increases opportunities for exposure to and use of language, and facilitates making connections to previous experience and knowledge.

And wonderfully, the integration of language and content and literacy strengthens the development of each domain. Literacy doesn't develop without language. Learning about the world involves naming it and talking about it and using books as one way to get more information about it. Language is learned in the process of learning about the world and hearing books and engaging with print. This means that teachers need to plan curriculum experiences that integrate children's learning within and across developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive) and subject areas (including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health). Educators build on ideas and experiences that have meaning in the children's lives and are likely to interest them, recognizing that developing and extending children's interests is particularly important when children's ability to focus their attention is in its early stages. So, for culturally and linguistically diverse communities of children, they need to plan curriculum experiences to build on the funds of knowledge of each child, family, and community in order to offer culturally and linguistically sustaining learning experiences.

Examples and Indicators

- *"Topics" and "themes" derived from content standards, Preschool Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations, or emerging from children's' interests involve exploratory inquiry driven by key questions and children's wonderings. These themes engage science, math, the arts, and social studies perspectives—with a focus on the language children need to talk about the topic. Design and pacing of the "units" and themes allow the flexibility to respond to what has meaning in children's lives and what interests them.*

- *Visuals, realia, inquiry centers, and dramatic play props support children in their own exploration and play related to the theme—and give context, meaning, and practice in using language.*

- *Chants and songs involve children in producing the language of the topic.*

- *The vocabulary teachers use and model is specific and includes high-level expressive vocabulary that gives children scientific and precise language related to the topic.*

- *Informational and narrative children's books are available in the home languages about the topic to support family engagement in reading with children about the theme.*

- *Read-alouds engage children with informational and narrative books related to the theme.*

- *Families are enlisted to contribute stories, songs, and shared experiences related to the theme and topic—providing meaningful connections to children's home cultures and experiences and the vocabulary to discuss the topics/themes in the child's home language.*

All children have the capacity to learn two or more languages. Though some have worried that it might be to the detriment of learning English or might be confusing to children, the research is clear that simultaneous development of two or more languages can be done with no harm and has tremendous benefits.

C. What does the EL Roadmap mean by "Instructional scaffolding for comprehension, participation, mastery and access" in a preschool /TK context?

It is still the reality that most DLLs attend preschools that are conducted in English—a language they don't yet comprehend, in which they cannot adequately express themselves, and face challenges in actively participating. If a child doesn't yet have proficiency in the language of the classroom, their participation, and comprehension can be compromised, and (in the language of civil rights and the K-12 system) they are effectively foreclosed from full participation and educational access. If immersed in an environment that is English-conducted, DLLs struggle to understand instructions and to comprehend explanations, and they cannot adequately express their questions. DLLs are thus disadvantaged if appropriate strategies and supports are not present to ensure comprehension, participation, and access. This is why there is so much emphasis within the field of early childhood education on the need for knowledgeable, competent, and sensitive multilingual/multicultural early childhood educators. And this is why the California Preschool Program Guidelines include the following among the "Guiding Principles for Supporting Young DLLs":

- *"High-quality preschool/TK programs benefit all children but are not sufficient for young DLLs to achieve equitable outcomes."*

- *DLLs' knowledge and strengths in their home language need to be recognized and built upon in the preschool curriculum.*

- *Characteristics of preschool DLL's language development need to be understood by all program staff.*

Even when a teacher or staff cannot speak the languages of the children they serve, staff need strategies to facilitate engagement and bolster comprehension of DLLs across language barriers. These strategies are often called "scaffolds." A scaffold helps DLLs in situations where they don't have the level of the English language that a native-English speaking child is able to rely upon to know what is happening. For a DLL, an instructional scaffold is basically anything that helps that child better understand and interact with content, understand directions, and actively participate in learning activities. It includes things like using images or pictures to help illustrate content and actions, acting out and modeling what is expected, providing sample sentence starters or sentence frames, one-on-one or small group work to give children a chance to talk and process in their home language and get extra support in understanding, use of bilingual teaching assistants and aides to provide translation, incorporation of opportunities for DLLs to work with bilingual teachers and staff in their home language and encouraging children to use their home language with others who speak that language. It includes designing learning activities in which using the English language is not a prerequisite for active involvement.

Examples of what instructional scaffolding for DLLs sounds like might include:

"Let me show you a picture so you can see what we're talking about....,"

"This is what it looks like...,"

"If you want to tell us what you are feeling, you could start by saying 'Today I feel ____.'"

Instructional scaffolding might look like pictures or visuals posted on the wall showing the steps involved in engaging in an activity. Scaffolds often include:

- *Engaging the families in home-school projects that provide opportunities for children to use their home language in learning routines, gaining information, and inquiring into content that mirrors what they are engaged with in preschool.*

- *Inviting a child's home language into the classroom is another form of scaffold.*

- *Having the whole class learn key words and phrases in each other's languages.*

- *Using bilingual assistants or volunteers to work with and support children in their home language mirroring.*

D. What does the EL Roadmap mean by "meaningful access to a full and relevant curriculum" in a preschool/TK context?

Unlike the K-12 system, which has grade-level content standards and outcome expectations, the early childhood systems do not define specific content mastery and skills that are expected to be attained by the end of each year of schooling. A developmental perspective instead recognizes that normatively, children develop in different ways and domains at different rates and describes a continuum of growth with general expectations of where a young child might be along that continuum as they age. Several key guidance documents in California describe this growth and lay out expectations for preschool programs that would support children's development towards those goals.

Through the lens of preschool, the EL Roadmap Principle #2 might more appropriately replace, "Access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum", with "English learners have meaningful access to preschool programs that are designed to support their growth, learning, and development towards desired goals and access to the full range of knowledge and skills that preschool children typically attain when given the benefits of a high-quality preschool program."

The California Preschool TK Learning Foundations outlines key knowledge and skills that most children can achieve when provided with the kinds of interactions, instruction, and environments that research has shown to promote early learning and development. The foundations are meant to provide early childhood educators, parents, and the public with a clear understanding of the wide range of knowledge and skills that preschool children typically attain when given the benefits of a high-quality preschool program. The foundations were released in 2008 by the California Department of Education (CDE) to offer early childhood educators a clear understanding of what preschool learners should know before entering kindergarten. They were revised in 2024.

The Preschool TK Learning Foundations for children ages 3 to 5½ focus on two overlapping phases of development (3 to 4½ and 4 to 5½) because they correspond to the end of the first and second years of enrollment in preschool and TK describing what children should know and be able to do within specific age ranges. Each foundation describes the competencies—knowledge and skills—that preschool children typically attain in high-quality preschool programs. Because English learners enter preschool with different levels of experience with English, as well as with varying skills with their primary languages, the English Language Development foundations describe what children typically demonstrate at three different levels of successive English-language development: beginning, middle, and later.

Volume 1 of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* focuses on the domains of social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics. Volume II covers the skills and knowledge that children attain between ages 3 and 5½ in the domain areas of visual and performing arts, physical development, and health. Volume III covers the skills and knowledge that children develop in the domain areas of history, social science, and science.

The Foundations and assessments of children's development are meant to be used together to plan the environment, play, learning activities, and instruction to meet the needs of the children and provide high-quality experiences. Created as companion volumes to the *California Preschool TK Learning Foundations*, the *California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks* present strategies for early childhood educators that enrich learning and development opportunities for all of California's preschool children. The *California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks* include ideas for how to integrate learning into children's play intentionally; implement child-directed and teacher-guided activities; plan environments, interactions, routines, and materials that engage children in learning; and individualize curriculum based on children's knowledge, skills, needs, and interests.

> *www.cde.ca.gov webpage for the Early Learning Division Resources for the newly revised Preschool/ Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (2024).*

E. What does the EL Roadmap mean by *"home language is a means to access content, a foundation for developing English and is developed to high levels along with English"* and that children are offered *"a choice of research-based language support programs including options for developing skills in multiple languages"*? How does this apply to a preschool/TK context?

The early childhood education field has long held the fundamental understanding that children are parts of families and the importance of a child's family as the context for early development. With the increased presence of children with home languages other than English in early education, the value of affirming home language and culture has become a pillar of defining quality care and programs. As described in Principle #1 of the EL Roadmap, an assets- orientation to schooling embraces the languages and cultures of children and families as key to creating a welcoming, safe, and affirming climate for learning in which children feel respected and that they belong. The English Learner Roadmap Principle #2 extends the general commitment to supporting a child's home language for its key role in academic learning and achievement. The home language is understood as a means of accessing curriculum content. Children can learn more, think more deeply, and make more connections in a language they know than they can in a language they don't yet know. So, learning is deeper when it can engage a child's strongest language.

Furthermore, research on language development among dual language learners has documented the supportive role of a strong foundation in one's home language as a foundation for developing a second language. A strong foundation in the home language facilitates learning a second language. *Plainly stated, the stronger a child's home language, the stronger the development of English will be*. It also is of considerable benefit to overall academic success.

A significant positive relationship exists between a student's level of bilingual proficiency and their achievement in math and reading in English. Bilingual children exhibit significant cognitive advantages in comparison to monolingual children in executive control processes related to selective attention and inhibition and monitoring of attention when, for example, children are engaged in problem-solving. The California Preschool Program Guidelines call this out. *"The executive function abilities of young DLLs can be enhanced through a balanced (bilingual) educational approach to language."* In addition, children learning to read in a second language can transfer many skills and knowledge from their first language to facilitate their acquisition of reading skills in the second language. The best evidence of this comes from studies showing that students with strong reading skills in the home language also have strong reading skills in their second language.

All DLLs live in two language worlds and learn through two languages. A child's home language is a crucial foundation for cognitive development, learning about the world, and emerging literacy. A child's home language matters. Support for the development of the home language in addition to English is critical. All children have the capacity to learn two or more languages. Though some have worried that it might be to the detriment of learning English or might be confusing to children, the research is clear that simultaneous development of two or more languages can be done with no harm and has tremendous benefits.

The cognitive, social, economic, and personal benefits of bilingualism—along with the research about the academic benefits that accrue when a child develops a solid strong foundation in their home language concurrently with English—has been sufficient to convince policymakers and educational leaders in both early education and K-12 education.

The most powerful approach to schooling for DLLs is one that develops and leverages both their home language and English.

California has set a vision of multilingualism for all children. The English Learner Roadmap reflects this by calling for the development of proficiency in multiple languages as one of the goals of schooling, and Principle #2 specifically calls for both utilizing home language assets and resources as part of a child's learning and for intentionally developing the skills of bilingualism and proficiency in both languages.

The window for developing native-like fluency in multiple languages is tied to the incredible brain development phase for language in those young years cited by some as the "linguistic genius" of young children. For both these reasons, over the past decade, research and guidance have become increasingly coherent and insistent about the importance and benefits of supporting dual language development for young children. For this reason, among the hallmarks of "intellectually rich" high-quality instruction for dual language learners in early childhood education is support for home language and bilingualism.

For DLLs, there is the added element in quality early education of supporting their bilingual identity development as children growing up in and across multiple language and cultural worlds. Between the ages three and eight is a critical time for bilingual development, and during this time, the relationship to home language and culture is particularly vulnerable. Loss and rejection of their home language is common as children absorb the attitudes of those around them about the status of English—learning shame about their family culture and language and as they are increasingly immersed in the environment of English-instructed schooling – unless this is countered by a strongly affirming environment in their preschools that supports bilingualism.

The use and development of a student's home language and affirmation of home culture promotes a sense of belonging and connection to school, positively affects family relationships and inter-generational communication, increases confidence and motivation, and supports academic achievement as they move through school. The best foundation for later literacy is a rich foundation of oral language—extensive vocabulary, experience with expressive language, active practice using language— which can be more easily developed in the child's strongest language. The sophistication developed in their home language is transferred into the new language—English.

A quality early childhood education approach for dual language children sets a foundation of rich and complex linguistic skills in the home language while providing exposure to English. Between the ages three and seven is an optimal time for developing two or more languages and an essential window for preventing language loss and language abandonment. Studies have found that children have more extended and complex vocabulary and language skills if their home language continues to develop throughout the age three to eight developmental phase. DLLs in English-only instructed preschool/TK programs are vulnerable to loss, rejection, and abandonment of their home language, which ruptures the process of language development and interrupts the overall strength of language development. What happens with and to home language development in preschool has long-lasting implications for DLLs—setting a firm foundation for academic success and the benefits of biliteracy or rupturing the process of language development and contributing to the loss of connection to family and heritage as home language development is interrupted.

What does this mean for preschool /TK programs? It means that it is important for children to hear and see their home language in the learning environment, and to have learning experiences that are both culturally and linguistically inclusive. In all classrooms, instruction should engage and leverage students' home languages, build cross-language awareness and connections, and affirm the value of bilingualism. Where possible, programs should be bilingual and explicitly develop both home language and English. This is not always possible, however, due to the linguistic mix of children in a classroom, the language skills of the staff, and family preferences. While not using the same titles in naming and describing language programs and approaches for DLLs, both HeadStart at the federal level and California's Preschool Program Guidelines at the state level call for English language development along with support for the home language at a *minimum*, and for bilingual approaches where possible.

Among the hallmarks of "intellectually rich" high-quality instruction for dual language learners in early childhood education is support for home language and bilingualism.

Goals	Head Start Classroom Models and Planned Language Approaches	California Preschool Program Guidelines
English Development + Support for Home Language	*English with home language support.* "Goals are that DLLs will develop age-level English skills in the Big 5, continue developing home language, and experience home language as an asset and strength."	*English language development with home language support program approach.* Interactions and instruction are primarily in English, with strategies that scaffold comprehension and participation. Home language is affirmed by inviting and providing some presence in the classroom of the home language through parents' engagement, books, volunteers, etc.
Development of Both English and Home Language—Bilingualism	*"Dual language (50/50 model)":* All children will become bilingual and develop age-level skill in English and another language and will learn the value of different languages and cultures. Children's identities will be enhanced and positive self-concept developed. Teachers are fluent in one or both of the designated languages; DLLs are expected to make significant progress in developing two languages.	*"Balanced English and Home Language Development Approach":* Programs that serve native speakers of English and children who primarily speak one other home language are able to implement an approach that uses the home language and English in balanced (roughly equal) proportions. This maintains and develops the home language and promotes English language development—with staff capable of providing high-quality language modeling and instruction across all learning domains in the home language and in English.
Development of Home Language + Exposure to English	*Home language as the foundation for English Development:* For programs in which all children speak the same home language, all are DLLs. English is gradually and intentionally introduced with the goal of developing a solid foundation in the home language and supporting age-level improvement in English as a second language over time. Program emphasizes strong bonds with families and culture, strong language, and conceptual skills.	(Not described in the California program guidelines)

Note that research does not support English-only programs for young DLLs. Ideally, all children would be provided an early education that embraces and supports the development of the home language and of English. Dual immersion/bilingual programs are the pathway towards biliteracy and the benefits that bilingualism accrues. Aligning preschool and Transitional Kindergarten with goals of bilingualism is a powerful start to the journey towards full dual language proficiency. The California EL Roadmap has earmarked support for home language as one of the hallmarks of intellectual quality and meaningful access. Where teachers are unable to provide instruction and care in the child's home language, they still have a responsibility and can support bilingualism and a child's connection to their home language through the English-plus- home-language support models. This is what it can look like in early childhood classrooms in which teachers do not themselves speak the home languages but are committed to home language support and affirmation:

Examples and Indicators:

- *Teachers learn key words and phrases in the home languages of the children, use these regularly, continue to learn more phrases, and model being a proud language learner interested in the child's home language.*

- *Key vocabulary words in children's home languages related to the content being studied are taught to the whole class.*

- *Classroom objects and thematic realia are labeled in the home languages of children.*

- *Books are provided in home language and books that depict the cultural and linguistic background of children are visible in the classroom.*

- *Children's emerging bilingualism is celebrated.*

- *Teachers work with families to understand their important role in young children's home language development to recognize and counter the risk of home language rejection and loss, and to leverage resources and strategies for intentionally and actively supporting the development of bilingualism for their children.*

F. What does it mean for preschools and TKs that the EL Roadmap calls for *"rigorous instructional materials to support high levels of intellectual engagement and integrated language development and content learning"*?

As described in prior sections, developmentally appropriate, intellectually rich, and integrated thematic teaching and learning in preschool require hands-on materials and books relating to the theme and topics. To create environments that bring topics alive and invite exploratory learning, preschools need the resources to create learning centers of manipulatives and realia. They need books in the languages of the children and families related to the theme. They need a variety of book genres—both informational and with wonderful illustrations, graphics, and photos. They need narratives, story books, silly books, and books with repetitive refrains that children can join in. They should have books with expressive language that models wonderful language. And, because materials are needed to support all domains of learning, the need goes beyond books. The Environmental Rating Scale, one of the mechanisms to measure quality in early learning programs in California, provides a checklist for California State Preschool Programs to be used to rate availability and quality of materials, including the following.

- *"Encouraging children's use of books" calls for at least 15 accessible books and a wide selection in the classroom library, and defines a "wide selection" as a significant variety of topics with at least five books related to the current classroom activities or themes.*

- *It calls for art materials including at least one material from each category (chalk, 3-D, collage, paint, tools) to support fine motor development.*

- *It specifies at least ten materials including at least one type from each category (manipulatives, interlocking building materials, and puzzles).*

- *For music and movement, it asks for at least ten instruments and recorded music equipment.*

- *For play, it suggests blocks and block accessories and many and varied dramatic play materials, including some that reflect cultural diversity.*

- *It calls for Nature and Science materials from multiple categories (natural objects, living things, tools for inquiry, water and sand materials, and nature-science picture games).*

- *As for math materials and activities, it calls for supplies for measuring and comparing quantities and shapes.*

- *And for "Promoting acceptance of diversity," the Environmental Rating Scale seeks items that represent diversity of race, culture, age, differing abilities, and non-traditional gender roles. Some of these are consumables and have to be regularly replenished.*

For TK program directors and preschool leaders, the bottom line is that materials are needed to support intellectual engagement and integrated learning for young children – and this requires a budget.

G. The EL Roadmap calls for fostering "high levels of English proficiency." What does this mean in preschool and TK classrooms?

Dual language learners come to preschool with a home language other than English and begin or continue a journey of learning English as another language. In the TK-12 system, there is a requirement that schools provide "English Language Development" to explicitly address the need to teach English to English learners. While there is no direct requirement that preschools actually teach English, there is an explicit acknowledgment that preschools have an important role to play in supporting these children as dual language learners. So what does it mean to "foster" proficiency in English? And what is the preschool experience that will set the foundation leading to eventual "high levels of English proficiency"?

It used to be a common belief that simply immersing DLLs in English was the appropriate and most direct pathway to developing the English proficiency they would need for successful Kindergarten readiness and later success in school. It is now clear from research (though still not necessarily understood or believed in some communities and by some teachers) that a strong continuing foundation in the home language is the strongest partner to developing high levels of English proficiency and the language skills needed for later academic success.

CHART: Outdated Beliefs and Current Understanding

Common Outdated Beliefs	Current Understanding
The strongest path towards English proficiency and the best foundation for the English language skills needed for later academic success is full immersion in English as early as possible.	A strong and continuing foundation in the home language is the most effective partner in developing children's English proficiency for later academic success. Full immersion in English undermines continuing home language development, often leading to detrimental home language loss.
It is confusing and it wastes children's time to develop two languages simultaneously. Because they need to become English speakers, preschools should focus on just English.	Children have the capacity to develop two languages simultaneously, and it is advantageous to do so.
If families want children to become bilingual, the preschool/TK settings should focus on English – and leave it up to families to support home language at home.	It is important that preschool/TK programs support bilingual development, providing the affirmation of the value of home language, opportunities for children to use their home language along with their emerging English, and support for home language development as part of bilingual development. When home language is left out of the preschool/TK experience, the development of that language is hampered, language loss often occurs, and bilingual/bicultural identity can be harmed as well.
If we immerse children in an English environment, they will naturally just pick up English.	While young children are wired to learn language, and will learn English if engaged with English-speakers, it is helpful and more efficient and produces better outcomes if there is also intentional support for their English language development.
Readiness in English is an essential element of Kindergarten readiness for young DLLs.	Readiness for kindergarten includes a strong foundation of language—but not necessarily English.

Attention to English Language Development is now understood as a component of a quality preschool program for DLLs. The California Preschool Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations includes a component on English Language Development for dual language learners that outlines the skills and competencies involved. This sub-domain identifies the foundations of English language development for children learning English as an additional language around the time of entry into an early education program. The English Language Development sub-domain may be used for children learning English in dual language programs as well as early education programs in which English is the primary language of instruction. It is intended for use together with the Foundational Language Development sub-domain.

Multilingual learners acquiring English as an additional language may enter an early education program with varying amounts of experience with English. As such, the English Language Development sub-domain has three levels to account for differences in individual children's ability to use English to communicate. There is no uniform pathway or predetermined rate for learning English as a second or additional language. Children enter early education programs with their current knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and conversational norms in their home languages and cultures. Still, the extent to which their knowledge applies directly to English may vary by language. For example, a child who speaks Spanish at home may have existing knowledge of alphabet letters and sounds that allows them to recognize the names and sounds of English alphabet letters relatively quickly. Alternatively, a child who speaks Mandarin at home may already understand print based on their exposure to Chinese characters but may require additional time and support to learn the names of English letters and the associated sounds.

The three levels of English Language Development are labeled "Discovering", "Developing", and "Broadening". A description of each is below.

- **Discovering:** *Foundations at the Discovering level describe skills and knowledge children demonstrate as they engage with English for the first days, weeks, and possibly months in an early education program. Children increasingly recognize English speech and print, understand and use a few words, and interact with English-language books and literacy activities.*

- **Developing:** *Foundations at the Developing level describe children's abilities to interact more skillfully and knowledgeably in English. Children understand and express an increasing variety of ideas, wants, and observations while applying some English grammar rules. They demonstrate a growing understanding of English print conventions and the alphabet, comprehend some information from books that are read to them, and experiment with writing using the English alphabet.*

- **Broadening:** *Foundations at the Broadening level generally represent children's skills and knowledge showing they are able to engage in most everyday interactions in English. Children at this level can use English across a range of contexts and interactions, both in spoken language and in literacy activities.*

A child may also be at different levels of English Language Development for different skills. For example, their listening and speaking skills may be at the Developing or Broadening levels, while some literacy skills in English may be new and, therefore, correspond to the Discovering level. In addition, the pace at which a child moves through the levels of different foundations may vary—the child may, for example, more quickly demonstrate Broadening-level knowledge of alphabet letters as compared to their development of English grammar. Other children may enter an early education program already at the Developing or Broadening level of each foundation due to some prior experience with English. They may be able to apply knowledge from their home languages to some aspects of English but not others. Children vary in their language development; the foundations allow teachers to support children's English language development in a way that is responsive to each child's strengths and needs.

While the English Language Development sub-domain foundations represent children's growing skills and knowledge in English, they are designed to recognize and encourage children's continued use and development of their home languages as well. Learning English does not, and should not, replace children's home language development. In addition, it is natural and helpful for both children and adults to draw on all of their language resources to communicate. As children develop their bilingualism, they learn to use their language resources to communicate effectively in different contexts with different people.

To support their language development requires intentionality on the part of teachers—in how instruction is planned, in interactions, and in modeling. Because they learn language in large part by hearing it and through interaction with proficient users of the language, the teacher's role with young children is as a language model, language engager, and facilitator.

- **First,** *teachers need to be thoughtful about the language their children will need in order to participate, engage with, and express their ideas related to what they are learning—in the academic and social realms.*

- **Second,** *teachers need to intentionally model rich, expressive language, use the vocabulary they want children to develop, invite and engage children to use their words, and create environments where vocabulary and concepts come to life.*

- **Third,** *across the staffing of the PK/TK program, DLLs need adults who speak their home languages, can engage with them in the home language, can model bilingualism, and are able to teach bilingually*

DLLs are emerging bilinguals – developing awareness of their dual language systems, and the proficiency/ competency to use both languages. As they learn English, they need to become aware of how English is structured, gain practice in it, and be able to compare and contrast it to their home language. In preschool classrooms, this can happen in 1:1 interactions with DLLs, through "in the moment" opportunities to introduce vocabulary and engage children in thinking about the languages, by pulling a small group of DLLs to preview or review the English that is required in some activity or learning the whole group is engaged in, or may include some special designated "ELD time" to provide a space for practice in pronunciation and fluency in English and as a mechanism to create a risk-free environment for DLLs to speak using their new language. In a preschool classroom where English is the primary language, teachers should also intentionally use "scaffolds" (see page 93) and effective practices to support multilingual learners' engagement and learning throughout the day – including attention to building English vocabulary and providing for English practice in the course of regular activities in the preschool day.

Examples and Indicators:

- *Posters, and other printed materials are visible and accessible in English and in the students' home language. Around the room, materials contain rich language, and objects are labeled.*

- *Through one-on-one work with DLLs and small groups, staff pay particular attention to helping DLLs learn English vocabulary and practice using English.*

- *Teachers and families delight in the children's emerging linguistic proficiency in both languages and celebrate their language development regularly and enthusiastically.*

- *Teachers model rich, expressive language, use the vocabulary they want children to develop, and actively invite and engage children in using their words to talk about ideas, feelings, and learning – in both language*

- *Teachers/adults regularly use visuals and physical movement to support comprehension for DLLs when speaking in English.*

- *Books are selected for read-alouds that have expressive language, and precise content-related, beautiful language.*

- *Teachers talk with children about how language works, about bilingualism, and engage them in noticing and appreciating language.*

- *Attention is regularly paid to inviting and invoking the home language, and engaging children in cross-language noticings and comparisons.*

A Crosswalk Translating Principle #2 of the EL Roadmap Into Early Childhood Education Terms for the Preschool/TK Classroom

CHART: Principle #2 in ECE Terms

"English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy and content learning as well as provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages."

The Text of Principle #2 Elements	How the Early Childhood Field Expresses It
Language development occurs in and through content and is integrated across the curriculum, including Integrated ELD and Designated content based ELD.	Learning is integrated. The development of language occurs in and through interactions, activities, and integrated curriculum. All domains of development, and all disciplinary content are addressed in thematic curriculum. Staff support DLLs in learning and using English as relevant to classroom learning and moving them along the ELD continuum per Preschool Learning Foundations.
Students are provided a rigorous, intellectually rich, standards-based curriculum with instructional scaffolding for comprehension, participation, and mastery.	Curriculum and instruction support and respond to the intellectual curiosity and drive of young minds. Teachers use visuals, realia, modeling, purposeful language interactions, and facilitative support for DLL comprehension and participation. Preschool/TK Learning Foundations are a resource for curriculum planning.
Teaching and learning emphasize engagement, interaction, discourse, inquiry, and critical thinking—with the same high expectations for ELs as for all.	Curriculum design, teaching, and learning are play-based, child-centered, and exploration/inquiry-based.
ELs are provided access to the full curriculum along with the provision of EL supports and services.	All children are invited and supported into participation and engagement. Curriculum is integrated and includes science, math, language arts, arts, social studies content, and ways of knowing. Staff use visuals, realia, and other supports to engage DLLs in understanding.
Students' home language is understood as a means to access curriculum content, as a foundation for developing English, and is developed to high levels of literacy and proficiency along with English.	Children's home language is affirmed, welcomed, and supported in the program. Bilingualism is celebrated. Instruction incorporates the home language. Materials are available in home languages. Families are encouraged and supported to maintain their home language. Opportunities to hear, use, and develop home language are incorporated into the program.
Rigorous instructional materials support high levels of intellectual engagement and integrated language development and content learning and provide opportunities for bilingual/biliterate engagement appropriate to the program model.	Narrative books are selected for expressive, beautiful language, inclusive, and authentic portrayals of human and cultural diversity, and are available in multiple languages. Informational text is selected for realistic visuals, precise language, and engaging text. The classroom is equipped with hands-on manipulative materials that invite exploration and bring content alive. The ECRS sets bottom-line expectations for materials needed to support early learning.
English learners are provided choices of research-based language support/development programs and are enrolled in programs designed to overcome the language barrier and provide access to the curriculum.	A clear language program model (Planned Language Approach) designed to support DLLs is well-articulated and implemented—aligned to the program models across grades. Parents/families are engaged in setting language goals for their children.

An Overall Look at Instruction and Curriculum Through the Lens of the EL Roadmap: Things To Look For, To Build Toward In Practice

In order to support robust programs, program administrators and school leaders need to know what effective DLL-centered practice looks like and what is called for by the EL Roadmap Principles. The following indicators hone in on key instructional and curricular elements of the EL Roadmap. Are these indicators evident in your classrooms? Which aspects of DLL-centered practice might use more support?

CHART: Practices to Build Toward

Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
Developmentally Appropriate Learning					
Caring, respectful, and affirming relationships between staff and children incorporate knowledge and understanding of children's cultural contexts and families and include those funds of knowledge and forms of learning into the program.					
The program provides a content-rich, play and inquiry-based learning environment in which play and child-initiated exploration are the primary contexts for learning.					
The child-centered curriculum is designed to be meaningful and relevant to young children and to support child-initiated inquiry and choice.					
Activity centers are stocked with hands-on learning materials that children can manipulate, investigate, and explore (e.g., art, blocks/manipulatives, dramatic play, books, games/puzzles, music, and movement, etc.)					
Dramatic play and fantasy play are fostered through the provision of costumes, realia, and manipulative and moveable materials—some of it reflective of the thematic projects and learning that is being taught.					
Integrated Approach to Learning/Curriculum					
All domains of development and full range of disciplinary content (science, math, arts, social studies) integrate learning within and across developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive) and subject areas (including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health).					
The curriculum is organized thematically. The theme or topic is evident through multiple activity centers and areas of the classroom. Thematic connections across all types of activities and materials enhance learning for all.					
Projects that build upon children's emergent interests are teacher-initiated with open-ended pacing and opportunities to expand based upon children's interests.					
Topics" and "themes" are derived from the Preschool Learning Foundations or children's interests. They involve exploratory inquiry driven by key questions and children's wonderings. These themes engage science, math, the arts, and social studies perspectives—focusing on the language children need to talk about the topic.					
Visuals, realia, inquiry centers, and dramatic play props support children in their own exploration and play related to the theme(s).					

Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
Families and community members are invited to share their stories and experiences with the class related to the theme and topic—thus helping children make connections to their family, culture, and language.					

Language-Rich Instruction

Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
DLLs are invited, supported, and freed to use all of their linguistic resources in and across home language and English.					
Children are engaged in storytelling, creating their own narratives and sharing their versions of the world.					
Chants and songs involve children in producing language—including the language of the topic/theme.					
Teachers understand their roles as language models, and intentionally model rich, expressive language, use the vocabulary they want children to develop, and actively invite and engage children in using their words to talk about ideas and feelings and learning.					
The vocabulary teachers use and model is specific and high-level expressive vocabulary that gives children the scientific and precise language related to the topic.					
Staff narrate and give voice/words to what they are doing and what they see children doing.					
Staff engage children in multiple back and forth exchanges and conversations.					
Staff engage children in structured opportunities to be in conversation with each other (e.g., Turn and Talk), with supports for DLLs to participate (e.g., sentence starters, examples, and sentence frames).					
Informational and narrative children's books are available in the home languages about the topic to support family engagement in reading with children about the theme.					
Interactive read-alouds are regularly used to engage children in hearing and talking about informational and narrative books related to the theme.					
To maximize language development, educators recognize differences in developmental progressions for monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual children and support the development of multilingualism.					
DLLs are provided support and opportunities for language learning and practice in English through a variety of "ELD" formats (1:1, small group)					

Early Literacy

| Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
Posters, and other printed materials are visible and accessible in English and in the students' home language. Materials around the room contain rich language. Objects are labeled.					
Frequent (daily) interactive read-alouds engage children with books and are used to emphasize the purposes of print, concepts of print, the wonders and gift of the wide range of what books have to offer, and as opportunities to engage children in meaning-making and dialogue.					

Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
Teachers use a variety of storytelling strategies and story-retelling activities to develop student comprehension and to teach story structure and elements (e.g., setting, characters, and plot). Materials such as puppets, flannel boards, and graphic organizers support story retelling and paraphrasing.					
The classroom has a range of accessible books (visible, with free choice time for children to engage with books) of varied genres, reflecting culturally diverse experiences in the languages of the children and families and relating to the theme.					
Phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge are developed through rhymes, active games, and hands-on materials—in both the home language and in English.					
Free choice writing centers (well-supplied) are available and used by children. Classrooms have writing centers (with paper, pencils, notebooks, envelopes, mailboxes, a range of types of materials with which to write, etc.) to encourage children to write. Staff take dictation from children, so they see their words turn into print.					
Children are provided frequent opportunities to dictate and see their words and thoughts turn into print.					
Family book loans, family literacy programs, and connections made between families and libraries support access to books for children outside the program.					
Content Focus					
Thematic units are developed based upon the Preschool TK Learning Foundations—engaging children in inquiry, exploration, and skill development in and through those themes.					
The learning environment is content-rich with multiple ways children engage with the theme.					
Learning activities and experiences are purposefully designed to engage children with the thematic content.					
Children are actively engaged through questions that stimulate their thinking and encourage them to articulate their thinking and learning.					
Families and community members are engaged in sharing their knowledge and experience related to the thematic content and encourage children to talk about the topics in their home language.					
Meaningful, relevant curriculum—and culturally, linguistically-sustaining pedagogy enrich and enhance learning.					
Educators plan curriculum experiences to build on the funds of knowledge of each child, family, and community in order to offer culturally and linguistically sustaining learning experiences.					
Educators build on ideas and experiences that have meaning in the children's lives and are likely to interest them, recognizing that developing and extending children's interests is particularly important when children's ability to focus their attention is in its early stages.					

Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
Desired goals important for young children's development and learning in general and culturally and linguistically responsive to children in particular have been identified and clearly articulated.					
Educators consider what children are expected to know, understand, and be able to do when they leave the setting (understanding kindergarten demands). This includes the domains of physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development and merges them with subject or content areas, including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health. These benchmarks require familiarity with state Preschool Foundations.					
Educators and administrators establish and regularly update goals with input from all stakeholders, including families. Goals are clearly defined for, communicated to, and understood by all stakeholders, including families.					
Teachers have agency, permission, and skills that support using curriculum frameworks along with what they know (from their observation, documentation, and other assessment) about the children's knowledge, interests, progress, languages, and learning needs to carefully shape and adapt the experiences to be responsive to each child and to enable each child to reach the goals outlined in the curriculum.					
Books in the classroom are available in the languages spoken by all enrolled children.					
Support for Home Language and Bilingual Development					
There is a clear, planned language approach for DLLs that addresses both first and second language development.					
Wherever possible, staff in the preschool program speak the languages represented by the children and families. These staff are primary communication links with families and are actively engaged in teaching and supporting the learning of DLLs.					
Delight in children's emerging linguistic proficiency in both languages and celebration of their language engagement is expressed regularly and enthusiastically.					
Children hear and see their home language in the program's learning environment. Instruction engages and leverages students' home languages, builds cross-language awareness and connections, and affirms the value of bilingualism.					
All staff and teachers learn key words and phrases in the home languages of the children, use these regularly, continue to learn more phrases, and model being a proud language learner interested in the child's home language.					
In programs that are primarily English-taught, key vocabulary words in children's home languages related to the content being studied are taught to the whole class. Songs and chants are also utilized to bolster the use of multiple languages.					
Teachers work with families to understand their vital role in young children's home language development to recognize and counter the risk of home language rejection and loss, and to leverage resources and strategies for intentionally and actively supporting the development of bilingualism for their children.					

Indicators	Definite feature	Somewhat/ Mostly true	Not really	Don't know	Priority to work on
Books are accessible in the home languages of all children.					
Teachers talk with children about how language works, about bilingualism, and engage them in noticing and appreciating language					
Support for English Language Development					
Teachers observe and attend to supporting DLL's English language development using the Preschool TK Learning Foundations for ELD.					
One on one and small group time are used as focus time to support DLLs in hearing, practicing, and using English.					
A Rich Learning Environment					
Pictures, posters, books, and realia reflect the cultures and languages of students and their families.					
Dramatic play and fantasy play are fostered through the provision of costumes, realia, manipulative and moveable materials—some of it reflective of the thematic projects and learning that is being taught.					
The classroom is set-up to support inquiry and hands-on engagement with content, and to support interaction and collaboration					
Print is visible throughout the classroom, in different languages.					
Classroom objects and thematic realia are labeled in the children's home languages.					
Books are provided in home language and books that depict the cultural and linguistic background of children are visible in the classroom.					
Children's emerging bilingualism is celebrated.					
Activity centers are filled with learning materials that children can manipulate, investigate, explore (e.g., art, blocks/manipulatives, dramatic play, books, games/puzzles, music, and movement, etc.).					
Access and scaffolding invite participation and enhance comprehension.					
Staff understand processes of second language and dual language development and use wait- time and scaffolding strategies (such as sentence starters, visuals, etc.) when working with children in the child's new or second language.					

REFLECTION:

Based on responses to the chart above, reflect on whether there are some areas of practice that might be high priority for a program-wide focus. Note those areas here:

_____

_____

_____

_____
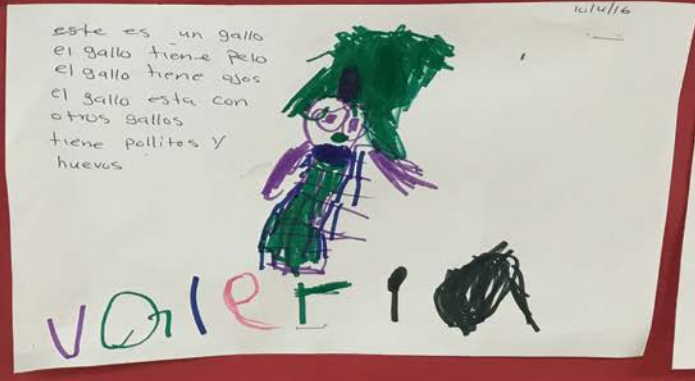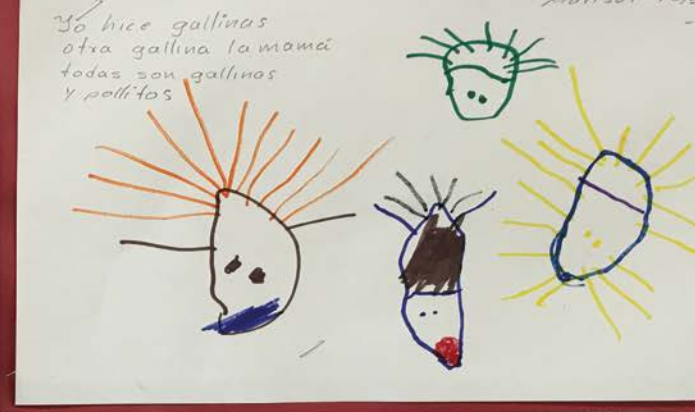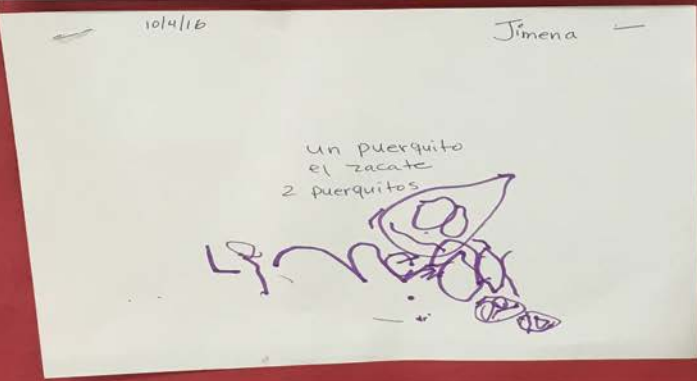
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ORGANIZATIONS

California Preschool Instructional Network

www.cpin.us

A network of the California Department of Education's Early Learning and Care Division in collaboration with the Center for Child and Family Studies at WestEd and the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). Through regional communities of practice (CP) and series of professional learning experiences, CPIN promotes promising practices in early learning, family engagement, and equity, and emphasizes a whole child approach. CPIN instructors provide research-based teaching and learning strategies that are age and developmentally appropriate and highlight inclusive practices and support for ALL children.

Early Care and Learning Division, California Department

www.cde.ca.gov>cdd

Provides leadership and support to the child development community, ensuring high-quality early education programs. Supports and disseminates professional learning and training resources for quality early education.

Early Edge

www.earlyedgecalifornia.org

A nonprofit organization that works statewide to expand high-quality early learning opportunities for children ages 0 to 8. In addition to policy advocacy, Early Edge provides resources for teachers and parents to support quality early learning care and programs.

Language Learning Project Toolkit (Fresno)

https://earlylearning.fresnounified.org/language-learning-project/

A project of the Fresno Unified School District, the Language Learning Toolkit provides resources for educators to implement concrete approaches to support language learning for children birth to five years of age. Based around Personalized Oral Language Learning (POLL) strategies developed by nationally renowned early childhood experts Dr. Linda Espinosa, Dr. Carola Oliva-Olson, and Elizabeth Magruder. Webpage includes videos and other resources.

Multilingual Learning Toolkit

www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org

This online resource is provided by Early Edge, including basic information, scenarios/vignettes, links to videos and other resources focusing on multilingual learners at the Preschool, TK and Kindergarten levels. Sections of the website include: classroom environment, oral language development, literacy development, bilingual classrooms, home language development, additional ELD strategies, and content learning.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

www.naeyc.org

The national professional association for early childhood education. Issue field-shaping position papers, publish the magazine Young Children, sponsor a large national professional conference, and have many resources for educators.

SEAL

www.seal.org

A nonprofit organization providing research, professional learning and support for leadership based upon the SEAL model, a powerful PK-5 EL focused approach to education rooted at the intersection of research and educational equity. Videos, webinars, professional learning, and technical assistance support for implementing the SEAL model support aligned programs, instruction, and curriculum from preschool through elementary grades.

PRINCIPLE #3:
SYSTEM CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT EFFECTIVENESS

3

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Preschool Toolkit builds on the others by focusing on the role of program directors and leaders in developing a system that supports the research-based, developmentally appropriate, assets-oriented, child-responsive practices called for by the EL Roadmap policy. Without systems, coherence, infrastructure, and aligned investment of resources, the vision and mission of the EL Roadmap cannot be enacted.

A major impetus for the CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care was the recognition that the early learning systems were fragmented and complex and resulted in inequitable access to quality care and programs. A call for building a comprehensive mixed delivery system, for investing in a well-prepared workforce across that mixed delivery system, updating early learning standards for building a data system that would enable the identification and monitoring of dual language learners from an early age—all of these are about creating the system conditions that are needed to make quality early care and learning a reality across the state.

Mirroring this focus on "systems," the EL Roadmap policy—besides describing the effective practices needed for DLL access and success—explicitly recognizes and calls for the development of systemic structures and approaches that make it possible for those practices to be implemented sustainably and equitably. What system conditions make it possible for the vision of early education articulated by the EL Roadmap to be enacted and sustained?

The vast majority of educators—teachers, instructional assistants, administrators, and others—want to provide their Dual Language Learners with the best early learning and education they can. The problem is that they don't always have the conditions to make that happen—the knowledge, time, resources, support, or skills to make the cultural and instructional shifts that will improve outcomes for their DLLs. Program directors, district, and school leaders make decisions every day that impact the education of DLLs, from allocating resources and hiring staff to making programmatic changes and establishing placement guidelines, developing curriculum, and adopting instructional materials, determining priorities, and designing professional learning opportunities. Principle #3 of the CA EL Roadmap speaks to the issue of creating a system in which DLLs are well served. "System Conditions for Effectiveness" is comprised of four related but different aspects of what it means to provide quality early instruction and access:

- *Leadership structures, policies, commitments, and practices that focus all components of the system on DLL needs, assets, and success.*

- *Data, assessment, and accountability systems that support appropriate and effective practices and ensure meaningful participation, access, engagement, and development for DLLs.*

- *Capacity building systems (professional learning, recruitment, retention) to build an educator force for DLL success.*

- *Allocation and alignment of resources to ensure adequate supports and conditions are present for effective early childhood education to be provided to DLLs.*

The vast majority of educators—teachers, instructional assistants, administrators, and others—want to provide their Dual Language Learners with the best early learning and education they can. The problem is that they don't always have the conditions to make that happen.

TEXT of PRINCIPLE #3

Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, pre-school) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities and utilize valid assessment and other data systems that inform instruction and continuous improvement; resources and tiered support is provided to ensure strong programs and build the capacity of teachers and staff to build on the strengths and meet the needs of English learners.

A. Leadership establishes clear goals and commitments to English Learners access, growth toward English proficiency, academic achievement, and participation, and maintains a focus across the system on progress toward these goals and continuous improvement.

B. The school system invests **adequate resources** to support the conditions required to address EL needs.

C. A system of culturally and linguistically valid and reliable **assessments** supports instruction, continuous improvement, and accountability for attainment of English proficiency, biliteracy, and academic achievement.

D. Capacity building occurs at all levels of the system, including leadership development to understand and address the needs of ELs, **professional development** and collaboration time for teachers, and robust efforts to address the teaching shortage and build a **pipeline** (recruit and develop) of educators skilled in addressing the needs of ELs, including bilingual teachers.

ACTIVITY: Reading for Understanding

Read through the text of Principle #3. Annotate as follows:

• *Highlight any terms/vocabulary/phrases that resonate strongly with you (e.g., "culturally and linguistically valid").*

• *Put a question mark next to anything you don't understand or wonder about.*

• *Place an arrow alongside any phrases that you see as connected to a key element of practices and approaches already part of your early education efforts—and write what that connection is.*
EXAMPLE: "Build a pipeline" – we are working on recruiting a UPK workforce now

NOTE-TAKER:

What resonates most with me and seems most important about Principle #3?:

_____

_____

Questions I have about Principle #3:

_____

_____

Connections I make between Principle #3 and other initiatives/efforts/practices:

_____

_____

Leadership Goals and Commitments

Statements of goals, values, and commitments clarify for all people in a system what aligns their work with others and sets up the expectations and responsibilities of being part of that system. They make clear both for people inside the system, and for the community outside the system what the system values. An important element of an effective early learning/preschool system for DLLs is that the commitment to recognize, value, and affirm culture, language, equity, and access is made explicit—through vision, goals, commitment statements that are backed up with aligned actions and services. In the very Introduction to the CA Master Plan for Early Care and Learning, it makes clear that the mission is to create a California for All Kids through a "truly equitable early learning and care system,"—and throughout the Plan is explicit mention of improving access and equity, committing to culturally relevant practices, and calling for support for dual language learners. The EL Roadmap itself articulates an assets-based vision and values statement for California schools overall in Principles #1 and #2 ("Assets-oriented and Student-responsive," "Intellectually Rich and Meaningful Access"). Major early childhood education entities similarly offer statements closely aligned with the EL Roadmap and state the goals related to culture, language, equity and access in broader child development terms. These explicit intentions, commitments and calls are important!

Principle #3 of the EL Roadmap addresses the importance of leadership at all levels establishing and articulating those goals and maintaining a focus on them across the system.

"The EL Roadmap Principle 3: A. Leadership establishes clear goals and commitments to English Learners access, growth toward English proficiency, academic achievement and participation, and maintains a focus across the system on progress towards these goals and continuous improvement."

Looking across such statements from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start, and the four Principles of the EL Roadmap, the directors of preschools and school leaders can discern the themes, their importance, and their role in guiding systems to address the needs coherently and intentionally and leverage the assets of young dual language learners.

CHART: Goals, Visions comparison: NAEYC, Head Start, EL Roadmap

NAEYC VISION, MISSION, CORE BELIEFS

VISION: Each and every child thrives and learns in a society dedicated to ensuring all children reach their full potential.

MISSION: NAEYC promotes high-quality early learning for each and every child, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

CORE VALUES/BELIEFS: Advancing Equity

"All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity. They can do this best when they are effectively supported by the early learning settings in which they work and when they and their wider communities embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental Principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities...Early childhood educators, however, have a unique opportunity and obligation to advance equity. With the support of the early education system as a whole, they can create early learning environments that equitably distribute learning opportunities by helping all children experience responsive interactions that nurture their full range of social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and linguistic abilities; that reflect and model fundamental Principles of fairness and justice; and that help them accomplish the goals of anti-bias education."

HEAD START PRINCIPLES: Head Start programs prepare America's most vulnerable young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school. To achieve this, Head Start programs deliver services to children and families in core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.

HEAD START MULTICULTURAL PRINCIPLES

Head Start programs are effective when their systems and services support the cultural diversity of enrolled families. Furthermore, individual staff members must be able to demonstrate their respect for and respond to the different cultures in their community and among their co-workers. The following resource provides recent research and perspectives on key multicultural Principles and offers guidance to staff on how to implement these Principles in their programs.

PRINCIPLE 1: Every individual is rooted in culture.

PRINCIPLE 2: The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program are the primary sources for culturally relevant programming.

PRINCIPLE 3: Culturally relevant and diverse programming requires learning accurate information about the cultures of different groups and discarding stereotypes.

PRINCIPLE 4: Addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices and adaptations is a necessary, developmentally appropriate practice.

PRINCIPLE 5: Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society.

PRINCIPLE 6: Effective programs for children who speak languages other than English require continued development of the first language while the acquisition of English is facilitated.

PRINCIPLE 7: Culturally relevant programming requires staff who both reflect and are responsive to the community and families served.

PRINCIPLE 8: Multicultural programming for children enables children to develop an awareness of, respect for, and appreciation of individual and cultural differences.

PRINCIPLE 9: Culturally relevant and diverse programming examines and challenges institutional and personal biases.

PRINCIPLE 10: Culturally relevant and diverse programming and practices are incorporated in all systems and services and are beneficial to all adults and children.

REFLECTION: Comparing NAEYC, HEAD START and the EL ROADMAP Values, Beliefs, Commitments to Equity and DLLS

How does the articulation of these values, beliefs, and commitments provide clarity and coherence for early childhood programs?

_____

_____

What connections do you see across the four Principles of the EL Roadmap, the Head Start Multicultural Principles, and NAEYC's Advancing Equity Position Statement?

_____

_____

What issues and commitments are raised in the early childhood statements (NAEYC and HeadStart) that are not explicitly present in the EL Roadmap?

_____

_____

In leading early childhood programs for ELs/DLLs, how might these commitment/belief/values /Principles statements be useful to you in fostering dialogue and shared direction for your preschool program?

_____

_____

LOCAL SYSTEM STATEMENTS

Each local system (district, preschool program) must put its own intentions and values in writing to give voice to common direction, commitment, and coherence. These may be statements of vision, beliefs, commitments, or goals. To a large degree, formal goal statements, resolutions, belief statements, or system commitments are made at the local governing board level or program/district leadership level. They thus represent the voice, intentions, and direction of the district/program.

Examples include:

Fresno Unified School District/Early Learning:

Children's brains and bodies develop rapidly in the first five years of life. This means early childhood is the best time to create a stronger future for our families and our community. At the Early Learning Department of Fresno Unified School District, we know that all adults in a child's life can help create the nurturing and engaging connections children need. We provide child-centered environments and high-quality educational programs that value and respect the language, culture, and needs of all students, families, staff, and communities. The FRESNO EARLY LEARNING MISSION is to ensure children of all abilities in Fresno Unified School District have an equitable start for college, career, and life readiness. The Early Learning Department provides nurturing, child-centered environments and high-quality educational programs that value and respect the needs, languages, and cultures of all students, families, staff, and community.

San Francisco Unified School District Early Learning:

Our Mission is to provide early childhood education programs in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment that promotes each child's socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and competency. We strive to validate the cultural and linguistic heritage of each child and to support families in maintaining their children's physical and mental health.

A vision statement speaks to our hearts and yearnings—what we want for children. A goal speaks to the direction the program will take to try to enact that vision. A resolution or commitment puts the system on record, saying it will make sure that something concrete happens. Principles guide the actions that will lead to the desired outcomes expressed in goals. What begins with the process of developing and articulating values and goals—and codifying them as a formal system commitment—leads then to plans to enact those goals and to design the structures that will align practices to the goals. But it all starts with formulation, articulation, and building collective ownership of those goals and foundational beliefs.

REFLECTION

What vision, goals, commitments, belief statements and/or Principles are articulated for YOUR district and early learning programs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

To what degree do your formal program/district statements explicitly speak to the cultural and linguistic realities of your young Multilingual children and their families?

_____

_____

To what degree do they explicitly address issues of equity, bias, or access?

_____

_____

To what degree are they aligned with and pave a path to enacting the EL Roadmap?

_____

_____

After reviewing the four EL Roadmap Principles, the Head Start Multicultural Principles, the NAEYC Advancing Equity statement, and the examples from districts, what would you like to see more clearly articulated/stated in your OWN goals and statements in order to address the needs and assets of the multilingual learners more powerfully in your early learning programs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

③

ACTIVITY: Engaging Others

Assemble a working group consisting of members of your leadership team, staff, and parents, to review your program goals, commitments, and belief statements through the lens of dual language learners. Begin by sharing a copy of your own existing program statements, goals, and belief statements. Then, break into three groups. One group reads the NAEYC Advancing Equity statement, one reads the Head Start Multicultural Principles, and the third reads the EL Roadmap vision and Principles. Each small group discusses what feels important about what they read and their sense about whether and how it might enhance your program if some statement like it were adopted for your program. They then report back to the full group. After the whole group has heard reports from all three small groups, lead a discussion focusing on:

- *Would it be helpful if our own mission/vision/commitment statement incorporated some additional elements speaking directly to dual language learners and their families?*

- *What would you like to see added to our statement?*

- *How might we use such a revised statement?*

Assessments

Child-responsive and supportive programs rely upon good quality assessment processes and tools. Observing, documenting, and assessing each child's development and learning are essential processes for educators and programs to plan, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of the experiences they provide to children. Assessment includes both formal and informal measures to monitor children's progress toward a program's desired goals. Educators can be intentional about helping children to progress when they know where each child is with respect to learning goals. Formative assessment (measuring progress toward goals) and summative assessment (measuring achievement at the end of a defined period or experience) are important.

Multiple kinds of assessments typically may be used in an early childhood education setting: observations to track children's development and growth across domains of development (cognitive, language, academic, socio-emotional, physical) in order to inform instruction; language assessments; Kindergarten readiness assessments; curriculum embedded or related assessments of knowledge and skills; and measures of program quality (including the learning environment, interactions, facilities, etc.).

Assessment practices also encompass a range of instruments and techniques, including structured one-on-one child assessments, standardized assessments, portfolios, rating scales, and teacher observation. Since every child develops in their own way, high-quality assessments enable teachers to tailor instruction to reinforce children's strengths and support individualized growth. A comprehensive system of assessments draws upon information from multiple sources—including measures that provide different types of information and including assessments in different contexts.

Effective assessment of young children is always challenging. The complexity of children's development and learning—including the uneven nature of development and the uncertain likelihood of children fully demonstrating their knowledge and skills in different contexts—makes accurate and comprehensive assessment difficult. For example, authentic assessment for DLLs has to consider such factors as a child's facility in each language they speak and use assessors and settings that are familiar and comfortable for the child linguistically and culturally. When standardized assessments are used for screening or evaluative purposes, the measures should meet standards of reliability and validity based on the characteristics of the child being assessed. When these standards are not met, these limitations must be carefully considered before using the results.

Developmentally Appropriate Assessment for Young Children

In general, developmentally appropriate assessment practices for preschool follow the following guidelines outlined by NAEYC. *(See NAEYC Position Statement on Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation. The following is excerpted from that statement)*

A. **Observation, documentation, and assessment of young children's progress and achievements is ongoing, strategic, reflective, and purposeful.** Educators embed assessment-related activities in the curriculum and daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice. They create and take advantage of unplanned opportunities to observe young children in play and in spontaneous conversations and interactions, in adult-structured assessment contexts as well as when children are participating in a group activity and doing an individual activity. Observations, documentation, and the results of other formal and informal assessments are used to inform the planning and implementation of daily curriculum and experiences, to communicate with the child's family, and to evaluate and improve educators' and the program's effectiveness. Care must be taken to avoid the overuse of standardized assessments, which can cause stress for young children and interfere with time for learning. Educators limit the use of digitally based assessments, especially for young children who (appropriately) should have limited exposure to screen media.

B. **Assessment focuses on children's progress toward developmental and educational goals.** Such goals should reflect families' input and children's background knowledge and experiences. They should be informed by developmental milestones, including use of state early learning standards. Goals should be aspirational and achievable and foster a sense of pride and accomplishment for educators, families, and children. Children, educators, and families should have opportunities to celebrate both small and large achievements, while recognizing that all children need time to build mastery of a current skill before progressing to the next challenge.

C. **A system is in place to collect, make sense of, and use observations, documentation, and assessment information to guide what goes on in the early learning setting.** Educators use this information in planning curriculum and learning experiences and in moment-to-moment interactions with children—that is, educators continually engage in assessment to improve teaching and learning. Educators also encourage children to use observation and, beginning in the preschool years, documentation to reflect on their experiences and what they have learned.

D. **The methods of assessment are responsive to the current developmental accomplishments, language(s), and experiences of young children.** They recognize individual variation in learners and allow children to demonstrate their competencies in different ways. Therefore, methods appropriate to educators' assessment of young children include results of their observations of children, clinical interviews, collections of children's work samples, and children's performance in authentic activities. Once collected, the results are explained to families and children (as appropriate) in order to extend the conversations around what is collected, analyzed, and reflected upon.

E. **Assessments are used only for the populations and purposes for which they have been demonstrated to produce reliable, valid information.** If required to use an assessment tool that has not been established as reliable or valid for the characteristics of a given child or for the intended use, educators recognize the limitations of the findings, strive to make sure they are not used in high-stakes decisions and advocate for a different measure.

F. **Decisions having a major impact on children, such as enrollment or placement, are made in consultation with families.** Such decisions should be based on multiple sources of relevant information, including observations of and interactions with children by educators, family members, and specialists as needed.

G. **When a screening assessment identifies a child who may have a disability or individualized learning or developmental needs, there is appropriate follow-up, evaluation, and, if needed, referral – all involving specialists with cultural and linguistic expertise matching the child.** Screening is used to identify issues needing more thorough examination by those qualified to do so; it is not used to diagnose or label children. Families are involved as essential sources of information.

California's Preschool Assessments:

In California, a system of assessments is in place for early education. Overall, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. The QRIS provides a framework for defining high-quality early care and education centers and family childcare homes. It is a collaboration between First 5 California (F5CA), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), that defines quality as "early learning and care programs that have environments, relationships, interactions, and activities to support all children's growth and development to prepare them for success in school and life." For preschools, the assessments include: the Environment Rating Scales of the program environment, and the Desired Results Developmental Profile to document the development and progress of children in early education.

- **The Environment Rating Scales**
  The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) are an observational assessment used to measure the quality of the program environment (e.g., child-teacher interactions, children's interactions and activities, use of language, health and safety practices, space, and materials). The ERS are required instruments for yearly program self-evaluation and are used for the reviews conducted by CDE/EED program staff. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) is used in preschool classrooms, and consists of 43 items organized into seven subscales (aspects) of an ECE classroom: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff.

- **The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)**
  California uses the Desired Results Developmental Profile system for early childhood classrooms throughout the state. The DRDP is designed for teachers to formatively observe, document, and reflect on the learning, development, and progress of all children in an early care and education program. Simply put, the DRDP, or Desired Results Developmental Profile, is an assessment to measure young children's learning and development. The DRDP is an observational assessment. Rather than having children sit down and take a test, teachers complete the DRDP through their own observations, family observations, and documentation of children's work. This makes the DRDP more accessible and accurate. It also gives family members a role in the process, helping them share their child's accomplishments and newfound skills. The DRDP is made up of eight developmental domains that are crucial areas of learning and development for children.

  1. **Approaches to Learning-Self-Regulation (ATL-REG)** measures skills like attention maintenance, curiosity, persistence, sharing, and self-control.

  2. **Social and Emotional Development (SED)** assesses a child's interaction with others, considering their social-emotional understanding, relationships with peers and adults, and forms of play.

  3. **Language and Literacy Development (LLD)** assesses a child's communication and literacy in their first language.

  4. **English-Language Development (ELD)** assesses the English communication skills of dual language learners.

  5. **Cognition Including Math and Science (COG)** assesses children's observation, exploration, and investigation. More specifically, it focuses on students' understanding of concepts like cause and effect, spatial relationships, and measurement.

  6. **Physical Development-Health (PD-HLTH)** assesses children's motor development and personal care routines, including their fine motor control, nutrition, hygiene, and more.

  7. **History-Social Science (HSS)** assesses a child's understanding of social situations, group participation, and relationships between an individual and their environment, including their sense of time and place.

  8. **Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)** assesses children's engagement in visual art, music, drama, and dance.

Each DRDP measure has four levels describing a developmental continuum on a rating scale, beginning with "responding"/"discovering," moving to "exploring," then "building," and finally "integrating." Within each of these, a child can be rated as "earlier," "middle," or "later" in their development. And, within each domain, there are a series of measures. Descriptors define the behaviors that would be observed for a child at that developmental level. Teachers are to complete a DRDP profile for each child within the first 60 days of enrollment, and then again every six months to monitor development.

DRDP Approaches to Learning Measures

ATL-REG 1: Attention Maintenance – Develops the capacity to pay attention to people, things, or the environment when interacting with others or exploring play materials.

ATL-REG 2: Self-Comforting – Develops the capacity to comfort or soothe self in response to distress from internal or external stimulation.

ATL-REG 3: Imitation – Mirrors, repeats, and practices the actions or words of other in increasingly complex ways.

ATL-REG 4: Curiosity and Initiative in Learning – Explores the environment in increasingly focused ways to learn about people, things, materials, and events.

ATL-REG 5: Self-Control of Feelings and Behavior – Develops strategies for regulating feelings and behavior, becoming less reliant on adult guidance over time.

ATL-REG 6: Engagement and Persistence – Persists in understanding or mastering activities, even if they are challenging or difficult.

ATL-REG 7: Shared Use of Space and Materials – Develops the capacity to share the use of space and materials with others.

DRDP Socio-emotional Measures

SED 1: Identity of Self in Relation to Others – Shows increasing awareness of self as distinct from and also related to other.

SED 2: Social and Emotional Understanding – Shows developing understanding of people's behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and individual characteristics.

SED 3: Relationships and Social Interactions with Familiar Adults – Child develops close relationships with one or more familiar adults (including family members) and interacts in an increasingly competent and cooperative manner with familiar adults.

SED 4: Relationships and Social Interactions with Peers – Child becomes increasingly competent and cooperative in interactions with peers and develops friendships with several peers.

SED 5: Symbolic and Sociodramatic Play – Child develops the capacity to use objects to represent other objects or ideas and to engage in symbolic play with others.

DRDP Language and Literacy Development Measures

LLD 1: Understanding of Language – Understands increasingly complex communication and language

LLD 2: Responsiveness to Language – Communicates or acts in response to language and responds to increasingly complex language.

LLD 3: Communication and Use of Language (Expressive) – Exhibits communication skills that develop from nonverbal communication to using language with increasingly complex words and sentences.

LLD 4: Reciprocal Communication and Conversation – Engages in back-and-forth communication that develops into increasingly extended conversations.

LLD 5: Interest in Literacy – Shows interest in books, songs, rhymes, stories, and other literacy activities in increasingly complex ways.

LLD 6: Comprehension of Age-Appropriate Text – Develops capacity to understand details and ideas from age-appropriate text presented by adults.

LLD 7: Concepts About Print – Shows an increasing understanding of the conventions and physical organization of print material and that print carries meaning.

LLD 8: Phonological Awareness – Shows increasing awareness of the sounds (elements) that make up language, including the ability to manipulate them in language.

LLD 9: Letter and Word Knowledge – Shows increasing awareness of letters in the environment and their relationship to sound, including understanding that letters make up words.

LLD 10: Emergent Writing – Shows increasing ability to write using scribbles, marks, drawings, letters, characters, or words to represent meaning.

DRDP English Language Development Measures (for DLLs)

ELD 1: Comprehension of English (Receptive English) – Shows increasing progress toward fluency in understanding English.

ELD 2: Self-Expression in English (Expressive English) – Shows increasing progress toward fluency in speaking English.

ELD 3: Understanding and Response to English Literacy Activities – Shows an increasing understanding of and response to books, stories, songs, and poems presented in English.

ELD 4: Symbol, Letter, and Print Knowledge in English – Shows an increasing understanding that print in English carries meaning.

DRDP Cognition Measures

COG 1: Spatial Relationships – Increasingly shows understanding of how objects move in space or fit in different spaces.

COG 2: Classification – Shows an increasing ability to compare, match, and sort objects into groups according to their attributes.

COG 3: Number Sense of Quantity – Shows developing understanding of number and quantity.

COG 4: Number Sense of Math Operations – Shows increasing ability to add and subtract small quantities of objects.

COG 5: Measurement – Shows increasing understanding of measurable properties such as size, length, weight, and capacity (volume) and how to quantify those properties.

COG 6: Patterning – Shows increasing ability to recognize, reproduce, and create patterns of varying complexity.

COG 7: Shapes – Shows an increasing knowledge of shapes and their characteristics.

COG 8: Cause and Effect – Demonstrates an increasing ability to observe, anticipate, and reason about the relationship between cause and effect.

COG 9: Inquiry Through Observation and Investigation – Observes, explores, and investigates objects (living and nonliving things) and events in the environment and becomes increasingly sophisticated in pursuing knowledge about them.

COG 10: Documentation and Communication of Inquiry – Develops the capacity to describe and record observations and investigations about objects (living and nonliving things) and events, and to share ideas and explanations with others.

COG 11: Knowledge of the Natural World – Develops the capacity to understand objects (living and nonliving things) and events in the natural world, including how they change and their characteristics.

DRDP Physical Development/Health Measures

PD-HLTH 1: Perceptual-Motor Skills and Movement Concepts – Moves body and interacts with the environment demonstrating increasing awareness of own physical effort, body awareness, spatial awareness, and directional awareness.

PD-HLTH 2: Gross Locomotor Movement Skills – Shows increasing proficiency in fundamental locomotor skills (e.g., rolling, crawling, cruising, walking, running, jumping, galloping).

PD-HLTH 3: Gross Motor Manipulative Skills – Shows increasing proficiency in gross motor manipulative skills (e.g., reaching, kicking grasping, throwing, and catching).

PD-HLTH 4: Fine Motor Manipulative Skills – Demonstrates increasing precision, strength, coordination, and efficiency when using muscles of the hand for play and functional tasks.

PD-HLTH 5: Safety – Shows awareness of safety and increasingly demonstrates knowledge of safety skills when participating in daily activities.

PD-HLTH 6: Personal Care Routines: Hygiene – Responds to and initiates personal care routines that support hygiene.

PD-HLTH 7: Personal Care Routines: Feeding – Responds to feeding v feeds self with increasing proficiency.

PD-HLTH 8: Personal Care Routines: Dressing – Develops and refines ability to participate in and take responsibility for dressing self.

PD-HLTH 9: Active Physical Play – Engages in physical activities with increasing endurance and intensity.

PD-HLTH 10: Nutrition – Demonstrates increasing knowledge about nutrition and healthful food choices.

DRDP History and Social Science Measures

HSS 1: Sense of Time – Communicates or demonstrates awareness about past and future events and relates them to present activity.

HSS 2: Sense of Place – Demonstrates increasing awareness of the characteristics of physical environments and connections among their attributes, including the people and activities in them.

HSS 3: Ecology – Develops an awareness of and concern for the natural world and human influences on it.

HSS 4: Conflict Negotiation – Shows increasing understanding of the needs of other children and is increasingly able to consider alternatives and to negotiate constructively in conflict situations.

HSS 5: Responsible Conduct as a Group Member – Develops skills as a responsible group member in an early education setting, acting in a fair and socially acceptable manner and regulating behavior according to group expectations.

> **DRDP Visual and Performing Arts Measures**
>
> **VPA 1: Visual Art –** Engages, develops skills, and expresses self with increasing creativity, complexity, and depth through two-dimensional and three-dimensional visual art.
>
> **VPA 2: Music –** Expresses and creates by making musical sounds, with increasing intentionality and complexity.
>
> **VPA 3: Drama –** Increases engagement, skill development, and creative expression in drama.
>
> **VPA 4: Dance –** Develops capacity to respond, express, and create through movement in dance.

In the case of dual language learners, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development are impacted by second language development; therefore, a child's inability to understand and/or use the language used in the classroom may impede the dual language learner's ability to demonstrate their true capabilities. Therefore, when interpreting a child's performance for the DRDP, teachers are supposed to assess based on all languages the child uses and take the child's levels of first and second language development into consideration. To address the impact of first and second language development across domains, the DRDP asks teachers to consider the capabilities that children demonstrate in the home language as well as English.

Typical Assessment Challenges:

While the early childhood education field is committed to the important role of observation and documentation, the amount of time and paperwork involved for teachers in the practice of documentation is a frequent challenge. The complications of assessing children in culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate ways is an additional hurdle. Because all children's development in any domain is not a straight-line progression—but rather like a wave with forward movement followed by some periods of regression and incorporation—frequent points of observation are needed. And because DLLs are developing in and across multiple languages, there is need to observe in their different cultural and language contexts. An effective system of preschool education provides support for teachers in learning how to do such assessments and provides the time and conditions to make appropriate observations and write documentation.

REFLECTION/ACTIVITY:

Interview teachers about their experiences assessing the development of their DLLs:

• *How effectively do they feel they are able to track the developmental progress of their children?*

• *What kind of information do they find helpful from the required assessments?*

• *How do they use that information—if at all?*

• *What challenges do they face in assessing their DLLs?*

• *What kind of supports do they need to effectively observe, document, and assess their DLLs?*

Culturally, Linguistically, and Developmentally Valid and Reliable Assessments

In describing system conditions for effective programs for DLLs, the EL Roadmap Principle #3 calls for developing a "system of culturally and linguistically valid and reliable assessments to support instruction, continuous improvement, and accountability". This is a tall order! Historically, biased and inappropriate assessments of culturally and linguistically diverse children has led to overlooking their needs and assets, misassignment to inappropriate interventions, tracking and separation, and inadequate instruction and materials. A commitment to culturally and linguistically valid and reliable assessments is both an essential step in turning away from that history, and a commitment to gathering accurate information about children that can guide instruction and inform program improvement.

The early childhood education field's commitment to (and tradition of) an emphasis on observation and documentation of children within a developmental framework—conducted over time and in multiple "naturalistic" contexts as a basis for instruction and services—makes it markedly different from the tradition of assessment in the K-12 system. And the issues of cultural validity, linguistic access, and developmental appropriateness call for careful use of assessments for diverse communities.

It is imperative that school leaders and preschool program directors understand some of the unique considerations that educators must keep in mind when screening and assessing young dual language learners (DLLs).

Bottom line—All assessments need to be conducted in ways that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive to authentically assess children's learning. This means that not only must the *methods* of assessment, both formal and informal, be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically sensitive, but also the *assessor* must be aware of and work against the possibility of implicit and explicit bias, for example through training, reflection, and regular reviews of collected data.

For multilingual and culturally diverse children, it is particularly important to assess in their different languages, and across home and program contexts. One of the indicators of good assessment is that it is linguistically and culturally responsive for all children, including children whose home language is not English. This is written into the EL Roadmap, and widely reflected in professional guidance—although seldom actually implemented.

READING: NAEYC RECOMMENDATIONS ON ASSESSING DLLs

Speaking to the need for culturally and linguistically valid and appropriate assessments in early childhood education, NAEYC set forth assessment recommendations in 2005. ("Screening and Assessment of Young English Language Learners")

http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/ELL_Supplement_Shorter_Version.pdf

Based upon and building from those recommendations, the following points are important for leaders to heed:

As with assessment of all young children, assessment of young DLLs should be guided by specific, beneficial purposes with appropriate adaptations to meet the needs of children whose home language is not English. Screenings should use linguistically and culturally appropriate tools that meet appropriate technical standards. Screenings should occur in the child's home language and English if the child speaks some English, and screeners should accept a child's use of code-switching (i.e., using words and grammar rules from both languages). Because young DLLs show variable paths to language development and because there is limited research on expected levels of language proficiency, it can be difficult to interpret the results of language screening for individual children. When results are unclear or follow-up is needed, it is important to involve specialists who can communicate in the child's home language and have expertise in the relevant areas of diagnostic assessment.

In assessing young DLLs, great emphasis should be given to the alignment of assessment tools and procedures with the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the children being assessed. One of the indicators of effective assessments is that "assessments are designed for and validated for use with children whose...cultures [and] home languages...are similar to those of the children with whom the assessments will be used." Program directors and school leaders should check and ensure that any assessments that are used with DLLs in the preschool program have been designed, validated, and normed for DLLs.

> **One of the indicators of good assessment is that it is linguistically and culturally responsive for all children, including children whose home language is not English. This is written into the EL Roadmap, and widely reflected in professional guidance— although seldom actually implemented.**

All screenings and assessments used with young DLLs should be culturally appropriate. Culturally responsive and appropriate assessments are those that occur in settings that embrace diversity and demonstrate esteem for a child's home culture; are administered by bicultural professionals who are knowledgeable about the values and norms (especially norms pertaining to interactions) of the child's home culture; do not include inappropriate referents to objects or words that are either unfamiliar to the child or may carry a different meaning than the one intended; and are interpreted in the context of the child's cultural and social history. Adults involved in conducting and interpreting assessments must be aware of how cultural values may affect young children's behavior and performance on assessments.

Culturally shaped expectations affect young children's ideas about interactive behaviors, such as when they are supposed to talk, to whom they should talk, and what kind of language to use in various contexts. These factors affect performance during assessments, especially standardized formal assessments in which a child may not know the person conducting the assessment. Before being accepted as culturally appropriate, an assessment should be carefully examined by bilingual, bicultural professionals familiar with the culture and community in question to ensure the assessment is culturally appropriate. Culturally appropriate assessments do not contain any inappropriate referents, such as words and objects that would be unfamiliar or have an unintended meaning for a child. Differences in connotation can result in confusion, frustration, and misunderstood responses on the part of the child.

All screenings and assessments used with young DLLs should be linguistically appropriate. Children's language development is dynamic; it is constantly changing. This is especially the case for dual language learners. Not only are they exposed to and learning their home language but they are also exposed to and learning a second language, such as English. If a child is learning their home language at the same time as they are learning English, the pace might be slower than that of a child who is learning only one language. On the other hand, if a child has mastered their home language, they will most likely learn a second language over time. In either case, delays in social and communication development might occur when a child is learning two or more languages. Beyond simply translating materials into another language, linguistically appropriate assessment considers a child's language history, proficiency, and dominance and preference, where applicable; has alignment between the goal of the assessment and the language(s) used to assess; is administered by a bilingual person fluent in the language of the assessment; and allows for flexibility in the child's language of response (except when assessing for proficiency in a given language).

Because of these challenges, it is important to include curriculum-embedded, observational assessments and other methods that place less reliance on children's production or comprehension of language as a key part of the assessment. To some degree, all assessments are measures of language. Planning for assessment of young DLLs should begin with gathering information about the child's and family's history with language. The information should include the language the family primarily speaks at home and in the community, other languages spoken in the home, the family's country of origin, the length of time the family has lived in the United States, the child's age at first exposure to English, and who in the family speaks English and how well. Accurate assessment of language proficiency is important because these children may seem to be speaking English with ease when actually they are not fully capable of understanding or expressing themselves in complex ways and still lack vocabulary skills, auditory memory, ability to follow sequenced directions, and other markers of proficiency. Insights about language proficiency will help staff effectively plan learning opportunities for young English language learners. Assessments of language proficiency should rely only on instruments and procedures designed to assess language proficiency, not those designed to assess content knowledge or anything else.

Assessments for young DLLs should be ongoing; with special attention given to repeated assessments of language development over time. Children can, but do not necessarily, achieve social language proficiency in a second language in two to three years and academic proficiency in four or more years. Because of the long-term nature of second-language development, and because paths to proficiency are uneven and unpredictable, a snapshot approach to assessment is particularly ineffective for young English language learners. A more accurate picture of a child's progress will reveal itself gradually over time as a child experiences a variety of social interactions and opportunities for growth in all domains. Assessments used to guide children's learning should be ongoing, with emphasis on assessment in everyday, naturalistic settings.

Whatever the purpose of the assessment, those conducting assessments of young DLLs should have cultural and linguistic competence, knowledge of the children being assessed, and specific assessment-related knowledge and skills. Even the most linguistically and culturally appropriate assessments may be inappropriate and ineffective if the adults who are implementing the assessments and interpreting their results lack relevant experience and preparation. It is primarily teachers who assess young English language learners, but paraprofessionals, assessment assistants, and specialized consultants also play an important role. Because the primary purpose of early childhood assessment is to help teachers learn more about children in order to make informed classroom-level decisions about curriculum and teaching practices, most often those involved in assessing are—and should be—children's teachers. Children tend to perform better when they know and feel comfortable with the person assessing them. The person assessing should be someone with whom the child is familiar and comfortable. In the case of ongoing assessment that informs instruction, teachers conduct assessments and should therefore be familiar with the children being assessed. Early in the year, teachers may need additional time and support to build relationships that will allow for effective assessment and interpretation of results. In situations where an external professional administers assessments, that person should spend time with and develop rapport with each child before assessing.

Those assessing young DLLs should be bilingual and bicultural. Ideally, those assessing should be fluent in the child's home language and familiar with the dialect spoken in the child's community. Those who assess young English language learners must appreciate diversity and show respect for the dignity and uniqueness of all people. People who hold prejudices or negative stereotypes about groups of children based on their background should not assess young English language learners. Teachers and other assessors should know the cultural traditions, values, and beliefs of the children they evaluate and should be aware of generally preferred interaction styles for people from those cultures. They should know not only about the child's culture generally but also about the child's current community specifically.

Those assessing young DLLs should be knowledgeable about language acquisition, including second- language acquisition. Whether they are conducting language assessments or assessments in other domains, teachers and other professionals assessing young English language learners should know about the development of language proficiency and specifically about second-language acquisition, both sequential and simultaneous. Too often, children from diverse backgrounds are overrepresented in special education programs, so it is important for those assessing to be aware that language errors as a function of learning stage might incorrectly lead to diagnosis of a disorder or developmental disability. Also, those assessing should know which specialists— including ELD teachers, speech, and language pathologists, and reading specialists to consult for assistance.

> **Addressing the unequal status of languages and cultures and affirming the value of cultural and linguistic diversity with intentionality are essential.**

③

TOOL: Reflecting on Our Own Assessment Practices with Young DLLs

Self-Assessment	Definitely true	Somewhat true	Not happening	I don't know
Our staff is aware of the specific purposes of the various assessments we use.				
Teachers feel they have adequate time and support to conduct and document required observations and assessments of DLLs.				
Teachers feel the assessments we use are helpful to them in understanding and responding to the needs of DLLs.				
We conduct assessments in the child's dominant language, and in additional languages if the child is learning more than one language.				
The assessment materials and strategies we use are appropriate for the child's age and level of development.				
The assessments that are used with DLLs in our preschool program have been designed for, validated, and normed with DLLs.				
We use a variety of assessment approaches (including observation, interviews, review of children's products, etc.) to gather data from multiple sources—including the child's family.				
Family members of our DLLs are regularly informed and updated on their child's assessment results in a way that is easily understood and meaningful.				
Those assessing young Dual language learners are knowledgeable about language acquisition, including second-language acquisition.				
All screenings and assessments used with young Dual language learners are culturally appropriate and are conducted by people with cultural and linguistic competence.				
We have bilingual, bicultural assessment experts to draw upon when needed to support assessment practices and analysis of assessment results for DLLs.				

REFLECTION

In reflecting on the assessment practices in your program/district, consider where you as a school/program leader may need additional information to discern whether your assessment practices are appropriate for your DLLs. Where may you want to make some changes to make assessment more effective and more developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Assessment of Young Dual Language Learners in Preschool, California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview papers.
http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/ dllresearchpapers.pdf

(Includes a decision tree for practitioners to determine in which language to assess young DLLs, and a sample family interview protocol to use to learn about families language practices.)

Screening and Assessment of Young English Language Learners, supplement to the NAEYC Position Statement on Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation.
http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/ELL_ Supplement_Shorter_Version.pdf

Capacity Building for Leaders, Educators, and Staff

In order to provide effective, assets-oriented early education, educators must be prepared to deliver developmentally appropriate and supportive instruction and services. The best instruction celebrates and sustains DLLs' home languages and cultures while ensuring that children's first years of schooling prepare them for a lifetime of opportunity. This is a matter of building a pipeline, recruiting, training, sustaining conditions, and championing capacity building.

As the EL Roadmap Principle #3 states: *"Capacity building occurs at all levels of the system, including leadership development to understand and address the needs of ELs, professional development and collaboration time for teachers, and robust efforts to address the teaching shortage and build a pipeline (recruit and develop) of educators skilled in addressing the needs of ELs, including bilingual teachers."*

Capacity Building in the Preschool World:

Widespread racial/ethnic and language gaps exist between the educator workforce and the children/students and families they serve in California.

- *The U.S. Department of Education data show that nearly 61% of all California teachers were white, while 23% of the state's students were white. Teachers in every other racial group were underrepresented compared to students.*

- *Latinos comprise 55% of the state's students, but only 21% of its teachers.*

- *TK teachers are predominantly white (71%) and only about 20% of teachers are multilingual. However, California's children and families are diverse; thus, their racial/ethnic and linguistic backgrounds do not match the TK teacher demographics.*

- *At the preschool level, 60% of children are dual language learners with a language other than English in their home—but far fewer preschool staff/educators are available to match the language needs of those children.*

The task of recruiting teachers with the languages and cultural competence to serve a multilingual population, and preparing all teachers with the skills and understanding to be effective with a culturally and linguistically diverse population is a major challenge for our state.

3

Multiple levels of staff working in preschool education intersect with and need the skills and understandings to support DLLs. Their pathways into working in preschool education differ as do their specific roles, compensation, and support. And the content and degree of preparation required for these jobs also differs. The following chart describes these:

Chart of the Early Education Workforce Jobs and Pathways

Role	Job	Pay (starting)	Requirements
Instructional Assistant	Assist in care and instruction of children in licensed preschool program.	$15.50-$17/hour	Six units of Child Development/ECE coursework
Preschool Teacher	Provide care and instruction of children in a licensed preschool program and supervise adult staff.	$18-$26/hour	• 24 units of CD/ECE coursework and 16 General Ed units and 175 days of experience, OR • AA/BA degree in CD/ECE or related field with three units of supervised field experience in early childhood setting.
Site Supervisor	Supervise care and instruction of preschool program operating at a single site.	$21-$30/hour	BA or higher with 12 units CD/ECE and three units of supervised field experience in ECE setting.
Preschool Program Director	Supervise development and instruction at multiple sites; serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	$30/hour	BA degree or higher; 24 units CD/ECE, six administration units, two units of supervised field experience in ECE setting, and Site Supervisor status with one year Site Supervisor experience.
Transitional Kindergarten Teacher	Provide classroom instruction as the lead teacher in TK in a self-contained classroom.	$60K/year	• BA degree + 24 units CD/ECE and Multiple Subjects credential (Note: If assigned to TK prior to 7/2015, "grandfathered" in as qualified), OR • For PK-3, BA degree and P3 Teaching Credential (TBD), OR • Holds a valid commission issued Child Development permit at Teacher level or higher, OR • LEA determines experience as teacher in classroom with preschool age children (36-60 months) is comparable to 24 units of child development. (Emergency permit option may be available.)
School Principal	School site principals *(along with preschool program directors)* impact preschool facilities on campus, community relations, alignment and coherence P-3, instructional oversight and support, professional learning P-3, resources, etc.	$110K + on average	Administrative Services Credential

Because the paths to becoming staff/educators in preschool programs differ for each of these roles, the degree and content of their preparation to work with a multilingual population of children and families varies widely. Generally, however, there is still scarce attention in the required coursework to become preschool educators to understanding and addressing the needs of multilingual children and families. In many communities, it is the instructional assistants who are more likely to live in and be from the cultural and language communities of the children served in preschool classrooms, bringing cultural competence and language skills to the schoolroom—but they tend to lack the preparation and professional learning supports related to addressing the needs of multilingual learners instructionally.

For these reasons, high quality professional learning and professional supports provided to teachers and staff in preschool programs are essential. Program directors and preschool education leaders need to watch for and hear from their staff about challenges and needs related to supporting DLLs, and provide the resources and mechanisms that support professional learning.

Identifying Key Characteristics of Effective Educators for Dual Language Learners in Preschool

What does it mean to be prepared to teach and support the development of DLL children? Looking across the early childhood education field, the English Learner/dual language education field, and California state guidance, there are a set of research-based and inter-related concepts essential to enact in the development of DLL-prepared early educators. *(The following builds upon work developed as part of the Emerging Bilingual Collaborative's "English Learner Workforce Investment Network" in the Central Valley).*

- **Mirror:** Young children are most successful when they have early educators who speak their language and reflect their family's cultural diversity.

- **Family:** DLL-prepared early educators work collaboratively with the families of young children, as family and culture play a crucial role in child development.

- **Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** DLL-prepared early educators design and implement learning environments that are strengths-based, play-based, responsive, and take an approach to joyful and engaged learning that integrates language with all domains of learning.

- **Culturally Affirming:** DLL-prepared early educators design and implement learning environments, curriculum, and pedagogy that are culturally, linguistically, and ability appropriate for each child, and are inclusive and sustaining.

- **Dual Language Development:** DLL-prepared early educators actively and intentionally support dual language development in ways that foster bilingualism and affirm young children's dual language identities.

- **Access:** DLL-prepared early educators reduce language-related barriers to multilingual learner participation and comprehension that can result when young children enter an early childhood setting that is instructed/run in a language other than their home language and ensure access to a full curriculum.

- **Equity and Anti-Bias:** DLL-prepared early educators counter the unequal status and history of exclusion related to language and culture by recognizing and undoing system practices that reproduce inequities and are actively aware of and seek to mitigate implicit and explicit biases and the potential impact on their expectations for and relationships with children and their families.

These elements add up as a body of distinctive knowledge and set of competencies that are essential for effective teaching for DLLs. Together, these components reflect a fundamental understanding of child development and learning—and more specialized knowledge about multilingual learners. Not only are all of these elements essential, they are interconnected. Attention to just one or two of these elements in the development of a DLL-ready early childhood education workforce is insufficient. These elements can inform the development of a DLL-prepared workforce in a number of ways.

In recruitment efforts, for example, leaders can identify, inspire, cultivate, and support UPK educator candidates who:

- *Speak young learners' primary language.*

- *Believe young multilingual learners are capable and that bilingualism is a gift.*

- *Have experience working in multicultural settings.*

In preparation and early career support, leaders can provide training, mentoring, and coaching to preschool educator candidates that provide instruction, modeling, and opportunities to practice the full range of competencies. For example:

- *Design and implement culturally and linguistically affirming learning environments.*

- *Develop awareness of systemic inequities and skills to counter them.*

- *Understand how dual language development differs from language development in monolingual children.*

A Deeper Look at Needed Staff Characteristics

MIRROR

The commitment to recruiting, hiring, and sustaining a diverse preschool workforce is stated clearly in CA's Master Plan for Early Learning, reflecting the general understanding from across the early childhood education field that young children are most successful when they have early educators (and/or other adults) in early childhood classrooms who speak their language and reflect their family's cultural diversity. Research links the presence of staff who speak the child's language and reflect the family's cultures to the child's comfort and their sense of safety in a preschool program and to their socioemotional health. The role of these adults is to serve as language models, to provide a strong communication link and connection between the family and the program, and to facilitate participation, comprehension, and learning through support in the child's strongest language.

In addition, having adults in positions of authority who model bilingualism and biculturalism strengthens DLL children's own identity development, and mediates the impacts of pervasive unequal status attached to languages other than English. The NAEYC's "Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" position statement states outright that equitable programs "employ staff who speak the languages of the children and families served." Head Start's Multicultural Principles similarly declare that "Culturally relevant programs require staff who reflect (and are responsive to) the community and families served." And the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's Promising Futures report states: "DLL's language development benefits from the input of adults who talk to them in the language in which the children are most familiar."

FAMILY

One of the strengths of the early childhood education field is the fundamental understanding that children are a part of their family, and that family and culture play a crucial role in child development. For this reason, early educators need to be prepared to reach out to families, get to know them, work collaboratively with the families, and utilize strategies to connect the learning in the program to learning at home. The general recommendation is that in preparation for engaging with the families of DLLs, teachers need to understand the central role of family in a child's development and learning. They also need to utilize available language resources (e.g., translators, translation technology, other staff with the language skills to serve as bridges, etc.) to support communication with families and have strategies and protocols for learning about the families of children they serve.

California's ECE Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) specifically reference "understanding the interactive and integral role of family and culture and community on children's development," the need to develop the "skills to establish home relationships and interactions that are nurturing, and to emphasize the value of family engagement and collaborative partnerships." NAEYC Core Values state that educators should "recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society." NAEYC

guidance expands on the general statement, "embrace the primary role of families in children's development and learning" by recommending that teachers learn about and honor each family's child-rearing values, languages (including dialects), and culture. "Gather information about the hopes and expectations families have for their children's behavior, learning, and development so that you can support their goals."

NAEYC's "Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" position statement calls for establishing reciprocal relationships with families, and "embracing the primary role of families in children's development and learning, making time to learn about the families, including their languages, customs, activities, values, and beliefs in order to provide a culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining learning environment." Family interviews are recommended in many sectors of the early childhood education delivery system (including Head Start). And as of 2023, California State Preschool programs have a Family Language and Interest Interview protocol for all dual language learners to support relationship building with families with children identified as dual language learners to learn more about each child's experiences with language (see pages 39-40 of this Toolkit). Finally, the first of the research-based Principles of the CA English Learner Roadmap policy calls for strong partnerships between programs and families as a component of creating assets-oriented and responsive schools.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE
Developmentally appropriate practice, as defined by NAEYC, is a pillar of high-quality effective early childhood education pedagogy, promoting each child's optimal development and learning through the design and implementation of learning environments appropriate for young children that are strengths-based, play-based, and take an integrated approach to joyful and engaged learning (see pages 70-78 of this Toolkit). Educators implement developmentally appropriate practice by recognizing the multiple assets all young children bring to the early learning program as unique individuals and as members of families and communities. Building on each child's strengths—and taking care to not harm any aspect of each child's physical, cognitive, social, or emotional well-being—educators must be able to design and implement learning environments to help all children achieve their full potential across all domains of development and across all content areas—in their own time, their own way. Different from the standards-based, outcomes-oriented, and academic focus of the K-12 system, developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs focuses on creating environments designed for how young children learn (through inquiry, play, and observation).

Teachers must be able to design learning experiences and sequences that highlight connections, relationships, and themes across the early childhood education curriculum–mirroring the interconnectedness of development across domains of development/learning/advancement/growth. Developmentally appropriate practice further recognizes that for MLs, the early years are particularly crucial for language, cultural, and identity development. To be developmentally appropriate, practices must also, therefore, be culturally, linguistically, and ability appropriate for each child, which requires teachers to understand that all development and learning occur within specific social, cultural, linguistic, and historic contexts. Effective teachers understand child development, recognize the role of cultural context in learning, know how to create the environments that support children's learning and development, and have strategies for culturally and linguistically responsive observation and assessment of their development.

CULTURALLY AFFIRMING
"Culturally affirming," "culturally responsive," and "culturally sustaining" are all terms commonly used to refer to teaching pedagogy that recognizes, supports, and embraces children's cultural experiences and the languages and customs that shape their learning–viewing them as assets for learning and development. This occurs in part through the curriculum. Head Start's Multicultural Principles clearly state that "the cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program are the primary sources for culturally relevant programming," that "addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices and adaptations is a necessary developmentally appropriate practice." Furthermore, "culturally relevant programming requires learning accurate information about the cultures of different groups and discarding stereotypes."

The CA ECE Teacher Performance Expectations (#3) call for teachers to be able to "design and implement a culturally, linguistically and developmentally appropriate curriculum–including for language and literacy development for first and dual language learners, ELD, literacy, math, history social science, visual and performing arts." ECE TPE #4 sets the expectation that teachers should be able to "apply knowledge of children's cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and first-second language acquisition and development when planning learning experiences."

NAEYC's "Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" position statement and guidance about culturally responsive pedagogy cite the need for teachers to develop a strong knowledge base about cultural diversity, understand different racial and ethnic groups' cultural values, traditions, and contributions to society, and be able to incorporate that knowledge into culturally relevant curricula and learning environments. This includes, for example, attention to ensuring that the images displayed in classrooms represent a wide range of diversity, that the books used in the program offer authentic "mirrors, windows, and sliding doors" for children to see themselves and learn about others, and that families and community are actively engaged and reflected in the classroom and curriculum.

The CA English Learner Roadmap policy incorporates culturally and linguistically affirming and responsive practices, calling for programs to "value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education," and stating that "the languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are assets for their own learning, and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction."

DUAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The development of language is a central developmental task of early childhood. For multilingual learners, of course, this development involves two or more languages. For children who live in and across multiple language and cultural worlds, the development of bilingualism is a necessity. This means that early childhood educators have to support dual language development actively and intentionally, foster bilingualism, and affirm young children's dual language identities. To do so, teachers need to understand the progression and stages of dual language development and how it differs from language development for monolingual children. Teachers need to be able to apply theories, principles, and pedagogical practices for ELD (English Language Development/English as a second language). Effective early literacy instruction for dual language learners attends to language development and pre-literacy skill development in both of their languages, and teachers need to be prepared to design language-rich environments that incorporate both languages. These competencies are written into the Bilingual Authorizations for teachers in the TK-12 system and are reflected as well in the ECE Teacher Performance Expectations.

TPE 1 describes the capacity to "understand comprehensive language instruction of first and dual language learners," "understand and use appropriate pedagogical approaches for developing language proficiency and for helping young children access, understand and respond to the language of schooling," and "support young children's dual language development and support home language if other than English." TPE 4 further speaks to the need for "strategies for supporting home language for the youngest learners in developing language and literacy skills." Head Start's Multicultural Principles articulates it thusly, "effective programs for children who speak languages other than English require continued development of the first language while the acquisition of English is facilitated." The CA Master Plan for Early Learning echoes this by quoting research that supports providing DLLs with high-quality language experiences in both English and their home language as a foundation for future academic success.

Finally, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Promising Futures summary of research reads: "Strong home language skills combined with English language skills appear to be the best preparation for early and later school success. Since all children can—with sufficient support and opportunities to learn—become proficient in two or more languages during the early childhood years, and since early bilingualism is associated with certain cognitive advantages, ECE educators play a critical role in promoting both languages." NAEYC's "Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" position statement focuses on relationships with families. It refers to the responsibility of early childhood educators to communicate the value of multilingualism to all families and "make sure families of emergent bilinguals understand the academic benefits and the significance of supporting their child's home language as English is introduced to ensure their children develop into fully bilingual and biliteracy adults. The California Early Childhood Educator Competencies echo this with: "all ECE educators should be able to communicate with the larger community about how children develop both their home language and English, and how this knowledge is applied in early education settings."

ACCESS

For over half a century, established by landmark equal educational opportunity federal legislation and court cases, the K-12 schooling system has recognized that children whose home languages are other than English face a language barrier to access and participation in an English-taught schooling system. Language access for these children depends upon both appropriate supports to bolster comprehension and participation, and effective intentional instruction and support in learning English as a second language. The P3 Framework Centering English Learners speaks to this in the following way: "Students may be disadvantaged when instruction is in a language that students aren't proficient in and does not use appropriate strategies to ensure comprehension." That basic understanding applies equally to early childhood education programs.

DLLs who do not speak English rely upon their teachers to use appropriate pedagogical scaffolds, strategies, and approaches that help young children access, understand, and respond to the language of schooling. The ECE Teacher Performance expectations reference this simply in TPE 3 as "facilitate equitable access." The CA English Learner Roadmap policy, Principle #2, describes "meaningful access" as having several components, including that MLLs should "engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning as well as provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. Students are provided a rigorous, intellectually rich, standards-based curriculum with instructional scaffolding for comprehension, participation, and mastery." More specific strategies and supports are spelled out in the Preschool Learning Foundations.

Access also relates to support services. As described in the CA EL Roadmap policy, "ELs are provided access to the full curriculum along with the provision of EL supports and services." A DLL-prepared workforce therefore needs to understand culturally and linguistically accessible services and supports and be aware of what is available in their local context for DLL children and families, so they are able to provide referrals. Head Start's "Culture and Language" Guidance document states clearly that Head Start programs are committed to providing equitable access to comprehensive services that prepare children for school and life. A critical part of this commitment is recognizing and respecting the culture and language of the children and their families.

EQUITY AND ANTI-BIAS

Because early childhood education settings are often among children's first communities outside the home, the degree to which these communities embrace a child's language, culture, and family has a powerful influence on children's identity development, sense of belonging, and understanding of social status attached to race, ethnicity, language, culture, skin color and class. Through interactions with staff and peers, children learn how to treat others and how to know what they should accept in how they are treated. In effective and equitable programs, children learn to acknowledge and respect differences of all kinds and to value each person. As described in the P3 Framework Centering English Learners, "the process of developing a healthy bilingual and bicultural identity begins as soon as a child enters a world in which their language culture, national background, and race/ethnicity are minoritized."

Addressing the unequal status of languages and cultures and affirming the value of cultural and linguistic diversity with intentionality are essential. Addressing bias begins with teachers and staff. NAEYC's guidance, the tenets of Anti-Bias practice, and CA's ECE Teacher Performance Expectation #6 all speak directly to the importance of teachers/staff being aware of their own potential implicit and explicit biases and the potential impact on their expectations for and relationships with children and families. NAEYC's "Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" position statement adds "consider how your own biases (implicit and explicit) may be contributing to your interactions and the messages you are sending children. Also reflect on whether biases may contribute to your understanding of a situation. Recognize the potential of your own culture and background affecting your judgment when observing, documenting, and assessing children's behavior, learning, or development."

California's Master Plan for Early Learning discusses the issue as well, stating, "...to ensure equitable treatment of children, training and support is needed on implicit bias." ML-prepared early educators also incorporate Anti-Bias Curriculum practices into their curriculum with young children, which includes nurturing each child's construction of knowledgeable and confident personal and social identities and their sense of family pride, promoting each child's comfort and empathy for human diversity, fostering children's sense of justice, and cultivating each child's ability and confidence to stand up for oneself and others in the face of bias. Finally, because unequal treatment for children of color and the children of language-minority communities have persistently run deep in our nation, it is incumbent upon early childhood educators to develop an awareness of patterns of unequal access and treatment, monitor for unequal impacts/outcomes, and take responsibility for countering and undoing those embedded practices and attitudes to ensure equity.

REFLECTION TOOL and ACTIVITY

The following Reflection Tool is designed for individuals and teams involved in planning and implementing efforts to recruit and develop a DLL-prepared workforce for preschool. Each of the seven elements that contribute towards DLL-prepared educators have implications for who is recruited and how they are recruited, as well as for the type and content of preparation and professional support that is needed. This Tool is comprised of two parts focusing on those seven elements.

Part I is designed to support those who are planning and implementing preschool and TK workforce development efforts in reflecting on the degree of familiarity, knowledge, and confidence regarding each element and its implications for recruitment and preparation–and reflecting on which elements may benefit from deeper reading, learning and discussion. It can be completed by an individual or by a team assessing its collective knowledge base.

Part II is a note-taking template for individual reflection and/or group dialogue, to facilitate a comprehensive planning effort that incorporates all seven elements into action for recruitment, preparation, and professional support.

Part I: How knowledgeable am I (are we) about the seven essential elements?
What might I (we) want to learn more about?

The Seven Essential Elements	Well aware and knowledgeable about what this means	Somewhat aware and knowledgeable	Not so familiar	This is a priority for learning more
Mirror: Young children are most successful when they have early educators who speak their language and reflect their family's cultural diversity.				
Family: DLL-prepared early educators work collaboratively with the families of young children, as family and culture play a crucial role in child development.				
Access: DLL-prepared early educators reduce language-related barriers to DL participation and comprehension that can result when young children enter an early childhood setting that is instructed/run in a language other than their home language.				
Dual Language Development: DLL-prepared early educators support first, second, and dual language development in assets-oriented ways that attend to language development and pre-literacy skill development in both their languages and that foster bilingualism and affirm young children's dual language identities.				
Culturally Affirming: DLL-prepared early educators design and implement learning environments and curricula that are culturally, linguistically, and ability-appropriate for each child and are inclusive, responsive, and sustaining. **Developmentally appropriate practice:** DLL-prepared early educators design and implement learning environments that are strengths-based, play-based, take an integrated approach to curriculum, and emphasize joyful and engaged learning.				
Equity/Anti-Bias: DLL-prepared early educators actively counter the unequal status of languages and cultures and the history of exclusion related to language and culture; early educators are aware of their potential implicit and explicit biases and the potential impact—positive and/or negative—on their expectations for and relationships with children and their families.				

Part II: Reflection on Implications of the Seven Essential Elements for Recruitment, Preparation and Early Career Support of a DLL-Prepared Preschool/TK Workforce

The Seven Essential Elements	Implications for recruitment (who and how we recruit)	Implications for preparation and early career support
Mirror: Young children are most successful when they have early educators who speak their language and reflect their family's cultural diversity.		
Family: DLL-prepared early educators work collaboratively with the families of young children, as family and culture play a crucial role in child development.		
Access: DLL-prepared early educators reduce language-related barriers to ML participation and comprehension that can result when young children enter an early childhood setting that is instructed/run in a language other than their home language.		
Dual Language Development: DLL-prepared early educators support first, second, and dual language development in assets-oriented ways that attend to language development and pre-literacy skill development in both their languages, and that foster bilingualism and affirm young children's dual language identities.		
Culturally Affirming: DLL-prepared early educators design and implement learning environments and curriculum that are culturally, linguistically, and ability appropriate for each child as well as inclusive, responsive, and sustaining.		
Developmentally appropriate practice: DLL-prepared early educators design and implement learning environments that are strengths-based, play-based, take an integrated approach to curriculum, and emphasize joyful and engaged learning.		
Equity/Anti-Bias: DLL-prepared early educators actively counter the unequal status of languages and cultures, and the history of exclusion related to language and culture; early educators are aware of their potential implicit and explicit biases and the potential impact, positive and/or negative, on their expectations for and relationships with children and their families.		

Educator Preparation: Cross Walk ECE Credential TPEs and the EL Roadmap Principles

In implementing the EL Roadmap and seeking alignment and coherence across the early education system through high school graduation, it is vital that we see the ways in which the EL Roadmap can be expressed within the framework of the California Early Childhood Educator Teacher Professional Expectations (TPEs). It means looking for the ways in which expected competencies for early childhood educators address the Principles of the EL Roadmap. The TPEs are the competencies, skills, knowledge, and abilities that California has officially defined as required to meet the needs of young children in an ECE setting. They are meant to be the basis for preparation programs—although the degree to which there is alignment and what that looks like differ markedly from preparation program to program.

Understanding the competencies that are needed is important for school leaders and program directors—to inform hiring, professional learning, and support. The following chart selects those aspects of the ECE TPEs that directly speak to dual language learners and connect to the EL Roadmap.

CHART: Connecting ECE TPEs to the EL ROADMAP

ECE Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs)	RELATIONSHIP TO EL ROADMAP
TPE 1: Engaging and Supporting All Young Children in Development and Learning • Role of family in development and learning of children. • Work collaboratively with families; understand the interactive and integral role of family, culture, and community on development. • Knowledgeable of demographics, cultural, linguistic and SES backgrounds of children and families. • Knowledge of first and dual language development. • Understand comprehensive language instruction of first and dual language learners—including appropriate pedagogical approaches for developing language proficiency and helping young children access, understand, and respond to the language of schooling. • Assess prior learning in both English and home language. • Design and implement learning experiences based on language proficiency. • Support young children's dual language development, support home language.	**Principle #1: Assets-Oriented and Needs Responsive Schools** Pre-schools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs, and identities. Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates. Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships. **Principle #3: System Conditions that Support Effectiveness** Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, and pre-school) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities.
TPE 2: Creating and maintaining effective environments for young children's development and learning. • Skills to establish nurturing home relations and interactions with children. • Importance of early language development. • Value of engagement.	**Principle #1: Assets-oriented and Student Responsive** Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships. Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates.
TPE 3: Understanding and Organizing Content Knowledge for Young Children's Development and Learning • Design and implement a culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate curriculum—including for language and literacy development for first and dual language learners, ELD, literacy, math, history social science, visual, and performing arts. • Design developmental and learning experiences and sequences that highlight connections, relationships, and themes across the curriculum. • Design and implement learning experiences that are developmentally and linguistically appropriate, engaging, and supportive of children's learning. • Facilitate children's understanding of key content and concepts and make modifications to promote children's access to the curriculum. • Facilitate equitable access.	**Principle #1: Assets-oriented and Student Responsive** The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages. **Principle #2: Intellectual Quality of instruction and Meaningful Access** English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning and provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages.

ECE Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs)	RELATIONSHIP TO EL ROADMAP
TPE 3: Understanding and Organizing Content Knowledge for Young Children's Development and Learning (continued)	Language development occurs in and through content and is integrated across the curriculum, including integrated ELD and designated content based. Students are provided a rigorous, intellectually rich, standards-based curriculum with instructional scaffolding for comprehension, participation, and mastery. Teaching and learning emphasize engagement, interaction, discourse, inquiry, and critical thinking—with the same high expectations for ELs as for all.
TPE 4: Planning Instruction and Designing Developmental and Learning Experiences for All Young Children • Apply knowledge of children's cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and first-second language acquisition and development when planning learning experiences. • Advance the development and learning of children who are DLLs. • Reflect the interconnectedness of children's skills development in literacy, math, science, and other disciplines across the curriculum • Implement strategies for supporting home language in developing language and literacy skills and strategies for supporting dual language learners in developing English language and literacy skills.	**Principle #2: Intellectual Quality of instruction and Meaningful Access** English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning as well as provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages.
TPE 5: Assessing and Documenting young children's development and learning. • Select assessment strategies that are developmentally appropriate, culturally, and linguistically sensitive, relevant, reliable, and valid across a variety of populations.	**Principle #3: System Conditions that Support Effectiveness** Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, pre-school) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities and utilize valid assessment and other data systems that inform instruction and continuous improvement. A system of culturally and linguistically valid and reliable assessments support instruction, continuous improvement, and accountability for attainment of English proficiency, biliteracy, and academic achievement.
TPE 6: Developing as a Professional Early Childhood Educator • Opportunities to reflect and improve practice through collaborative inquiry, observation, feedback, and performance data. • Aware of potential implicit and explicit biases and the potential impact positive and/or negative, on expectations for and relationships with children and families. • Understand the responsibility of ongoing professional learning.	**Principle #3: System Conditions that Support Effectiveness** Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, and preschool) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities. Resources and tiered supports are provided to grow teachers and staff's capacity toward building on the strengths that will meet the needs of English learners.

Citation: The California Standards for the Teaching Profession, Early Childhood Educator Teacher Performance Expectations

REFLECTION

To what degree do you see alignment between the California Teacher Performance Expectations for Early Childhood Education and the CA English Learner Roadmap Principles?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

To what degree do you experience your preschool educators/staff as matching the TPEs for ECE listed in the chart above? Which areas are strongest? Which areas are weakest?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACTIVITY

Talk to the preschool teachers and staff, and ask:

- *How prepared do you feel you are to meet the needs and leverage the assets of our DLLs?*
- *What particular gaps do you see in your preparation?*
- *What kind of professional learning and/or support would be helpful to you?*
- *For each of the seven areas identified above as characteristics of prepared educators for multilingual learners, ask staff to consider their own current levels of understanding and skills.*
- *Consider planning professional learning for areas where there is shared interest and need.*

Program directors and leaders should explore ways to bridge resources across the delivery systems, to leverage the resources of the TK–12 system, and to extend professional learning opportunities and supports across TK and preschool delivery systems.

Creating an Infrastructure for Professional Learning Support

Putting understandings about language and learning to work requires hands-on opportunities to practice and master teaching strategies that respond to all seven of the above needs—with support, coaching, and time for reflection and planning. "One and done" workshops seldom actually impact practice. High-quality professional development for teachers is designed to support implementation. It is collaborative—offering engagement and reflection and sharing with other teachers—and provides opportunities to observe and practice research-based strategies and receive feedback and coaching. In addition to the Standards of Quality Professional Development, the following are hallmarks of an effective staff development system:

- *Time is created, allocated, devoted, and protected for adult learning—including paid time within the regular calendar and day when teachers are not responsible for students.*

- *Staff roles are designated and conditions/resources are created that support the endeavor of professional learning (e.g., coaches, mentor relationships, professional libraries, and material protocols) to focus attention on key essential aspects of teaching and learning. Create calendared routines for cycles of inquiry and implementation, walkthroughs, and "look for's" to inform responsive professional learning.*

- *A culture of inquiry and commitment to seeking out the most current research and evidence-based practices in the service of providing the strongest and most effective schooling for DLLs.*

- *Messaging, practices, and modeling underscore that the work of professional learning is everyone's responsibility and is never done. Collectively, all adults in the system feel it is incumbent on them to work together to make education equitable, fully accessible, inclusive, relevant, joyful, and effective for DLLs.*

- *Professional development is ongoing, with communities of practice/networks that support implementation.*

It is particularly important to create opportunities to strengthen programs and instruction for DLLs that enable preschool and kindergarten teachers to come together to learn and collectively construct their understanding of effective practice for DLLs across the four- to 5.5-year-old age span.

Funding and Resources

A fundamental understanding of Principle #3 of the EL Roadmap is that the system must provide the resources and tiered support needed to ensure strong programs and invest adequate resources to support the conditions required to address DLL needs. While this is an issue across the board for schools, it is particularly an issue in building a high-quality, equitable early learning system which has been historically and dramatically under-resourced.

Preschool teachers and childcare workers earn 38% less than their colleagues in the TK-8 system. California state preschool teachers across the state with a BA earn, on average, 26% less than TK-12 teachers with the same level of education. Data reveal that 17% of early childhood educators live in poverty in California. That's almost seven times the poverty rate for the state's K-8 teachers. Low teacher pay is one of the main reasons that Early Learning programs aren't able to attract and keep highly-skilled teachers. This, in turn, undermines program quality and hurts the ability of young children to thrive in safe and stable educational environments.

The CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care attempts to address aspects of this seemingly intractable problem by aligning compensation to qualifications and building a pipeline of learning opportunities and pathways to career advancement with supports for pursuing them—thus incentivizing and funding career pathways and changing the way in which the workforce is prepared to meet competencies.

Meanwhile, however, while Transitional Kindergarten teachers and preschool teachers in other delivery settings all are teaching and supporting the development of preschool children, there are significant inequities in conditions. Transitional Kindergarten teachers' educational qualifications and certification differ from state preschool teachers. They earn payscales reflective of the TK-12 system, and thus more than preschool teachers in other settings. Across all segments of the mixed-delivery system, early educators in California are typically women, predominantly members of a minority group, and many are multilingual. The workforce in this field is critically under-compensated with data from 2019 showing the median hourly pay for a California childcare worker was $13.43. Preschool teachers earned $16.83, and Transitional Kindergarten teachers earned $41.86. Child:staff ratios differ across these settings. And system supports differ – including resources that support professional learning. These inequities create challenges in providing coherent and collaborative professional learning across teachers and staff in the different delivery systems despite the fact that their responsibilities and the task of supporting young DLLs is similar.

In California and nationwide, serious underfunding of early childhood education has been a challenge. Early care and education is substantially subsidized through low teacher pay and inadequate supports. In the past decade, California has stepped forward to begin to invest in building a more sustainable and equitable early childhood education system. The development of Transitional Kindergarten has moved preschool/early education formally into what had been a K-12 schooling system. TK is free. TK teachers are paid within the salary structure of other credentialed K-12 educators. Funding comes through Proposition 98 state funding. As a result, districts can opt to use LCAP dollars to build and strengthen TK, which is considered a first year of a two-year kindergarten. But California State Preschool Programs (CSPPs) are funded at a lesser level. Generally, the unequal resources between the TK-12 system and the preschool/early childhood education mixed delivery system results in inequities within and across early education. There is a need to equalize or at least offset the discrepant resource base. To the extent possible, program directors and leaders should explore ways to bridge resources across the delivery systems, to leverage the resources of the TK-12 system, and to extend professional learning opportunities and supports across TK and preschool delivery systems.

③ Building the Table in a Mixed Delivery System

As California moves towards the implementation of UPK, the context in which the state's ECE providers and programs operate is changing. The "system" is being redefined. With the use of Proposition 98 funds, the Governor and Legislature expanded universal access to Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and expanded the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) through LEAs. The Governor and the California State Legislature took steps towards uplifting a more mixed-delivery approach in the 2022–23 budget and Education Omnibus Trailer Bill (AB 2185). Specifically, the budget invests funds at the local level for UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grants aimed at expanding access universally to preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children across the state through a mixed-delivery system. The mixed delivery system includes:

California State Preschool Program (CSPP)

CSPP prepares three- and four-year-old children to transition to kindergarten through state funded contracts with LEAs, community-based organizations, and other public agencies.5 Early educators in CSPP provide full-day and part-day services to children from families in need who either meet income eligibility, receive social services, or meet other need criteria such as being in school or working. In addition to meeting the requirements of Title 5, CSPP contractors must create a program that addresses a series of specific components including: an education component, a nutrition component, a parental involvement component, and a health and social services component. The Title 5 standards stipulate that CSPP contractors create an education program that: is inclusive of children of various abilities; is developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate; supports social and emotional development; develops cognitive and language skills; and promotes physical development. During their time in CSPP, children are provided with meals and snacks that reflect federal and national standards. The parental involvement component of CSPP creates a partnership between early educators and families. CSPP contractors provide opportunities for families to learn about additional services, receive periodic updates about their child's education and progress, participate in activities, and advise on issues related to the program. The health and social services component requires that the program identify, refer, and ensure the enrollment of families in need of social programs. CSPP is administered by the CDE.

Head Start and Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships

Head Start is a federally funded program for preschool age children and Early Head Start is a federally funded program for children under the age of three whose families meet specified income or other need- based eligibility requirements. The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) initiative brings together the Early Head Start (for children from birth through age three) and childcare providers through layering of funding to provide comprehensive family centered services within high-quality home- and center-based environments that adhere to the research-based Head Start Program Performance Standards. EHS-CCP is the primary mechanism for offering Head Start services in home-based settings, however, the Office of Head Start occasionally funds grantees who partner with homes through a "Locally Designed Option".

District-Funded Preschools

District-funded preschools are typically locally funded, locally regulated preschools that are funded by local revenue sources or private sources. Since these programs are operated on LEA sites, they are regulated by the same staffing, facility, and health and safety requirements as TK-12 schools. Curriculum choices and other specific program components vary from preschool to preschool.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. It is part of the K-12 system in California and promotes school readiness skills. All four-year-old children will be eligible for TK by the 2025-26 school year. TK programs are located in K-12 public schools, available to students regardless of family income, exist mostly as stand-alone classrooms, and are sometimes offered as full-day programs. In addition to academic preparation, districts support students and families through referrals to community-based care and programs and may provide on-site care. TK uses a modified kindergarten curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of four-year-old children. TK is overseen by the CDE.

Each of these has its own governance, mandates, regulations, funding and staffing. The notion expressed in the CA EL Roadmap of the importance of building system conditions to support quality programs, services and practices applies to each of the delivery mechanisms for preschool/TK education in California – but the actual work to be done in creating such systems differs across these settings.

③

References & Resources for Principle #3

A rich body of research and guidance inform the development of the DLL-prepared UPK workforce. The following selected documents and resources either are specifically quoted in this paper on the seven elements of a ML-prepared UPK workforce or are most directly relevant for those engaged in planning and implementation of recruitment and training efforts.

From the California Department of Education
www.cde.ca.gov

Best Practices for Planning Curriculum for Young Children: Family Partnerships and Culture
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>familypartnerships

California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>mleleducationch4

The California Early Childhood Educator Competencies (2012)
www.cde.ca.gov>ececomps
Note particularly competencies for "culture, diversity and equity" and "Dual-Language Development."

CA Preschool Learning Foundations
(Volume 1 focuses on socio-emotional development, language, and literacy, ELD and math)
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>preschoollf

California Preschool Program Guidelines
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>preschoolprodgdlns2015
Dual Language Learner (DLL) support web page
www.cde.ca.gov>dllsupport

Implementation Support for Grades TK-1, ELA/ELD Framework
www.cde.ca.gov>isresources-tkto1

Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy and Learning (2nd edition)
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>psenglearnersed2

Other California State Guidance and Policies

CA Early Childhood Education Teacher Performance Expectations (April 2019)
Commission on Teacher Credentialing
www.ctc.ca.gov
Check particularly the ECE credential, and the drafted P3 Credential TPEs.

California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: Making California for All Kids
www.Cdn-west-prod-chhs-01.dsh.ca.gov

From the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC
www.naeyc.org

Advancing Equity for Early Childhood Education (position statement)

Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves (second edition)—authored by Louise Derman-Sparks, Julie Olsen Edwards and Catherine M. Goines

NAEYC Core Values

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (position statement)

On Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs (policy statement)

Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (position statement)

Responding to linguistic and cultural diversity: Recommendations for effective early childhood education.

From Head Start
www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

Planned Language Approach (guides, tools, research base, and strategies)

"Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five"

Other Referenced Documents

A P-3 Framework: Centering English Learners
www.seal.org

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). 2017. Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

California Professional Learning Resources

Being a learner engaged in refining the art and craft of teaching is part and parcel of being a good teacher. School leaders also, dedicated to navigating a site or a district in a coherent direction and toward continuous improvement during always-changing contexts and conditions, also have to be learners. What we know is that good schools, high-performing schools, and effective school systems intentionally support adult learning, investing in creating the time and space and culture where adults learn together as a community in the act of continuous improvement in pursuit of sturdier student outcomes.

Providing meaningful access and high-quality instruction for English learners depends upon having educators who understand the strengths and needs of English learners and have the capacity to deliver standard-based, assets-oriented, affirming, and responsive education.
Each of the following have resources, research-based programs, and services providing professional learning and training focusing on Dual Language Learners in UPK and early childhood education.

Center for Equity for English Learners at Loyola Marymount University
www.soe.lmu.edu>ceel

Language Learning Project
https://earlylearning.fresnounified.org/language-learning-project/

Multilingual Learning Toolkit
www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org\

Preschool GLAD
www.ntcprojectglad.com>trainings>preschool-glad\

SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language)
www.seal.org

Readings

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PRINCIPLE #4: ALIGNMENT AND ARTICULATION WITHIN AND ACROSS SYSTEMS

4

INTRODUCTION

Principle #4 of the English Learner Roadmap, "Articulation and Alignment," focuses on issues of coherence across the system. It calls for building connections across grade levels to knit a consistent and aligned pathway for Dual Language Learners as they move along their schooling journey from preschool into kindergarten and beyond. Learning a new language and becoming bilingual takes years. Consistency across those years is crucial to their success. Preschool education is the beginning of that journey and sets the foundation for what will come. But the alignment and coherence need to be knit across what have historically been quite separate and disparate systems—early childhood education on the one hand, and the K-12 system on the other.

What must this alignment look like that is developmentally appropriate for preschool children but is also linked to what they will encounter in Kindergarten and beyond? And will that alignment pave a coherent pathway of language and identity development for emerging bilinguals in a multicultural world? The English Learner Roadmap promises articulated practices and pathways across grade levels and educational segments, with a strong foundation in early childhood and continuing through to reclassification (English proficiency), graduation, and higher education.

TEXT OF PRINCPLE #4

English learners will experience a coherent, articulated, and aligned set of practices and pathways across grade levels and educational segments beginning with a strong foundation in early childhood and continuing through to reclassification, graduation, and higher education. These pathways foster the skills, language(s), literacy, and knowledge students need for college- and career-readiness and participation in a global, diverse, multilingual 21st century world.

A. *EL approaches and programs are designed for continuity,* ***alignment and articulation*** *across grade and systems segments beginning with a* ***strong foundation in early childhood*** *(preschool) and continuing through to reclassification, graduation, and higher education.*

B. *Schools plan schedules and resources to* ***provide extra time*** *in school (as needed) and build partnerships with afterschool and other entities to provide additional support for ELs, to accommodate the extra challenge facing ELs of learning English and accessing/mastering all academic content.*

C. *EL approaches and programs are designed to be* ***coherent*** *across schools within districts, across initiatives, and across the state.*

ACTIVITY: Reading for Understanding

Read through the text of Principle #4. Annotate as follows:

- *Highlight any terms/vocabulary/phrases that resonate strongly with you (e.g., "strong foundation in early childhood").*

- *Put a question mark next to anything you don't understand or wonder about. EXAMPLE: "reclassification"?*

- *Place an arrow alongside any phrases that you see as connected to a key element of practices and approaches already part of your early education efforts—and write what that connection is.*
  EXAMPLE: "alignment and articulation" - we have our preschool and kindergarten teachers meet twice a year to talk about kindergarten preparation and readiness

NOTE-TAKER:

What resonates most with me and seems most important about Principle #4?:

_____

_____

Questions I have about Principle #4:

_____

_____

Connections I make between Principle #4 and other initiatives/efforts/practices:

_____

_____
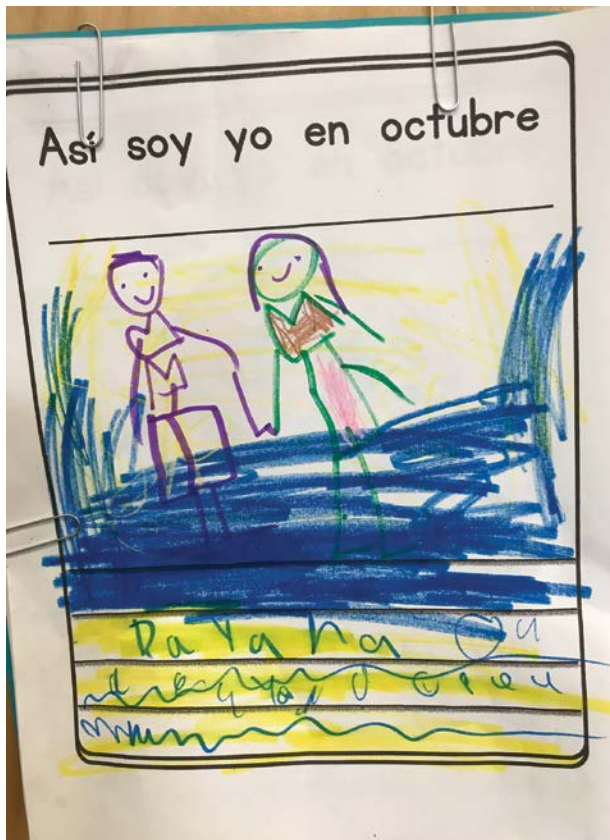
Preschool: The Beginning of the Journey

Alignment and articulation across preschool and kindergarten, looking ahead to later schooling involves building bridges of communication across the sectors, creating systems of connection that honor and leverage the distinct developmental and programmatic features of each level, and that result in smooth transitions and a coherent pathway for children and families as they move through preschool into kindergarten and beyond.

READING: Thinking About Kindergarten Readiness for DLLs

In addition to understanding the essential role of preschool in supporting children's development, the public investment in early education is driven in part by viewing those early years as preparing children to be successful academically down the road—and specifically, to help them be "Kindergarten ready." The following reading is excerpted and adapted from: Herrera, S., Martinez M.I., Olsen, L., and Soltero, S. (December 2022) "Early Literacy Development and Instruction for Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Education.", National Committee for Effective Literacy. www.MultilingualLiteracy.org

Kindergarten was once seen as the transition year between home and school, a time for socializing children for schooling and laying the foundation of development. Since the standards and accountability movement in the early 2000s, more and more concern about academic gaps has focused attention at earlier and earlier stages in the system, ultimately turning attention to early childhood education—and the notion that children need to be sufficiently "ready" when they enter Kindergarten. The notion that gaps should be closed before children enter Kindergarten was part of a growing push to have children arrive in Kindergarten with a foundation of knowledge, "school appropriate behaviors," and skills.

In fact, in California, one of the explicit purposes of the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (SB 1381) was to ensure that children would be better prepared to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond. As then Governor Schwarzenegger declared, "this legislation ensures that children's academic careers will be built on a strong foundation."

What does Kindergarten readiness mean for preschools? School readiness is a back-mapping concept that starts by defining what children should know and do in Kindergarten, then asks: "How do we get them there?" While there is no common definition of "Kindergarten readiness" in the U.S., most states have filled this void with their own definitions of what this means. Definitions, goals statements, and understandings that focus broadly on important child development domains such as social and emotional development, cognitive development, and physical well-being, for the most part, tend to be written in developmentally appropriate ways. However, some are overly academic and require children to demonstrate discrete skills in specific academic content areas. Many school

readiness assessments and beliefs resort to a narrow definition of literacy and numeracy derived from elementary school curriculum. For example, children are expected to demonstrate early language, literacy, mathematics, and science development. Or certain "cognitive abilities" are defined in specific areas of early literacy (e.g., phonological awareness, print concepts, alphabetical understanding), basic numeracy (e.g., counting, number awareness, spatial awareness), basic science (e.g., using appropriate science vocabulary), and social studies (e.g., an awareness of money and time).

Well-meaning educators sought "Kindergarten ready" children who would be able to sit still for 45 minutes, cooperate as part of a group, and follow directions—all in English – and with a basic foundation in phonics and letter knowledge. By 2018, 41 states had begun implementing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), prompted in large part by the federal government's 2011 Race to The Top: Early Learning Challenge grant, which promoted the development and use of KEAs. These 'readiness' expectations are typically English-centric with detrimental effects for dual language learners. Rather than describing what children will begin to learn about and experience as they enter Kindergarten, these definitions consider as "at-risk" any child that does not already demonstrate mastery of these academic and behavioral skills before entering Kindergarten. And preschools were enlisted in closing that gap.

Kindergarten readiness definitions and KEAs become harmful to children when they define and assess Kindergarten readiness from an overly academic lens, and when they contribute to Kindergarten and preschool learning environments that are developmentally inappropriate for young children.

From an early learning and developmental perspective, school readiness does not occur by replicating first grade or Kindergarten at an earlier age. Play, both child-initiated and teacher guided, is essential to children's healthy development and should be a central element of Kindergarten classrooms and curricula. Unfortunately, play in Kindergarten has increasingly been replaced by direct instruction in literacy and math. In many respects, Kindergarten has become the new first grade, focusing more on academic content and standardized assessment and less on child-centered, exploration and educational play.

An additional risk of Kindergarten readiness definitions and KEAs to dual language learners is when they also reinforce an English-centric view of language and early literacy. In some places, school readiness efforts reflect a belief that in order to succeed in school, children must be exposed to programs emphasizing English so that they will learn English as quickly as possible. The belief is still widespread that the more time children spend listening to and speaking English, the more rapidly they will master the fundamentals of the English language—and the more prepared they will be for Kindergarten in an English-speaking schooling system.

The immersion myth pushes many preschools to introduce and provide an English-Only instructional environment as early as possible. This is despite the evidence that supports for the home language during the PreKindergarten years helps, rather than hurts, long-term English mastery. Unless children from non-English speaking households also receive strong support for their home language, their overall language development may be impeded and their likelihood of school success actually diminishes. For young children who are actively processing and have not yet mastered the fundamentals of their first language, completely shifting to a new, unfamiliar language during the early childhood years often negatively impacts the ongoing development of their home language, as well. The evidence suggests that children in English immersion preschool programs tend to lose their ability to communicate in their first language, start to prefer the English language, frequently develop communication problems with their extended families, and experience depressed academic achievement in English.

While English can be successfully introduced during the PreKindergarten years, if it replaces the home language, and children do not have the opportunity to continue to learn in the language they know, advanced linguistic, conceptual, and academic development is at-risk. Systematic, deliberate exposure to English during early childhood combined with ongoing opportunities to learn important concepts in the home language results in the highest achievement in both the home language and English by the end of Third Grade and beyond. The notion that being Kindergarten Ready means knowing English is erroneous and damaging. And, if cultural and linguistic differences in socialization and development are not understood and incorporated into school readiness frameworks, children become viewed as deficient. Early negative labeling and tracking can occur.

Children are not innately "ready" or "not ready" for Kindergarten. A strong, developmentally focused, culturally- and linguistically-inclusive and supportive preschool education provides the best basis for later success in school. A robust oral language (in home language at least if not bilingually), interest in learning, confidence as a learner and a strong and healthy sense of identity predict Kindergarten success. With positive attitudes and experiences related to learning and engaging with text, children are destined for success in Kindergarten. But the driving question should not be, "Is this child Kindergarten ready?" Instead, the question should be, "Are our Kindergartens ready to embrace, support, and respond to the needs and assets of the young, culturally and linguistically diverse children who arrive at their doors in Kindergarten?"

REFLECTION

Does the district and Kindergarten program have a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment or formal list of expectations related to Kindergarten readiness? If so:

- *How are these used and what are the ramifications of degree to which an incoming child meets those expectations?*

- *Does that assessment include expectations related to English proficiency?*

- *Is the assessment conducted in the child's strongest language?*

- *To what degree do feeder preschools use that Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to influence their curriculum, program, or instruction?*

DIALOGUE

This set of questions can be used either 1:1 in a conversation between you and individual teachers to give you a picture of how they think about the transition between preschool and Kindergarten. Alternately, the questions can be the basis for group dialogue or panels bringing together preschool and Kindergarten teachers to build a common understanding of expectations.

Ask Kindergarten Teachers:

- *In what ways do you think about the notion of 'Kindergarten readiness'?*

- *What do you wish preschool teachers understood about Kindergarten and about the task of preparing children for Kindergarten?*

- *Are there particular skills or developmental capacities that you consider important for a child to have reached prior to Kindergarten entry?*

- *How important is proficiency in English for a child entering Kindergarten to be able to succeed in Kindergarten?*

- *Are there ways that you would like to see Kindergarten expectations, curriculum, and instruction adapted to support children entering Kindergarten more effectively at a range of developmental levels and English proficiency levels?*

Ask Preschool Teachers:

- *In what ways do you think about the notion of 'Kindergarten readiness'?*

- *In what ways (if at all) do you think about preparing your children for Kindergarten?*

- *Are there particular skills that you think your children should have before entering Kindergarten in order to be able to be successful? What does successful mean for you?*

- *In what ways do you think about English proficiency as an issue for your DLLs in being prepared for Kindergarten?*

- *What messages would you like to share with the Kindergarten teachers who receive your children after preschool? Is there a mechanism for doing that?*

4 Building Vertical Articulation: Coherent Bilingual/Dual Language Pathways Across Grade Levels

In most places, the schooling system is divided into a standard set of levels—beginning with preschool, or beginning with Transitional Kindergarten, proceeding to Kindergarten and elementary school (primary and then upper grades), continuing to middle school, and culminating in high school. Principle #4 of the CA English Learner Roadmap calls upon schools to provide a coherent, articulated, and aligned set of practices and pathways across all of these grade levels and educational segments. State curriculum standards already articulate expected content and skills delineated to address the different developmental levels of young people moving through these school system levels from K-12. And new California Preschool Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations articulate developmental expectations for children as they move through those levels. These are articulated with the Kindergarten Standards.

Vertical articulation is about building coherence among these levels. Education needs attention to fluid, vertical transitions across from one schooling level to the next. The transition from preschool into Kindergarten and the primary grades/elementary school, the transition between elementary and middle, and between middle and high school should flow easily. A robust PK-to-graduation system pays attention to these transitions—seeking ways to smooth the articulation, planning how to support children and families making the transitions, building stronger communication systems between educators at the different levels, and preparing parents/families for the differences in expectations at each tier.

For Dual Language Learners (DLLs and ELLs), the journey from early education to high school graduation includes all of the transitions that other students face. However, they must deal with added complexities related to language development (i.e., involvement in becoming English proficient and developing their dual-language capacities), the need to develop healthy bi-cultural and dual-linguistic identities, and for most, the challenge of finding their way through a schooling system that is "foreign." School is often unknown for both DLL children and their families in how it works and functions. This means that education leaders and directors have to pave the transitions – providing guidance, information and connections across the levels.

One key aspect in need of articulation for DLLs is how dual language development is approached and supported from one level of schooling to the next. Dual-language/second language development occurs over a long process and period of time—crossing levels and segments of schooling. It takes five to seven years for most students to develop the levels of proficiency in English as a second language to provide meaningful participation and access to English-taught schooling. The journey for most begins in preschool or Kindergarten and continues throughout elementary school. After reclassification as an RFEP (meaning the student has reached sufficient English proficiency so they no longer need supports to access the academic curriculum) , the student's journey carries forward into middle school.

1. **The handling of second language development can be very different in each school segment.** There is seldom formal ELD in early education (although the Preschool Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations does include a section on ELD), and the development of children's linguistic resources is less intentional and less formally defined than what they experience once they enter a "language development/language acquisition" program in the K-12 system. A coherent and consistent, articulated program of language development is vital in reaching good outcomes.

2. **Commitment to strong, bicultural identity development for ELs across the span of years.** The process of developing a strong bilingual and bicultural identity begins as soon as a child begins to see a world in which their language, culture, national background, and family experiences are minoritized. Principle #1 of the CA EL Roadmap is explicit: programs should value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates. Each school year when the student enters a new grade level with a new set of peers and teachers, it is a crucial moment for communicating acceptance, affirmation, and reassurance that the student belongs there. This mindset is particularly necessary during transitions from one school to another, or from one school level to another.

For many English learners entering a new unknown school, there are questions about whether one's language will find a place, their accent embraced, their culture and family welcomed and visible, and whether there will be risks in using the new language. For this reason, entrance into preschool, enrollment in Kindergarten, transitions into middle school, etc., can be particularly vulnerable points at which the schooling system should respond with affirming messaging and watchful monitoring. Intentional efforts to smooth these leaps between system segments are critical for English learner success.

3. **Data sharing and common system vocabulary across educators at various levels.**
   In early education, the terminology used for children with a home language other than English is "dual-language learners." The program types are "Balanced English-and-Home-Language Development Approach" and "English Language Development with Home Language Support Program Approach." However, once a student enters Kindergarten, the children are called "English learners" and the program options titles are: "Structured English Immersion," "Dual Language," and "Transitional or Developmental Bilingual." This can be confusing for parents and even for teachers seeking to create an articulated and smooth transition across those levels of the system.

   To address the need for consistent information and data sharing throughout various levels of the system, it is recommended that preschools and districts create DLL/EL Profiles that capture the development, trajectory, placements, and progress of English learners toward English proficiency and biliteracy. The purpose is to create a shared understanding of the programs on both sides of the transition and consistent, unvarying terminology that provides clarity regarding the incoming students. Such communication is important to ensure appropriate services, placement, and planning.

4. **Consistency in support for home language development is particularly important for DLLs.** As children progress from preschool and Transitional Kindergarten to Kindergarten and beyond, attention to their home language must be consistent or damaging language loss occurs. Even a one-year gap in which home language is not being addressed can be a problem. So, for example, one year in an English taught preschool and then enrollment in a dual language Kindergarten program jeopardizes bilingual development. Or, moving from a preschool in which home language is affirmed and welcomed or ideally is intentionally developed to a Kindergarten that is solely English-taught, and t hen enrolling in a bilingual/dual language program can be a problem. Parents who seek bilingual and dual language development for their children should consistently have their children in programs from preschool throughout elementary that are designed to promote bilingualism and biliteracy. Parents need information about the bilingual/biliteracy trajectory and programs available to them. And program directors and leaders should build consistency and pipeline programs beginning in preschool throughout elementary.

Orientation and Supports for Students and Families

The parents of most Dual Language Learners did not attend U.S. schools and find the practices, expectations, and structures of U.S. schools unfamiliar. They benefit from orientation sessions, materials, and the availability of staff who speak their languages to explain how the U.S. system of education works. They need to know the preschool program's expectations, where to find available resources and supports, their rights, and the various options for language programs, graduation requirements, planning for college, etc. And then they need support to understand each new level of the system as their children move through the schooling journey. This type of orientation is particularly important in the transitional points of movement through the PK-graduation continuum (i.e., at Kindergarten entry and where choices are needed regarding language program options for ELs; the transition from elementary to middle school). Children also benefit from transition supports—including visits, orientation, opportunities to meet teachers in advance, peer group activities, etc.

TOOL: How Strong Is Our Articulation Across Segments?

Reflect upon what is currently in place that facilitates more seamless transitions and articulation crossing over from preschool to Kindergarten. How well implemented and effective are these transition supports? What are the gaps? What might your priorities be to strengthen support for DLLs as they journey across segments?

Preschool—Kindergarten/Primary Grades	Do we have this?	Notes
Into preschool: Orientation for children and families provided in the language of the family, with opportunities to speak with staff and other parents who speak their language and are of their cultural community.		
During PK: Orientation in the families' languages is provided for preschool parents about the transition to Kindergarten and the significance and options for choice of Kindergarten language programs and implications for bilingual development.		
PK-K: Preschool children are provided an orientation and a visit to a Kindergarten classroom (whenever possible) and the supports for talking and learning about the transition to Kindergarten, including different expectations and routines.		
PK-K: Outreach from elementary schools to preschools provides information about dual-language opportunities, benefits of bilingualism, and parent choices for program options in Kindergarten enrollment. The outreach includes information on how parents can request bilingual/dual-language enrollment.		
P3: Developmentally appropriate instructional (pedagogical and content) alignment exists across the PK-TK-K grade levels.		
P3: Information/data regarding first and second language proficiency is aligned across the early education-primary grade levels and communicated to classroom teachers.		
P3: Professional development for teachers engages preschool, TK, and K-2 teachers together in developing shared understanding, vision, and instructional alignment for DLLs/English learners regarding language development.		
P5: At the district level, the early and primary grades education and EL personnel meet regularly for planning, communication, and alignment purposes.		
TK-5: Information is shared about DLLs/ELs as these children progress from grade level to grade level to ensure progress monitoring and acceleration and foster continuity in support.		

Building Pathways Towards Bilingualism (and Eventually, Biliteracy)

Bilingualism is an asset with significant benefits for all learners—and is a necessity for Dual Language Learners who depend on bilingualism for participation in and access to their multiple language and cultural worlds. *(Reference Principle #1 section on bilingualism).* Because it takes years to develop proficient bilingualism (and eventually biliteracy), and because the early years (0-8) are particularly important for building a foundation for bilingualism and avoiding home language loss, articulation of bilingual development supports across the preschool and primary grade years is crucial.

California was the first state in the nation to develop a Seal of Biliteracy that is awarded to high school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in two or more languages. It is a recognition awarded by the State Superintendent of Instruction, marked by a gold seal on the diploma or transcript, recognizing high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing one or more languages in addition to English.

High school graduation is many years away from preschool. But the pathway to biliteracy begins in preschool as children build a sense of positive identity as emergent bilinguals, as they begin to absorb society's attitudes about language diversity, and as they face early pressures and conditions that can result in abandoning home language in favor of English.

To encourage students along the pathway toward high levels of biliteracy and continue development of biliteracy throughout their schooling, California has established Biliteracy Pathway Recognitions to recognize preschool, Kindergarten, elementary, and middle school students who have demonstrated progress toward proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. The purposes include:

To encourage students to study languages, continue their language study, and become multilingual.

- *To raise awareness about the State Seal of Biliteracy and encourage students to work toward attaining the State Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation from high school.*

- *To prepare students with twenty-first century skills.*

- *To recognize and promote world language instruction in public schools.*

- *To strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures, histories, and languages of a community.*

- *To implement Principles #1 and #4 of the English Learner (EL) Roadmap Policy by creating an aligned and articulated pathway to multilingualism that embraces students' home and community languages and cultures as assets.*

Preschool marks the beginning of this journey. The Preschool Awards are about entry on the path to biliteracy or multiliteracy. They recognize and celebrate that children are on that path. Neither the Biliteracy Program Participation Recognition Award nor the Home Language Development Recognition is based on a child's language proficiency, but rather, the recognition that they are engaged in two or more languages and that this represents the beginning of a path towards bilingualism and biliteracy. There are two recognition awards defined by the California Pathways to Biliteracy initiative.

Bilingual Recognition Awards

The Biliteracy Program Participation Recognition is based upon a child's participation in a preschool program that leads to bilingualism and biliteracy (e.g., the program includes some focus and support on becoming bilingual, exposes children to more than one language by, for example, engaging in songs and playing and listening to stories in English and another language.

The Home Language Development Recognition is for emergent bilingual children with a home language other than English in preschool and Kindergarten who demonstrate that they are continuing to develop their home language by engaging in age-appropriate activities in the home language. The Preschool Home Language Development Recognition may be awarded to a preschool child who is provided with opportunities to maintain and/or develop the home language outside of school. The parent, guardian, or caregiver of the student completing this grade level certifies that the child has had exposure to opportunities that maintain and/or develop the home language. This certification could take place through a survey provided to parents, during a conference with a teacher or counselor, or during a home visit, for example. How to certify that the student is continuing to develop the home language is a local decision. Discussing these recognition awards with parents, guardians, or caregivers can provide preschool personnel with an opportunity to share the benefits of biliteracy with families and to frame the home language as an asset. Presenting and celebrating the awards with children is an opportunity to publicly acknowledge the value of bilingualism, affirm children's bilingual identities, and their emerging competence as bilinguals.

For more information: www.cde.ca.gov website section on Biliteracy Pathway Recognitions.

IN CLOSING

The various sections of this Preschool Toolkit have addressed how we approach building meaning for each of the four Principles of the EL Roadmap policy individually. Each section provides resources, tools, supports, and prompts to reflect on from which should emerge a plan for preschool leaders to actuate the tenets of each Principle.

- *The first Principle suggests the creation of assets-oriented and student-responsive preschools to set a foundation of understanding about the diversity of Dual Language Learners and their needs, and focused on creating preschool programs that are inclusive and affirming and embrace the whole child, their families, culture, and community.*

- *The second Principle describes research-based approaches to developmentally appropriate and culturally/ linguistically inclusive teaching and learning for DLLs that is intellectually rich. The direct attention to language development integrated in and through content, second language, and bilingual development, and the practices supporting them provide meaningful access for DLLs.*

- *The third Principle centers on the creation of a system/systems designed to support assets-oriented, needs responsive, intellectually rich, and accessible schooling for DLLs—calling for knowledgeable and advocacy oriented leaders, systems of professional learning, the necessary investment of resources, and meaningful assessment and accountability.*

- *The fourth Principle speaks to the alignment, coherence, and articulation that an effective, efficient, and equitable system demands.*

Plenty of work can be done in each of these areas, yet the profound truth is that no one Principle stands alone. Each informs the other. Each demands attention to the others. And the vision and mission of the English Learner Roadmap cannot be realized without enactment of all four Principles.

For preschool leaders, this means holding always in your heart and gaze the overall commitment that DLLs in our preschools will fully and meaningfully access and participate in an inclusive and affirming schooling experience from the moment they step in our doors. And always ask, always check ourselves, and always use the lens:

- *Is what we are doing assets-based? Are we seeing, valuing, affirming, and building upon the cultural and linguistic assets children and families bring?*

- *Are we responsive to the needs of our DLLs and to who they are?*

- *Is the environment, instruction, and curriculum we are providing intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate, culturally, and linguistically inclusive, focused on language development in and through content, and scaffolded for comprehension and full participation?*

- *Are we doing whatever we can to build our own knowledge and capacity, to invest adequately, assess meaningfully, and hold ourselves accountable for the education and healthy development of our DLLs?*

- *Have we built and are we utilizing the partnerships (and walking arm in arm) with families, community, agencies, and others to ensure that our DLLs have a strong, aligned, and coordinated net of support for their success?*

The reward is in witnessing the thriving, bilingual, confident children making their way through school successfully – and sharing the gifts of their brilliance and voice with each other and in their communities. **Our future!**

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Organizations and Websites:

California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for All Kids
www.californiaforallkids.chhs.ca.gov
Copy of the Master Plan, plus resources for implementation

CA English Learner Roadmap webpage (California Department of Education)
www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm
Copy of the policy, plus resources to support educators as they implement the EL Roadmap policy

CDE Multilingual Support Division
www.cde.ca.gov>els
The Multilingual Support Division provides educational services and technical assistance to assist local education agencies in ensuring all migrant, immigrant, and multilingual and English learner students receive equitable access to a meaningful education

California Department of Education
Dual Language Learner (DLL) support web page
www.cde.ca.gov>dllsupport

California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)
www.gocabe.org
CABE is a non-profit organization and professional association of bilingual educators that sponsors conferences and professional learning promoting bilingual education throughout California.

Center for Equity for English Learners at Loyola Marymount University
www.soe.lmu.edu>ceel
The Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) focuses on research, policy, and professional learning to informs and influence leadership and instructional practices for California's Dual Language Learners and English Learners. This includes a focus on early learning and Transitional Kindergarten – with professional learning, research and resources.

California Preschool Instructional Network
www.cpin.us
A network of the California Department of Education's Early Learning and Care Division in collaboration with the Center for Child and Family Studies at WestEd and the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). Through regional communities of practice (CP) and series of professional learning experiences, CPIN promotes promising practices in early learning, family engagement, and equity, and emphasizes a whole child approach. CPIN instructors provide research-based teaching and learning strategies that are age and developmentally appropriate and highlight inclusive practices and support for ALL children.

Early Care and Learning Division, California Department
www.cde.ca.gov>cdd
Provides leadership and support to the child development community, ensuring high-quality early education programs. Supports and disseminates professional learning and training resources for quality early education.

Early Edge
www.earlyedgecalifornia.org
A nonprofit organization that works statewide to expand high-quality early learning opportunities for children ages 0 to 8. In addition to policy advocacy, Early Edge provides resources for teachers and parents to support quality early learning care and programs.

Head Start California
www.headstartca.org
Mission, vision, FAQs and resources for Head Start programs in California.

Head Start
www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov
The website for the federal Head Start program includes many resources and guidance documents related to serving dual language learners in preschool.

Language Learning Project Toolkit (Fresno)
https://earlylearning.fresnounified.org/language-learning-project/
A project of the Fresno Unified School District, the Language Learning Toolkit provides resources for educators to implement concrete approaches to support language learning for children birth to five years of age. Based around Personalized Oral Language Learning (POLL) strategies developed by nationally renowned early childhood experts Dr. Linda Espinosa, Dr. Carola Oliva-Olson, and Elizabeth Magruder. Webpage includes videos and other resources.

Multilingual Learning Toolkit
www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org
This online resource is provided by Early Edge, including basic information, scenarios/vignettes, links to videos and other resources focusing on multilingual learners

at the Preschool, TK and Kindergarten levels. Sections of the website include: classroom environment, oral language development, literacy development, bilingual classrooms, home language development, additional ELD strategies, and content learning.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
www.naeyc.org
National organization for the profession of early childhood education. Issue field-shaping position papers, publish the magazine Young Children, sponsor a large national professional conference, and have many resources for educators. Website includes many resources and position papers, including "Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Paper", "What Parents have to Teach Us About their Dual Language Children", Advancing Equity for Early Childhood Education (position statement), NAEYC Core Values, "On Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs" (policy statement), Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (position statement), and Responding to linguistic and cultural diversity: Recommendations for effective early childhood education.

National Committee on Effective Literacy (NCEL)
www.MultilingualLiteracy.org
The National Committee for Effective Literacy uplifts research, policies, and practices to ensure that English learners/emergent bilinguals leave school as proficient readers and writers in English — and preferably more languages — and who thrive and succeed in school and their communities. Publications and resources include a focus on early learning.

Preschool GLAD
www.ntcprojectglad.com>trainings>preschool-glad\
A professional development and training center focusing on instructional strategies for the preschool classroom.

SEAL
www.seal.org
A nonprofit organization providing research, professional learning and support for leadership based upon the SEAL model, a powerful PK-5 EL focused approach to education rooted at the intersection of research and educational equity. Videos, webinars, professional learning, and technical assistance support for implementing the SEAL model support aligned programs, instruction, and curriculum from preschool through elementary grades.

TK California
www.tkcalifornia.org
Information for teacher, administrators and parents about Transitional Kindergarten as a state program, including resources for implementation.

PUBLICATIONS

California Department of Education, "Best Practices for Planning Curriculum for Young Children: Family Partnerships and Culture"
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>familypartnerships

California Department of Education, "California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners"
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>mleleducationch4

California Department of Education, "The California Early Childhood Educator Competencies" (2012)
www.cde.ca.gov>ececomps
Note particularly competencies for "culture, diversity and equity" and "Dual-Language Development."

California Department of Education, CA Preschool Learning Foundations (Volume 1 focuses on socio-emotional development, language, and literacy, ELD and math)
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>preschoollf

California Department of Education, California Preschool Program Guidelines
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>preschoolprodgdlns2015

California Department of Education, Implementation Support for Grades TK-1, ELA/ELD Framework
www.cde.ca.gov>isresources-tkto1

California Department of Education, Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy and Learning (2nd edition)
www.cde.ca.gov>documents>psenglearnersed2
California Department of Education (2020), Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice. Sacramento, CA.
www.cde.ca.gov>mleleducation
Contains the following chapters (among others):

– *Linda Espinosa and Jennifer Crandell, "Early Learning and Care for Multilingual and dual Language Learners Ages Zero to Five"*

– *Laurie Olsen with Martha Martinez, Carla Herrera and Heather Skibbins, "Multilingual Programs and Pedagogy: What Teachers and Administrators Need to Know and Do"*

California Department of Education, "Assessment of Young Dual Language Learners in Preschool," California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview papers.
http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/dllresearchpapers.pdf
(Includes a decision tree for practitioners to determine in which language to assess young DLLs, and a sample family interview protocol to use to learn about families language practices.)

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www.californianstogether.org
A guide for California State Preschool Programs to support DLL identification process as a positive experience for providers, emphasizing the important role it plays in building strong relationships with DLL children and their families.

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Espinosa, L. and Crandell, J. (2020) **Early Learning and Care for Multilingual and Dual Language Learners Ages Zero to Five, Chapter 4 in Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learners: Research to Practice.** California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA
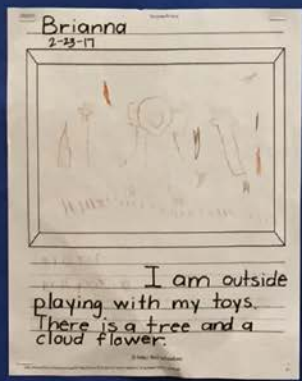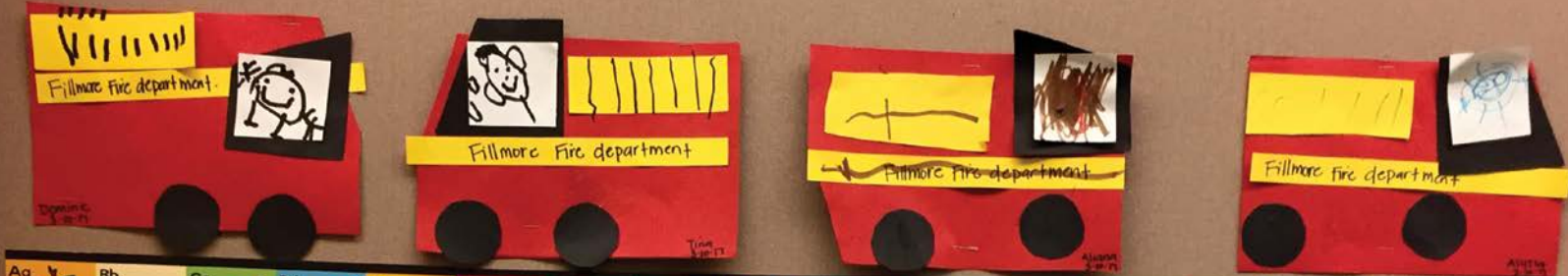
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National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. (2017). **Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising Futures.** The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226./24677

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