



DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

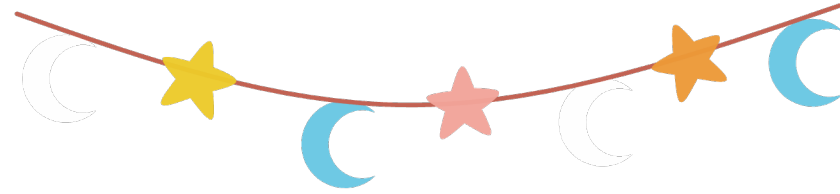
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Purdue CEL 2025 Professional Development Seminar





Goals For Today

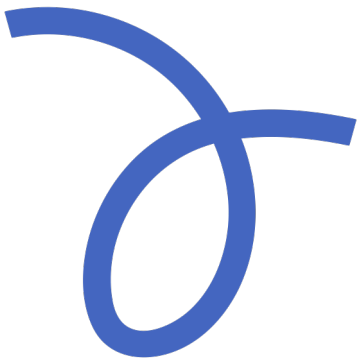


Review beliefs about
dual language
learners' development
and learning

Discuss connections
between language
and literacy
development that are
relevant for dual
language learners

Explore ways to
support dual language
learners in the early
childhood classroom

Learn practical
Instructional strategies
for promoting language
and literacy
development in dual
language learners



Positive Beliefs Promote Responsive Practices



Teachers and administrators should continuously reflect on and examine their own beliefs and how their practices align with these beliefs.

BELIEFS THAT PROMOTE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES WITH DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS



BELIEF 1: CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF SUCCESSFULLY LEARNING MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

BELIEF 2: QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF LANGUAGE INPUT ARE IMPORTANT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

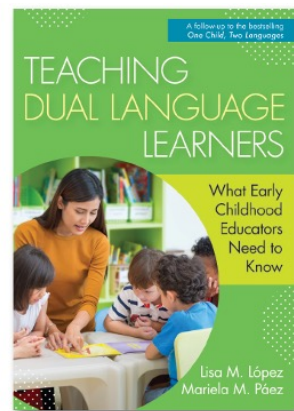


BELIEF 3: KNOWLEDGE OF A FIRST LANGUAGE CAN SUPPORT LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

BELIEF 4: BILINGUALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM HAVE MANY LINGUISTIC, COGNITIVE, AND CULTURAL BENEFITS



Adapted from López, L.M., & Pérez, M.M. (2021). *Teaching Dual Language Learners: What Early Childhood Educators Need to Know*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.





Belief #1: Children are capable of successfully learning multiple languages



Over half of the world's population is bilingual



Children can navigate different languages and cultures

Learning multiple languages during childhood does not cause a language delay or impairment



The process of developing and learning multiple languages does not cause developmental delay or language impairment

There are multiple successful methods for children to become bilingual



Multiple languages may be spoken at home or school or one language may be spoken at home & a different language spoken at school or in the community

Belief #2: Quality and Quantity of Input are important for language learning

Quality

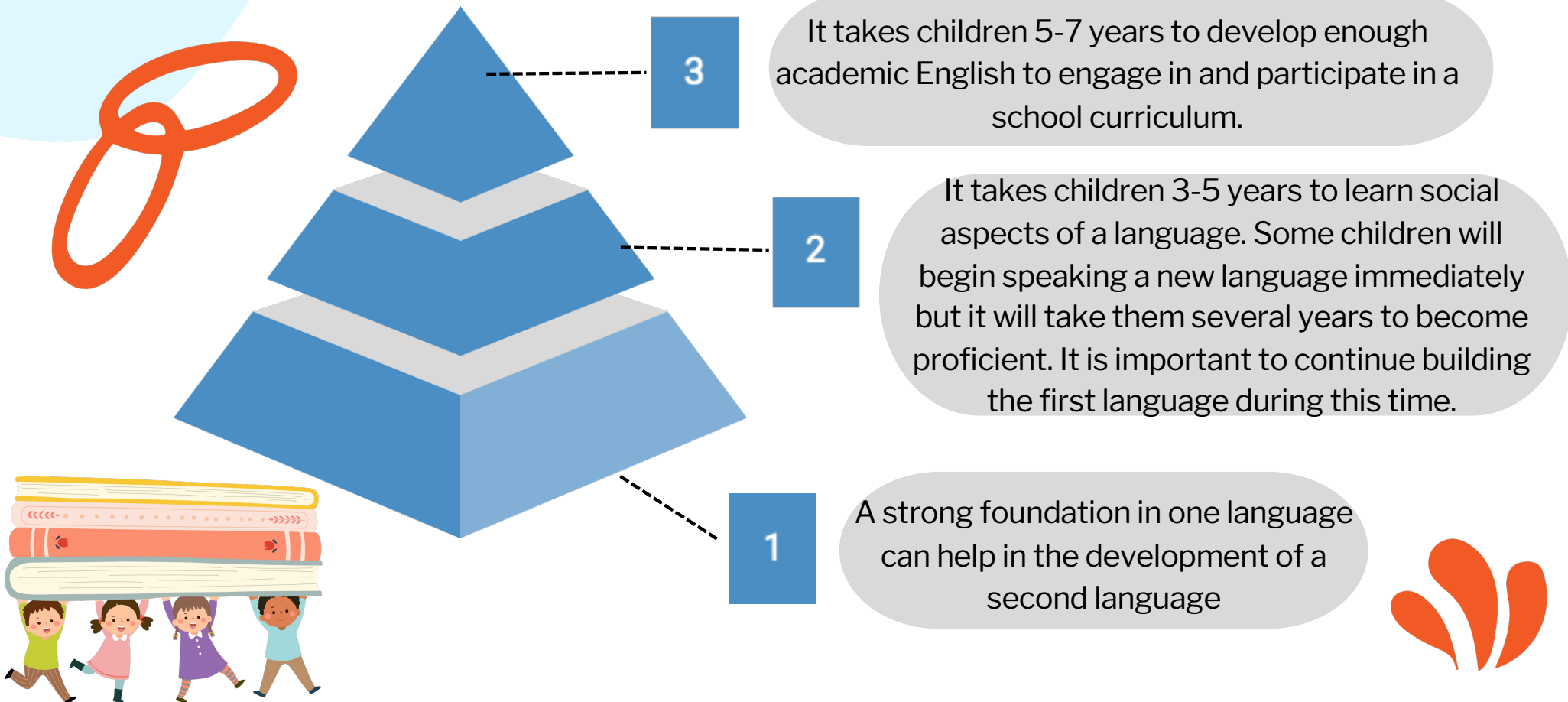
- Teachers must be Intentional, responsive, and comfortable speaking the language
- Engage in back-and-forth Interactions and conversations with the child (Strive for Five)
- Quality language Interactions Include talking, singing, and reading in both languages

Quantity

- Children's language growth depends on the amount of Input they are receiving In each language
- Children need exposure to each language to develop language



Belief #3: Knowledge of a first language can support learning a second language



Belief #4: Bilingualism and Multilingualism have many linguistic, cognitive, and cultural benefits



01	Linguistic	Learning one language helps in the development of a second or third language. Many skills transfer across languages.
02	Cognitive	Knowing more than one language can help with planning and regulating behavior, thinking flexibly, and inhibitory control.
03	Cultural	Children continue to communicate with family members, develop cultural competence, and strengthen their identity.



The background is a vibrant yellow with abstract, colorful brushstrokes in blue, purple, and pink. A large, white, cloud-like shape with a scalloped edge is centered, containing the main text. To the left of the cloud is a cartoon girl with dark hair, wearing a purple shirt and a pink backpack, pointing towards the text. To the right is a cartoon boy with red hair, wearing an orange shirt and blue pants, pointing upwards. Various icons are scattered around the text: a lightbulb to the left, a smiley face to the right, and several blue lines radiating from the text. Small white stars are also present in the background.

CONNECTING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN DLLS



Language Development is critical In early childhood

Predictor of Success

Language is the most important predictor of academic success in children.



Reading & Math

Students learn reading and math skills faster if they have better language skills.

Social Pragmatics

Children need language to understand and use language to make sense of the world and establish social relationships with others.



Bilingual Language Development

- To understand bilingual development, we need to review some key Ideas...



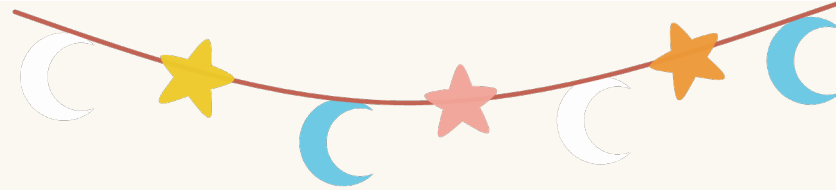
KEY IDEAS

Simultaneous
language
learners

Sequential
language
learners

Cross-
language
transfer

Translanguaging



Bilingual Language DEVELOPMENT

Vocabulary

Discourse

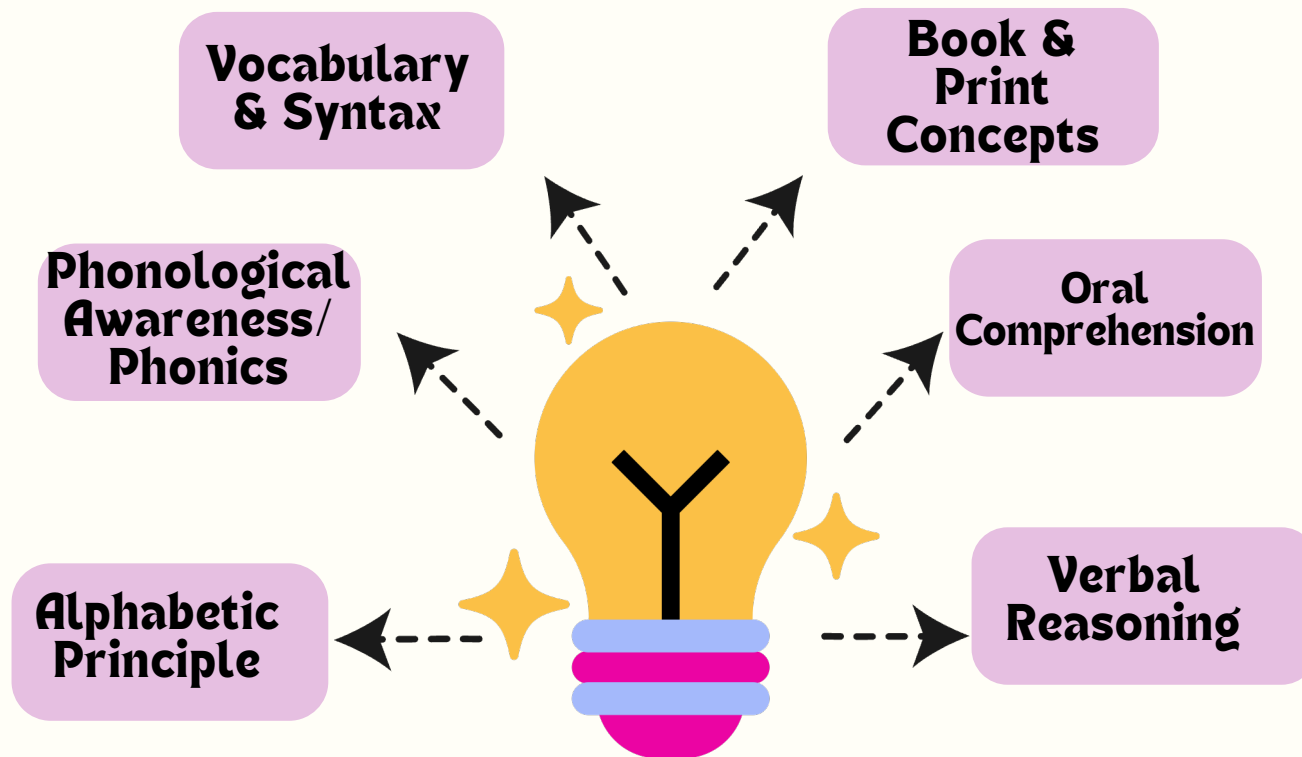
Grammar

Pragmatics

Phonology



EARLY LITERACY



HETEROGENEITY OF DLLS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

- 1 The goal is for children to be advanced bilinguals.
- 2 Children in infant and toddler classrooms can develop these skills by being exposed to both their home language and English in intentional ways.
- 3 For children coming into preschool classrooms, it is important to understand their levels of proficiency and dominance in each of their languages.

ENGLISH DOMINANT

- May blend in
- may have difficulty with listening comprehension and vocabulary
- Would benefit from a Spanish-speaking classroom

EMERGENT BILINGUAL

- Need the most help!
- May be falling behind.
- Consider screening these children for language delays or disorders using dynamic assessments

ADVANCED BILINGUAL

- Successful in any environment
- Should receive language and literacy instruction in both languages
- Vocabulary may be smaller in each language

SPANISH DOMINANT

- Continue to receive instruction in Spanish language/ literacy
- Start being introduced to English vocabulary
- Emphasize connection between languages - cross-language transfer

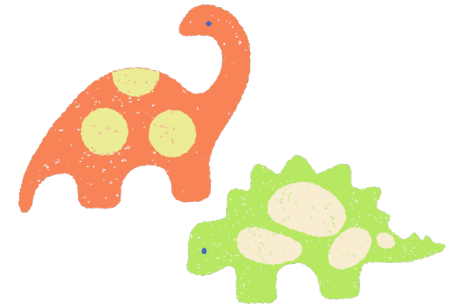
Supporting Dual Language Learners

**Focus on language development
and extended vocabulary**

**Language skills should be developed
in the home language and can
support learning a second language**

**Have students make
connections from their own
lives to extend their vocabulary
and their background
knowledge - make connections
between ideas and concepts in
their home language and
introduce them to new words in
English**





Language Development and Extended Vocabulary

Infant Room

Sing songs in both languages, gesture and label using vocabulary in both languages, back & forth cooing, use parallel talk, engage in conversation during diapering and feeding



Toddler Room

Introduce new vocabulary words daily in both languages, repeat words throughout the day, build background knowledge and vocabulary through play and book reading, scaffold languages, engage in sustained conversations, parallel talk



Preschool

Teach vocabulary; Read books in both languages; engage in pretend play; build background knowledge through field trips, class projects, invited speakers; engage in sustained conversations; scaffold language; encourage translanguaging



Supporting Dual Language Learners



Learning about phonological awareness in the home language during early childhood will help children with learning to read in both their home language and English during kindergarten.

Spanish speakers will be able to segment syllables more easily than individual phonemes.

Foster Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness can be supported in early childhood classrooms by activities such as listening to and creating rhymes, word and language games, etc.





Foster Phonological Awareness

Infant Room

Introduce concepts of phonological awareness through the use of finger play, lullabies, and rhyming songs in English and the home language.



Toddler Room

Have students recite nursery rhymes in English and home language. Sing rhyming songs. Create scavenger hunts looking for items that start with the same sound across languages.



Preschool

Have children create poetry or funny stories that rhyme or use words that start with the same sound. Play matching games focused on words that rhyme or start with the same sounds. Point out differences in sounds across languages.



Supporting Dual Language Learners



Learning about letters and the sounds they make in the home language during early childhood will help children with learning to read in both their home language and English during kindergarten.

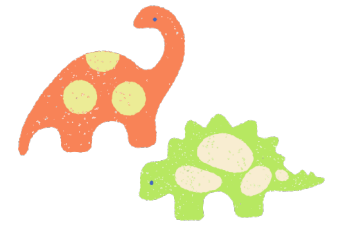
Integrate instruction on letter recognition, decoding, and word recognition skills

Letter recognition should occur in both languages. Compare alphabets of different languages. Focus on teaching letters and sounds together in each language.





Integrate instruction on letter recognition, decoding, and word recognition skills



Infant Room

The focus for 0-3 should be on building language. Providing labels around the classroom will help children to start recognizing words.



Toddler Room

The focus should be on building language. Include labels in both languages throughout the classroom. Create a word wall that includes words in each language.



Preschool

Introduce the letters in the children's names first. Pair letters with sounds during instruction. Practice writing letters and words, build a word wall with sight vocabulary in each language, match pictures to words in both languages.



Supporting Dual Language Learners



Children should understand that books are read differently depending on the language the book is written in.

Support learning about book concepts and print knowledge

Teachers can support learning the conventions of books and written language by exposing children to texts through regular reading, noting features of books (e.g., title, author, illustrator, front cover, back cover, where to start reading).



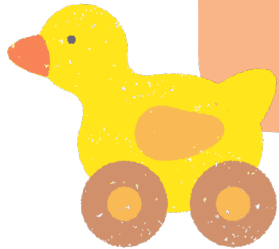


Support learning about book concepts and print knowledge



Infant Room

Read books in multiple languages daily. Let babies explore board books. Provide print through labels and colorful posters in multiple languages.



Toddler Room

Read the same book in different languages to the children. Include print (posters, word wall, labels) in the languages represented in the classroom. Give children the opportunity to explore books and print in multiple languages. Point out words when reading.



Preschool

Read books daily to the children. Pre-read the book in the children's home language before reading it in English. Point out unique print features of the language. Have children compare and contrast book and print concepts across languages.



Supporting Dual Language Learners



Engage students in early writing.

Teachers can extend print knowledge by engaging children in writing activities, starting with drawing and scribbling. Later as children learn how to write letters, they can write their names, labels, and signs for the classroom.

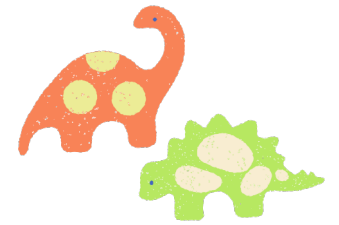
Provide language models in all languages. Include a writing center in the classroom with alphabets available in every language represented in the classroom.

Early writing improves later reading development.



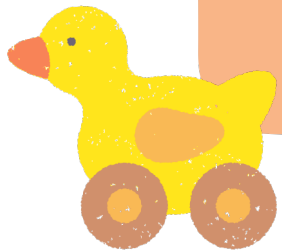


Engage students In early writing



Infant Room

- Build fine motor skills through playing with blocks and stacking cups



Toddler Room

- Use sensory tables to draw shapes; encourage drawing with paper and crayons; engage in pretend writing; dictate student stories and label their drawings.



Preschool

- Include a writing center in the classroom; have students trace name and other words; encourage student writing and drawing; dictate stories; model writing.



Thank You

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