Supporting Language Development for Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Head Start and Early Head Start Webcast Presented by the Office of Head Start – January 20, 2010

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Viewer's Guide and Training Resource

This resource is designed as both a viewer's guide and a training resource. It contains the key points covered in the Webcast so you can follow along and make notes while viewing the program. After you have viewed the Webcast, you may want to review the information yourself, or share it with staff and families.   Training tools in this *Guide* include questions for reflection about your own beliefs, practices, and knowledge about supporting children who are dual language learners, along with discussion points from the Webcast, and suggested strategies for implementation. Many of the discussion points can be linked to items on the *Program Preparedness Checklist*. Additional resources are listed at the end of this document.

The *Guide* is presented in three segments to match segments 1 – 3 of the Webcast. These can be used together or separately. The fourth segment of the Webcast used the "Take Away Messages" of the first three segments to provide examples for implementation. When watching the Webcast, you can use the space under each "Take Away Message" to make notes about examples thinking back to the video clips you just saw or drawing upon your own experiences.

Segment 1

Topic: Children Learning in Two Languages

Questions for Reflection:
(Use these questions to frame your thoughts about teaching young children who are learning in two languages as you watch the Webcast. Later, you might use them to start discussions or professional development events.)

1. Who are children who are dual language learners in Early Head Start and Head Start?

2. What kinds of information and training do parents, teachers, volunteers, and staff need to guide and support children who are learning in two languages?

3. What have we learned from research and best practices about how to focus our teaching strategies for young children who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken?

Take Away Messages:
(These statements capture the key points made in this segment and appear on screen during the Webcast. The discussion points in the next section provide more information and detail about each take-away message.)

- Languages are learned while young children are developing – physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively – rather than directly taught. *Examples:*

- Languages are learned through interactions with people who are loving, playful, and responsive to the individual child. *Examples:*

- Concepts need to be learned only once, in the language in which the experience happens. Then children can transfer and apply that conceptual knowledge as they learn the English. *Examples:*

- The home language is the foundation for learning English. *Examples:*

- Teachers need to observe and be intentional as they support children who are learning in two languages. *Examples:*

Discussion Points:
(These items provide more information and detail from the Webcast. Use the space provided to take additional notes. After the Webcast, this information can be shared with colleagues and families.)

1. Children who are dual language learners acquire two or more languages simultaneously, or they may learn a second language while continuing to develop their first language. The term "dual language learner" encompasses other terms frequently used in the field, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, English language learner (ELL), English learner, and children who speak a language other than English (LOTE).

2. It is important to remember that, above all, children learn language through relationships and closeness with people who care for and love them in their day-to-day experiences.

3. Young children's main activity in these early years is play. It is through play and curiosity that they engage with the other people in their lives and learn to navigate the world.

4. Learning to speak, for a child, is integrated with all other growth and development that is occurring during these early years. In fact, children learn to understand a great deal of language before they can speak

5. This ability to understand and get their needs met shows how important language is, even when children are not ready to speak, so their home language is already an important part of their development.

6. Teachers need to focus on intentionality and duration as addressed in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act to infuse language learning throughout the day and to build learning from day to day.

7. Children are growing physically. They need activity and rest. We guide their physical activity and rest with language.

8. They are growing emotionally. They need to be accepted and guided through the variety of emotions they are experiencing.

9. They are growing socially. They need to interact with adults and other children in caring ways.

10. They are growing cognitively. They need to be engaged with their world in ways that satisfy their curiosity.

11. Language is an integral part of all these areas of growth and development. In fact, language is one of the most important vehicles or tools used to encourage and guide growth.

12. Sometimes, a quiet environment is needed to help new language learners clearly distinguish the sounds of their new language.

13. As adults, our first intention should be to get to know the children by observing and interacting with them. Especially when children speak a language in which teachers are not fluent, it is important to pay attention to the cues provided by the child.

14. Language develops in all children in every culture and in every part of the world.

15. Our responsibility is to teach young children, using language to communicate with them without isolating the language from the context.

16. Very young children, infants, and toddlers readily respond to all forms of communication: touch, eye contact, voice, and language.

17. When preschoolers who are dual language learners enter Head Start, they will need to continue learning in the languages they know and begin learning English.

18. This is why we need to be intentional if they are to continue growing cognitively, in any language.

19. Children continue to acquire concepts through experience and conversation with adults that care for and love them.

20. Once they learn a concept in one language, they can simply transfer that knowledge by learning the word in the other language. Concepts are learned only once.

21. Language is learned through interaction with others, in ways that make sense to the child. And, we know that children learn more by doing than by listening. What makes sense to the child is talk about what she is doing at the time.

22. The interaction becomes meaningful to the child when she is caringly engaged in conversations and activities of her interest.

Implementation Strategies:
(Here are a few steps you can take to begin implementing the strategies discussed in this segment of the Webcast. Use the ECKLC and the resources at the end of this document for additional information.)

- List the resources available to your program to help with training and professional development for staff and families about young children's language development.

- Create a language policy for your program.

- Use the *Program Preparedness Checklist* to assess the steps your program has already taken to meet the needs of young dual language learners, and to identify areas that need more attention.

Topic: Each Family is a World

Questions for Reflection:
(Use these questions to frame your thoughts about teaching young children who are learning in two languages as you watch the Webcast. Later, you might use them to start discussions or professional development events.)

1. How can you work with the families of children who are learning in two languages?

2. Many times, parents say they want their child to learn only in English because they believe that will provide their child for more opportunities for success in this country. How can we respond?

3. Why is it important to know the language or languages used by the family at home?

4. How can you establish systematic cooperation from families in all areas of the program?

5. What can be done when the teacher does not speak the language of the family?

Take Away Messages:
(These statements capture the key points made in this segment and appear on screen during the Webcast. The discussion points in the next section provide more information and detail about each take-away message.)

- Take the time to really get to know families and their hopes and dreams for their children. *Examples:*

- Help parents to understand that the development of the home language is essential to their child's learning of English and succeeding in school. *Examples:*

- Develop and take a systemic approach to engage and support families throughout the overall program and in the child's learning environment. *Examples:*

Discussion Points:
(These items provide more information and detail from the Webcast. Use the space provided to take additional notes. After the Webcast, this information can be shared with colleagues and families.)

1. First thing we need to remember is that each family is different and a world of its own. We have to relate to the parents and other adults who love the children to understand their dreams and hopes for them. If possible, teachers can visit the homes of their students to gain a deeper understanding of the culture and language of the home.

2. We must make a concerted effort to respect and support each family's individuality. They each have their own stories and narratives.

3. Be aware of the importance and richness of children's literature that features the cultures present in your classroom authentically. Quality children's literature, originally written in the language of the family and not translated from English, may be available. There are many original stories and rhymes that have been published into beautifully illustrated books for children. These need to be available in the classrooms so the children can see themselves reflected.

4. The role of the teachers is to support and encourage parents to transmit their guidance, values, and culture to their children in their own language. The language of the family at home is essential to maintain family cohesiveness.

5. Affective family relationships happen in the language spoken at home and in which the family is most comfortable conversing. Children learn concepts in their home environment, with their families and the language for them. This assists children in learning English, since they do not have to learn the concepts again; they only need the vocabulary in the new language.

6. Families who learn to advocate for their children's education by this systemic process implemented in Head Start and Early Head Start are prepared to support their children's education throughout their lives.

7. Develop a comprehensive language policy that includes parents in the entire process and provides interpretation and translation when necessary.

8. Programs would be wise to incorporate a self-evaluation process to assess if they are indeed supporting parents systemically.

9. The home language gets lost from generation to generation; our effort must focus on supporting the family to keep their confidence and pride in their culture. One way to do this is to connect them with low-cost adult learning courses.

10. A language policy does not emerge in one presentation at a parents' meeting. It must be carefully thought out. Create an action plan in order to insure that parents are properly informed and prepared through their contact with teachers, family service workers, and all the staff of the program.

11. Having a systemic language policy is important because otherwise we risk sending children conflicting messages about language and culture as in the example José shared about his daughter not wanting to speak Spanish.

Implementation Strategies:
(Here are a few steps you can take to begin implementing the strategies discussed in this segment of the Webcast. Use the ECKLC and the resources at the end of this document for additional information.)

- List the resources available to your program to help with training and professional development about the value of supporting learning and literacy in the home language for staff and for families.

- Create a language policy for your program that addresses ways to communicate with and engage parents who speak languages other than English.

- Use a home language survey and follow up conversations with families to learn about the home language environment of each child as they enroll in your program.

Segment 3

Topic: Toward Better Classrooms and Programs!

Questions for Reflection:
(Use these questions to frame your thoughts about teaching young children who are learning in two languages as you watch the Webcast. Later, you might use them to start discussions or professional development events.)

1. How can your program prepare to offer adequate services for children who learn in two languages and their families?

2. How can teachers support children who are learning in two languages?

Take Away Messages:
(These statements capture the key points made in this segment and appear on screen during the Webcast. The discussion points in the next section provide more information and detail about each take away message.)

- Developing a written language policy for the program supports successful service delivery and child outcomes. *Examples:*

- Developing different strategies to promote learning in the home language and in English will work in different contexts. They must be developed and used with intentionality. *Examples:*

- Program leaders must continue to search for resources and strategies to support children's learning in their home language and in English. *Examples:*

Discussion Points:
(These items provide more information and detail from the Webcast. Use the space provided to take additional notes. After the Webcast, this information can be shared with colleagues and families.)

1. Develop a clear language policy that is accessible to all.

2. Hire bilingual teachers and other program staff.

3. Develop an action plan to support teachers in how to improve their classroom practices (such as how to use language in their classroom). This support must be provided on a continual basis.

4. Use the *Program Preparedness Checklist* to evaluate where your program is in the development of the plan.

5. Develop the language policy as a collaboration between the educational team and the parents.

6. Assign a "dual language coach" to support teachers in this work.

7. Identify classroom scenarios and adapt instruction as necessary.

8. Keep learning and updating your professional repertoire regarding children who are learning in two or more languages.

9. Continue your own professional growth to support the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children in your classroom and their families.

Implementation Strategies:
(Here are a few steps you can take to begin implementing the strategies discussed in this segment of the Webcast. Use the ECKLC and the resources at the end of this document for additional information.)

- List the resources available to your program to help with training and professional development for staff about supporting learning and literacy in the home language.

- Create a policy for your program about adapting your comprehensive curriculum to meet the needs of children who are dual language learners.

- Use the *Program Preparedness Checklist* to assess your program's progress toward meeting the curriculum needs of children who are learning in two languages. Also, identify areas that need more attention.

Multimedia Resources

Visit the Dual Language Learners and Their Families page on the ECLKC at
http://www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov. There are useful multimedia resources about culturally
and linguistically responsive approaches and professional development information,
including:

OHS References
- *DLLs and Their Families: Program Preparedness Checklist Version 3*
- *OHS Report: Dual Language Learning: What Does it Take?* (2008). Office of Head Start.
- *Related Head Start Performance Standards*

To access these resources, visit the Dual Language Learners and Their Families page and look for "OHS
References" on the right.

Ready for Success
- *Ready for Success: Supporting Dual Language Learners in Head Start and Early Head Start*

Ready for Success is a year-long series of professional development opportunities intended to help
programs support the healthy development and learning of Dual Language Learners (DLLs). To access
this resource for Webcasts and Webinars, visit the Dual Language Learners and Their Families page
and click on "Ready for Success: Supporting DLLs in HS & EHS" near the top of the page.

DLL Program Design and Management
- Academy for Educational Development. *"Using the Multicultural Principles to Establish a
  Framework for Creating and Strengthening Language Policies and Procedures in Head Start
  Programs."*

To access this resource, visit the Dual Language Learners and Their Families page. Under Program
Design & Management, click on "Cultural & Linguistic Responsiveness." From there, click on "Cultural
and Linguistic Responsiveness: Reports."

Research
- Espinosa, Linda M. (2008). Challenging the Common Myths about Young English Language
  Learners, *Foundation for Child Development Policy Brief Advancing*. PK-3 No. 8.

To access this resource, use the Search tool at the top of the page and search for "Challenging the
Common Myths about Young English Language Learners."