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Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Settings

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Who are Connecticut's English Learners?

- Approximately 36,000 EL students (6% of K-12 school population)

- Approximately 150 languages

- Approximately 77% of ELs are eligible for free or reduced-price meals

- Over 60% of ELs are in grades K-5

An Overview of Connecticut's English Learners (ELs) Grades K–12, 2014–15:

- There were 34,833 ELs in 173 public LEAs.
- There were 143 different dominant languages among ELs and Spanish accounted for 72.4 percent of ELs.
- 96.6 percent of ELs received English language services.
- Over 60 percent of all ELs were in Grades K–5.
- 18 percent of ELs were also identified for special education.
- 76.8 percent of ELs were eligible for either free or reduced-price meals.
- Connecticut received $5.05 million in Title III funds for English language services.
- In the 2013-14 school year, 97 percent of EL students took the annual English language proficiency assessment; 59.4 percent made progress from their prior assessment, while 25.9 percent demonstrated English proficiency.
- In the 2013–14 school year, 1,918 ELs (5.9 percent) met the CSDE's English mastery standard and exited EL status.
- The 2014 four-year cohort graduation rate for ELs was 63.0 percent compared with 87.9 percent for non-ELs.
- The CSDE designated bilingual education and TESOL as certification shortage areas for the 2014–15 and 2015–16 school years.

2014-15 English Learner Data Bulletin

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The Connecticut State Department of Education only collects the number of ELs who are enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12. The number of ELs would be much larger if it included preK ELs.

According to 2014-2015 data bulletin, the 6 top languages in CT were Spanish (72.4% of ELs), Portuguese (3.3%), Arabic (2.8%), Creole-Haitian (2.1%), Mandarin (1.9%), Polish (1.5%).

There are many different ways to refer to ELs-English Learners, English language learners, ELLs, SLIFE, bilingual students, PHLOTE, etc. In CT we call these students English learners. For English learners in early childhood settings, these students are referred to as Dual language learners because their home language is still being developed as they learn English.

Stages of Language Proficiency

- **Level 1: Beginner/Pre Production**
  - EL understands very little English, may not talk at all
- **Level 2: Early Intermediate/Early Production**
  - May understand more than able to express, can follow basic instructions and respond with short answers
- **Level 3: Intermediate/Speech Emergence**
  - Understands most *conversational* English, may not understand complicated structures or sentence patterns
- **Level 4: Proficient/ Intermediate Fluency**
  - Speaks fluently, may have limited understanding of low incidence vocabulary
- **Level 5: Above Proficient/ Advanced Fluency**
  - English usage similar to native English peers, may still be developing language skills

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Although pre-K students are not identified ELs, this information is included to show how ELs are referred to in grades k-12. While a student may sound like they are fluent, it is important to note that conversational spoken English often develops much more rapidly than academic language and the academic skills of reading and writing.

This slide shows what students at each stage of language proficiency can and cannot do to illustrate some of the expected behaviors at various levels of ELP.

How can we support our students?

1. Provide explicit, systematic instruction in vocabulary.
2. Ensure that Dual Language Learners (DLLs) have ample opportunities to talk with both adults and peers and provide ongoing feedback and encouragement.
3. Expose DLLs to rich language input.
4. Structure the classroom space and routines to provide scaffolding for DLLs' language learning.
5. Encourage continued L1 development.

-Karen Ford, *8 Strategies for Preschool ELLs' Language and Literacy Development*
Retrieved from http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/8-strategies-preschool-ells-language-and-literacy-development

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These strategies are simply a list and are not written by level of importance. All are vital strategies.

Ford identifies these five key strategies to help DLLs develop language:

1) explicit, systematic instruction in language: multiple exposures, thematic presentation of vocab to develop associations and scaffold learning, read alouds and dramatic play
2) Pair DLLs with children with children that have strong English, self-directed activities, provide prompts for using language use open ended or multiple answer questions
3) Shared book reading, teacher talk, narration/commentary about activities in classroom
4) Arrange room to support instructional activities and keep changes to a minimum (physical environment and predictable routines scaffold for DLLs)
5) Strong L1 skills support language and literacy in English (encourage parents to talk and read to children in L1; incorporate L1 in classroom if possible)

(Objective: Pre-teach and explore new vocabulary)
While the class on this video is likely not reflective of your classroom demographics, the strategies are still applicable. Consider the supports that we discussed in the previous slide, and note each time Ms. Ngan uses those strategies.
Questions to Consider: How does Ms. Ngan teach vocabulary in a variety of different ways? What strategies does Ms. Ngan use to engage students in the read aloud? How does incorporating movement help students learn vocabulary?
Objective: Present information visually
Questions to Consider: Why are visual cues helpful for young children? How can visual cues be used to support language development? What kind of information does Ms. Hawkins present visually?

Are there other things that you noticed that Ms. Ngan and Ms. Hawkins do that are supporting the DLLs in their classrooms?

English Learners Website
www.ct.gov/sde/EnglishLearners

- English Learners Data Bulletin 2014-2015
- Dual Language Learners Toolkit
- Meeting the Needs of Dual Language Learners
- SCSU's English Learner Curriculum Library
- EL Strategies Desk Cards
- Family Resources for English Learners
  - 4 Ways to Support Your English Learner at Home Bookmark
  - CT Family Guide to Supporting English Learners
  - Web Resources for Parents and Families
  - English Language Development Web Sites

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There is a page devoted to English Learners on the Connecticut State Department of Education website, and there are many resources that can be accessed there. The EL page was reorganized recently and continues to be updated. The bullets show some of the resources that can be accessed. Not only do many of our districts rely on these resources to stay current, but they can also reference federal resources, such as the recently released English Learner Toolkit, Dual Language Learner Toolkit (for early childhood), and the Newcomer Toolkit.

Meeting the Needs of Dual Language Learners: The CT ELDS document includes a Dual Language Development Framework for considering children's development of a second language. It was designed as a supplement to the CT ELDS to raise awareness of the typical stages of acquiring a second language and to assist early care and education providers in supporting growth and development for young children learning more than one language.

SCSU's EL Curriculum Library: country culture cards available on this page

EL Strategies Desk cards available in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), English, Haitian Creole, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish

Bookmark is available from family resources site in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin),, English, Haitian Creole, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish

CT family guide brochure available in English and Spanish

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