

What is a Planned Language Approach?

Carola Matera: Better understanding of what we do on a daily basis, whether we are advisers, whether we are teachers, whether we work as directors, regardless what we do, the job we have is important, and I'm sure many of you will have a lot of questions about this. Let's start. As you can see, this presentation focuses on the language practices in preschool classrooms. And what's unique about my presentation is that I'm not talking about preschool classrooms. Instead I'm talking about classrooms in which you have dual language learners. This occurs very often. We have a classroom where you have maybe just one child or many. You have one child that speaks a different language or many children who can speak that same language or you may have a classroom where you may have many children each speaking a different language. So this session focuses not only on that kind of a classroom, but also on the planned language approach, and why the PLA is important. It's a new concept.

Sometimes people think, "Oh, there's so much to do, when you have to deal with dual language learners." It's possible. Where do we start? How do we do it? Well, this methodology helps us organize so as to have a better idea of how to move forward, what changes need to be made, and how to understand how children are learning at this preschool level. Also in order to be able to focus on what PLA is exactly, I'm going to talk a bit about the models that exist in a classroom to support language as part of learning. I'm not going to elaborate on that because we could have a whole two-day lecture on that topic. Instead what I'm going to do is talk about this to interpret the practices and strategies that are effective in that context. I am not going to talk about general strategies, because very often, then, when you go to classroom to work with the teachers, you find those practices actually don't work, because what we have to do is deal with the child, who they are, how we, the educators, work with them and we have to understand how the whole thing operates as a whole. In the end, I'll focus on certain practices that help develop language for those children who are dual language learners.

So let's start by first defining the methodology, PLA. The methodology is a response to the need to be able to make a decision before the children come in to the classroom. You already know who the children are, what languages they speak, what languages the teachers speak, what resources you have, but we have moved this from the program level down to the classroom level. Now, this methodology not only addresses preschool children. It covers all children from birth to 5 years of age, and it's available for children who are in Head Start programs and child-care programs, but it's available to everyone, because it's in the public domain. I think that's what's very helpful. Because it allows us to understand science and then helps us apply science in the educational context so that we can help children. These resources come from the Head Start platform and all of you can find the link to this on the zero to three website at the conference, and you can also download the entire presentation so can you have it in the future.

One thing that has recently happened and has a lot of importance is... this document, which was adopted a few months ago. I'm not quite sure when, but it comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Education.

It's a document that promotes the use of certain resources including the Planned Language Approach, so that all programs can have access to it, and so that they understand that these resources actually exist and how you can develop a program to deal with the challenges. What's most important to understand, particularly from the perspective of Head Start and child care, is that PLA is not just something that we do in a classroom. It's not a decision that applies exclusively to the classroom. It's a coordinated, systemic, integrated approach. Those three words are very important because we want to make sure that whatever we do becomes sustainable. That some day if the director, the teacher, changes, then you don't want everything to collapse and not work. We want to prevent that from happening. So we want to make sure that this is something that's incorporated throughout the entire program so that it can be sustainable, it can be continued, but also, it can be improved upon. So it's - it has a record that can be improved upon through self-evaluation instead of having to start at zero every time.

As you can see, PLA has certain key components to it and you've probably seen this elsewhere, but of all of these that appear up here, that includes the big 5 for all -- language, reading, writing, research-

based strategies and support programs, specific strategies. that support home language support as well as policies, practices and systems. We can't cover everything, because I only have an hour and a half, but what I'll do is focus on a preschool child and on the 5 big A's and on the specific strategies that support language and the development of literacy. We also want to make sure that this doesn't mean you have to buy a whole new curriculum. If you are using a specific curriculum, and you need to change it, no, that's not what we want. It's a question of how to organize yourself, how to think, how to make decisions ahead of time. Keeping in mind and knowing who the children are, who your teachers are, what kind of language experience they have both outside and inside the classroom. And also, that this is not just for dual language learner children. It's something that can be used with everyone. It's a system. It's a protocol that allows you to continue making decisions that respond to how one can teach, how do you facilitate language learning in children?

And this here helps you organize teaching, and it helps you define the strategies that we can use. Because not all are strategies. Some work well in different contexts. So in this slide here -- may not be completely relevant to all programs, because maybe not all the programs can have initial home visits, for instance, but what you see up here are the Head Start programs. And what we're showing through this is that the children and the families that participate in this program, that are a part of the program, have very explicit experiences that you need to talk about, and are experienced by the child from the moment of enrollment, when the parents join the program, up until a time where they develop a partnership agreement during the initial home visits as well as during the parent conferences.

So the issue of how you develop literacy skills in a child has to be something that is looked at throughout the entire year. If all of the components, if the PLA includes all of these components that are up on the screen, then the parents' experience and the child's experience is going to be much more robust, much more solid than if you just used a single classroom strategy used in a classroom during the specific hours of the class. So you have to put this in the proper context. You have to first think, "Well, how many languages do we have in the classroom? And how many teachers do we have speaking languages? So what can we do? What are our possibilities?" If you have children that are learning more than two languages, then your options are two. You can either have a model, where you teach in the two languages.

Where the vocabulary is presented and organized based on everyday experiences so that the child develops in both languages. Maybe not necessarily at the same time, but in different ways. And I'll talk about that a little later on. So that's the focus of a model that is teaching in those languages. That model has to keep in mind how they organize their teaching so that the children end up developing both languages. For instance, since we're talking here in Spanish, say I had a program that focuses on developing literacy in the various domains in those two languages, then there are different options, different possibilities. I haven't listed them all here, but just to give you an example, let's say you could alternate the days and the use of language. It doesn't mean that on Monday you're not going to -- you're only going to use Spanish, but you have to think about, how are we going to support Spanish so the child develops comprehension? It now becomes a strategy. And you have to separate the use of the languages from a strategic perspective.

As you see here, the first week changes from the second week, and the reason we do that is to make sure that the quantity and the quality of the language is balanced. The use of the language is balanced. So, say, if you have Monday, Wednesday and Friday, that's Spanish. Well, then we have to make sure that the next week, you reverse it and you have two days of Spanish and three of English. And there are other different options, but let me just give you another example. Say you have children who are all day there. What language do you use in the morning? Which language do you use in the afternoon? As you know, afternoon activities are often very different from morning activities, so it's important to alternate morning and afternoon so that it's not always Spanish in the morning and English in the afternoon, or vice versa. The second type of model that we could use is where you have English and for my support to the native language, and then support, sometimes you don't have a place where both languages can be taught. Sometimes you have teachers who don't speak the language of the student.

There are a wide range of languages and you can't learn all five languages overnight, for instance, and

you may not want to, and you may not even have the time to do so. But it's important that if you have a case where the model you have is -- teachers speak English only, then you include strategies throughout the day to make sure that whatever language the child speaks, they have access to learning opportunities throughout the school day, because if they don't have access to the planned experience, then that child, that individualized attention, is not going to happen. It's not occurring. So let's talk about the kinds of strategies that you would have to use in such context.

One important point is that when you choose this model where you have an English-speaking teacher, but you have to provide support to the native language, you have to get the teachers to learn key words, key phrases in the other language. Not just to make the child feel comfortable and understood, but so that he can understand what's going on in this new place he's at, particularly at the very beginning. It doesn't mean that you're going to change and that you use it only for one language that exists in that classroom. Sometimes we have cases where a teacher only speaks English and the assistant maybe speaks Spanish. But you have children that speak Armenian, or maybe...Cantonese. Et cetera. So if you learn certain key words and sentences in those languages, so the children can know what's going on and how to move and feel emotional support, it's very important. Also, another key strategy is to work with the family. Learn together.

We always say that the first teachers for children are their parents, but we are also acting as teachers, and we should do that together with them. One of the resources that are wonderful and marvelous and appear on the webcast, it's called "ready for success" on the website that I referred to earlier. And there's several. One on language, and one on literacy. Where they show you video clips that help you see how parents, families, volunteers, can work together in a classroom to support those children who are learning English in this context through what we call reading circles. For instance, in Oregon, every Friday, different volunteers come in and different parents come in. They form little circles. The books that are going to be used in the future are presented. They children are in those different groups, where the language that they speak is represented and they hear those stories in their own language from the volunteer in the classroom.

So this helps the child have the vocabulary, the concepts and understanding of the story, given to him in his own language first. It makes it more comprehensible. The other thing is, very often, we try to say whatever we're saying in English in Spanish, but that's not productive. It doesn't help children learn. So how should we do it, then? We don't want to directly affect the filter of a child. So we want to create a positive relationship with the children when they come to a classroom and they don't know us yet. There are several times throughout the year where there are certain skills that are very important to have, and language shouldn't interfere with that. But how can we make sure that we don't go directly to giving the child that information in Spanish? Well, one theory, one way of doing it, is to try to ask if, say, you think the child's not understanding.

Say, "Hmm, I wonder how you would say gallina --" chicken -- "in English?" Or the other way around. So if the child doesn't know -- Let's say we were reading "The Little Red Hen." So if the child doesn't know how to say "hen" in English, don't just stop there. We could say, "Well, how could you find the information? How can we figure this out?" That helps the child as a way of demonstrating and modeling how to be resourceful, which is a very important skill to have for learning, in childhood and for the rest of your life. So we use all of these methods to connect with the other aspects of development that go beyond just language development. Another very important point is the last one made here, which is, as a teacher, we have to not only understand the stages of language development when it's a second language, which is coming after the first, but we also have to be able to recognize when this is happening and see it in action and document it. Then what do we do with it? We need to be able to understand and implement the strategies we have used to take the child to the next level to help the child move out of the stage where he's still not using English, for instance, but he's using his own language.

Try to get him to use at least a few words in English, and then get him to use more than a few words. But in order to understand how to do that, we need to know where the child is at this point in his development. Earlier, when I described the entire PLA, one of the areas is on language and literacy, and the big 5s of language and literacy. And I say it's very important and I realize that everything is

very important, but this is one area which we as teachers realize is extremely important. That is, that language and literacy are basic elements. Now, what's important to know here is that, say, if you're talking about a classroom in which two languages are taught during the day or during the week, how do we make the learning in Spanish -- how do we do it in Spanish? And it's not the same in Spanish as in English, and many of us have not been trained in school for how to do that, how to teach literacy in Spanish. But there are ways and you can focus on this through stories, through rhymes, through songs, where you can promote this understanding like phonological awareness, or developing vocabulary.

Get children to understand how books work. Have book knowledge, understand how print works, and get them to understand the alphabet and do early writing, but there's differences in the two languages. In Spanish, writing has a very important role, because Spanish itself is a very transparent language. It's based on syllables that are very consistent, and here you'll see the link to the webcast that I talked about earlier. There, you'll find clips that show you how these -- how to recognize these moments in the phonological awareness of the child and how to promote that in Spanish. Another important point is that very often we want to prevent the use of phonemic awareness. It's very important in English, like "Dr. Seuss." That's part of U.S. culture. It's something that children are very familiar with in the U.S., but it's not the same in Spanish and those books don't have the same role in Spanish. There are other books that have funny rhymes, who talk about sayings or maybe not idiomatic expressions but are just rich in the kind of experiences they talk about with children. So you have to look for these materials. Of course, it's an art. It's not easy to always find that, but it's part of the challenge. Another important thing is to have a team of people who can -- you have access to and that can help you.

Somebody who can help you in what kind of material to use to promote literacy. Don't do it alone. And we begin with basic knowledge and this is an example. Let me give you something visual to see what it means. What does it mean to know what the child knows? Here the child gave the children, before they read, and before they -- a book, which was "The Little Red Hen." they allowed them to talk about hens. What was the experience of the children with that concept? And as you see, there are pictures of hens. It's not a drawing of a hen, but it's a picture of a hen. The children wrote both in Spanish or in English what they knew about hens. And when we are in English with the support of the language, we would have somebody that would help us that would be a resource, so that they can write when the children are speaking in another language.

The other one is book knowledge and print concepts, and the opportunity to see both languages in writing allows us to see the difference between the languages and the similarities. If it were Cantonese and the parents helped us to write a sentence, which is what we have here, it also would allow us to discuss a lot, what opportunities are there when we show this to children. When we talk about similarities and differences, we make them think and also we make them value their languages. Another example is the use of cognates, which is useful in some languages but not all. Languages that have the same meaning in both languages, sound very similar and you write them very similar, and the other one is one of the ones I like best. Only one word in Spanish but the teacher did something wonderful. This child was the first to participate.

He was very comfortable by giving answers to the questions posed by the activity. He understood the concept of what's being asked, and the teacher recognized, he asked for the information to somebody she had in the room, and she realized that the child needs that vocabulary in English, but he has the concept, he understands it. He understands what's going on. And if we think of a small group with this experience, and this used as an assessment of interaction between teacher and children, this is a good example of sensitivity to what the child has to offer, recognize and understand what it is that the child understood. One of these components is the knowledge of the alphabet. It's very important in English and it's very important in Spanish.

We know the alphabets are a little different. There are just small differences. There's only one that's different, really. And how important early writing is. It is essential in Spanish to give the children the opportunity to explore writing at an early age, with their names and by understanding how it works. Because the language is very transparent and then it's very easy. This is a very well-known practice. All the practical research comes from Mexico [inaudible] and from other Latin-American countries,

and Spain, but most of the research is in Mexico. And what we know is that children in the U.S. who are learning in two languages follow the same standards as children in other countries. The difference is that they use the knowledge of both languages. Sometimes when they start writing and start inventing writing, inventing what they want to say, they use consonants, they use vowels. In monolingual, Spanish-speaking children, they would use the vowels much more. Because one of the rules in Spanish is each syllable has to have a vowel.

As you saw before. [Inaudible] Three syllables. And as we said before, phonological awareness is very important. It's a key predictor of early reading. DLL children learn two systems of sounds or more, because in a child, in a family, we can have a child that's learning Spanish at home, but maybe they also speak [inaudible] an Indian language, and then he's learning English at school with the support of his or her languages. And we also know through research that certain skills can be transferred. So they use what they know in one language to learn the other, and this is one of the most important things to be discussed during the year with the families. Not only is it important because of their identity, because of their culture for families to be able to communicate and to maintain the language of their family, but also because it helps us to learn English better. The game in syllables, is one of something we learned through research that can be easily transferred. So we have the language, we have literacy, we know the context, we know that there are models that can be used in situations where you have one or many children learning two languages or in a second language, and we've also talked about how to organize those two models with the language that you want to underscore. There are certain strategies that are more global, more universal, for children that are dual language learners. One, basic, in small groups. And we think of small groups.

We may be thinking about dividing the whole class into 10 here, 10 there. That's not the case. Research... [Speaking Spanish] And others have demonstrated very clearly that children benefit from small groups, three to five children in a group. And this is linked to what I said before. You don't want to change the curriculum. This is one of the things we can do to adapt what we already have. So we look at the day in school, the routine. At what point can we get organized to work in small groups, the teacher with three to five children, focusing on vocabulary, on stories, storytelling? Something that we'll see in the next few slides. Another important element, or important strategy, is to extend communication or focusing on new words. Well, scaffold communication focusing on new words. And as I say to my children very often, it should be full of details, flowers and gestures, all sorts of things. Big eyes. Something is massive and then you show it with your hands, with your gestures, giving the child the possibility to understand more beyond the word, incorporating photographs, photographs of real things.

We want to expand the child's world. If we have the photograph of something that looks like something else, it's not the same thing as looking at a photograph of an owl whether its a beak and feathers and everything that an owl has. And movement. We know that movement, singing -- singing the songs that we can change. So we can incorporate the vocabulary we're focusing on. And when we see the child does not understand, it is there that we use the bridge with the language that we're not using at that point. Because we can always make sure that there is understanding, but we are now going to say, "Well, everything we said before in the other language." You ask yourself, "Hmm, what does this mean? Can somebody explain?" And so when they talk and you try to understand, if you have three to five children, you understand what the level of comprehension is. If we have 20 or 10 children, it is much more difficult to understand that.

We should always contextualize. If we're talking about something new and the child who's learning a language is just paying attention, he's looking at you, but you don't know if he's understanding, we want what you're saying to be related to his experience in the school, in the classroom, outside in the community and prior experiences. The words have to be used not only when we are in that small group, but we want to use them throughout the day so they become real. And we want to be able to ask and answer questions at the level of the child trying to get the child up to the next level. As I had said before, it's important to recognize and understand the level of language learning of the child and also how to bring the child forward, How to make the child advance. This is an example in Oklahoma, a program... that they were dealing with "Rosie's Walk." Looking at new words, understanding the different parts in the story.

And at the same time, our role is to support the social and emotional development of the child. A child has to be identified within a new cultural space. Either there are several languages they don't know. English with the support of Spanish. Or where they're teaching in a DLL, they teach both languages, but there could be a child that speaks Vietnamese. So there's a lot of variety in that context. But in terms of social and emotional support, I'm going to show you a very short clip that is in the webcast I mentioned before.

Woman: And how to say "hi" in Vietnamese.

Girl: Yeah.

Woman: Do you know how to say it? Should we get teacher for some help?

Girl: Cho.

Woman: Cho? Okay. Can you tell her? Cho. Cho. Hola! We learned how to say "hello" in each other's languages.

Woman #2: In our classroom right now, we have three different languages, actually four different languages represented. We have Spanish speakers. We have Vietnamese speakers, we have English speakers and we have one Russian.

Carola: Going to see -- [Speaking Spanish] As you can see, the context is everything. There are quite a number of languages, and one of the things the teacher did was to facilitate friendship through language. It's something explicit. It is spoken. When we don't speak something, when we do not use it as part of the experience of children, it sends a very strong message. The children understand the makings, statistics of everything, what's going on, what does it mean. Also we have to offer spaces, quiet spaces where the children can go. They're learning two languages. It's a very difficult intellectual effort. And this is not decoration there. We want them to know that they have that quiet space available when they need it. And this makes us think about the issue of self-regulation when we feel that something is too much. Because the children can also feel that and that's where they can go. And this offers them the quiet space, offers them a unique space where they can relax.

This slide shows how it is that children or how we organize the day so children can talk amongst themselves. Because if we are all the time, trying to have them learn new words, we read to them, we ask questions, but we don't give them the chance to talk amongst themselves, they do not own their own learning or they can't demonstrate it or they can't feel the pride of owning what they learned. But beyond that, we can see how they're learning, and document how they're learning. So you see the connection with everything, what we started saying at the beginning of this session and how things connects one to the other. So that we can then implement the work, follow the progress of the children, see how it is that we're learning, and we can respond in keeping with what is happening. This slide makes me smile because it's very pretty, but you don't really see the quality of each of these stories. We know that the quality is important.

The words that are used, the poems, the rhymes, the stories that are told in each of the books. Some of them have no words, but they're very beautiful. But they're very difficult to get. And this goes back to the idea of having a support team. When we decide in our PLA how we're going to find all the resources we want and to have somebody in the team that is not inside our program, somebody from outside. I get a lot of e-mails asking, "Where is it that you got the book that you showed us?" And I give a list, but the books change. The industry of books in English and in Spanish is very different. Once they're published, then there's no more. They made so many copies and that's it. Not all of them, but in general, that's what happens. But there may be new ones or there may be ways in which you can find them. And there are several companies that sell this within the U.S. So if you have any questions at the end of the presentation, is my e-mail. I'm very happy to share this with you. Yes, we do want quality literature. And, of course, we want quality literature related to the culture of the children, of the teachers, because we are all beings that have a culture. We come into contact with each other with this culture.

And what calls my attention the most when you go to a school where there are several classrooms is to see the variety in the cultural books because the families in each of those classrooms are different.

And so, we give an opportunity to the families to choose the material. One of the ways that you can do this is through public libraries. Public libraries often don't know what books to buy and a wonderful project is to go there with the parents so that you make the decisions together. What are the important books that we should have and use in the classroom? Even if we all speak Spanish, we're all very different. We have different soccer teams. We come from different places with different histories, different experiences, different beliefs, different ways in which we live. And we don't understand that just by seeing somebody or looking at somebody. So families have to be involved so that we can choose together and live this together.

This is my favorite part. Dialogic reading is something that has existed for a long time, especially in Head Start. They've been underscoring this for many, many years. And it started with Dr. Lonigan in Whitehurst. And also, in his work, that was not done only with families, and I will talk about that, but also the classroom. And the strategies we mentioned before have been incorporated. And you see this in action in small groups. How it is -- it works for teachers to use the practice, this practice. Teach new vocabulary with gestures, with movement, with songs, with photographs. Ask questions, expand on what the children say. Ensure that the children understand. Dialogic reading... the authentic way to use dialogic reading is in three steps. And these three steps are crucial because first is vocabulary, then comprehension, and expanded language and vocabulary of the children, their answers, what they say. And the last is the most important. It's when the child appropriates what he learned and he demonstrates it and he uses it when he retells the story. Let me give you an example of an activity that's at the last step of dialogic reading. The teacher here has more the role of an observer. He's not structuring any more. Children, through games, they went through motivating experiences, through fun activities. They used the vocabulary they learned. And many may think, "Well, this looks more like a curriculum based on the theory on projects, that it's thematic."

Yes, it's important to deal with themes and projects, but not all the curricula that are adopted in different programs are the same. or have these pedagogical theories. But they can incorporate through the experience of using tales and books that have a lot of information that have activities that we all live. Give the child the opportunity to learn the vocabulary and understand what's going on, expand their language. English and Spanish, if it's a dual language learner, and later, use it. This happens at the same time that we are trying to work with the families and it goes beyond giving them the opportunity in a certain environment. When the parents arrive in the morning or at the end of the day, have a library with the books in Spanish and in English. or other languages. That's wonderful, but not enough because what is the idea of those books there?

There are parents with different personalities. Some would immediately make use of what's there. Others won't know. "Is this for the teacher? How do we use this?" Some look at it and see there's too much text, others have no words. What happens with all of this? Head Start used a lot of the research I mentioned before to help teachers to learn with parents strategies for dialogic reading that are exclusively for parents that are not so much focused on the text but on simple ways that allow you to start a dialog with the children through the pictures, the images, the events that you see taking place in the book. And these strategies in English are called follow the CAR. In Spanish, follow the child's lead, would be the translation. The child chooses the story and then comment and wait. Ask questions and wait. Then respond by adding a little more. In this that you are weaving with the father -- the volunteers, the family, the parents feel successful, because the children are interested. They chose the story. They want to have a dialogue, and it is what they want to talk about, the children. So if they only see this, it's not the same thing as if that comes with this.

One plus one is not two. In this case, it's much more, because it's a very enriching experience. It's an experience that translates into the type of dialogue and conversation that they have outside the classroom. And we should engage families in the classroom with songs. With this dialogic reading within the classroom in the different languages, it does...start a dialogue that is constant and progressive with families on the importance of bilingualism. This is something I mentioned before about the importance of being explicit, of talking about things and then not just leaving them to interpretation, and to speak about the importance of bilingualism is one of those things, because when you speak, you open the opportunity to discuss, to discuss in a nice way with questions where you can ask and think. What are the questions that parents have based on the experience others have had

with public schools or their fears that their children won't learn English well. Or how? What do I do to support the language?

When we speak two languages, how do I do that? We speak Mixtec. The Indian language and Spanish. So have this ongoing, progressive dialogue helps parents to feel more comfortable to ask and even the teachers themselves don't have the answers, but we have a support team that we can ask. Then the dialogue continues. Let us talk about resources. There are many resources, and one of the things that I haven't shown you but it was in the slide that talked about models, there are many, many resources in the public domain that help you not only to study but show you the practical ways in which you can implement them. They're in English. They're in Spanish. Some are being translated, and others are in several languages, not just English and Spanish. So, for example, here one of the resources to be used with the families, and this is in several languages, is the advantages of being bilingual. Some can be used in the community. It helps the parents to talk to other parents about the issue. On the other hand, the one you see on your right is part of a document that helps learning about families, health programs, to learn about progress in children individually, about their experiences in language learning and what are the resources that those families and children have? On the second page, the one that is shown here, there's a puzzle. The part of a puzzle, and the idea is that we're trying to understand who the children are.

What their experience has been, and they continue to have, to be able to answer in a fashion that individually meets their needs. Each of these components has questions. Some have questionnaires that are used at the beginning of the year once children have enrolled. And what I would say is that it's important. It's not just something you send for the parents to complete. It has to be used as an opportunity to talk to the families so that you can understand and demystify things that sometimes lead to misunderstandings, and it also helps to develop a positive relation from the beginning. So what is this all about, then? Tito started Head Start when he was 3. If Tito was beginning today... he is enrolled. He gets into the program, and they tell him what he has to do, and they tell him that this program gives value, underscores his home language, and how.

To say it or not to say it has a very big effect. When you start like that and throughout the year, you have so many opportunities. Not only to see the child develop his own language and English and to be invited to participate in the classroom with your own language as a family, and, also, to see how it is that he is developing his two languages, because if we do not have the opportunity, if the parents don't have the opportunity to see that, because they see how it is they're developing at home, what it is they aren't understanding in their own language, but if we don't know that, we don't know enough in the program, if our program is English with support of the home language. If we know only one side, at the end of the year, we know that Tito will have really, a difficult time learning English. It was quite difficult and sometimes he points. Sometimes he says some words, but we don't know what's happening with his Spanish. So we don't know half of the story, but if we had a conversation that has to be ongoing and progressive with the family, we will learn that he's doing the same in Spanish. He does not speak in Spanish with full sentences or with phrases. He's also pointing, and he has a couple words that he uses very often. Well, there's something we could have done before.

There's something we have to do. Or...if he is in an English program, with the support of his native language, and his English improves by leaps and bounds, he loves it when his father comes in and tells a story in Spanish. And he's here smiling broadly, and he wants to continue learning, or he comes from a program where both languages are taught, and he has learned not only to communicate in sentences at the end of the year, short sentences, he's dared to speak English, but he has phrases, sentences that he uses, and his Spanish is also going forward. Wonderful. Right? So we want to know the story of each of those children every month. Throughout every period with us, throughout the school year, so at the end, we can be successful. We know things are going well. It has to be balanced.

What I've shown you, in the different classrooms, in the different models, are not the whole day in Spanish and a few songs in English. No. It's balanced. Because when they have the chance, when Tito goes to kindergarten, we want him to have two strong languages, and that meant he had to do a lot of dialogic reading, to chat through stories, vocabulary, comprehension, expand his language, his communication, He felt he -- The owner. He had ownership of what he learned, but, also, he has to

feel that wherever he goes, because not all of our children are going to go to a learning school. We don't know. We don't know if perhaps he is going to go to a public school where they may not teach in the same way. However, what we do want to make sure is that the level is strong and solid, regardless of where he's going. It's not going to negatively affect him, the fact that he learned in two languages when he gets to kindergarten. That's one thing we want to be absolutely sure of. But in order to achieve that, we have to have the planned language approach. We have to have a process, a methodology in place that allows us to think about how we're going to achieve all that and how we're going to organize ourselves.

And it's not the question of just drawing up a long, long, long list where, for three years, we're going to be focusing on applying several strategies at the same time. It's a question of organization and knowing whom we're dealing with, who is the child, who is the family, who are the teachers? Who are the directors? How do we organize all of this so that... Sort of as if you can feel that everybody has their arms around the whole thing, working together to achieve the goal. And those decisions have to be thought out very carefully, very rigorously, and you have to have resources, valid, good resources that help you organize these experiences that will help with the children and the families.

So having come to this point, I'd like to talk about the next steps. Where can you start? What can you do? And then I'd like to hear your questions. As you can see, I can't talk about everything involved in PLA, nor how it applies to infants, toddlers, et cetera, but at least we can start doing something that's very important, which we didn't know how to do before. It tells us how to think. It provides a very clear, transparent guide that gives you a set of contextual strategies to help you decide what you need to do given your own context. So...tomorrow, or just -- Gonna happen right away, first you have to think about, in here we're talking about classrooms. In each one of the classrooms, you have to first think, "Okay. What are the languages that the teachers speak, and at what level do they speak it? What language does the family speak?"

We could use the resources that we have. Which is a systematic way of doing this. At the very beginning, we always do that. We have a way of finding out the complex issues behind this question, because when you ask, "What language does the family speak?" It's more than just asking do you speak Spanish or another language? It's trying to find out how has the child been learning? Did the child learn English and Spanish or another language at the same time? Did the child go to a program for toddlers and was exposed to English? Now, that child's going to be very different from a child who has never heard English and comes to us for the first time. So as you can see, part of the puzzle is a very big one. Well, so we want to find out not only the quantity, but the quality of what the child gets every day, hears every day.

So this is one of the first steps and it's a key step to organizing this methodology. Secondly, you must find out more about the language experiences of the children and the families outside the classroom in order to help develop the language skills outside. For instance, there are resources that exist in the community. And if these resources exist, does the child participate in it? How do we connect them? How do we help the families find those resources, if they aren't familiar with them? And if they are familiar with them, well, then, how can we connect other families to them so that they can be part of that connection? There are some opportunities in English. Does the child have a brother or sister that's already in elementary school? Because that has a big experience on the child's experience in the classroom.

The parents will have a lot of questions about what they should do, particularly if their brothers or sisters have had a negative experience in the school. Maybe they've made the decision to not use their home language. So those are issues that we have to address that often go beyond what we actually know. So you have to find ways and resources to be able to support the family. And finally, don't stress out. As I said, this is not an endless list. In fact, what the PLA actually does is that it helps you organize the way you make decisions, and in the end, those decisions become much simpler, because decisions have to do with the context. If you remember, the context is the model I showed you and what strategies we need to use within each of those contexts. It's also a question of adapting an existing curriculum. It's not a question of changing everything around, because what you're already doing is wonderful, and we're learning as we go, and if you just change everything all over again, you'll never

move forward.

So we have to try to see what are the little things? What are the small things that need to be fine-tuned a bit, or changed a little, or just, well, reorganized in a slight way instead of thinking, "Ah, okay. Let's start from scratch." Because that's not a realistic way of thinking nor is it a valid thing to do. So with this, I now invite you to think about the things you want to learn more about. It may be we don't have a lot of time to talk about it here. But at least I can provide you guidance and tell you where you can find more information, and I could elaborate a bit more on the basis of your own program's experience. I also would like to invite those of you who are online, or with us virtually, that if you do have questions, please send them in writing.

And we'll be able to answer them here. So it's up to you now. No questions? None? Everything was perfectly clear! Said one of the participants. Well, there's a lot to be done and I'm sure tomorrow, you'll say, "Oh, why didn't I ask that question?" But do you have my information. And the last slide you'll see my e-mail address, and I invite you, as you think about this and as you try to implement some or many of the things that we talked about, that you write to me, and you stay in contact with me, and ask if something... sounded confusing. For the context in which you are working, because as I said earlier, sometimes training courses are short and they're sort of global general, but they don't take place within the context, and it's not within the context of the program, and the daily experiences you have. And what's important is to see how you can take that content and bring it down to your own reality as closely as possible.

That's why it's important to contextualize from the very beginning of the presentation, instead of saying that everything fits everywhere. One size fits all, because that -- I don't think that this attitude of wanting to change everything, it doesn't really work. It just ends up creating crises and chaos and it ends up creating more problems that you end up having to solve instead of just making small adaptations. We have a question from the online audience, and it's, "How do you use the PLA for learning mathematics?" That's an excellent question. As I said, we're talking a lot about language and literacy. But math is not too far removed from language and literacy, because it's all an integral part of the experiences in the first five years of life. You have the language of mathematics. And we talked about the strategies and how to teach new vocabulary, how to expand and build on what the child says, constantly analyzing, making sure the child is understanding. All of those strategies apply to math as well. What's great about math is that you can use concrete materials. So you can set up, again, small groups.

I would say this is one of the key essential factors. A small group. Because that's one way you can check that the child does have access to the curriculum and to the learning experience, and when I talk about curriculum, I'm not talking about a book. It could be a book he's using, but I'm talking about the daily experiences that let a child learn. So if a child comes to the preschool and he has been learning for three years, since birth, he's learned a lot of things. He's not only learned how to talk, walk, he's learned a lot of logical mathematical content. Say it's a culture where people sit down and he has one little glass. It means that he only gets one glass, not three. So those patterns that he has learned. Or maybe in the context of the model where you support English with -- well, you teach English with support of a home language.

What we want to prevent is having the child continue to learn mathematics just with the patterns or the materials he's using. We now have to provide him with the vocabulary that he can apply to that material. Discuss it, a conversation so that the child can continue to develop those skills. So these strategies can be used in the same way. But what's important is to organize it in such a way that the experience takes place in small groups so can you find out what the child needs, what is the vocabulary he needs, so that you can help him develop new concepts. There's another question. "Could you elaborate a bit more on how we can use some of these strategies with monolingual children?" Thank you. Well, when we're talking about the English model, say English with the support of the home language, and we are talking about models where you teach both languages, bilingual models. In those classrooms, you'll have children that -- Okay.

Let's first look at the model where two languages are taught. Let's say the child speaks Spanish at home. His maternal language is Spanish and we are now doing an activity in English at school. So the

child, through the teachers, is provided support so that he can participate, understand, develop his language, develop new concepts, using the strategies that we talked about. Now, when you find yourself with a different type of experience, where all communication is in Spanish, the children who are learning Spanish as a second language are going to be given the same strategies. If it's a dual program, we need to know how much progress each child is making in learning Spanish, for instance, using the same strategies. And there are resources available, and you can write to me to ask about it, where we -- describe how you see that trajectory in a child who's learning Spanish as a second language. You can write to me, and I can guide you to the right place and make sure you have good, quality resources.

Woman: Now, in the case you have a group where only one child is bilingual, would you, in your alternating languages, would you do it on the basis of one to one or would you have the whole classroom exposed to the language switching?

Carola: You're talking about the dual language model, where you're teaching the two language and there's only one child who's learning both languages. The rest of the group is completely monolingual.

Woman: So should I expose the rest of the children to both languages or just one?

Carola: That's an excellent question, because what we want is to have a varied group, where you have a balance between the children who speak one language. Because as I said, we're talking about quality and quantity. If you only have one bilingual child in a dual language program, it's very difficult for the other children to get the quantity and quality, because the children not only learn from what we provide to them, it's what they learn amongst themselves as well. So there are no resources. In other words, they can't hear and use the language. Then it becomes much more difficult. In this kind a situation, what we'd use is the model of English with the support of the other language, and there are a lot of programs that are private. Well, maybe not even private, but programs for the family and the community, value bilingualism very highly and they want to have their children have those experiences. In those kinds of programs, the organization would be different. You wouldn't use the same organization to develop the language. It can be done, but you'd have to do it in a different way. Thank you.

Woman: At what age do you recommend starting a completely bilingual program? Three months? Birth? I'm talking about sectors.

Carola: Well, today -- we don't talk so much about the birth to 3. And you can have an entire program, of course, to talk about that. However, what we do know is that there's something very unique that occurs in infants and young children where they need warmth, emotional relationship, or emotional ties to an adult, and language. So we'd have to talk a lot about that. But we do know from neuroscience that there are certain windows, little windows that open up in our brains that are quite big in the first years of life. Which mean that if you are exposed to more than one language, it means that the chemistry and the organization within the brain it becomes unique, and it's very strong. And it's something that ends up benefiting that person for the rest of their life.

So I can't give you an exact answer, because there are many things that have to be taken into account, but what I can say that it is very important to provide the opportunity, and the importance of the home language during those three years has a very, very important, key rule, and the amount, the quantity is not the same as that needed for the other languages, to develop those abilities. I don't know if you've read the work done by a doctor. She has a very short video that shows how they found that through these experiences, children learn and make brain connections of the sounds they hear. And that remains for life. Now, as to the quantity or the context, the model, it's different. There is some information available that you can read more about, and it's included here.

So I recommend that you look at this. Well, we've come to an end. I'd like to thank you very much for your attention, for the questions you asked, and I am here as a resource person. I would like to thank you again and I hope to see you in another opportunity.