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Over 22 million children and families served since the summer of 1965

Watch for more information about commemorative events this year
to honor Head Start's past and strengthen its future.



¡Feliz Cumpleaños Head Start... en sus 40 años de vida en 2005!

Más de 22 millones de niños y familias han recibido servicios desde el verano
de 1965

Esté atento a recibir más información sobre los eventos conmemorativos que se
realizarán este año para celebrar el pasado de Head Start y fortalecer su futuro.

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Head Start Bulletin

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English Language Learners



Pullout in English & Spanish:

Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes for English Language Learners

Estrategias que fomentan resultados positivos en los niños que están aprendiendo inglés



The *Head Start Bulletin* is published by the Head Start Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Head Start Bulletin

English Language Learners

Issue No. 78

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Errata in the Head Start Bulletin on Father Involvement Issue 77, June 2004:

The title of the pull-out in Spanish should be Consejos para crear un libro de historias familiares. The title appears on the front cover of the *Bulletin* and on pages 1 and 34.

The photo credit on page 24 should read: Photo courtesy of the Cherokee Nation HS.

The byline on page 8 should read: Compiled by *Bulletin* Staff from Father Facts by Wade F. Horn and Tom Sylvester, 4th edition (2002). Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative, and other sources.

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page 4: Meeting the requirements of the Program Performance Standards



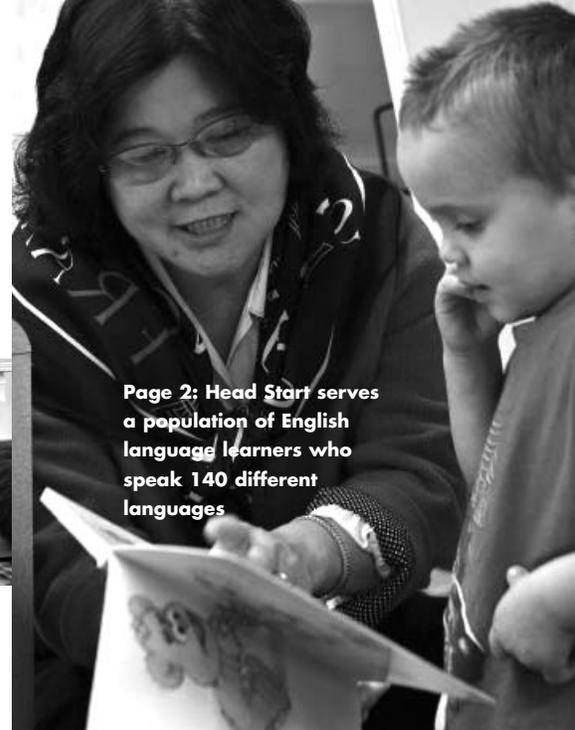
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The Head Start Bureau
embraces the cultural
and linguistic diversity
of our extended family.
by Windy M. Hill



Photo courtesy of ACE.

Windy M. Hill

Welcome to the English Language Learners Bulletin

V IETNAMESE, HMONG, CHINESE, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Russian, Tagalog, and American Sign Language. These are but a few of the languages spoken by today's Head Start children and families. Our extended Head Start family has evolved from a program that, in its early years, served a population of English language learners who were primarily Spanish speaking, to the current cultural representation that includes over 140 languages!

As Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau, I'm delighted to introduce this *Head Start Bulletin*, which offers a wealth of essential information about English language learners. It includes articles about research-based instructional strategies that support first and second language acquisition. There also are descriptions of Head Start programs that successfully serve diverse populations. Parents, program managers, Head Start Bureau staff, and family literacy partners share first-hand accounts of their experiences in serving the dynamic diversity of English language learners in Head Start.

This *Bulletin* is the latest in a series of efforts the Head Start Bureau has made over the years to support English language learners. *The Head Start Program Performance Standards*, first published in 1972, require that classroom environments be structured to help each child build ethnic pride and that home languages are supported. In 2002, the English Language Learners Focus Group was convened in Washington, D.C. to discuss and make recommendations

about effective approaches with diverse populations in Head Start. Additionally, the new *Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes* provides research-based strategies that promote the progress of English language learners in all areas of learning and development.

The National Head Start Hispanic Institute, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico from January 31- February 4, 2005, represents another commitment of the Head Start Bureau to provide knowledge and tools that programs need to provide effective, culturally appropriate services to English language learners. Since I have been Associate Commissioner, a number of efforts have been made to provide improved services to our growing number of Hispanic staff and families. At our conferences, Spanish interpreters are available (as they are for American Sign Language), publications are printed in Spanish, including the invaluable *Building Blocks for Father Involvement*, and the recent Parent Mentor Training has been offered to Spanish speakers.

As you begin to read this *Bulletin*, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and honor your dedication to English language learners and their families. The Head Start Bureau embraces the cultural and language diversity of our extended family and values this diversity as a tremendous resource for our programs as well as for our nation. ■

Windy M. Hill was named Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau on January 7, 2002.

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PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: SUPPORTING HOME LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH ACQUISITION

The goal is to design services for ELLs that meet the standards AND respond to your program's unique situation.

by Michele Plutro

This *Bulletin* reminds us that every year, Head Start programs are steadily increasing in the number of enrolled families and children whose home language is other than English, as well as in the number of languages spoken. Fortunately, Head Start has a long, rich history of serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations, as well as strong programmatic requirements in the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* to ensure a high quality program for all children and families.

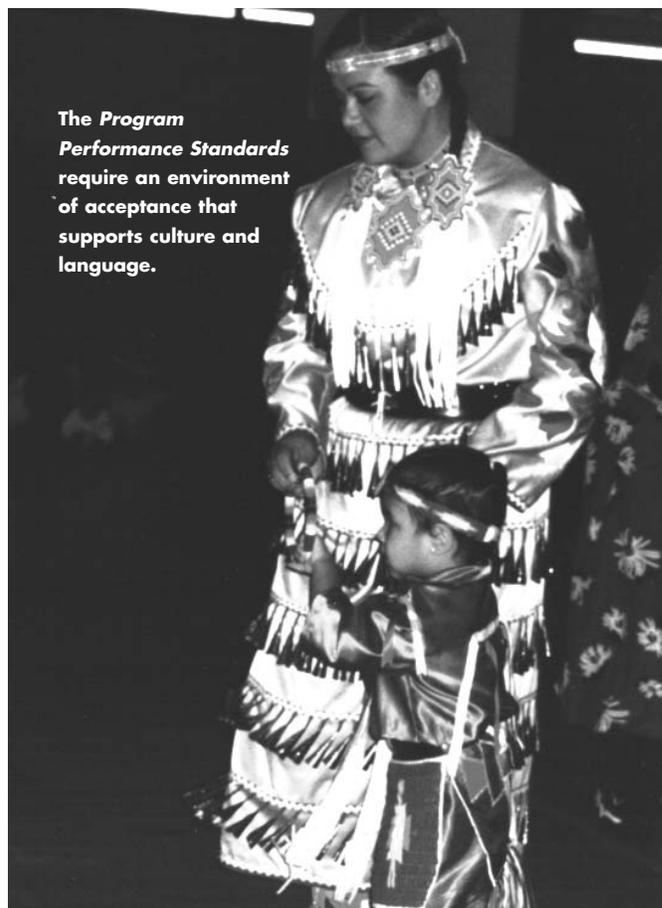
In fact, there are over 20 standards in the *Program Performance Standards* that specifically refer to the home language, the learning of English, or the cultural background of families and children. The standards require programs to address the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and their families. These requirements cut across multiple service areas: Child Health and Developmental Services; Education and Early Childhood Development; Child Nutrition; Family Partnerships; Management Systems and Procedures; Human Resources Management; and Facilities, Materials, and Equipment.

More specifically, the *Program Performance Standards* require that programs:

- provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition;
- serve foods that reflect cultural and ethnic preferences;
- communicate with families in their preferred or primary language or through an interpreter, to the extent feasible;
- hire staff, whenever possible, who speak the home languages of infants and toddlers, and when a majority of children speak the same language, hire at least one classroom staff member or home visitor who speaks their language; and

- promote family participation in literacy-related activities in both English and the home languages.

Other standards play important supportive roles in creating successful and responsive program services for all children, including ELLs and their families.



The *Program Performance Standards* require an environment of acceptance that supports culture and language.

Photo courtesy of HSNRC Photo Archives.

The *Program Performance Standards* tell us *what* to do, but not *how* to implement. They help us understand *what* the requirements for each service area are, but they do not limit *how* we are to meet these requirements. For example, each Head Start program still determines how to address the requirements for community partnerships, the transition of children to elementary school, the family partnership agreements, and ongoing assessment.



What are the advantages of being bilingual? A review of research (Augusta & Hakuta 1997) indicates that bilingual children often have higher levels of cognitive achievement than monolingual children.

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

The same is true for the required services to families and children learning English. Each program must continue to determine the most effective ways to communicate with the children and families they serve, to support home languages, and to help children learn English.

However, the Guidance accompanying each standard offers examples and illustrations of how to implement the standard. Other suggestions about putting the standards into action appear in this issue of the *Bulletin*, in other Head Start publications including the *Head Start Leaders' Guide to Positive Child Outcomes*, and in Web-based resources, such as STEP-Net.

When some Head Start programs discuss services for English language learners, they say they “don’t know what to do and don’t know where to start.” First, they need to become very familiar with the *Program Performance Standards* and the accompanying Guidance. Then, they can take a close look at their English language learners and their families, their staff, and their community resources. The goal is to design services for ELLs that meet the standards and also respond to the program’s unique situation.

In fact, many Head Start programs around the nation have successfully determined how to meet the requirements of the *Program Performance Standards*. They report that children whose primary language is other than English are making progress in all areas of learning and development. Many families recognize that the Head Start program has effectively supported their home language and helped them and their children learn English. Recent demographic data from the National Reporting System and the Child and Family Experiences Survey (FACES) provide evidence of Head Start’s reach in serving diverse populations.

This is not to suggest that Head Start has done it all or done enough for ELLs and their families. We are still identifying best practices at the classroom and administrative levels; we are still considering how to provide training and resources to teachers, home visitors, and other staff; we are still cultivat-

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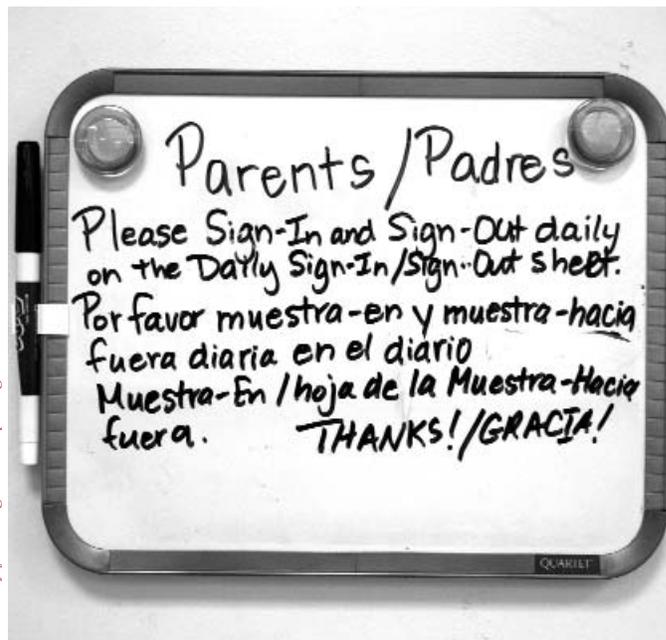


Photo by J. Brough Schamp, Higher Horizons HS/EHS.

The *Program Performance Standards* require communication with families in their preferred or primary language whenever possible.

ing community partners who will help us meet the needs of families. Our charge is to do what we are required to do, to provide the best services possible, to look for ways to improve what we are doing, and to implement changes to ensure positive outcomes for Head Start children and their families. Let us take even greater advantage of the local design and implementation flexibility that characterizes effective Head Start programs.

Each time we reflect on the evolution of Head Start, as well as the services designed and delivered, we should be struck by our demonstrated capacity to collectively deal with change and to embrace diversity. This current area of demand, indicated by the increasing numbers of ELLs and the variety of languages in our programs, should showcase our collective strengths. As we move forward at the local and the national levels to serve our richly diverse Head Start population, let us agree to be early childhood leaders, innovators, and open learners. ■

Michele Plutro is the Educational Affairs Specialist in the Office of the Associate Commissioner at the Head Start Bureau. T: 202-205-8912; E: mplutro@acf.hhs.gov

A HEAD START FOR ALL CHILDREN

This *Bulletin* is dedicated to all those who support English language learners in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. **by Jessica Knight**

Where I grew up in northern New Mexico, nearly everyone spoke English and Spanish, and some of my friends also spoke Tewa, the language of the local Native American Pueblo. My home language was English, and I learned Spanish in a bilingual preschool. Our group of 4-5 year olds went on many outings to the town square where we watched weavers at work, chatted with the elders, and sometimes, used the hornos (adobe oven) to make bread for our snack. I went to a very culturally diverse public elementary school. My high school was on the Pojoaque Indian Pueblo. My world consisted of friends who switched between English and Spanish, depending on who was a part of the conversation.

I became certified as a teacher of English as a Second Language and in Bilingual Education. I taught in Guatemala in an early childhood dual language setting, in New Mexico in a kindergarten/first grade bilingual combination classroom, and in Japan in a second grade Spanish immersion classroom. As I worked in these different educational settings, I was impressed with how easily the children accepted different languages, styles, and customs. They were well on their way to becoming global citizens.

When I joined the Head Start Bureau, I fell in love with the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* and the numerous ways they require that programs provide an “environment of acceptance” for children and families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (1304.21 (a)(1)(iii)). *The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework* continues to promote the language and literacy development of all preschoolers and requires that English language learners show progress in their acquisition of the new language.

This *Head Start Bulletin* is dedicated to all who support English language learners in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Diversity is one of the strengths of Head Start as well as one of its challenges. Whether your program works

with families and children who speak the same language in the classroom—Spanish, Mandarin, Hebrew, English, or another language—or whether your program has many languages represented in a setting, you will be able to read about different perspectives on English language learners in this *Bulletin*.

The articles are organized into the following sections: The Community and Families; Educational Leaders; Teachers and Home Visitors Speak; Assessment; and Resources. There are discussions of program policy related to English language learners, instructional strategies, curriculum planning, challenging behaviors related to language development, and research reviews of language acquisition. A glossary of terms is included. Developmental continuity and individual differences are addressed in the articles. There are personal accounts describing how Head Start staff have been creative and sensitive in their work with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families.

The authors include academics, researchers, administrators, mentor-coaches, and teachers. They represent geographical diversity too—they come from Head Start and Early Head Start programs in urban Puerto Rico and rural Alaska; from migrant programs in upstate New York and the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma; from the suburbs of Virginia, the Hawaiian Islands, and the coastal city of Portland, Maine. Appearing throughout the articles are research “nuggets” which are extracted from the longer, research-based discussions available at www.headstart-info.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm. The research “nuggets” are noted by a lightbulb icon. 

With a firm foundation in their home language and in English, Head Start children will be able to achieve positive outcomes and to succeed in school and in life. I hope that all of us who work in Head Start will do our best to ensure that the children and families in our programs are successful in a culturally and linguistically diverse world. ■

Jessica Knight is a former Bilingual Program Specialist, Head Start Bureau, residing in Hawaii.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Information comes from AskNCELA's glossary of terms related to the education of linguistically and culturally diverse students at www.ncela.gwu.edu/expert/glossary.html

BILINGUAL: Refers to the use of two languages. However, defining bilingualism is problematic since individuals with varying bilingual characteristics may be classified as bilingual. There may be distinctions between ability and use of a language; variation in proficiency across the four language dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing); differences in proficiency between the two languages; variation in proficiency due to the use of each language for different functions and purposes; and variation in language proficiency over time (Baker & Jones 1998). People may become bilingual either by acquiring two languages at the same time in childhood or by learning a second language sometime after acquiring their first language.

BICULTURAL: Identifying with the cultures of two different language groups. To be bicultural is not necessarily the same as being bilingual, and vice-versa (Baker 2000).

Dominant Language: The language with which the speaker has greater proficiency and/or uses more often (Baker 2001).

See Primary Language.

DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM/DUAL IMMERSION:

Educational programs designed to serve both language minority and language majority students concurrently. Two language groups are put together and instruction is delivered through both languages. For example, native English-speakers might learn Spanish as a foreign language while continuing to develop their English literacy skills, and Spanish-speaking ELLs learn English while developing literacy in Spanish. Also known as two-way immersion or two-way bilingual education.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs) : Children whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL): An educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language.

HOME LANGUAGE: The language a person acquires first in life or identifies with as a member of an ethnic group (Baker 2000). It is sometimes referred to as the first, native or primary language.

IMMERSION: An approach to teaching language using the target language as the only means of instruction.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: The process of acquiring a first or second language. Some linguists refer to acquisition as the informal development of a person's second language and learning as the process of formal study of a second language. Other linguists do not distinguish between formal learning and informal acquisition. The process of acquiring a second language is different from acquiring the first (Baker 2000).

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE: The protection and promotion of the first or native language in an individual or within a speech community, particularly among language minorities (through bilingual education, for example). The term is often used with reference to policies that protect and promote minority languages (Baker 2000).

MONOLINGUAL: Refers to using or knowing only one language. (American Heritage Dictionary 2000).

MULTICULTURAL: The broad term used to refer to several cultures. It also relates to a social or educational approach that encourages interest in many cultures. (American Heritage Dictionary 2000).

MULTILINGUAL: Refers to the use of three or more languages.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE: The language in which bilingual/multicultural speakers are most fluent or which they prefer to use. This is not necessarily the language first learned in life (Baker 2000). It is also referred to as dominant language.

SECOND LANGUAGE: This term is used in several ways and can refer to 1) the second language learned chronologically, 2) a language other than the native language, 3) the weaker language, or 4) the less frequently used language. Second language may also be used to refer to third and further learned languages (Harris & Hodges 1995).

Second Language Acquisition: The learning of a second language, often English.

SEQUENTIAL ACQUISITION: The process of acquiring a second language after the basis for the first language has been established (Tabors 1997).

SIMULTANEOUS ACQUISITION: The process of acquiring two languages from a very early age (Tabors 1997).

References can be obtained from the NCELA Web site.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION: THE KEY TO SERVING ALL FAMILIES

How a Head Start program developed effective services for its refugee and immigrant families. **by Kathleen Sullivan**

Fifty-two languages are spoken in the city of Portland, Maine. That's kind of surprising, given that the last U.S. Census reported that Maine was the least diverse state! But Portland has been designated by the State Department as a Refugee Resettlement city. The refugee families who have resettled have discovered that Portland is a safe and welcoming town. Friends and family members have followed as secondary migrants from other resettlement areas across the country. During the last decade, the influx of refugee, secondary migrant, and immigrant families has changed the face of our small city.

Of course, these demographic changes are reflected in the population we serve in our Head Start, Early Head Start, and child care programs. Our programs are operated by the People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP), a community action agency. We serve Maine's most populous county, Cumberland County. The number of languages spoken by families in our programs has increased steadily and now averages about 20 languages. In any classroom, there might be as many as ten different languages spoken by the children. Since one language may be shared by various cultures, the diversity of cultures is even greater.

All this change sweeping across our city has resulted in a huge learning curve for our community and our agency. First and foremost, we have identified dialogue with the families and the communities as the primary vehicle for effective and responsive program planning and change. Head Start and other service

programs have developed effective strategies for reaching these new populations.

The Cross-Cultural Family Network

In 1997, we began to take a closer look at the cultures of the

refugee and immigrant families enrolled in our programs. Their perspectives on child rearing practices and their perceptions of social service institutions differed from ours, which hindered our communication. The result was a negative impact on the ability of these new families to rear their children uneventfully. For exam-



Photo by J. Brough Schamp, Higher Horizons HSI/EHS.

Demographic changes are reflected in the populations that Head Start programs serve.

ple, service providers who did not understand traditional medical practices were calling the Child Abuse and Neglect Council to ask if these practices were deemed abusive by the State (the answer was “no”). At the same time, refugee families did not know how to find out about best parenting practices in the U.S.

To ensure clearer understanding across cultures, PROP's Head Start program and the Cumberland County Child Abuse and Neglect Council co-founded the Cross-Cultural Family Network. The Network is comprised of community providers, educators, interpreters, and representatives from the refugee and immigrant groups. Our mission is to obtain and provide information, offer workshops and conferences, provide opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, and offer a perspective on cross-cultural issues to the larger Portland community.

The Network's first goal was to design and disseminate culturally sensitive materials on U.S. child rearing practices and laws. Working with cultural liaisons, interpreters, and child development professionals, we developed and translated pamphlets for the five most populous cultural groups in the area.

Over the past six years, we have continued to offer workshops on a community and statewide level on topics such as evolving demographics of our community and holiday practices. In addition, we offer monthly forums to service providers and others where they can identify challenges and determine best practices.

Educational Services for Children

As the demographics of our classrooms have changed, so has the need to assess our teaching strategies. One of the greatest challenges is that educational expectations vary across cultures. Approaches to individualization, guidance and discipline, and disabilities differ. Our education staff has made great efforts to learn about the desires and values of each family for their young children.

A training priority has been supporting staff working with English Language Learners (ELLs). Our approach has evolved as we have begun to understand the complexity of second or third language development in young children. The first workshops our staff attended were conducted by the Multilingual, Multicultural Office of the Portland Public Schools with Title VII funding (now Title III of No Child Left Behind Act).

In 2001, nine education staff from our program attended a conference on ELL teaching strategies in Rhode Island. The training focused on classroom practice and incorporated recommendations from *One Child, Two Languages* by Patton Tabors (1997). Subsequently, we purchased this book for every classroom serving ELLs and recommended it to the school system. We developed in-service training based on the workshops we had attended and used the book as a resource.

Next, we conducted a formal assessment of our practices and then planned a comprehensive ELL training series. We were awarded an Early Learning Opportunities grant from the Child Care Bureau (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services) to carry out this plan. The grant included provisions for multicultural activities which became a perfect vehicle for moving our work forward.

First, we hired consultants from the community who were credentialed in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and familiar with the populations we serve. Over the course of a



Stages of Sequential Acquisition of a Second Language

Tabors and Snow (1994) have identified four stages of sequential acquisition of a new language. The stages represent a general pattern of second language learning for children, after the age of 3, in English-speaking settings.

Stage 1: Home Language Use. Monolingual children in a new language environment continue to speak their home language.

Stage 2: Nonverbal Period. This stage begins when children start to realize that their primary language is not being understood. They will become quiet, watching and listening intently, and often use nonverbal means to communicate.

Stage 3: Telegraphic and Formulaic Speech. During this time, children intentionally use individual vocabulary words in the new language or put them together in a short sequence or short sentence. Some mixing of the English and the home language may occur.

Stage 4: Productive Language. The child begins to speak English relatively well. Sentences may be rather awkward and words over- or under-generalized at times.

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition*
(http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

year, they observed our classrooms and reviewed our assessment tools, curriculum, and policies. They held focus groups with staff and management to assess needs and concerns. Based on their findings, they made recommendations concerning our work with ELLs and refugee families, and subsequently developed a comprehensive training series.

The training began with a report on our cultural responsiveness as an agency. We then discussed best practice models that incorporate current research findings about multilingual, multicultural service delivery. To assure program-wide recognition and understanding of the changing dynamics of our work, all managers, lead teachers, and family service workers were required to attend the series.

In addition to participating in the training, PROP Head Start has:

- adapted an observational tool (from Tabors 1997) for teachers to track English language acquisition and
- formed a “Multicultural Book Group” that meets once a month.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

To maintain our momentum, the consultants met with our entire management team again in the fall 2003. We reviewed their recommendations and talked about further implementation. This continuing dialogue has been instrumental in shifting the focus of our staff and classrooms around this work.

Various community resources have helped support language acquisition and the home cultures in our classrooms. We have hired bilingual community members to work in the classrooms. They remain until the children understand the routine and feel comfortable in the new setting. Because each child adjusts differently, interpreters may remain with children for one week or three months.

We also have partnered with the foreign language department of a local university. Students who are bilingual in English and Spanish volunteer in our programs for two days a week for a semester and earn course credit. Bilingual community members make recordings of children's books in both English and the home language. Then high school volunteers put them onto CDs. Parents help us label the classrooms with words from their home languages. In addition to promoting the home languages, these activities allow us to learn more about the children's cultures.

A Unique Literacy Project

The most inspiring and informative multicultural project was the "New Mainer Book Project," a collaboration between PROP and the Maine Humanities Council. We identified the Sudanese culture in Portland as being under-represented in children's literature. Community elders helped the project recruit Sudanese women to tell stories that were important to them—stories that they would like their children to hear.

During the fall of 2003, we met with the Sudanese women. We found that the most effective way to involve refugee families in outreach projects was to meet them at times when they would normally congregate. For the Sudanese communities, this meant meeting on Sundays after church.

Because there are many tribes and dialects in the Sudan, we met tribe by tribe. We ate together and listened as the stories were told. We heard fables, folktales, creation myths, and anecdotal accounts of love, marriage, birthing, and

loss. In all, approximately 50 women participated in the project.

The Maine Humanities Council engaged a noted children's author (who spoke some Arabic) to collect the stories into a book that reflects the Sudanese experience. Although the book is still in the early stages, the information we gathered about the Sudanese way of life has been invaluable to our staff—information that was often missed when reading an article or conversing quickly with a parent.

Staff Development and Hiring

To reach out to the new communities we serve and to involve them meaningfully in our work, we started to attend Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings held by the Portland public schools. PACs are culturally specific groups that focus on issues affecting parents of school-age children. They are held on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, so weekend work has become an important part of the outreach effort. We learned that many Portland families do not understand what PROP offers nor do they realize the comprehensive nature of Head Start.

To address these needs in the multicultural community and to further develop the cultural competence of staff, we formed an agency-wide Cultural Capacity Committee for outreach, training, and hiring. While participation was voluntary, we asked that each department of the agency send a representative.

The initial activities of the Cultural Capacity Committee led us directly into the communities. We attended a Multicultural Outreach Breakfast, neighborhood block parties, and school PAC meetings. We developed a multicultural resource library and offered culture-by-culture workshops regarding education, home visits, and barriers to accessing service. One of the most important efforts was the identification and establishment of "Cultural Brokers" (bilingual/bicultural liaisons) who helped introduce our programs to the community and train staff regarding culturally specific concerns.

Through the work of the Cultural Capacity Committee, we have changed how we conduct our work. We have developed culturally responsive policies about interpreting, holidays, toileting, and meal-modification.

While services to families have improved, recruiting and employing refugee and immigrant parents remain areas of growth for us. With Early Learning Opportunities funding, the agency has brought together Somali and Sudanese women at our local resource and referral agency (Child Care Connections) to discuss issues of childrearing. Many women were interested in starting their own home daycare centers or working in local preschool and child care centers.

In response, we collaborated with Portland Adult Education, Child Care Connections, the Child Abuse and Neglect Council, and several other child care programs in the city to offer pre-vocational ESOL classes to 15 refugee women. The classes were held on-site at a neighboring child care center, and child care was provided.

Because the job interview process in the United States is very different, PROP offered “practice” interviews. We modeled and coached the women to talk about themselves and their achievements so they would be competitive applicants in the job market. In turn, our staff and Policy Council representatives learned how to successfully engage the applicants in the interviewing process. As a result, three participants have been hired as permanent staff in the agency while three others are on the substitute list.

Final Thoughts

We at PROP know that this work is very time consuming and that weekend work is necessary. We also know that we have more to learn, yet, we have made much progress. We have established credibility with both the provider and client communities. Families want to enroll their children in our programs. Parents want to be employed in the agency. Other groups seek us out as collaborators. Cultural brokers demonstrate their appreciation of our commitment by offering free training, interpreting, or research services. The benefit to the agency, and to all of us who have been involved in this multi-cultural endeavor, is without measure. ■

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BIENVENIDA A IRELYS RAMÍREZ



Photo by D. Mentzer

Irelys Ramirez is the Bilingual Program Specialist at the Head Start Bureau. She first learned about Head Start when her young daughter was enrolled in a program. For Irelys, one of the most valuable and distinctive components of the program was parent involvement.

Irelys comes from Region II, where she has worked with several ACF programs for more than 20 years. In 1997, she joined Head Start as a Program Specialist; providing guidance, technical assistance and policy interpretation to local grantees in Puerto Rico. According to

Irelys, the best part of her job was visiting Head Start centers, where she was able to observe teachers and children in action. She adds, "The teachers and directors have such passion for their work that they continually inspired me to assist them in improving their programs." She was also a Team Leader for on-site PRISM reviews.

Looking ahead to her new role, Irelys is committed to supporting the Head Start Bureau in the development of policies and strategies for English language learners and their families served in Head Start and Early Head Start.

A HEAD START PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON LANGUAGE LEARNING

BY SAHAR ALI

My children started out in a home-based Head Start program. The home visitor helped us get used to life in a new country. We were speaking both Arabic and English at home. When my children entered the center-based program, I participated in early literacy training in order to work in the classroom. There, I learned more about the importance of speaking my home language with my children.

So, we decided to only speak Arabic at home because the children would be exposed to English in Head Start, in elementary school, and in the community. I also send them to the mosque once a week to learn Arabic. I have bought some videotapes in Arabic; we see some TV programs in Arabic. I have a few picture books of the Arabic alphabet and the numbers.

When we go back to Egypt for a visit, my oldest child speaks only Arabic there. The younger ones speak both Arabic and some English. I want them to be with other children who speak Arabic because they will "catch" the language from them.

I explain to my children that learning and speaking two languages will be an advantage. Their high school and college years will be enhanced by this knowledge. Also, when they become part of the working world, their experiences with two languages will make them more successful.

I hope that Head Start will continue to support the home languages of its families. If the Child Development Associate training was offered in different languages (now it is in English/Spanish), more teachers and assistants could be hired who are able to prepare the children's curriculum in their home languages. Head Start programs might sponsor more multi-language book fairs for families and children. I wish that teachers could purchase more materials, such as books and games in different languages. Then parents would have material in their home languages to read with their children, and their language would be kept alive in the Head Start program.

I am grateful that Head Start helped me realize how important it is for my family to speak our home language. I want to encourage other families to do the same. ■

Sahar Ali's children attended the Higher Horizons HS/EHS program in Falls Church, VA. T: 703-931-4474; E: sahar_ali22041@yahoo.com

THE PARENT-MENTORING INITIATIVE IS UNDERWAY

In the summer of 2004, the Head Start Bureau launched The Head Start Parent-Mentoring Training Program designed to:

- increase the ability of parents to enhance their children's language and literacy skills through everyday experiences and
- provide parents with critical communication skills and strategies for sharing their learning with other parents in their communities.

Over 1,000 mothers, fathers, and legal guardians representing local Head Start grantees and delegate agencies attended the training events around the country. Their children were entering their last year of Head Start before going onto kindergarten.

Participants were enthusiastic and eager to implement what they had learned back home. One Parent-Mentor reflected on her experience in the training, "I walked through the doors with my own knowledge of being an ordinary parent; now I am leaving with the extra knowledge and confidence to share my experiences with other parents." A Spanish-speaking Parent-Mentor remarked, "This training gave me confidence to continue using our Spanish language. It is very important that we keep our roots in our children's vocabulary. That way they can have not one, but two languages. This will help them to succeed in everything."

The Head Start Bureau staff made these inspiring remarks at the end of each training, "As Parent-Mentors you will be more intentional about working with your own children and you will become a support for other parents as they help their children." In fact, many Parent Mentors have made an impact on their local programs. A Parent-Mentor from California recently wrote to the Regional Office, "Our agency now has a Parent-Mentor Program and guess who put it together? I will soon be staff. We have openings for 3 paid positions. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month to share ideas and learning activities. Last time we met at the local library. We were given a tour, applied for library cards for parent/child, even booked a story teller. I have planned a Family's Reading Together Workshop. Each participant will get a free book." No doubt, other Parent-Mentors across the country are making a difference in the lives of their own children and of other families too.

The Parent-Mentoring Training will be extended in 2005 to the Head Start families of 3- and 4-year-old children in the Regions, including Puerto Rico. For more information, contact Willa Choper Siegel, Program Specialist, Education Branch, Head Start Bureau, T: 202-205-4011; E: wsiegel@acf.hhs.gov

BY WILLA CHOPER SIEGEL AND BARRY M. GARY

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS THROUGH FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES

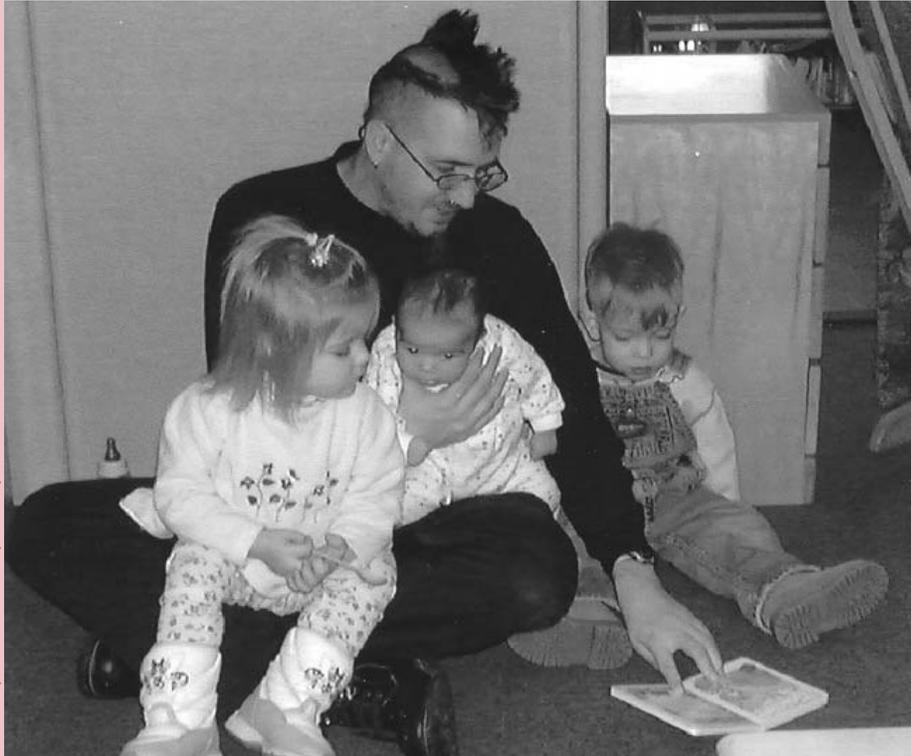


Photo by W. Donlan, Bay County EHS.

Family literacy services reach out to all parents and children in Head Start.

What are Family Literacy Services?

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are committed to helping parents contribute to their children's success. By focusing on the literacy of parents and of their children at the same time, family literacy services provide an effective strategy to help parents accomplish this. Family literacy services are mandated by the Head Start Act of 1998 and identified specifically in 1304.40(e)(4)(i)&(ii) of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*. However, elements of family literacy can be seen throughout the *Program Performance Standards* because the philosophies of Head Start and family literacy are so similar. In fact, family literacy services impact on the entire range of positive child outcomes described in the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework*.

For the last five years, The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) has provided training and technical assistance and other resources to support the legislative requirements and the implementation of the *Program Performance Standards* related to family literacy. Family literacy services

are multi-focused and inter-related. They include:

- parenting education for family members
- child development information for program staff
- parent-child activities and experiences
- adult education at all levels

These services may be delivered directly through the Head Start or Early Head Start program or in collaboration with community partners. Family literacy services, supported by the resources of the NCFL, reach out to all parents and children in Head Start. They can address many needs of families whose home language is not English or who may have recently immigrated. Family literacy services are an important link between families, program staff, and local communities. More information about the NCFL is available at www.familit.org. ■

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HOW CAN TEACHERS AND PARENTS HELP YOUNG CHILDREN BECOME (AND STAY) BILINGUAL?

Teachers can take a first step by gathering information about the languages and cultures of the families.

by **Patton O. Tabors** and **Lisa M. López**

“... yo creo que una persona siendo bilingüe tiene muchas mas posibilidades de llegar mucho mas lejos que una persona que sepa solo un idioma.”

“...I think that a person being bilingual has many more opportunities to get much further [in life] than a person who only knows one language.”—Clara’s mother, Head Start, May 28, 2002.

When children in the United States enter early childhood classrooms from homes where English is not the primary language, they become involved in the process of becoming bilingual (learning to speak more than one language). As expressed by Clara’s mother, there is growing recognition that being bilingual can provide opportunities that may not be available to monolinguals, people who can speak only one language. Further, bilingualism can be beneficial for children’s early language and literacy development, for family communication and functioning, and for children’s feelings of self-worth.

In order for the process of becoming bilingual to be successful, parents and teachers need to work together to build understanding about what it means for a child to become bilingual and how becoming bilingual can be accomplished under varied circumstances. How should teachers and parents collaborate in helping young children become bilingual? We think that these activities are important:

- collect information about the children and their families
- develop a plan for children’s continued use of the home language
- develop a plan for children’s acquisition of English

Collecting Information About the Children and Their Families

“Me vine con mi mamá, mi papá ya estaba aquí, me vine con mi hermano menor, pero por mejorar. [En este país hay] más oportunidades de progresar que en el país de nosotros. [Pero todavía tengo] un hermano, el mayor, y mi abuelita, así que es por la que mas bien viajo por allá.”



Photo by H. Wilson. Community Services for Children HS.

A buddy system pairs children who are proficient in English with English learners.

“I came with my mom, my father was already here, and I came with my younger brother, but to have a better life. [In this country] there are more opportunities to succeed than in my country. [However, I still have] a brother, the oldest, and my grandmother, and that is my main reason for going back to visit.”—Rosa and Ramon’s mother, Head Start, June 12, 2002.

The first step is for teachers to find out all they can about the language(s) and culture(s) of the families. Of course, this may not be easy when teachers and parents do not communicate in a common language. For this reason, it may be useful



By emphasizing the support of the home language at home and encouraging positive and stimulating learning experiences in the early care settings and in the community, caregivers are working to prevent the overall language delays that can affect future school-related academic achievement (Thomas & Collier 2002).

Excerpt from Sylvia Y. Sánchez . *Is It Wrong to Speak to My Babies in Their Home Language?* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

for teachers to use a questionnaire that can be translated into the parents' home language or that can be filled out by parents in English with the help of community members.

Designed to gather cultural and linguistic information about the child and the family, a questionnaire might ask:

- What name do you use for your child? How did you decide to give your child this name? Does this name have a particular meaning or translation?
- What language(s) do you use to talk to your child? Who else does your child spend time with and what language do they use?

Other questions could gather information about the child's preferences and routines and the parents' expectations for the child. (See the sample questionnaire in Tabors' book *One Child*,

It is only if children continue to learn their home language and begin to learn English that they will be on the pathway to bilingualism.

Two Languages (1997), pp. 96-98). A questionnaire could be incorporated into the initial home visit when the family and child enroll in Head Start.

Once teachers have collected this information, they can begin thinking about how they want to discuss the issue of bilingualism with parents. In interviews with Head Start parents and other parents of children who speak Spanish at home, two themes emerge. Parents want their children to continue to use Spanish. And parents want their children to learn English. In fact, it is only if children continue to learn their home language and begin to learn English that they will be on the pathway to bilingualism. How can this goal be accomplished?

Developing a Plan for Children's Continued Use of the Home Language

"Aparte pues que esa es la lengua de uno su maestra nos dice siempre, la maestra de Tomás, que siempre en casa puro español. Como en su escuela todo el día es puro inglés entonces nos dice que en casa no le hablemos por favor inglés para que aprenda la lengua natal de uno y no el puro exactamente inglés."

"Besides being our language, his teacher always tells us, Tomás' teacher, that at home always use only Spanish. At school he spends all day using English so she tells us to please not speak to him in English so that he can learn his native tongue and not only English."—Tomas' mother, public pre-K, August 24, 2002.

Encourage parents to maintain the home language. Working with parents around the issue of home language use can be challenging, as parents may hear from many sources that it is important for them to start speaking English with their children as soon as possible. The important messages to get across to parents are:

- Children will need to continue to speak their home language if they are to become bilingual.
- Communication within the family provides children with necessary information about the world.
- Families should communicate in the language they feel most comfortable using.
- Research shows that children with a strong foundation in their home language do better in school (Tabors 1997).

Teachers who are confident about these messages and are willing to collaborate with parents to help maintain the home language can help parents make the decision, as Tomás' mother has, to keep using their home language with their children.

Bring the home language(s) into the classroom. Depending on the linguistic composition of the classroom (both the children and the staff), different approaches are used to incorporate the language(s). If the teachers and the children share the same home language, then the curriculum can capitalize on this fact. With the collaboration of parents, teachers can set appropriate goals for home language use.

BECOMING (AND STAYING) BILINGUAL

However, if teachers and children do not share the same language(s), then it is necessary to make the curriculum multi-linguistic. Suggestions for teachers include:

- encourage children to speak their home languages with classmates who share that language.
- introduce the different alphabets or writing systems of the home languages.
- ask parents to teach an activity, present a song, tell a story, or read a book using their home language.
- find story books in the children's home languages and/or have parents develop story books in their home languages to add to the classroom library.
- introduce new vocabulary words in English and find out what that word would be in at least one other language.
- bring story-tellers into the class who can tell a story in another language.

Developing a Plan for Children's Acquisition of English

"Sí, sí sí eso sí, [que ella aprenda inglés] me preocupa...aquí el inglés es predominante y en toda parte necesita hablar inglés."

"Yes, yes, yes, that is so, I worry [about her learning English]...here [in the United States] English is the predominant [language] and you need to know how to speak English everywhere you go."—Maricarmen's mother, Head Start, June 17, 2002.

When and how should English be introduced to young children from homes where it is not the primary language? Of course, it depends. In a classroom where all of the children and the teachers share the same home language, English can be introduced as a "foreign language." One approach designates a particular time of the day as English period. At this time, another teacher who is a native speaker of English is in charge of the classroom activities. Goals for these activities will be set by the teachers and the parents together.

A second option for using a home language and English at the same time would involve developing a two-way or dual language classroom or classrooms. In this model, approximately half of the children have a greater proficiency in the home language and half have a greater proficiency in English.

In these classrooms, instruction is planned to occur in one or the other of the languages at a given time so that all of the children are developing bilingual abilities.

In a multilingual classroom where children come from a variety of home language backgrounds, teachers usually use English as the classroom language. In this situation, a variety of well-documented techniques are useful in helping children make progress in acquiring English. Some techniques focus on how teachers communicate in English, and other techniques focus on how teachers organize their classrooms.

Communication Techniques to Help Children Who Are Learning English

When teachers use English with children who are just learning English, they try to ensure that they are understood. For this reason, teachers rely on techniques like buttressing (using non-verbal cues, such as gestures), repetition (using the same phrases over and over again), and talking about the here and now (referring to objects and activities in plain view of the children). Teachers often provide running commentary (talking about what they are doing while they are doing it) during activities and are careful to expand and extend any words or phrases that a child uses in English. Finally, teachers also use a technique called "upping the ante" in which they encourage children to respond in English when they are ready (Tabors 1997).

Classroom Organization to Help Children Who Are Learning English

Classrooms with consistent routines are extremely helpful for young children who are learning English. They come to know what to expect and begin to navigate the classroom successfully. By using small groups for activity work and by making sure that the English learners are included in those activities, it is possible to tailor the use of English to the ability level of individual children. It is also possible to establish a buddy system, where children in the classroom who are already proficient in English pair up with English learners. Finally, it is important to have places in the classroom where English

learning children can sit quietly or use manipulatives or look at pictures or play alone. These places can be thought of as safe havens in an otherwise demanding classroom situation.

Conclusion

Although we often think that young children can learn a second language with little effort, research demonstrates that this is not the case. In fact, the process of learning a second language and the process of maintaining a home language at the same time are cognitive and social challenges for young children. However, with the help of their parents and their teachers, it is possible for young children to become bilingual. ■

All quotes in this article come from interviews administered by Lisa M. Lopez, National Science Foundation (NSF) Minority Postdoctoral Fellow (010920), in collaboration with the Early Childhood Study of Language and Literacy Development of Spanish-speaking Children, a sub-project of Acquisition of Literacy in English, a program project of the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC, funded by the NICHD and the Institute of Education Sciences (5-P01-HD39530), Patton O. Tabors, Principal Investigator.

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ENROLLMENT BY PRIMARY LANGUAGE OF THE FAMILY AT HOME

As reported in the *Head Start Program Information Report* for the 2003 – 2004 Program Year:

English	772,320	72.40%
Spanish	243,541	22.83%
East Asian Languages	11,830	1.11%
Native Central/ South American and Mexican Languages	8,671	0.81%
Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages	7,160	0.67%
Pacific Island Languages	5,173	0.48%
European and Slavic Languages	5,026	0.47%
Caribbean Languages	4,182	0.39%
African Languages	4,063	0.38%
Native North American/ Alaska Native Languages	2,063	0.19%
Other Languages	2,678	0.25%

BY JUDITH R. CRUZADO-GUERRERO

BUILDING STRONG LANGUAGE FOUNDATIONS IN EARLY HEAD START

What practices can Early Head Start (EHS) programs implement to support the home languages and cultures of the families and to support the infants and toddlers who are English language learners? The Early Head Start National Resource Center @ ZERO TO THREE (2001) makes the following recommendations. They parallel the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* which EHS programs are required to implement.

The recommended practices for EHS programs are to:

- Involve parents and families in sharing their language and culture through a range of activities at home and in the program.
- Collaborate with community partners as well as state and local programs that work closely with culturally and linguistically diverse families. Ask for volunteers who share the same culture and language of the children to spend some time in the classroom.
- Communicate with the families in a variety of ways using different language approaches and resources. Provide both written and verbal communication, and whenever possible, translate into the home languages. Keep them informed about the best practices for supporting language development.
- Encourage parents to share music, songs, and stories for children that are from other cultures and in different languages.
- Use visual images (such as books, posters, and photos), furnishings, toys, and foods that reflect the cultural diversity of the families.
- Communicate with children in a variety of ways using their home language. Hire and train qualified bilingual caregivers BUT if the caregiver does not speak the child's home language, search for resources (songs, toys) that help the infant or toddler feel at home.
- Involve all parents in curriculum development. Ensure that the curriculum is individualized to support the language goal that parents have identified for their children. For example, is the goal to learn the home language first, to learn English first, or to learn both simultaneously?



Photo by J. Brough Schamp, Higher Horizons HS/EHS.

It is important to communicate with young children in a variety of ways.

- Conduct dual-language assessments when necessary to obtain accurate information about the child's progress. Include ongoing, systematic observations of the children's behavior and language.
- Respect, value, and promote the home languages and cultures for the ultimate development and learning of the children (NAEYC 1995). ■

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BY SHARON YANDIAN

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAMS (MSHS) JUNTOS HACEMOS LA DIFERENCIA

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs, nationally administered from the Region 12 Migrant and Seasonal Program Branch, are designed to provide comprehensive services to eligible mobile migrant and seasonal farmworker families and their children, birth to compulsory school age.

Geographically spread out in over 37 states, there are currently over 68 MSHS agencies in the United States. These programs serve approximately 3,000 seasonal children and 31,000 migrant children, of which 40% are under the age of three. Of the total population enrolled in MSHS programs, 97% are Hispanic, and Spanish is the dominant language for 9 out of 10 children.

Migrant Head Start was established in 1969 to serve migrant farm worker infants/toddlers, preschoolers and their families. The program was initiated because both parents worked full-time for part of the year in the agricultural fields and children were often at high-risk for being exposed to weather conditions as well as environmental hazards such as pesticides.

Seasonal farmworker services were added in 1998 when it was recognized that migrant families who no longer moved in search of agricultural work also deserved to be eligible to be served in migrant programs. They have similar characteristics but no longer move from one place to another.

As with all Head Start programs, migrant and seasonal parents are an integral part of the management and administrative decision-making structure. Parents actively participate in all aspects of program operations in grantee and delegate



Photo by J. Greenburg, Okeechobee Migrant HS.

MSHS staff believe that children benefit from hearing and speaking two languages. They are volunteers at centers, staff, and members of parent committees and Policy Councils.

MSHS programs are extremely complex. Different programs in different states may serve the same family as it changes location. Programs operate on different schedules. Program length (number of months) and hours of operation are diverse, with some programs operating over 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. The shortest reported length of a program is 5 weeks and the longest program length is 11 months. Programs use the location of the grantee/delegate and the type of crops being harvested, cultivated or processed to determine when the program will be open.

Because of changes in the agricultural industry, migrant streams are in flux

and many families have found it necessary to change what is typically known as their “Home Base” state to another state entirely. For example, some families find themselves traveling westward toward the central United States instead of from south to north as was typically the case. This pattern is expected to continue since the agricultural industry itself is in a state of constant change.

Promoting the Home Language and English

Migrant and Seasonal Programs go to great lengths to support and foster the home language of families, primarily Spanish, and at the same time strive to provide a classroom environment that supports the acquisition of English from an early age. Migrant and Seasonal program staff believe that children benefit from exposure to two languages. The potential advantages of being bilingual in today’s world are enormous, and Migrant and Seasonal staff foster bilingualism wherever possible. Though hiring qualified temporary staff is often very challenging, MSHS programs are committed to having Spanish and English role models in the classroom.

MSHS program staff facilitate second language acquisition by respecting young children as individuals and by planning learning experiences that address their individual strengths, needs and interests. Classroom staff equip their classrooms

The proportion of Head Start children who hear Spanish at home is increasing at a rapid pace. Head Start's Hispanic Implementation Initiative calculated county populations by age and Hispanic origin for 2010 and 2020 to indicate how local client bases might change in coming years.

To view the changing demographics of your county, go to Brad Edmondson's article, *Immigration is a Powerful Force - How Does It Affect Head Start?* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)



MSHS PROGRAMS

with materials that invite verbal exchanges and work to engage each child in many types of communication each day. In addition, classroom staff use their understanding of each child's background to initiate and sustain communication. MSHS teachers ease the pain of relocation by talking about the experience in positive ways:

- What we (you) saw on the way...
- How the new location is exciting....
- What we (you) left...

Above all, classroom staff facilitate second language acquisition by creating safe environments in which young children can try out and experiment with the new language—and in which they can continue to develop their first language. By continuing to support the development of the child's first language while gradually and carefully introducing a second language, classroom staff offer preschool children appropriate supports for a life-long process. Starting in the spring of 2004, the Migrant and Seasonal Head

Start programs participated in the NRS. Four- and five-year-olds who were enrolled for four months or more and were eligible for kindergarten were assessed. (see Schultz, page 52).



Photo by J. Greenburg, Indianatown Migrant HS.

Diverse learning experiences promote language development.

Creating Administrative Practices

MSHS programs encourage and support second-language acquisition and know that learning a second language cannot be the sole responsibility of program staff. Two actions that have worked for MSHS programs and that are particularly beneficial for staff and parents are to: (1) develop a program-wide language acquisition policy state-

ment; and (2) promote and support ongoing professional development for staff in knowledge of first- and second-language acquisition (see Gonzales, http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm). Both send a clear message that children's language development is important and a priority for the program.

The policy statement makes clear exactly how the program will support the home language and culture within the context of demonstrating progress towards listening, speaking and understanding English. It should also make clear that progress for each child differs. The policy statement helps establish what the organization believes and generates discussion among staff and parents as well as helping them educate each other. Professional development activities ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to facilitate children's first- and second-language development.

While working with Migrant and Seasonal children provides unique challenges to Head Start staff, it also presents a unique opportunity for fostering bilingual education with preschool children. ■

There are two types of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs.

Home Based programs:

- Serve families in the areas families call home
- Are located in the southern part of the United States (e.g., Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, New Mexico, southernmost California, and Texas)
- Provide services to mobile farmworker families as they return to the place they call home primarily from September through May.

Upstream programs:

- Provide services to migrant families as they move (generally northward) in search of agricultural work
- Provide direct services in a shorter time frame
- Provide service that always encompasses the summer months
- Are located in, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Washington, and other states.

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CREATING A VISION FOR SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

By acknowledging prior misunderstandings about language learning, program leadership can develop an informed language policy. **by Eileen M. Torres**

“When I was little and really wanted something, I prayed to God in two languages, just in case God didn’t know one of them. Knowing two languages opens many doors for children, ensuring that nothing is lost in the translation.” Rafael Guerra, Executive Director of East Coast Migrant Head Start Project

Head Start programs that serve children and families whose primary language is other than English face a unique challenge. How do they ensure children’s progress in listening, understanding, and speaking English as specified in the Child Outcomes Framework while at the same time being developmentally and linguistically appropriate as required in the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* (1304.21)? Thoughtful and committed program leadership is key.

Developing the Vision

Language and culture are intricately linked. They are fundamental to the development of identity and are essential connections for families. When a family’s language and culture are not valued in the educational setting, children may experience emotional distress or feel distanced from their parents and other relatives. Without a solid social-emotional foundation, children’s cognitive development may be jeopardized. Therefore, establishing a language policy that affirms cultural and linguistic identity is central to Head Start’s commitment to promoting positive child outcomes for all children.

What are the steps Head Start program leaders can take to ensure that local policies and practices support children and families whose language is other than English?

First, program leaders need to understand the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*. They need to understand what the *Program Performance Standards* do and do not say. They do

require that programs recognize, accept, and affirm the language and cultures of families and children. They do require that, if possible, one staff member speak the same language as the majority of children (see Plutro, page 4).

Second, program leaders need to be well-informed about second language acquisition. Research demonstrates the positive effects of supporting the home language and of bilingual learning environments (see articles at http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm). Administrators also need to reflect on their own experiences as language learners and as members of a cultural group.

Photo by J. Greenburg, Bowling Green Migrant HS.



Third, program leaders need to examine their agencies’ systems and services in order to formulate a sound language policy. Other staff can be included in this process. Consider these questions:

- How does the program support cultural and linguistic diversity?
- How does the program use the children’s first language in the classroom?
- How do the policies and practices impact children and families whose home language is not English?
- How do family literacy efforts reflect the languages spoken by the families?
- How do hiring practices reflect the diversity of the families served?



Before age 3, children exposed to two languages will appear to learn both as one. They may often mix the two languages as they speak. At about 3 years of age, children begin to separate the two languages. They often associate each language with its primary speakers, such as Spanish or Chinese with their parents and English with Head Start teachers.

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

CREATING A VISION

Some programs find that they have an “unspoken” language policy without realizing it. By addressing these questions honestly and openly, current policies and practices will be clarified and, where necessary, adapted and modified. Some programs may want to consider including these questions in their program self-assessment.

Finally, it is essential that program leaders formulate and articulate a positive vision regarding second language acquisition and home language use. They need to ensure that both parents and staff have the opportunity for questions and input on the language policy. By sharing up-to-date information about best practices, collaboration can be fostered.

Implementing the Vision

The implementation of the program’s vision is contingent upon a number of factors. First, the program must define the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Head Start population in order to plan appropriate services. Where there are predominately two languages, such as English and Spanish, dual language models may be considered to give all children the opportunity to acquire two languages. Multi-lingual Head Start programs need to consider the number of languages spoken by the families and children and then develop strategies to support the diversity. If only a few children speak a language other than English, programs need to ensure that services designed to serve the majority are equally responsive to all children and families.

Another factor is the availability of community resources that can assist a program in supporting first language development and affirming the culture(s) of the children and families. Programs need to identify staff and volunteers who speak the home languages. Finding resources can be challenging, but nonetheless essential to ensuring that the children have the opportunity to develop a strong linguistic foundation in their home language that will facilitate their learning English.

Also, an important factor is having leaders—both staff and parents—who model the vision for others in the organization. Their behavior demonstrates how cultural and linguistic diversity can be supported. For example, they intentionally speak their home language inside and outside of the classroom or at program meetings.

Of course, Head Start staff affect the implementation of the vision. Therefore, administrators must emphasize how important it is for all staff to learn about second language acquisition, to develop an understanding of the families’ cultures, and to support language development at home and in the program. Program leaders can ensure there is teacher training on relevant topics, such as language development and instructional strategies; they can encourage teaching teams to apply their knowledge to the child assessment process. Programs also can review and improve existing management systems to make them more culturally and linguistically responsive. Most important, leaders can inspire a shared vision among the staff by appealing to the common goal of providing the best services to Head Start children and families.

Celebrating the Vision

Head Start leaders are busy, but they must take time to reflect on accomplishments that bring them closer to their goals. The identification of new community resources or a new volunteer who speaks the language of the families or new bilingual materials for the curriculum are small steps to show commitment. Leaders need to communicate the positive results of the program’s language policy, whether these include an increase in parent participation or observable gains in child outcomes. Also, leaders need to acknowledge the contributions of families and promote the idea that literacy behaviors can be cultivated in any language.

With informed and committed leadership, Head Start programs can establish policies and practices that support the development of the child’s home language and emphasize the child’s connection to the family as well as the child’s progress in learning English. Such policies and practices aid in preparing children for success in school and in life. Let us continue to hold the presence of more than one language in the life of a child in high esteem and create Head Start programs that provide linguistic continuity for all children. ■

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QUYAKAMSU ELAQULLUTA LIITFIGPUTEM GUUN: WELCOME TO THE SHARING AND LEARNING PLACE

A Head Start program develops a curriculum to preserve Alaskan Native cultures and languages. **by Bulletin staff with Onsomu Onchonga**

In 1999, after more than nine years as a Head Start administrator for a large grantee in Georgia, Onsomu Onchonga became Director of Kawerak Head Start. The program enrolls 203 children in Nome, Alaska and in island villages in the Bering Straits. In the isolated areas, Head Start is often the only program provider for early childhood services besides the public school districts. Some Head Start classrooms serve only 5-10 children. Many families speak English at home; others speak a native language—either Siberian Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, or Central Yup'ik.¹

Onsomu took on a challenge. A firm believer in community involvement, he was committed to including parents and Tribal elders in shaping the development of the Kawerak Head Start. He affirms that one of the strengths of Head Start is that parent participation and community partnerships are required by the *Program Performance Standards*. He explains, “I wanted to build from the ground up. I didn’t want the Policy Council just to be a rubber stamp. The Tribal belief/way is to make decisions by consensus, and that’s my philosophy too.”

Over a two-year period, Onsomu went to visit each Head Start program. He traveled by plane to the 12 villages, sometimes delayed by bad weather. Accompanied by the President of the Policy Council and 5-6 members of the Executive Board, he met with the village elders. They often had tea together, a village tradition in Onsomu’s native Kenya as well. They discussed the needs of the village and solutions that included child care, employment training, and medical services. In Teller, for example, they learned of a transportation problem for Head Start students, addressed it with the Bering Strait School District administration, and found resolution. In

addition, a community needs survey was conducted with Tribal leaders and city government officials, school administrators, and Head Start parents to identify service needs.

A recurring theme during various discussions was language preservation. In some villages, such as Gambell, children spoke the native language, but due to outside pressures, it was being used less and less. In other villages, the children did not speak their Inupiaq dialect, nor did most of the adults, including classroom teachers. In this case, the villagers’ goal was revitalization. Across the programs, parents were con-

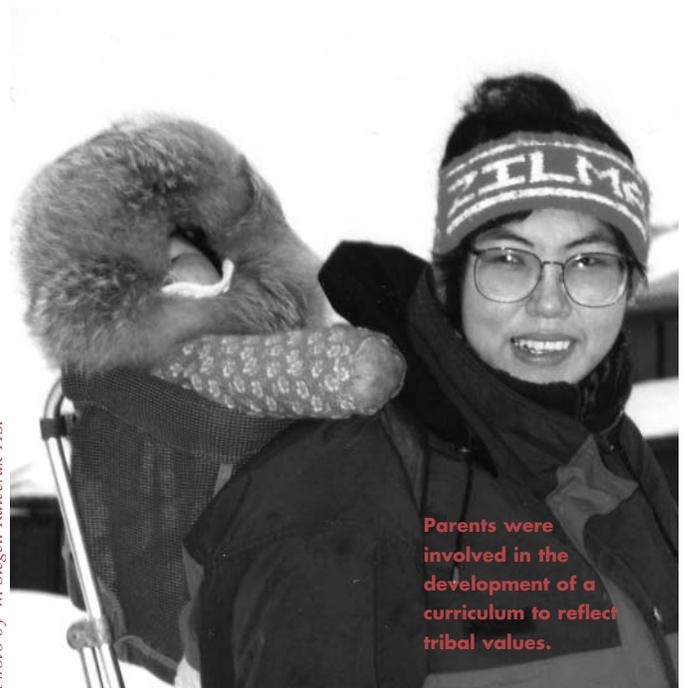


Photo by W. Siegel, Kawerak HS.

Parents were involved in the development of a curriculum to reflect tribal values.

cerned not only about the preservation of culture through language, but also that their children’s identity and psychological health were threatened if they were not grounded in their linguistic and cultural heritage.

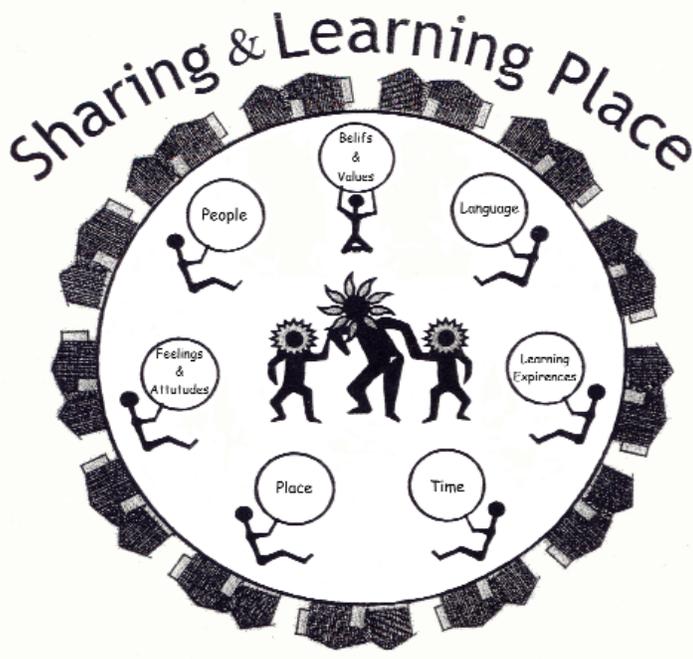
What was Onsomu’s reaction to these concerns about language and culture? “I wasn’t surprised. I come from Kenya where people were forced not to speak their home language



The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* require that programs support home language development in order to promote communication between children and their families and to build children’s cultural and linguistic identity. They also suggest the importance of acquiring English for 4- and 5-year olds in Head Start whose home language is other than English.

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

WELCOME TO THE SHARING AND LEARNING PLACE



The logo for the Kawerak Head Start reflects their curriculum approach. It shows two children dancing with an adult family member. Around them are the seven drums, each showing one aspect of the child's environment, all beating in unison. As they do in real life celebrations, the drums bring all the members of the community together in mutual sharing. The logo is based on the traditional belief that human development is a process of becoming increasingly connected with the world and its beings in wider and wider realms. Around the drums are small school buildings. The child moves outward from family to school. The task of learning is to relate successfully and with increasing understanding to each of the seven drums (the environment).

under the colonial government. Similar injustices have occurred with Native Americans and Alaska Natives.”

In January and June of 2001, a committee of Kawerak elders and Head Start parents met to begin the process of creating a new curriculum in keeping with all the *Head Start Professional Performance Standards* and integrating local culture and traditional ways of knowing. Reflecting on the process of curriculum development, Onsomu says, “The elders talked

about what they felt about the traditional ways and they looked at Western ways.” Working with a consultant and building on the Creative Curriculum that was already being implemented in classrooms, Kawerak Head Start developed the Sharing and Learning Place curriculum.

The Eskimo culture and languages are woven throughout the Sharing and Learning Place curriculum. Seven chapters provide the general framework and discuss culturally appropriate methods for presenting learning experiences. They are referred to as the Seven Drums (see sidebar) and include the traditional principles of learning that are common to all the villages (and often consistent with “modern” educational psychology and developmental practices). For example, one principle is that children learn best by building on familiar experiences. This principle is based on the idea of “growing out” that Yup’ik groups follow as they introduce the child to life, starting with the mother, then the house and householders, and then the village and villagers, and on to the tundra and its inhabitants.

Later chapters, called the Drum Beats, offer specific learning activities related to Arts and Celebrations, Land, Sky, and Water. For example, one activity designed to implement the principle --“Children learn best by building on familiar experiences” -- is creating an “observing out” area where two or three children can sit comfortably by a window. They can develop their visual skills for weather, animal behavior, and plant life, and show respect for their environment. Examples of locally based experiences to include in the classroom are the ice fishing game, basket making, and setting up a tent and meat drying racks in the dramatic play area.

The committee designed a curriculum platform that would encourage and sustain the use of Alaska Native languages in Head Start. Recognizing that programs face different situations and have different resources, the curriculum states that, “Every classroom is expected to be using strategies for addressing local language issues...The ultimate goal is creating immersion programs in which children hear and use the language they are learning 100% of the time in the classroom.” Onsomu adds this insight, “An environment will be created where children can learn and use their main language. They will gain confidence

and skills. We'll use the local language as a springboard to other learning, including learning English."

The curriculum acknowledges that "the challenge is to keep the language alive in the moment to moment communications of the classroom rather than to delegate it to separate lessons or units." The recommended strategy for teachers and children who do not have a command of the spoken language is to provide meaningful phrases to use throughout the day; each of the learning experiences in Drum Beats has a space to record phrases to teach during the activity. Adults in the village can help with translation and pronunciation; where there are bilingual teachers, they can assist. Parents are urged to learn the language along with their children. Where children speak the native language at home, its use is to be encouraged in Head Start.

In 2004, one program will begin an immersion approach. The staff and the children in this village speak the native language. Over time, other programs in Kawerak Head Start will transition into immersion classes. In Nome, parents will have a choice about placing their child in an English-speaking or a native-speaking classroom.

When interviewed by a local newspaper in 2000, Onsomu declared, "Head Start works—it works if it's done right... The

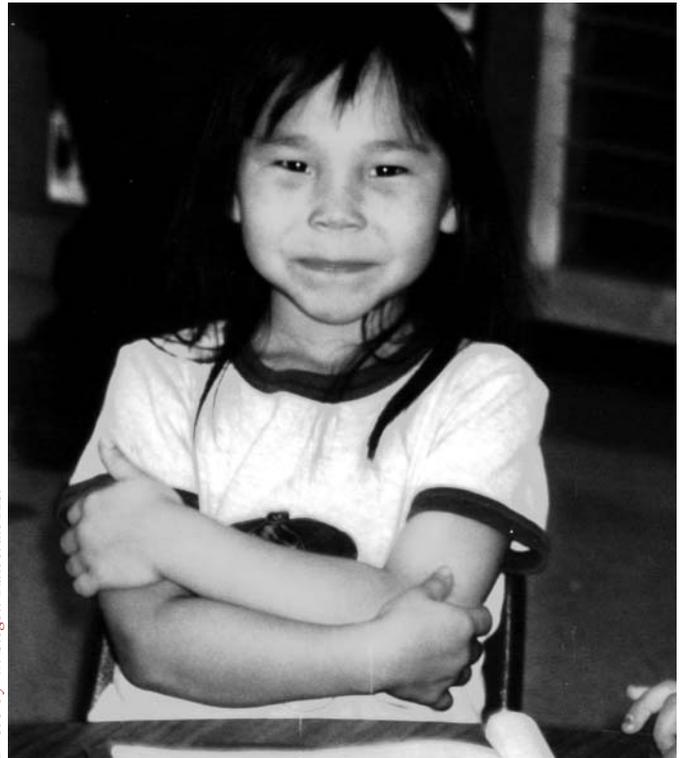


Photo by W. Siegel, Kawerak HS.

The Eskimo culture is woven throughout the Sharing and Learning Place curriculum.

community must get involved in the process, and that's the way we can help our children and their families." As Director of Kawerak Head Start, Onsomu has lead the community on an exciting journey—one that connects the community with its heritage and prepares its children for the future. ■

¹ The different spellings of Yupik and Yup'ik denote different pronunciations.

Information for this article was obtained from interviews with Onsomu Onchonga in October-November, 2003, from the Sharing and Learning Place curriculum, and from the article, "Community Involvement Makes Head Start Work," by Laurie McNicholas which appeared in The Nome Nugget (February 10, 2000).

Onsomu Onchonga was a Head Start Fellow in 2003-2004. He is the Director of Kawerak Head Start in Nome, AK. T: 907-443-9050



Photo by W. Siegel, Kawerak HS.

In Kawerak Head Start, the local language is a springboard to other learning.

A VIEW FROM PUERTO RICO

For more than 13 years, Felicitá Sanabria has worked in Head Start programs in Puerto Rico. She has been a Head Start/Early Head Start Education Coordinator with the New York Foundling (NYF) grantee in Puerto Rico for the last 7 years. She supervises eight Education Supervisors and three Mentor-Coaches who work with center-based and home-based programs. She also supervises the implementation of the curriculum, Niños y Niñas que Exploran y Construyen, written by a local educator, Dra. Angeles Molina (1996). It aligns with the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Felicitá was interviewed by Bulletin staff.

Q: What is the program’s language policy about English as a second language?

The agency is promoting language development in the children’s home language—Spanish—and in English as a second language. Our language policy comes from the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* 1304.21(a)(1)(iii), which require that programs: “Provide an environment that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition.” This Standard encompasses our teaching beliefs that we demonstrate respect for the diverse backgrounds and languages that exist in our classrooms. It also supports our use of different strategies to sustain and expand the home language. We also know that the *Child*

Outcomes Framework mandates that children will show progress in learning English, so this is one of our goals.

Our agency is committed to Program Performance Standard 1304.52

Our goal is to support our children to be successful communicators in kindergarten. Children in public school in Puerto Rico begin learning English formally in first grade.



Photo courtesy of Juana Matos HS.

We use songs to help teach vocabulary.

g (2): “When a majority of children speak the same language, at least one classroom staff member or home visitor interacting with the children must speak their language.” We have a well-defined process of staff recruitment and training. NYF hires early childhood and bilingual teachers (Spanish-English) to promote our preschoolers’ language and literacy development in Spanish and their acquisition of the English language in developmentally appropriate ways. We train teachers who are not fully bilingual in strategies for teaching English as a second language.

Q: What are some of the strategies the program uses to encourage English language learning?

As teachers, we have to respect the children’s home language and teach basic language skills and expose children to other languages. In our Head Start program in Puerto Rico, teaching English as a second language is believed to be appropriate if it relies on practices such as singing songs, playing games, and telling stories.

We use some very specific songs that are presented in both languages. One song that we include in our curriculum,

Pollitos-Chicken, was adapted by Mrs. Ramonita Auger (a Head Start teacher in Puerto Rico). The song starts with “pollitos-chicken, gallina-hen, lapiz-pencil, pluma-pen, ventana-window, puerta-door, maestro-teacher, piso-floor,” sung to a familiar tune (see box on right). We also add about 20 different key words to the song, including concepts of family members and objects in the classroom. Some other songs in English the children learn are, “The Wheels of the Bus,” and “If You Are Happy and You Know It.”

When I visit the classrooms, I see children singing songs in English and Spanish while others are listening to tapes or looking at one of the bilingual books. We also have labels around the room in Spanish and English. The children learn some greeting words (like “good morning,” “hello,” “sit down,” and “come in”), color names and number words. Children in Puerto Rico are exposed to the English language in their daily routine when they watch TV at home and visit restaurants like McDonalds or Burger King.

Q: How do you measure progress in English?

We have a system of ongoing assessment. For example, we observe the child in a normal routine and prepare a portfolio of our observations, record the child’s voice in song, and assess each child’s individual progress. We then discuss the portfolio with the

parents three times per year. The children are showing progress in listening to and understanding English as well as in speaking English.

Q: How do you include parents in their child’s language development?

We coordinate Early Learning Specialists and Mentors in all the centers to work as an Early Literacy team with the family. The parents want their children to learn to read and write in Spanish first and, when they are ready, learn English. They are informed at the Head Start orientation that English will be taught in a natural and informal way. Parents are provided English language learning activities to participate in with their children. For example, they can use the English labels on food items to help teach the alphabet.

Q: How do you, as the Education Coordinator, support the educational staff to promote language and literacy development?

Professional development is conducted in Spanish. Although our program does not offer specific teacher training in bilingualism, we do support those teachers who are not fully bilingual by teaching them instructional strategies, including songs and games in English. We try to put one bilingual teacher in each center to support the other staff.

Tune of Pollito-Chicken

Po – lli – to, chi –cken
Do- Fa – La- Fa- Fa

Ga –lli – na , hen
Do – fa- la – sol

La – piz – pen-cil
La#, La#- La- La

Y plu – ma , pen.
La sol sol fa

Repeat the same tune in the second verse

Q: What challenges does the program encounter implementing its language policy?

We have adjusted our program in line with the *Child Outcomes Framework*. We are just now gaining a grasp of teaching English as a second language. At first, teachers were anxious about the mandated indicators, but now teachers see them as a new challenge and as an opportunity for the children. We also have tried to increase our teachers’ salaries because we want to keep our best teachers to implement our language policy. ■

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BY E. DOLLIE WOLVERTON

A NEW RESOURCE FOR HEAD START LEADERS IS HERE!

The Head Start Bureau has issued a new publication entitled, *The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes*. The core of this *Guide* is a comprehensive set of effective teaching strategies to foster children's progress in each of the eight Domains of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework: language development, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social & emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical health & safety. The *Guide* provides a clear vision of what educational quality looks like: intentional, outcomes-oriented teaching and engaging, challenging learning opportunities for groups and individual children. A chapter in the *Guide* is devoted to adaptations for children who are advanced in development or for children who have disabilities.

The *Guide* addresses the learning needs of all children, including English language learners. It offers strategies related to the legislatively mandated Language Indicators targeting children's progress in listening to and understanding English and speaking English and strategies that also support their home language and culture (see the *Bulletin* Pullout). For example, strategies to support English language learners include:

- Speak English in ways that help English language learners understand. Use simple sentences, repeat what is said, use gestures and facial expressions, point to objects, use everyday vocabulary.
- Help children link English vocabulary to firsthand experiences with pictures, concrete objects, and real-life events.
- Provide lots of time and opportunities for children to talk among themselves. Pair English language learners with dominant English speakers for some activities.

Across the other Domains, the learning needs of English language learners are highlighted in the *Guide*. The creative arts allow children to build a sense of competence because there are no right or wrong ways, all products are valued, and they can rely on non-verbal communication. Drama and dramatic play provide for the use of and practice of language in a natural and spontaneous environment. Mathematics and science involve hands-on experiences that build vocabulary and concepts. As English language learners develop gross skills, they experience confidence and pride in their accomplishments which furthers their progress in other Domains; as their fine motor skills develop, they experiment with writing tools and literacy materials.

The leadership teams in Head Start programs will find this *Guide* a useful resource in staff development and parent training. It can be ordered from the Head Start Information and Publication Center at 1-866-763-6481 (toll free); 1-703-683-5769 (fax). It is also available on-line at www.headstartinfo.org. A Spanish version is available.

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STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT POSITIVE CHILD OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes presents instructional strategies to support children's progress across eight general Domains of learning and development. The strategies highlighted here are helpful when planning for culturally and linguistically diverse children and ensuring the progress of English language learners. Many more strategies are presented in the *Guide*, available in English and Spanish at www.headstartinfo.org

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Build positive, warm, nurturing relationships with English language learners so that they feel safe and less anxious. Not being able to communicate creates considerable anxiety for young children who cannot learn anything well if they are stressed.
- ◆ Speak English in ways that help English language learners understand. Use simple sentences, repeat what is said, use gestures and facial expressions, point to objects, and use everyday vocabulary.
- ◆ Gradually expand your vocabulary so English language learners continue to make progress in vocabulary development and are conceptually challenged.
- ◆ Help children link English vocabulary to real life-events, experiences with concrete objects, and pictures. Focus on the here and now until they become more proficient in English.
- ◆ Help children acquire book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness, and phonological awareness in their home language, drawing on family and community members as resources. Once acquired, these skills will transfer to English.

LITERACY

- ◆ Support early writing experiences for English language learners in their home language whenever possible.
- ◆ English language learners may recognize and identify letters of the alphabet in their home language as well as in English.

MATHEMATICS

- ◆ Math is an area where many English language learners can accelerate because they can manipulate materials, as well as their bodies and hands, to practice math skills.
- ◆ If children know how to count in their home language they can easily transfer that knowledge of numbers into English.

SCIENCE

- ◆ English language learners can touch, manipulate, and explore science materials without using language until they are comfortable verbalizing.
- ◆ It is preferable that children first learn science content in their home language so they are familiar with the concepts when introduced to science in English.

CREATIVE ARTS

- ◆ Dance, art, pantomime, and creative expression are areas where English language learners can be included without needing to rely on language skills in English.
- ◆ Ask families to share traditional stories from their cultures. Dramatize these stories.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Make sure the learning environment is welcoming to every child and reflects his or her identity and culture.
- ◆ Demonstrate respect for the children's cultures and home languages by reflecting them in books, signs, and learning experiences.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

- ◆ How linguistically diverse children approach learning will differ and will affect how quickly they progress in learning English.
- ◆ A child who is more willing to take risks with language may develop more rapidly than a child who is hesitant in attempting to speak English.

PHYSICAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ English language learners may show competence in physical skills which can help them feel more confident about their other activities and skills.

ESTRATEGIAS QUE FOMENTAN RESULTADOS POSITIVOS EN LOS NIÑOS QUE ESTÁN APRENDIENDO INGLÉS

La *Guía del personal directivo de Head Start para lograr resultados positivos en el niño* ofrece estrategias pedagógicas que fomentan el avance de los niños en los ocho dominios generales de aprendizaje y desarrollo. Las estrategias que se destacan a continuación son útiles cuando se planifican actividades para los pequeños con diversidad cultural y lingüística y para garantizar que los niños que están aprendiendo inglés puedan progresar. Esta "Guía" ofrece muchas otras estrategias y se encuentra disponible en inglés y en español en el sitio www.headstartinfo.org.

DESARROLLO LINGÜÍSTICO

- ◆ Forme vínculos positivos, cariñosos y afectivos con niños que están aprendiendo inglés, de modo que se sientan seguros y con menos ansiedad. El no poder comunicarse crea una ansiedad considerable en los niños pequeños, quienes no pueden aprender si se sienten estresados.
- ◆ Hable inglés de un modo tal, que les ayude a estos niños a entender. Utilice oraciones sencillas, repita lo que dice, use gestos y expresiones faciales, apunte hacia los objetos y use un vocabulario simple de todos los días.
- ◆ Amplíe su propio vocabulario gradualmente, de modo que los niños que están aprendiendo inglés sigan realizando avances en el desarrollo de su vocabulario y sientan que tienen un reto desde el punto de vista conceptual.
- ◆ Ayude a que los niños conecten el vocabulario en inglés con acontecimientos de la vida real, y las experiencias con objetos concretos e ilustraciones. Céntrese en el "aquí" y el "ahora" hasta que logren mayor dominio del inglés.
- ◆ Ayude a los pequeños a adquirir un conocimiento y apreciación por los libros, conciencia de la palabra escrita y conciencia fonológica en su idioma materno, usando a integrantes de su familia y de su comunidad como fuentes de información. Una vez que adquieran estas habilidades, éstas se transferirán al inglés.

ALFABETIZACIÓN

- ◆ Apoye las experiencias iniciales de escritura de los niños que están aprendiendo inglés en su idioma materno, cada vez que sea posible.
- ◆ Estos niños pueden reconocer e identificar las letras del alfabeto en su idioma materno, como también en inglés.

MATEMÁTICAS

- ◆ Las matemáticas son un área en la que muchos niños que están aprendiendo inglés pueden avanzar aceleradamente, debido a que pueden manipular materiales y usar el cuerpo y las manos para practicar sus aptitudes matemáticas.
- ◆ Si los niños saben contar en su propio idioma, pueden transferir ese conocimiento de los números fácilmente al inglés.

CIENCIAS

- ◆ Los niños que están aprendiendo inglés pueden tocar, manipular y explorar materiales de ciencias sin usar el idioma hasta que se sientan cómodos expresándolo oralmente.
- ◆ Es preferible que los niños aprendan primero las materias de ciencias en su propio idioma, para que así ya estén familiarizados con los conceptos cuando se les introduzca las ciencias en inglés.

ARTES CREATIVAS

- ◆ El baile, el arte, la pantomima [expresión y representación con gestos] y la expresión creativa son ámbitos en los que estos niños pueden ser incluidos sin necesariamente tener que depender de sus habilidades lingüísticas en inglés.
- ◆ Pídale a las familias que compartan historias tradicionales de sus culturas. Actúe estas historias.

DESARROLLO SOCIAL Y EMOCIONAL

- ◆ Asegúrese de que el entorno de aprendizaje es acogedor para todos los niños y refleja su identidad y cultura.
- ◆ Demuestre respeto por las culturas y los idiomas del hogar de los pequeños, reflejándolo en los libros, afiches y experiencias de aprendizaje que utiliza.

MÉTODOS DE APRENDIZAJE

- ◆ Los niños con diversidad lingüística abordarán el aprendizaje de una manera distinta y esto afectará el grado de rapidez con que avancen al aprender inglés.
- ◆ El niño que está más dispuesto a tomar riesgos en el ámbito del lenguaje puede desarrollarse más rápidamente que aquel que no se atreve a intentar hablar inglés.

SALUD Y DESARROLLO FÍSICO

- ◆ Los niños que están aprendiendo a hablar inglés pueden demostrar su competencia en las habilidades físicas lo que puede hacerles sentir más seguros sobre sus demás actividades y aptitudes.

HOW TEACHERS SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOM

A language relationship built on play and talk encourages children's development. **by Julie A. Hirschler**

Cindy, a Head Start teacher, sits on the floor with a group of three- and four-year-olds. It is choice time in her class, and they are all playing with wooden replica figures of community helpers. Three of the children, Anthony, Ikechukwu, and Roney, are only just beginning to learn English. Their home languages are Spanish, Ibo (a Nigerian language), and Arabic respectively. Ursile is a more advanced English Language Learner (ELL). Her home language is Haitian Kreole.

Cindy holds up a wooden figure, the mail carrier, and says to Anthony, "Oh, Anthony has some people too. Anthony, look, you have some people." She continues to hold up the figure. "Anthony, here's the mail carrier."

Then Ikechukwu holds up the doctor figure while looking at Cindy as though he wants her to name it. Instead of giving him the name, Cindy turns back to Anthony and asks, "And who's this, Anthony? Is that the doctor?"

Anthony doesn't respond so she turns to Roney and points to the figure, "Is that the doctor, Roney?"

Then Anthony holds the figure up to Cindy's face as though he were comparing the doctor to Cindy. Cindy interprets his gesture and responds by saying, "It's the doctor. [Does the doctor] look like me? It looks like me? [Who is it?]"

When none of the children gives the name of the figure, Cindy turns to Ursile. "Ursile, who's this? Tell...Anthony wants to know, and Roney and Ikechukwu want to know. Who's this?"

This is not an unusual Head Start classroom. At least 27 percent of the Head Start children nationwide speak a language other than English in the home (Program Information Report 2002-2003). In Cindy's class of 19 students, 15 are English Language Learners (ELLs) representing 8 different language

groups. Cindy only speaks English but knows some words in a few of the home languages.

ELLs in the Classroom

Like many Head Start teachers, Cindy's greatest challenge is to offer her best efforts to support the learning of all the chil-

Photo by J. Sever. Action for Boston Community Development HS.



Cindy listens to, observes, and talks to the ELLs in her class.

dren in her classroom. How can she do this in a multicultural, multilingual setting?

We might be tempted to believe that monolingual English-speaking teachers like Cindy can have little positive effect on children's learning of English. Teachers might hope that children's personality and motivation, along with family support, will enable them to learn English quickly. They also hope the children will pick up English as they play with their classmates. They find translators for meetings with ELLs' parents; they assign the bilingual assistant teacher to work with the ELLs; they introduce books in the home language for the classroom library; they take photos of the child's family to include in the classroom *Families* display. They smile at the children and gently encourage them in the routines and activities of the day.



Jones and Yandian (2000) point out that children who are acquiring a second language sequentially have already learned a great deal in their first language. They will transfer knowledge and concepts to their second language. For example, once Spanish speakers learn the concept of numbers in Spanish, they just need to understand that "uno" means "one" as they learn English.

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

TEACHERS SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

All of these are appropriate ways to support ELLs, but they do not address a very important element of early language learning—teachers must use language with ELLs to offer them the maximum support in language acquisition. The goal of teachers' interactions with ELLs is to form a language relationship.

Establishing a Language Relationship

Cindy was establishing a language relationship through play. This was an ideal learning situation because using shared toys allowed all of the children to refer to the same concrete objects with Cindy. She took advantage of their common toys by conducting a “conversation” even though the children did not know enough English to respond with words. She used the children's names when speaking to them or when speaking about them. (“Is that the doctor, Roney?”) It is easier for ELLs to know what the teacher is talking about if she uses actual names of people and objects rather than pronouns like *he*, *she*, or *it*.

Cindy was not at all deterred when the children did not respond verbally. She continued her interaction with them and used their gestures and facial expressions as a clue to their intended meaning. For example, when Ikechukwu looked at Cindy while holding up a figure, she could tell that he wanted to know its name. Cindy drew several ELLs into the conversation by asking Roney and Ikechukwu about the figure before turning to Ursile, a more advanced ELL.

Cindy supported their play through her deliberate use of language and her interpretation of their non-verbal communication. The interactions between the teacher and the children not only reinforced their understanding of English but also brought the group together in the play situation.

Teacher Talk that Supports ELL Children

Cindy's play with ELLs illustrates other effective language supports as well (See sidebar). She chose a topic for talk that had meaning for the children. The children had chosen to play with the figures and were interested in learning about them. She followed their lead and set up an optimal language learning situation.

Instructional Strategies that Support Beginning ELLs

- Show a genuine interest in ELL children.
- Be observant! Notice what ELLs are interested in, what they might want to talk about, and what they know.
- Select a conversation topic that is meaningful to children. Their choice of a toy or a play area signals their interest.
- Learn how to read the meaning of gestures and facial expressions. Is a child asking for a word? Does she want to play with a particular child?
- Use actual names of people and objects rather than pronouns.
- Talk about topics in the present.
- Accept minimal responses such as the nod of the head or a smile.
- Continue to interact even though the children do not offer a verbal response.

Figure 1

Another positive aspect of Cindy's conversation was that it focused on the present and the concrete. The replica figures were widely scattered among the group on the floor and could be easily picked up, manipulated, and discussed. It would have been much more difficult for these ELLs with little or no English vocabulary to understand talk about the past or the future. With more advanced ELLs, it would be appropriate to discuss the recent past, such as a picnic they had with their family over the weekend.

Cindy was observant and accepted minimal responses. The children had little or no vocabulary to contribute to the conversation. Only the teacher used oral language to communicate. But Cindy paid attention to their non-verbal behavior. When Ikechukwu held up the doctor figure, she could tell that he wanted to know what the figure was. Instead of supplying the word, she turned to Anthony and engaged him, “And who's this, Anthony? Is that the doctor?” She acted as a go-between for Ikechukwu and Anthony in the “naming the figure” game. She created a “conversational triangle.” When Anthony did not

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BEGINNING THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH LEARNERS FROM MANY CULTURES

Honoring individual differences creates an inclusive community in this multicultural classroom. **by Carol Bellamy**

Summer is almost over. It is time for me to begin planning for the new school year. I am the head teacher in the Corduroy Classroom in the Higher Horizons Head Start. The program draws from a very diverse population, including recent immigrants and refugees from around the world. In my 13 years in Head Start, I have enjoyed meeting families who represent more than 20 language groups. Every year, I look forward to working with the English language learners in my classroom.

Learning about the Children and Families

Seventeen children are enrolled in my class this year. As I make the required home visits before the program begins, I have an opportunity to learn about what each child enjoys and to think about how to prepare a welcoming classroom environment. I begin to establish a relationship with my families and learn about their different cultures and celebrations. I ask how many family members speak the home language only or English as well. I ask if the Head Start child has an older sibling in school who has exposed the younger child to English. That may mean the preschooler recognizes some spoken words but may not speak English yet.

This year's children speak English, Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Amharic, or Somali with their families. Although most of the children are new to my classroom, it will be their second year in Head Start. I expect that there will be a wide range of English language learning in my classroom.

It is important that I support the parents' goals for family literacy. I make sure parents know that Head Start works with The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, an organization which provides many resources to adult English language learners. This year, our Head Start program is hosting English language classes in the evening. Our family literacy committee

helps us plan literacy events for families, staff, and community members. For example, they plan "Breakfast and Books," an October event geared to increase the number of stories read to our children.

Creating the Classroom Environment

I want this to be perfectly clear to all classroom teachers: *We cannot keep those old lesson plans and just change the date and names on the forms. Throw them in the recycle bin and start fresh. Each year, your classroom should go through a process of renewal.* Even the children who are returning to the same classroom have changed, and the teaching team



Teacher Carol Bellamy uses picture symbols and signs to communicate with ELLs.

Photo by J. Brough-Schamp, Higher Horizons HSEHS.

needs to plan according to their new interests, developmental levels, and language needs.

Higher Horizons Head Start uses the High Scope curriculum. It provides a structure to the day and an organization for the environment that helps all the children, and certainly the English language learners, feel comfortable and safe in the classroom. The room is divided into areas, such as art, science, and blocks. I will ask a bilingual child who likes to write to help me label each area in both English and Spanish.

I love to collect items from different countries for the classroom: scarves and clothes for dress-up; cooking spoons,



Research (Tabors 1997) indicates that preschoolers may acquire 6-10 new words a day while also expanding their understanding of the words they already know.

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

MULTICULTURAL LEARNERS

chopsticks, a wok, and a tortilla pan for the housekeeping area. I have story tapes in Spanish that can be used in the classroom or sent home for families to use together. Of course, the books on the library shelves and around the room show children who resemble those in my classrooms.

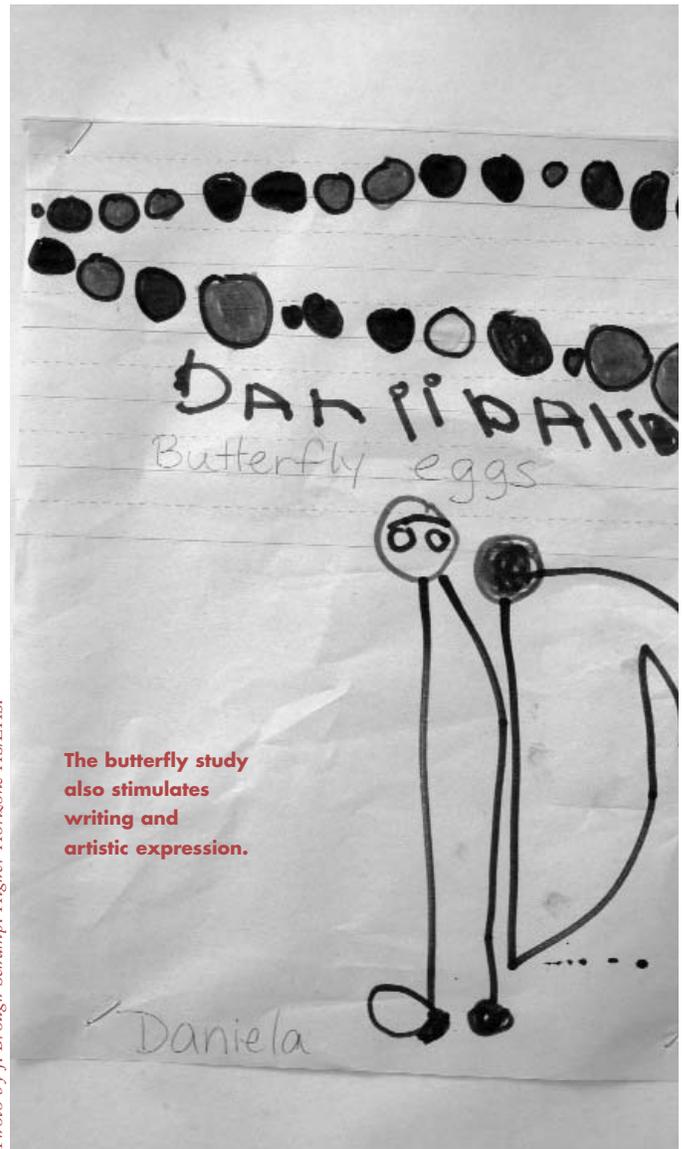
I also have a world map at the children's eye level which stimulates conversation about their countries of origin. One child described how he took an airplane to Peru to see his abuela (grandmother). Looking at the map, he showed me how many countries the plane "flew" across. Class discussions that center on the map provide many opportunities for support of home languages and cultures and also for learning English.

Teaching Strategies for Language Learning

The first few weeks of the program are a time to observe the children and get to know them. I note that there is a range of English language learning. Four children speak only Spanish in the classroom. Other children who speak other languages at home are in the non-verbal period (they have temporarily abandoned efforts to communicate with people who do not understand their home language); others are repeating what is said to them in English; some children are speaking a combination of both their home language and English. Every day, the teaching team documents all children's activities and language usage in English (and their home language).

I am primarily a monolingual English speaker, as is one of the teaching assistants, although we both know a bit of Spanish. The other assistant is bilingual in English and Urdu. When people learn that we work with children who speak little or no English, they always ask, "How do you communicate?" I respond that all children understand love and that they know when you genuinely care for them. But, I intentionally use certain techniques or strategies too.

For example, the daily schedule chart consists of pictures accompanied by words. We go over the schedule at group time. I also have the same picture symbols on cards that I wear on a string around my neck; this way, I can approach an individual child or a small group and explain and demonstrate what is



expected next. I might say, "Time for the school bus to go home" while I show the picture. If it is cleanup time, I will say the words and also show the picture of a child putting away toys.

I have discovered that this basic technique prompts new language learning. Four-year-old Carlos can read some words and enjoys asking questions about what he reads. One day, he read each word on our chart, including *school bus*. He told me, "You forgot to add the children who are picked up in the car. You need a picture (and words) for that."

I also make a point of learning key phrases in different languages. When a Spanish-speaking child asked me, "Escuela

es mañana?,” I was thrilled to respond in my rudimentary Spanish. “No escuela mañana, mañana es sabado. No escuela en sabado y domingo. Escuela en lunes.” The child got so excited, she blurted out, “Ms. Carol!! Espanol!” Last year, a Farsi-speaking girl was so eager to get from one activity to another that she would run from the classroom to the bathroom to the playground. Asking her to slow down in English did not seem to help, and I was worried she would fall. I asked her mother, “How do you say walk in Farsi?” The next day, the word “Roborro” effectively communicated my message to her daughter!

Building the Curriculum

In the early fall, we found a butterfly outdoors and brought it into our classroom. The children have been watching and talking about it. Their vocabulary is expanding as they learn new words in English like “caterpillar,” and everyone has learned the word “mariposa” from the Spanish speakers. We have added butterfly-related books, pictures, word cards to the writing area, scarves for wing dancing, and butterfly-shaped play dough cutters. We set up a painting activity,

too. Eventually, we released the butterfly outside. But I went ahead and ordered seven caterpillars to hatch in the class. The children ask daily, “When will the caterpillars get here?”

To support family literacy and the children’s learning, I will begin sending home books for families to read. Of course, one of the first books will be *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. The home reading bag will include ways to extend the reading with stencils and art materials. I am lucky to collect many books in more than one language for families.

When the caterpillars arrive, there will be many opportunities for discovery and language development. We will make a butterfly storybook with illustrations for our class library. One child, a native Spanish speaker, has proposed that the book’s title be *The Corduroy Caterpillar, Chrysalis, and Butterfly Book*. What vocabulary and conceptual development are evident in his title! I am pleased to be able to support language-rich activities for all language learners. ■

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Teachers Support, Continued from 32

respond, she also included Roney in the conversation by saying, “Is that the doctor, Roney?” In the end, she had involved all three children in the conversation.

Creating a Classroom Community for ELLs

These ELLs cannot yet offer oral language to the conversation, but they are active partners in the play of learning. Cindy has created much more than an opportunity to learn vocabulary; she has begun the important work of creating a classroom community of learners. She has done this by establishing a language relationship in the context of play with each child and among the children. When Head Start teachers converse in a way that supports English language learning,

children will not only make progress in language development, but will feel connected to each other and to all the learning experiences in the classroom. ■

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A VISIT TO THE RAINFOREST

How the creative arts promote language and literacy.

by **Victoria Brown and Sarah Pleydell**

Why the Arts?

The arts provide a unique, multi-dimensional learning medium for all children including English language learners (ELLs). Body movement, dance, music, gestures, mime, and puppets help ELLs illustrate the ideas they are learning to express in the new language (Brown & Pleydell 1999). Using varied sensory experiences to support a word or concept in the new language helps create multiple imprints on the learner's memory. The open-ended nature of the arts also alleviates anxiety about making mistakes and thus encourages ELLs to cross the threshold from non-verbal activity into verbalization. The arts create a strong stimulus for the development of language in a natural, spontaneous, and creative way.

Furthermore, the arts support all areas of children's development (Deasy 2002; Arts Education Partnership 1998; Caldwell 1997). They foster critical thinking, social learning, emotional intelligence, mathematical understanding, problem solving, creativity, and literacy. These areas encompass the eight general Domains referred to in *The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework*.

The Rainforest: An Arts-Based Curriculum

Teachers at Lucy School in Middletown, MD use an arts-based curriculum approach with their preschoolers. They immersed one group of 4 – 5 year olds in a variety of art experiences about the rainforest that were inspired by Lynne Cherry's book, *The Great Kapok Tree* (1990). This book tells the story of a woodcutter who wants to chop down one of the greatest trees in the Amazon basin, the Kapok, but is magically overpowered by the forest and falls asleep. In his dream, the forest animals plead with him to spare the tree for their sake. Over a six day period in the classroom, the visual arts, drama,

storytelling, creative movement, and music were used to stimulate the children's language and other areas of development.

Many children were English language learners, and these art forms were intentionally used to facilitate their acquisition



Photo by V. Brown, Lucy School.

The arts allow for creative self-expression in young children.

of English and at the same time, support their home language of Spanish or American Sign Language (ASL). This model—learning through the arts—could be used with any language.

English language learning was promoted as new words were connected to references in the children's home languages,



In 1982, the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential Bilingual Specialization was established for candidates with a working knowledge of two languages, including the ability to speak, read, and write well enough to understand others and to be understood by others.

Excerpt from E. Dollie Wolverson, *Historical Overview: Head Start as the Nation's Early Childhood Laboratory Supporting English Language Learners*
(http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

to other symbolic vocabularies (such as signs or pictures), as well as to the children's kinesthetic and sensory imprints from other classroom experiences. Signs (ASL) are generally easy to learn and help reinforce new vocabulary in any language.

Excerpts from this curriculum project illustrate how each specific art form promoted the children's development in general and language learning in particular.

Creative Movement

Creative movement dissolves language barriers and, at the same time, provides a kinesthetic and sensory connection for learning new vocabulary in any language. Children were shown photographs of rainforest creatures: monkeys, jaguars, parrots, frogs and sloths, snakes and butterflies. Each animal was named in English, Spanish and ASL. While sitting in a circle where they could see each other, children created sounds and facial expressions (they chattered and grinned like monkeys and they hissed and flicked their tongues like snakes). Next, they added a full body movement (the snakes slithering, the monkeys swinging their arms, the butterflies flapping their graceful wings).

While Amazon rain forest sounds were played on a CD, the children moved like animals. They had great fun scrambling and jumping like monkeys, but also delighted in crawling as slowly as a sloth.

Visual Arts

An important part of this work was creating the physical environment of the rain forest. The artwork followed the movement and drama, which made it more imaginative and vivid, because the children had first experienced the story with their bodies. By suspending large, inexpensive pieces of green netting from the ceiling and then hanging vines, flowers, snakes, butterflies, birds, lizards, tree frogs, toads (all painted and sculpted by the children), a rainforest canopy was created. This canopy shimmered above the children, giving them a "living through" experience of walking in the rainforest.

Opportunities for vocabulary and concept learning were plentiful: "We're building a canopy for the animals," "The tis-

sue paper crumples," "Are parrots the biggest birds?" Latin American music was often played in the background to help focus and stimulate the children during the art activities.



Photo by J. Brough Schamp, South East Community Organization HS.

The arts allow for creative self-expression in young children.

Music

The children made rain sticks (using wrapping paper tubes, aluminum foil and rice) to capture and recreate the music of nature; they popped bubble wrap to simulate the sounds of raindrops falling from branches at the storm's end. Using fingers, hands and assorted percussion instruments, rhythms and beats were also created for rain sounds. Other musical instruments introduced during the week included gourd shakers, drums and simple flutes. The instruments were featured in the closing fiesta. For this event, the teachers also made up a song in Spanish and English describing the layers of the rainforest and sung to the tune of "Row, Row, Row

A VISIT TO THE RAINFOREST

Your Boat.” The children also sang, signed, and danced to a variety of multicultural musical selections.

Drama

Dramatization was a vital part of each day’s activities, but the children’s favorite scenes were their encounters with “the Señor” (the main character from the book, played by a teacher). His “hacienda” was set up in a corner of the classroom where he welcomed and entertained the children. He fed

During the dramatization, the Señor spoke in English and Spanish. “Buenas dias. Amigos, come to my house, Bienvenidos a mi casa.”

them slices of mango and laid grass mats on the floor for the children’s naps. The Señor spoke in English sprinkled with Spanish phrases and words, many of which he reinforced with sign language, “Amigos, Friends! Bienvenidos a mi casa.” “Buenos días! Hello.”

“Hi. Hola. Is this the rainforest?” the wide-eyed visitors ask the stranger. “Si, Bosque - Rainforest. Beautiful - Bonito! Yo soy lenador - a woodcutter. You may call me Señor. Mira, come inside and see what I have made. Miren todas las cosas bellas.” The children enter the woodcutter’s home and are served arroz con frijoles. “Yummy.” “Yuck.” “Can I have more?”

The children particularly enjoyed the discussion where they took on the roles of their favorite animal and talked to the woodcutter in his dream. They told him how sad it made them to see their homes (los arboles) being cut down and destroyed. The teacher aide, in the role of a tour guide, translated the English and Spanish.

Later, the children and their teachers discussed what solutions there might be to the problem of deforestation. Maybe the

woodcutter could grow the kinds of foods that flourished in the shade. Maybe he could cut down some of the trees and spare the rest. Finally, they went back to the book to see how the problem was resolved there. (The woodcutter walks out of the forest with the tree still standing. He leaves his ax behind.)

Looking Back

This language and arts-rich learning experience provided many opportunities for all the children to excel and to enjoy learning. Their language learning was evident: Spanish speakers learned English, English speakers learned Spanish, and all learned sign language. The arts have the capacity to stir a child’s curiosity and provoke questions and idea sharing. Perhaps this is because drama, movement, music, dance, and visual arts have the potential for communicating to young children in their own language: the language of make-believe (Brown & Pleydell 1999). ■

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HEAD START: AN AVENUE TO REVITALIZE A LANGUAGE

An environment of acceptance helps preserve the Cherokee culture. **by Ramona Drew and Regina Grass**

In the spring, Head Start classes of the Cherokee Nation visit the kindergartens the children will attend in the fall. During one of these visits, the kindergarten teacher leads the children in circle time and asks a young girl to count to ten. She begins, “sa-gwu, tal-li, jo-i, nv-gi, his-gi, su-da-li, ga-qwo-gi, cha-ne-la, soh-ne-la, sgo-hi,” and finishes with a broad smile. She has just counted to ten in the Cherokee language.

Her emerging fluency in Cherokee is testimony to the role of the Cherokee Nation Head Start (CNHS) in keeping alive a language on the verge of being lost. Serving over 1,000 children, the CNHS is one of the largest American Indian Head Start programs in the country. Its programs are not only providing a “Head Start” to children, but also aiding in the preservation of the Cherokee language, history, and culture.

Background

In 1821, the Cherokee leader, Sequoyah, completed a Cherokee alphabet/syllabary. The syllabary consists of 84 characters which represent the 84 syllables used in speaking the language. Within a few years, over 90 percent of the Cherokee Nation was literate.

Today, the scenario is much different. It is estimated that only about 15 percent of the population has some understanding of the language and approximately 10,000 people speak it. Chad Smith, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, has warned, “Cherokee people may be only one or two generations from losing the language, and language defines the Cherokee culture.”

Spurred by the Principal Chief’s passion to restore the language, the Cherokee Nation has taken steps toward its revitalization. The Cherokee Nation Tribal Council passed a legislative act in 1991 that promotes “...maintaining and preserving the Cherokee language as a living language by...encourage(ing) the use of Cherokee language in both written and oral form to the

fullest extent possible in public and business settings. Language is very important to preserving a culture—many words that are descriptive of cultural mannerisms, feelings, events, and ceremonies are only identifiable in the native tongue. There is no comparable word in the English language.”

The Cherokee Nation Culture Resource Center (CNCRC) was established in 1995 to perpetuate and preserve the Cherokee language, history, and culture. In 2002, the CNCRC conducted a survey to assess the fluency rate of the Cherokee language in the tribal jurisdictional area in northeastern



Photo courtesy of Cherokee Nation HS.

Classroom visitors demonstrate traditional forms of Cherokee culture.

Oklahoma. The results indicated that the language was fast disappearing and prompted the development of a ten-year language preservation plan. And some of the most important efforts have been directed at young children.

Head Start Program Highlights

From the beginning, the Cherokee Nation Head Start program has provided an environment of acceptance for culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition as required by the



Language connects with the child's heart and lays the foundation for emotional well-being. The language that signals this earliest connection is the home language of the family and the cultural community.

Excerpt from Sylvia Y. Sánchez. *Is It Wrong to Speak to My Babies in Their Home Language?* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

REVITALIZING LANGUAGE

Head Start Program Performance Standards. Referred to as emersion, or “act of emerging” classrooms, they provide a beginning exposure to the Cherokee language. The daily classroom schedule includes learning meaningful Cherokee words, such as numbers, colors, and animals. The children also learn familiar greetings and phrases to express their needs, such as “Let’s go outside” (See Figure 1). Some classrooms learn entire songs in Cherokee. Classroom centers and materials are labeled in Cherokee and English. The syllabary is included in the writing center.

To further the goal of producing a new generation of Cherokee speakers, Head Start has collaborated with a preschool program created by the Cherokee Nation Cultural Resource Center (CNCRC). In this program, the children see, hear, and speak the Cherokee language exclusively. CNCRC director Gloria Sly states, “Cherokee language classrooms have grown under the steadfast leadership of Head Start and its holistic approach to each child.” Teacher training and other resources have been shared by the CNHS and the CNCRC program.

Head Start also has served as a curriculum and language model for the Lost City, Oklahoma school system. In one public school serving a number of Head Start graduates, weekly assem-

English	Cherokee (Roman alphabet)	Cherokee Syllabary
Hello	o-si-yo	ᎠᎩᎩᎠ
Hill	ga-du-si	ᎩᎩᎩᎠ
Paper	go-we-li	ᎩᎩᎩᎠ
How are you?	do-hi-tsu	ᎠᎩᎩᎠ

Figure 1: An example of Cherokee words and phrases that Head Start children are learning.

blies are conducted for all grades to discuss the Cherokee word of the week.

This type of collaboration among educational entities—the CNHS, CNCRC, and the Lost City school system—offers the promise of continuity for Cherokee children and exposure to the Cherokee language for non-Cherokee students.

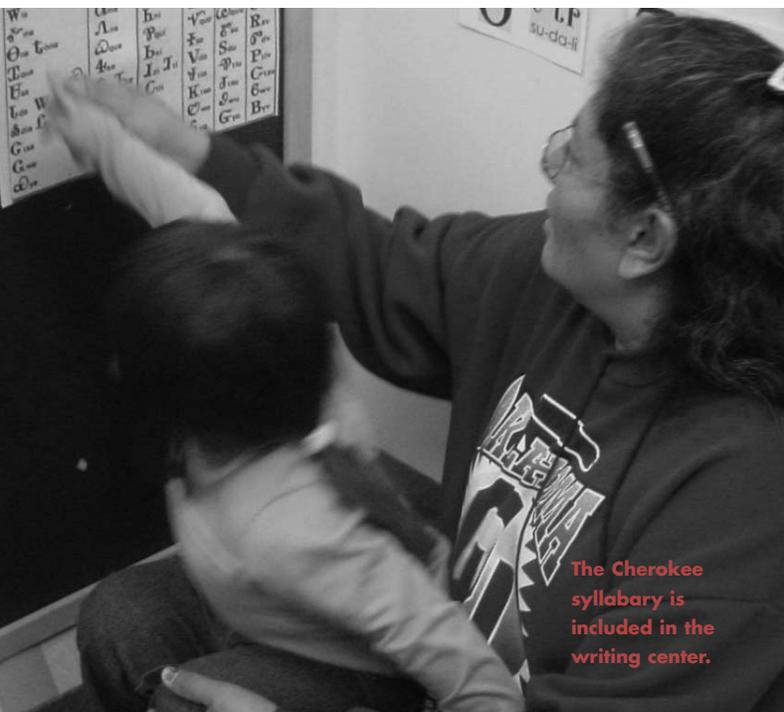
Successful Strategies

How did the Cherokee Nation Head Start program implement this language initiative designed to benefit the children and their families? There are many interrelated pieces.

❖ *The creation of a network of Culture and Language Specialists.* Certified as master Cherokee speakers and writers, Culture and Language Specialists offer training and other language-related resources to Head Start staff. Two important products they have developed are:

- a language assessment and screening tool that is used when children enroll in Early Head Start or preschool Head Start. Although the assessment is conducted in English, it assesses children’s receptive and expressive Cherokee vocabulary. The results help teachers plan activities in the classroom.
- a Cherokee language curriculum that includes lesson plans and an audio tape for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

❖ *The support for staff training and development.* Many Head Start staff have obtained their CDAs. Teachers of the Cherokee language who work in schools within the 14-county jurisdictional area of the Cherokee Nation are encouraged to go through teacher certification training and testing to assure their competency and sharpen their instructional skills. Cherokee language speakers visit and volunteer in the Head Start classrooms



The Cherokee syllabary is included in the writing center.

Photo courtesy of Cherokee Nation HS.

Continued on page 42

TALKING WITH A TEACHER

For six years, Eunice Berríos has been a teacher with Aspira Head Start in Puerto Rico. She describes her work in this way, “Each year has been a challenge that I have accepted -- I continue to learn from the children.” She is bilingual in Spanish and English. Eunice currently teaches 18 three- and four-year-olds. Most of the older children will move on to kindergarten next year but the younger ones will remain with her for another year. The Head Start program uses the Spanish version of the Creative Curriculum. Eunice was interviewed by the Bulletin staff.

Q: How would you describe the language learning environment in your classroom?

Every time children go into the classroom, they have an opportunity to have a language experience. You can find paper, writing tools, and books everywhere. Children must have proper learning activities that are relevant and based on developmentally appropriate practices.

Spanish is spoken with the Head Start children and their parents. As defined by Patton Tabors in her book, *One Child, Two Languages*, my classroom is a First Language Classroom because all the teachers and the children speak the same home language. My classroom represents the reality of our culture, where our home language is Spanish, in contrast to the reality of the Latinos living in the States who are immersed in an English-speaking society.

Sometimes, we use English with families who have lived in the States or whose first language is English. Other parents do speak English but if asked what they want from the Head Start

Mentor-coaching has brought more exposure to letters and words in the classroom that are significant to the child’s language education.

program, their preference is that their children learn to speak Spanish. The parents also know that English instruction will be incorporated into their child’s elementary education.

Because the Puerto Rican population is politically connected to the United States, young children are readily exposed to the English language. Most of the PBS broadcasts are in English. All around Puerto Rico, you can find signs in English.

So it is not surprising if we hear children using English words in the classroom. When we are in circle time and counting in Spanish, children will jump up and announce, “I can say it in English too.” They are continually encouraged in their pursuit of language

learning in Spanish and English, if they choose. Although the actual language learning process is informal, it is consistent and constant.

I think that exposing children to English at an early age expands their experiences so they feel more comfortable when they receive formal language education later on.

Q: What are some of the typical language experiences in your classroom?

The children arrive and prepare for breakfast. We discuss the day ahead. After breakfast, the children have choice time and select a game, toy or book. We do charts for the weather and many other topics. We bring language experiences to the kids by using poems and stories adapted to our culture. We practice blending and separating sounds as well. When published materials are in English, we also translate into Spanish. For example, the poster in the bathroom says, “I brush my teeth,” and I added a sentence strip in Spanish, “Cepillo mis dientes.”

We have translated children’s books into Spanish and have other books by Puerto Rican and other Hispanic authors. We use music from cultural icons such as José Luis Orozco. We have our own Puerto Rican culture but because of the political connections to the United States, we have celebrations for both countries. For example, we celebrate Thanksgiving week.

TALKING WITH A TEACHER

But it is also the week of the discovery of Puerto Rico, and we celebrate that, too.

Q: How has the Mentor-Coach supported the language learning in your classroom?

This has been a new experience for the teachers and supervisors, and I like it. The Mentor-Coach comes to the classroom to help with developmentally appropriate practices. I am encouraged to write in my diary about any issues surrounding the children or classroom situations and my feelings about them. The Mentor-Coach reviews my journal and writes notes back to me. As a result, I have learned to teach and communicate differently and view mentoring as a great experience.

Mentor-coaching has brought us more exposure to letters and words that are significant to the child's language education. For example, the word Apple in the English language begins with the letter A, but in Spanish it is M for Manzana. I was using a chart with the alphabet that was in English, so the apple drawing was under the "A." I left it there, but I also put the word Manzana under the drawing. This way, the children are exposed to both languages. We've always had books and materials to support our teaching, but now, with mentoring, we know how to make the best use of them.

The mentor-coaching process originated in the United States but at Aspira, we adapt it to our own language, culture, and traditions. We use some books

and other training materials from Hispanic authors.

Q: What recommendations do you have for other programs?

Be sensitive to how your classroom and how every learning activity support the culture of the children you have in your class. Try to always encourage a favorable classroom experience no matter what language is being used. Although the words that come from our mouths may be spoken in different languages, the love, care, and support we bring to our children are spoken in the same language—the language of the heart. ■

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Revitalizing Language, Continued from 40

to expose the children to the culture and to provide teaching models for the staff. In addition, a Cherokee Language Advisory Board is made up of community members, CNHS staff, and representatives from local agencies. They are knowledgeable in the Cherokee culture, language, and traditions and provide input regarding developmentally and culturally appropriate experiences to incorporate into the Head Start program.

❖ *The investment in community assets.* Community leaders, elders, and speakers of the Cherokee language are vital links to revitalizing the language. Head Start is just one part of this multi-faceted

language revitalization effort throughout the community. Classroom visitors demonstrate various traditional forms of Cherokee dance and dress, marble games, and basketry. Parent education meetings include topics about traditional Cherokee customs. Exposing the parents, as well as the children, to Cherokee tradition, teaches the Cherokee culture and reinforces the importance of keeping the language alive for future generations.

Conclusion

Today, the reality of hearing Cherokee spoken as the language of everyday life can be observed in the CNHS classrooms. And

the benefits do not end there. Parents and family members have been learning along with the children. Thanks to the ongoing collaboration of the CNHS and the CNCRC, the entire Cherokee community can see its language and culture being revitalized and preserved. ■

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BY BULLETIN STAFF WITH ERICA QUEZADA, SWATI MUKHERJEA, AND PATRICIA MOLINA

OFFERING FAMILIES A LANGUAGE CHOICE DURING HOME VISITS

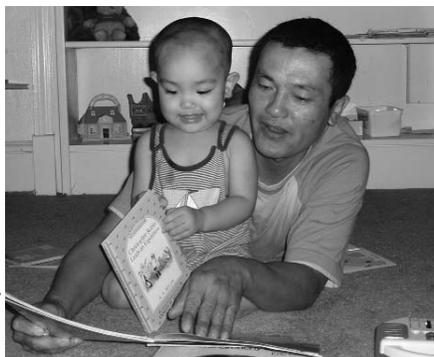
In order to meet the needs of the linguistically diverse populations in their Head Start programs, the Children's Aid Society in New York City and The Rosemount Center in Washington, D.C. offer home-visiting services in languages other than English.

The Children's Aid Society is located in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood, and the staff is representative of this population. Many of the families are recent immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries. Erica Quezada is a former home-visitor and current Educational Director at the agency's Early Head Start program. She reports that about 95% of the families in the home-visiting program choose to have their home visits conducted in Spanish. The other 5% speak English as their first language.

Being able to communicate in Spanish has made it easier for Ms. Quezada to connect with the children and families in the program. "It's not about language; it's about learning and building relationships," she remarks. Parents feel much safer and more comfortable communicating in their preferred language; as a result, the program is more effective in its delivery of services.

Swati Mukherjea and Patricia Molina are home-visitors at The Rosemount Center, which offers Early

center-based services. Ms. Mukherjea is a native of India who speaks Bengali, Hindi, and a bit of Spanish. Ms. Molina, who is from Chile, works



Home visitors support the cultural and linguistic diversity of all families served.

with the Hispanic community. The families they work with are primarily Hispanic, but others are from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Pakistan. Ms. Mukherjea works with primarily Head Start children, while Ms. Molina works with Early Head Start children.

They agree that one of the most important aspects of working as a home-visitor is to respect every family's beliefs and traditions. "Because we go into their houses, we need to be really sensitive to their cultures and myths," Ms. Molina notes. Speaking a family's preferred language in their home is one way of showing sensitivity and respect.

The majority of the families at Rosemount prefer a mix of languages

the home-visitor might speak to the parents in Bengali but sing songs with the child in English. Head Start families want their children to learn and be comfortable with the English language because they will use English when they are in elementary school.

Ms. Mukherjea finds that, "Parents are very conscious of literacy and want their child to have the necessary basic skills to succeed in school."

The Rosemount Center offers literacy resources and support for parents who want to learn English and is currently seeking a formal partnership with the American Library Association. The home-visitors often provide invaluable services such as translating the family's mail or helping family members fill out job applications.

These home-visiting programs in New York and the District of Columbia receive positive feedback from parents for their innovative approaches and bilingual and multilingual staff capabilities. As Ms. Quezada notes, home-visitors empower these families to navigate the largely English-speaking world around them "by enhancing parents' abilities to contribute to the positive development of their children, providing resources, and helping them with the challenges of daily life." ■

Written by Bulletin staff based on interviews with the home visitors.



Research (Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter 2003) indicates that the amount of input, frequency of use, and the parents' estimates of their child's language ability highly relate to the child's level of proficiency in the language.

Excerpt from Vera Gutiérrez-Clellen, *Assessment of English Language Learners: Challenges and Strategies* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE ON LANGUAGE ISSUES

Both parents and teachers need to consider a child's prior language experience. **by Anita Yuen Wah Choy**

In 1974, I immigrated from Hong Kong to the United States to attend college. I am fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese. For more than seven years, I worked as a Program Manager and later as an Education Specialist for an Early Head Start/Head Start Program in Honolulu, Hawaii. More recently, I was a Mentor-Coach Specialist in Region IX, the Pacific area. All of my work in Head Start has included close contact with Pacific Island and Asian immigrants. Most of the Head Start staff are English-only speakers. As a team, we have worked together to meet the growing needs of the increasing non-English speaking population who need Head Start services.

Who Are Asians?

According to the most recent Program Information Report (PIR), over 11,000 Head Start children are speakers of East Asian languages, making them the second largest group of English language learners (after Spanish speakers). However, the term "Asian" does not lend itself to an easy definition. In fact, it is an umbrella term referring to over 20 ethnic groups from Japan, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, China, India, Pakistan, and other countries. These ethnic groups have different languages, child-rearing practices, and approaches to learning.

Asian Approaches to Schooling and Learning

In most Asian countries, schools are formal and structured institutions. The children have limited time in free choice learning. Even very young children are expected to sit in desks. To show respect, they listen to or talk to their teachers with their heads down; they avoid eye contact. They do not ask questions (which would appear disrespectful), and they follow the teachers' instructions with absolute attention.

Traditionally, Asian families have entrusted their children to the teachers and the school system. They think that it is the

teacher's responsibility to teach their children. The role of parents as teachers of their young children—a cornerstone of Head Start—is an unfamiliar concept. At first, Asian parents may think this concept means giving "rules" and "dos and don'ts" such as: Sit properly in class and speak only when asked. Some parents think that learning means being able to memorize, read and write, and that playing is a waste of time. They expect teachers to give their young children daily homework.

Recommendations for Head Start Staff

I have seen first-hand how much a child's reaction to a new place, to different customs, and to changed expectations is colored by their prior experiences. When my son was three years



Photo by W. Siegel, Parents and Children Together EHS/HS.

Providing a print-rich environment helps children learn a new language.

old, we moved from Texas to Hawaii. I read books to him about moving and talked with him about what changes to expect. I thought he was well-prepared for the transition, but when he started preschool in Hawaii, he insisted on wearing his Texas cowboy boots and refused to take them off when he entered the room, which is the Hawaiian custom. This went on for several weeks. When he attended his first Hawaiian luau (feast) at his preschool, he refused to sit on the floor as is customary and



Young children can acquire a second language if exposed to it in meaningful experiences. They become increasingly fluent in a second language as they have opportunities to speak it with a variety of individuals on many different topics and for a range of reasons (California Department of Education 1998; Quiñones-Eatman 2001).

Excerpt from Phillip C. Gonzales, *Becoming Bilingual: First and Second Language Acquisition* (http://www.headstartinfo.org/English_lang_learners_tkit.htm)

insisted on sitting on a chair to eat his food. It took about a year, with lots of assurance and encouraging words, before he was able to adjust to and accept the Hawaiian way of living.

When Asian families and children enroll in Head Start, they encounter many new experiences, not unlike my own son. Not only may they be hearing English more than they ever have before, but they are now exposed to new routines, unfamiliar food and eating habits, and different expectations for appropriate behavior. What they face in the new environment can be very confusing. How can we help them adjust to Head Start? How can we respect their Asian cultures and promote their new learning? How can we help the children achieve positive outcomes?

Based on my personal and professional experience, I offer these suggestions:

Build a Trusting Relationship with Children and Families. Mutual trust opens the channel of communication and cooperation. In order to establish a trusting relationship with Asian families, the Head Start team needs to learn about the family's unique background, culture, and practices. Each ethnic group is different—for example, the parenting style of a Chinese family from Hong Kong is different from the parenting style of a family from Vietnam, Taiwan, or mainland China. How can staff be informed about the diverse cultures and practices? Besides reading books and materials on a particular Asian group, one of the best ways is to have open dialogue with parents and children.

In Hawaii, the term “talk story” refers to informal conversation about everyday matters. It can take place at any time and in any place—during a Head Start gathering or a home visit or during a chance meeting in the grocery store or on the bus. It is a way of making connections with people through causal dialoguing. Head Start staff use this avenue to meet with families, learn their interests, and know their needs and problems. Learning about the families and their culture shows respect and appreciation for who they are. With this information, the program staff can provide continuity as the child transitions from home to school, and can plan how to individualize the services to meet the family's unique needs.

On numerous occasions, I have witnessed the positive effects of trust-building between program staff and families. Take the

case of Sonja and Sophia, three-year-old twins in Head Start in Hawaii, whose family came from mainland China and spoke Cantonese. The mother understood simple English sentences, but the children had little prior exposure to English and neither understood nor spoke the language.

At first the twins often cried in class; when teaching staff tried to comfort them, they would scream and cry louder. During outdoor playtime, the twins would stay together and watch others play. Everyone was concerned, including the mother.

The teachers, program specialists, and family support staff worked with the mother to establish a plan to ease the children's transition. Every morning as Mom walked the twins to Head Start, she talked with them in their home language about the school's daily schedule. She explained what they were going to do and emphasized that these were going to be fun activities. She also reassured them that she would be back at the end of class to pick them up.

At school, teachers greeted them upon arrival. I taught the teachers to say some simple Chinese phrases, such as, “Jao su hn” (Good morning), and “Nei hou ma?” (How are you?). At the same time, Mom learned English phrases from the teachers to describe the classroom routine and taught them to the twins at home. Gradually, with consistent support, repeated practice, and encouragement from the program staff and from Mom, the twins adjusted to the changes. Soon, they enjoyed class activities and became active learners.

Provide Parenting Education and Home Language Support. Parenting education is a very powerful tool and a foundation of Head Start programs. Workshops or classes help parents to gain knowledge about nurturing and raising their young children. They can also create networks of parent support. Topics that are relevant to Asian parents include:

- child development milestones
- how children learn to play
- appropriate ways to discipline young children
- school policies and regulations
- learning strategies for young children

Asian parents feel more confident when they hear the information in their home languages. Because I am trilingual, I was

AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

able to assist English-speaking Head Start staff with Mandarin- or Cantonese-speaking parents and children. I acted as a teacher's translator during classroom orientation to help the Chinese-speaking parents become familiar with their children's daily routine and schedule. I translated documents and program notices from English to Chinese. I also translated during parent/teacher conferences and meetings with specialists.

Teachers have found creative ways to support the home language and, at the same time, involve parents in their children's learning. At parent meetings, teachers demonstrate how to make word or number games and create concept books, such as an alphabet book, in their home language. One mother created a numeracy book featuring both English and Chinese. The games and books are displayed in the classroom and can be borrowed for at-home activities.

Provide a Language-Enriched Learning Environment.

Using labels with accompanying pictures enhances learning significantly for young children. For example, the daily schedule in the classroom can indicate lunch time with the words and a picture of children eating at the table. When the signs are posted at their eye-level, children can easily refer to them, and they will feel more comfortable when they can predict what will happen next in their environment. Seeing the words and pictures also may prompt some children to verbalize and to recognize words and their meanings. All of this learning occurs at the children's own pace.

One Head Start teacher created a multilingual book for her class, where at least four different Pacific and Asian languages were spoken by the children. To help them learn the school routine, follow directions, and develop positive self concepts, she guided a discussion about how to make the class a safe place for learning. They generated a few class rules which she wrote down; the teaching team and the children illustrated them and posted them in class. She invited parents to translate the rules into the children's home languages. Then she put the rules together into a book format and placed it in the reading area. Throughout the day, she used paraphrases, gestures, and body language to reinforce the rules. The children would often look at the book as if to check on their understanding of what was expected of them.

Indeed, her children adjusted to the school environment very quickly because of this dual support for their home language and for their learning of English.

Access Resources in the Community. As a first generation immigrant from Hong Kong to the United States, I know how important it is for immigrant children and parents to have access to materials that will teach them about their new environment. However, there were very few culturally and developmentally appropriate children's books available for the Pacific and Asian families in Head Start. With the support of the Program Director, I applied for a community grant and formed a literacy task force to plan a Head Start resource library. For two years, we worked on purchasing high quality children's books written in English and Asian languages and developed a lending library for teachers and parents.

We also applied for funding to hire qualified parents and community leaders to be bilingual classroom assistants. Fluent in both English and their home languages, they guided the non-English speaking preschoolers in learning experiences. The bilingual assistants also provided support to parents and helped them access resources in the community, such as ESL classes. They also assisted parents during workshops on children's literacy and language development. In addition, they assisted teachers during parent/teacher conferences.

Concluding Thoughts

One out of five individuals in the United States speaks a language other than English at home. Many speak Asian languages. Are we prepared to nurture Asian families in our Head Start programs and help them to become contributing members of our society? Do we know about their cultures? Do we incorporate their diversity into our programs? Do we provide support in the form of parenting education and language-rich learning environments? If the answers to these questions are YES, then our Head Start programs are meeting the unique needs of Asian families. ■

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ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

A bilingual strategy is the recommended approach to measure English language learners' progress.

by Vera F. Gutiérrez-Clellen

How are our children doing? Head Start and Early Head Start programs seek answers to this question in multiple ways.

Programs are required to:

- *Perform an initial screening of each child to identify evidence of developmental, sensory, or behavioral concerns and to determine if the child should receive a more formal evaluation to identify disabilities. (Head Start Program Performance Standards 1304.20(b)(1))*
- *Conduct ongoing assessments of each child to identify their strengths and needs, to help individualize learning experiences and other services, and to support staff in communicating and working with parents and families. (Head Start Program Performance Standards 1304.21(c)(2))*
- *Incorporate data on child outcomes for groups of children over time into annual program self-assessment and continuous program improvement. (ACYF-IM-HS-00-18)*
- *Use the National Reporting System (NRS) to assess all 4- and 5-year olds on a limited set of language, literacy, and numeracy outcomes that have been legislatively mandated. (ACYF-IM-HS-03-07)*

Many Head Start programs have English language learners who must be included in the multiple forms of assessment. How can this be done in a way that is sensitive and respectful to the children's culture and language? How can children's ongoing progress be assessed if they speak a language other than English? What kinds of tools or techniques provide valid information about a child's language development? How can assessment elicit the most competent performance from a young child that indicates what they can do or know rather than what they can not do or do not know?

The author of this article, Vera Gutiérrez-Clellen, has conducted research on assessment techniques with English language learners in preschool and elementary schools. She describes some of the observational and interview approaches that program staff can use to measure the language usage and ability of children

whose home language is not English. She also addresses some of the dangers in drawing conclusions about children's progress when assessments are only conducted in the new language, English.

The demographics of the Head Start population indicate that more and more children enter the program speaking a language



Everyday conversations can provide insights into children's language development.

other than English. How are teaching teams in classrooms and home visitors going to evaluate progress made by these children in the general Domains of learning and development that are identified in the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework—specifically, how can staff assess the children's language development, including their progress in listening and understanding, speaking and communicating in English?

The answer is: *Whenever possible, a child's progress should be based on the child's performance in both the first and second languages.* Known as a dual language, or bilingual, approach, this assessment strategy is recommended rather than a single language, or monolingual, approach. Why?

The Value of a Dual Language Assessment

A dual language approach will provide a more accurate picture of a child's progress than assessments focused only on performance in the child's new language, English. One reason is that

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

while a child is learning English, she may show greater initial progress in the home language and limited progress in her second language. Another reason is that research shows that when the child's achievements are examined in the home language, teachers can also make fairly accurate predictions about the child's potential for learning in the second language (Gutiérrez-Clellen 1999). For example, a preschooler who shows the potential for learning concepts (such as number and color) in the home language has the potential for transferring those skills to the second language. In contrast, children who show limited performance in the home language may need further evaluation from the Head Start support staff and other professionals in the community.

Furthermore, there are significant individual differences in the language proficiencies of second language learners. Many children are first exposed to the second language, English, when they enter Head Start. Other children may have some prior exposure to the language but may not have been exposed to school-like language activities at home. For example, children may be able to converse in English but lack the vocabulary or the ability to manipulate sounds and letters in English which are considered early literacy activities.

Even children who appear fluent in the two languages may show differences depending on the language tasks, contexts, and assessment (Valdés & Figueroa 1994). For example, a child may be proficient in one language for one task (e.g., counting, letter naming) but not for another (e.g., listening comprehension). Another child may be able to hold a simple conversation in English but not be able to answer questions about a story or a sequence of pictures (Gutiérrez-Clellen 2002). Because of this variability and the fact that knowledge is mediated by language, it is almost impossible to obtain an accurate measure of progress without examining development in the two languages.

Assessing only in English will underestimate the child's abilities and might raise questions about the efficacy of the program in facilitating children's learning. Limited performance or progress may be confused with a developmental or language delay, leading to the inappropriate referral and/or diagnosis of these children. Also, this approach has the poten-

tial of generating lower expectations for other English language learners who are not referred, but may have true and unmet needs.

Gathering Information About Dual Language Usage and Ability

There are multiple ways for Head Start staff to learn about children's language development in both the home language and the new language, English. Parents, of course, can provide invaluable information about the family's home language and the child's early exposure to English. Teaching teams and home visitors can assess the child's ongoing progress in speaking, listening to, and understanding English as they interact with children in the context of everyday activities. By working together, parents and Head Start staff can gain insight about the child's progress and find ways to promote development in both languages as recommended by the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*.

❖ *From Parents.* If the parents do not speak English, a family specialist or other staff person who is bilingual can gather information about the child's language usage and ability during the enrollment process. This information can be shared with the teaching team and help them plan ways to support the child's language development. Research indicates that the amount of input, frequency of use, and the parents' estimates of language ability highly relate to the level of proficiency in the language (Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter 2003). Sample questions appear in the Parent Form (see page 50). The questions ask the parents how well and how often the child speaks and uses the first and the second (English) language. (See Tabors and Lopez, page 14, for additional questions to ask parents).

❖ *Staff Observations of the Child.* Based on staff observations of the child in the Head Start setting, the teacher or home visitor can complete a form indicating how much and how well the child speaks the languages. Research shows that teachers are highly reliable in estimating a child's level of proficiency and English usage based on their observations of the child (Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter 2003). Observations and insights from other staff who have contact with the child, such as bus drivers and family or health specialists, also can be added to the form.

A sample Teacher's Form is included (see page 51). This form can provide baseline data when the child enters Head Start. It could be used several times during the year to note the child's progress in first and second language usage and proficiency.

In addition to questions addressed by parents and teachers, proficiency in the languages can be assessed directly by asking children to provide spontaneous narrative samples, also known as story retellings.

❖ *Narrative Samples and Story Retellings.* Across cultures and languages, narratives are used to share past information within families and communities. Children are exposed to narratives at a very early age; their retellings can provide important information about their ability to produce and comprehend a language(s).

Classroom staff or home visitors in Head Start programs can elicit narratives from the child by using a sequence of 10-12 pictures (such as are used in the Renfrew Bus Story, a standardized language assessment (Cowley & Glasgow 1997)). Adults can model a statement about each picture (e.g., "This is John and his frog"; "One day they went to the park") and then ask the child to retell the story. A child who is not proficient in the language will not be able to retell the different parts of the story using appropriate sentences, even with the visual support of the pictures. As the child retells the story in whatever language he speaks, the teacher or home visitor (or other adult) can count the number of parts the child is able to include about the story. Then, the staff can ask the child questions about the pictures to assess comprehension (e.g., "What did the frog do?"). This approach can be used to compare the child's proficiency in English and in the home language when staff or volunteers speak the child's first language.

Research indicates that narratives also provide information about a child's progress with pre-literacy skills. For example, children's language skills are important predictors of their ability to blend or delete sounds in words, skills that are associated with learning to read (Cooper, Roth, Speece, & Schatschneider 2002).

Summary

The best picture of children's linguistic competence is based on their performance in both their home language and the new language, English. This dual language approach will provide the most fair and accurate assessment of children's ability to understand and use language. Information about the child's progress in both languages can be gathered from a variety of sources, including parent interviews, staff observations, and the child's narrative retellings. Head Start programs can also use information from the National Reporting System (NRS) to measure the progress of Spanish-speaking children in both their home language and their new language, English. ■

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PARENT FORM

Name of Child _____

Age of the Child _____

Head Start staff/other person who is speaking with the parent(s) _____

1. I will ask you to tell me your opinion about how well your child speaks each language. We will start with the language spoken at home, which is _____ (fill in the blank). Then, I will ask you for your opinion about the child's English. *[The numbers are for the interviewer's use only; each category will be read to the interviewee.]*

- (0) My child cannot speak (e.g., Spanish, Tagalog, etc.), has a few words or phrases, but cannot produce sentences (e.g., "I want cookies").
My child only understands a few words.
- (1) My child cannot speak _____, has a few words or phrases, but understands the general idea of what is being said.
- (2) My child has limited proficiency in _____ with grammatical errors, has limited vocabulary, but understands the general idea of what is being said.
- (3) My child has good proficiency in _____ with some grammatical errors, has some social and school vocabulary, and understands most of what is said.
- (4) My child has native-like proficiency in _____ with few grammatical errors, has good vocabulary, and understands most of what is said.

2. Now, I will ask you for your opinion about your child's English. *[The ratings are for the interviewer's use only; each category will be read to the interviewee.]*

- (0) My child cannot speak English, has a few words or phrases, but cannot produce sentences (e.g., "I want cookies"). My child only understands a few words.
- (1) My child cannot speak English, has a few words or phrases, but understands the general idea of what is being said.
- (2) My child has limited proficiency in English with grammatical errors, has limited vocabulary, but understands the general idea of what is being said.
- (3) My child has good proficiency in English with some grammatical errors, has some social and school vocabulary, and understands most of what is said.
- (4) My child has native-like proficiency in English with few grammatical errors, has good vocabulary, and understands most of what is said.

3. How much does your child use each language? Let's start with the language spoken at home.

- (0) Never speaks (e.g., Spanish, Tagalog, etc.), never hears it.
- (1) Never speaks _____, hears it very little.
- (2) Speaks _____ a little, hears it sometimes.
- (3) Speaks _____ sometimes, hears it most of the time.
- (4) Speaks _____ all of the time, hears it all of the time.

4. How much does your child use English?

- (0) Never speaks English, never hears it.
- (1) Never speaks English, hears it very little.
- (2) Speaks English a little, hears it sometimes.
- (3) Speaks English sometimes, hears it most of the time.
- (4) Speaks English all of the time, hears it all of the time.

(Adapted from Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter, 2003, pp. 286-288; see Tabors and Lopez, page 14, for additional questions)

TEACHER FORM

Name of Child _____

Age of the Child _____

Teacher _____

1. Use refers to how much the child uses the home language and English. Circle the appropriate rank for each language.

- (0) Never uses the indicated language. Never hears it.
- (1) Never uses the indicated language. Hears it very little.
- (2) Uses the indicated language a little. Hears it sometimes.
- (3) Uses the indicated language sometimes. Hears it most of the time.
- (4) Uses the indicated language all of the time. Hears it all of the time.

Questions	Home Language						English					
1. Speaks with you in class.	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4
2. Speaks with aides or other teachers.	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4
3. Speaks with classmates.	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4

2. Proficiency refers to how well the child speaks each language. Circle the appropriate rank for each language.

- (0) Cannot speak the indicated language, has a few words or phrases, cannot produce sentences, and only understands a few words.
- (1) Cannot speak the indicated language, has a few words or phrases, but understands the general idea of what is being said.
- (2) Limited proficiency with grammatical errors, has limited vocabulary, but understands the general idea of what is being said.
- (3) Good proficiency with some grammatical errors, has some social and academic vocabulary, and understands most of what is said.
- (4) Native-like proficiency with few grammatical errors, has good vocabulary, and understands most of what is said.

Questions	Home Language						English					
1. Speaks with you in class.	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4
2. Speaks with aides or other teachers.	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4
3. Speaks with classmates.	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4	Don't Know	0	1	2	3	4

3. On the continuum, circle the % of time that the child is exposed to each language in Head Start (the total time for the two languages should equal 100%):

English:	0%	20%	40%	50%	60%	80%	100%
Home Language:	0%	20%	40%	50%	60%	80%	100%

(Adapted from Gutierrez-Clellan & Kreiter, 2003, pp. 286-288; see Tabors and Lopez, page 14, for additional questions)

THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

NRS reports will support ongoing assessment and contribute to program improvement. **by Tom Schultz and Linda Jagielo**

Head Start's National Reporting System (NRS) is the nation's largest assessment of the skills and progress of preschoolers, including English language learners. In Fall 2003, Spring 2004, and again in the Fall 2004, over 410,000 children in Head Start programs, including more than 90,000 English language learners, participated in a common, 20-minute one-on-one assessment of language, literacy, and numeracy. Starting in Spring 2004, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs participated in the NRS.

Announced in President Bush's Early Childhood Initiative *Good Start, Grow Smart* in April, 2002, the NRS is designed to strengthen Head Start program quality, effectiveness and credibility. It provides comparable information on children's progress on a limited set of learning outcomes for all programs nationwide. Child outcomes areas for the NRS are based on Congressional mandates in the 1998 Head Start Reauthorization Act. The legislation requires the assessment of child outcomes in language, vocabulary, letter knowledge, and early math skills. In addition, the Act requires the assessment of the progress of non-English speaking children in listening to, understanding, and speaking English (see the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework in *The Head Start Path to Positive Child Outcomes* available at www.headstartinfo.org).

Head Start programs have performed well in implementing the National Reporting System. Nearly all Head Start agencies participated; staff were well-prepared to administer the assessments; and both parents and children cooperated with this new approach to documenting the benefits of Head Start services.

Assessing English Language Learners

Special efforts were made to prepare to assess English language learners. Over 500 staff from programs serving bilingual or Spanish-speaking populations were prepared and certified to train local bilingual NRS assessors, who administer both the English and Spanish versions of the NRS assessments.

The assessment begins with a screening procedure to determine a child's English language proficiency. The assessment process includes several options for English language learners:

- Children whose primary language is Spanish and who do not attain the cutoff score on the English language screener are given only a Spanish version of the NRS.
- Children whose primary language is Spanish and who attain the cutoff score in English receive both the English



Photo by J. Brough Schamp, Higher Horizons HSEHS.

Children enjoy learning to write their names.

and Spanish versions of the NRS (at two different times).

- Children whose primary language is other than Spanish or English and who do not attain the cutoff score in the English version do not receive any further assessment.

The extra time and effort it takes to assess some children in two languages makes it possible to compare their progress in language, literacy, and numeracy skills in their home language (Spanish) and in English. This comparative information is important because English language learners may have strong prior knowledge and skills in their home language (Spanish) that would not be evident if they are assessed only in English. They also may show different rates of progress from fall to spring and attain different levels of proficiency on the NRS measures by the end of their Head Start year, depending on the language of assessment.

Based on these procedures, of the 436,000 preschoolers who participated in the Fall 2003 NRS effort:

- 78% were assessed in English only
- 12% were assessed in Spanish only
- 7.5% were assessed in both English and Spanish
- 1.7% were not assessed due to lack of proficiency in either English or Spanish.

A similar pattern emerged from the Spring 2004 and Fall 2004 data.

NRS 2003-4 Assessment Information

Combining data from all Head Start programs, the Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 NRS results indicate that English language learners are showing progress over the course of the program year on all of the NRS measures. For example, the proportion of Head Start children who showed a basic understanding of spoken English sufficient to pass the language screener increased from 90 percent in the fall to 96 percent in the spring. This means that 60 percent of those children who could not pass the English screener in the fall acquired sufficient language skills by the spring to pass the screener.

For children who were classified as English language learners by their program and who passed the English language screener, data from the Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 NRS assessment in English are presented in Figure 1. Their understanding of spoken English increased during the program year, as evidenced by their answering 51% of the items correctly in the fall

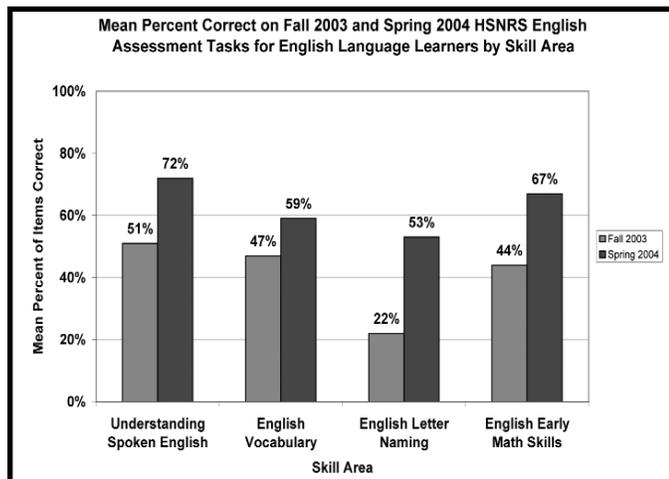


Figure 1

and 72% correctly in the spring. Not surprisingly, their knowledge of English vocabulary also increased, though not as dramatically. From the fall to the spring, the English language learners also became better at naming letters in the English alphabet – from 22% correct responses to 53% in the spring. When assessed in English, they also showed growth in their early math skills from the beginning of the program year.

Children who passed a similar Spanish language screener and who were assessed in Spanish in the fall and spring also showed growth in all skill areas (see Figure 2). Overall, children

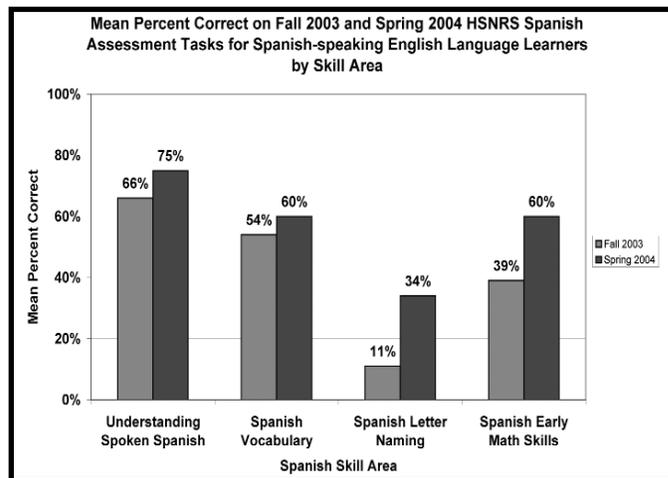


Figure 2

assessed in Spanish showed growth in Understanding Spoken Spanish. Their average scores on this section of the NRS went from 66% correct in the fall to 75% correct in the spring. The Spanish speakers also showed some growth in their Spanish vocabulary knowledge.

In the fall, children assessed in Spanish identified an average of 4 letters out of the 30 letters of the Spanish alphabet, or 11 percent. By spring, they identified an average of 10 letters, or 34%. Spanish speakers also showed growth in their Spanish Early Math Skills, from an average of 8 out of 21 items correct in the fall or 39% to an average of 13 items correct in the spring or 60%.

How Is NRS Information Being Used?

Each Head Start grantee and delegate agency received reports on their 2003-4 fall and spring assessments, allowing

THE NRS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

them to chart the progress of their 4- and 5-year-old children over the course of their Head Start year. This information, along with an analysis of local ongoing child assessments and other program information, will be used in program self-assessment and planning improvement initiatives. NRS reports have expanded each program's capacity to address questions such as:

- What is the progress of English language learners in the areas of language development, vocabulary, knowledge of letters and early mathematics in both English and Spanish?
- What is the progress of English language learners who enter at different levels of initial skills and knowledge in the areas assessed by the NRS?
- How do our results from the NRS compare with patterns of progress for children in other Head Start programs?
- How do programs with similar proportions of English language learners compare in terms of fostering children's progress?

In addition to their local program report, agencies may access additional analyses of assessment information in the internet-based NRS Reference Tables. These materials allow programs to compare NRS results for programs with similar characteristics on variables such as part-day vs. full-day program operations, proportion of English language learners and minority group children, percentage of teachers with college degrees, and children in the first or second year of Head Start.

The NRS also is designed to produce information to contribute to Head Start training and technical assistance efforts. By analyzing NRS assessments of English language learners and related descriptive information collected in the NRS and in the Program Information Report (PIR) system, regional and Federal staff can answer questions such as:

- What are the characteristics of Head Start programs that are unusually effective in promoting progress for English language learners?
- Are there different patterns of NRS outcomes for English language learners from programs using different curricula?
- Are there different patterns of NRS outcomes for English language learners based on factors such as teachers' level

of education or experience, fluency in Spanish, or use of Spanish in the classroom?

The NRS data from the first program year (Fall 2003 and Spring 2004) are currently being analyzed to provide answers to these questions. As an example of an initial finding, children attending Head Start programs in Puerto Rico show more substantial progress on the Spanish language assessments when compared to children who attend Head Start in other states and regions. This finding reflects the fact that Spanish-speaking children in Head Start programs in Puerto Rico receive instructional support in Spanish, whereas most children in U.S. mainland programs do not.

The NRS Is Evolving

The Head Start Bureau views the NRS as an evolving concept. We will continue to evaluate and work to improve the procedures and the measures. For example, during the program year 2003-4, Spanish-speaking children were assessed in English first and then in Spanish. But as of Fall 2004, Spanish-speaking children went through the language proficiency screener and subsequent assessments first in Spanish and then in English. This change was suggested by representatives of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start who followed this procedure in their initial Spring 2004 NRS assessments. We also anticipate working with a Secretary's Advisory Committee on Head Start Accountability and Educational Performance Measures in the coming year to review options for improving the NRS, such as incorporating assessments of social and emotional development.

Over the long run, the NRS will complement and enhance other ongoing Head Start quality efforts—Technical Assistance, program monitoring, research and evaluation. The NRS is a means to an end—the goal being to improve program effectiveness and promote the successful learning and healthy development of all Head Start children. ■

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THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES ON PRESCHOOLERS' CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Staff can build a blueprint to help second language learners gain confidence and skills.

by Rosa Milagros Santos and Michaelene Ostrosky

Head Start preschool teachers and other early childhood educators frequently observe the children in their care engaged in child-centered learning and playing with peers in very appropriate ways. At others times, these teachers are very concerned when they observe some children engaging in tantrums, being noncompliant, or retreating into isolated activities. These behaviors might be labeled as challenging.

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign defines challenging behaviors as, “any repeated patterns of behaviors, or perceptions of behavior that interfere with or are at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults.” However, these behaviors are not always what they appear to be, especially for children who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken.

Since the school year started, Adrian, a 4-year-old, has had difficulties adjusting to his new classroom. Every morning, he clings tightly to his mother and cries when she drops him off at school. Throughout the day, he follows one of his teachers around and participates in group activities as long as the teacher is sitting right next to him. He and his family have just moved to the community from another country. His father speaks some English, while his mother does not speak English at all. None of the teachers in the classroom speak the family's home language. Thus, very little communication occurs among the teachers, Adrian, and his mother.

About 27% of the total number of children enrolled in Head Start are from homes where languages other than English are spoken. There are over 140 languages represented in Head Start; Spanish is the most common language other than English (Administration on Children, Youth, and Families 2000). Interestingly, while Head Start personnel speak 93 of the 140 languages, there are still many children in Head Start programs where there are no classroom staff who speak their languages (Administration on Children, Youth, and Families 2000).

Head Start staff who work with families and children who speak a language other than English at home have many questions. Are children's refusals to interact and communicate with others, frequent tantrums, difficulty in attending, and excessive shyness signs of behavior problems, or are these typical behaviors for young English language learners? Are children behaving this way because their home language is different from the language used in the classroom? Do challenging behaviors represent frustration due to an inability to commu-



Photo by E. Huffmon, Bristol Bay Native Association HS.

Field trips can promote discussion and vocabulary development.

nicate in the early childhood environment? Head Start staff want answers in order to understand children's behavior and how to support their learning so they will succeed in school and in life. These questions, coupled with Head Start demographics, highlight a critical need for all Head Start staff to understand the impact of language on children's behavior and overall development.

Why Is Understanding the Impact of Language So Confusing?

Learning another language is not an easy task for many children and even for adults! For many, acquiring oral skills in the new language may take 2-3 years and an additional 5-7 years to acquire higher-level language skills for academic or other uses (Brice 2000).

LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

The developmental pattern for learning English is fairly consistent for all young children. This developmental pattern includes four sequential stages (Brice 2002; Tabors 1997):

- the continued use of the home language
- the silent or nonverbal period
- sound experimentation and use of telegraphic speech (e.g., the use of a few content words as an entire utterance, such as when a child responds to, “What can I get for you?” with comments such as “crackers,” “book,” or “airplane” in the new language)
- productive use of the new language

Some of the behaviors that children might demonstrate during second language learning stages, such as playing in isolation and not speaking in either language, may be misinterpreted or mislabeled as a problem.

Although most English language learners progress through these stages, they move through them at different rates. The ease and the pace at which English is learned depends on the child’s age, motivation, personality, knowledge of the first language, and exposure to English (August & Hakuta 1997; Brice 2002; Cummins 1991; McLaughlin 1984). Disabilities, including speech delays evidenced in the primary language, may impact the rate of second language acquisition (Roseberry-McKibbin 1995).

Some of the behaviors that children might demonstrate during these language-learning stages, such as playing in isolation and not speaking in either language, may be misinterpreted or mislabeled as a problem. In fact, children are simply

beginning to acquire the new language. These behaviors also are similar to those exhibited by children identified with specific language or speech impairments (Brice 2002; Rice, Sell, & Hadley 1991; Tabors 1997). Thus, it is not uncommon for many of these children to be labeled as having challenging behaviors or communication disorders when in fact they are following a fairly typical developmental progression in acquiring another language.

What Behaviors Might Young English Language Learners Exhibit?

Some common behaviors associated with language acquisition that may be misinterpreted as challenging behaviors include not talking, difficulty following directions, difficulty expressing ideas and feelings, and responding to questions inconsistently (Tabors 1997). For example, during the nonverbal period, staff and parents, too, may be very worried about the child’s language development. Roseberry-McKibbin (1995) suggests that children typically go through the silent period for about 3-6 months, which may cause great concerns for professionals when children do not seem to be talking. In fact, at this stage, the child is working actively to gather information about how to communicate with peers and adults in the new language.

During this non-verbal phase, researchers also note that children may isolate themselves as they take on the role of spectator or observer (Brice 2002; Tabors 1997). In “safe” environments (such as solitary play), they may rehearse new words they have heard. Although a teacher might interpret this tendency to keep to themselves as problematic, the English language learners are often watching classmates and adults and attempting to figure out how to communicate.

Additionally, Tabors (1997) notes that some children use cognitive and social strategies in acquiring a new language that may be misinterpreted as “challenging behaviors.” One strategy is “pretending” to understand interactions or activities, such as large group play, when they do not grasp clearly what is going on. In these situations, English language learners may be inconsistent in responding to directions given by their peers or adults and, therefore, appear to be non-compliant.

How Can I Tell if There Is Really a Behavior Problem?

Assessment is the key to pinpointing a child's strengths and needs and then designing instructional programs that facilitate the child's development. When assessing an English language learner, Head Start staff should look at (1) the child's abilities in terms of cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development (referring to the eight Domains in the *Child Outcomes Framework*), (2) the child's abilities in his/her first language; and (3) the child's capabilities in his/her second language (Brice 2002; McLean 2002; Ortiz & Maldonado 1986).

These researchers note that because cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development are involved in and affected by the process of second-language acquisition, it is important to assess these areas. Knowing the child's abilities in his or her first language is critical in gaining a complete picture of the child's skills and knowledge, as is gathering information about how a child is progressing in the development of the new language (McLean 2002). Similar to assessing children who are monolingual or speak one primary language, conducting authentic performance-based assessment helps teachers understand how a child uses language during day-to-day interactions (Brice 2002; McLean 2002).

It is always important for the teaching team to work with the Head Start disabilities coordinator, the mental health consultant, and other specialists to assess any situation where there are concerns about a child's development. These personnel should be well-informed about the impact of language differences on child behavior. For example, in Adrian's situation, his inability to adapt to his new classroom is due in large part to his inability to communicate with others in that environment. Crying is his way of communicating the frustration and anxiety that he is unable to verbalize in the new language.

What Can I Do to Support the Children in my Program?

Head Start teachers and other staff should understand the process by which children learn language, whether it is their home language or a new language. It is also important that they gather information from a variety of sources and not rely on one assessment tool to ensure that they have a complete picture

of a child's skill development. Additional sources of information include observations of the child in different settings, interviewing adults who provide care to the child, and collecting a sample of the child's work (e.g., art work, writing, etc.).

Professionals can learn from families about their children and also about the families' cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. With this knowledge and understanding of the children and their families, staff will be better able to distinguish between a challenging behavior and behaviors associated with the acquisition of a new language. They also will be able to effectively support children's overall development. The teaching team will want to individualize instruction, because even two children from the same cultural background might show differ-

Authentic performance-based assessment is the key to pinpointing a child's strengths and needs.

ent patterns and rates in learning English. Thus, it is critical for Adrian's teachers to find means to communicate with his parents and with him to be able to support his transition in the new classroom. Strategies such as using pictures to communicate the classroom routines, rules, and expectations may help alleviate some of Adrian's anxiety about being in the classroom.

The *Program Performance Standards* require that programs provide a supportive and safe environment in which children can use their home language while learning a new language. Teachers can develop a systematic plan to promote meaningful participation and inclusion of English language learners in routines and activities in the classroom. They can build upon what the children know and engage them in situations that at the beginning may not require them to give specific responses (e.g., low-demand situations). For example, teachers might get children more involved in group activities

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by having them help carry materials such as books, name cards, and musical instruments to circle time. The intentional use of instructional strategies -- such as pairing new words with gestures, pictures, and cues; commenting on what a child does; expanding and extending upon children's words; and repeating what children have said -- are effective in young children's successful acquisition of a new language.

Collaborating with families and other professionals, creating a supportive early childhood environment, and using evidence-based communication strategies are key ingredients to working effectively with English language learners. Not only will using these strategies help in distinguishing between challenging behaviors and behaviors associated with acquisition of a new language, but it will also enable adults to effectively support young children's overall development.

This article is adapted from the What Works Brief series produced by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (www.csefel.uiuc.edu). The What Works Brief is a continuing series of short, easy-to-read, "how to" information packets on a variety of evidence-based practices, strategies, and intervention procedures. The Briefs are designed to help teachers and other caregivers support young children's social and emotional development. They include examples and vignettes that illustrate how practical strategies might be used in a variety of early childhood settings and home environments. ■

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online... For more information on Head Start, visit our site at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb

RESOURCES

PRINT

THE MENTOR-TEACHER HANDBOOK ON EARLY LITERACY FOR MIGRANT & SEASONAL HEAD START CLASSROOMS. 2003.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center. Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development.

This mentor handbook supports the professional development of MSHS teachers and family child care providers. The handbook is organized by early literacy topics and includes discussion of research findings, teaching strategies, and successful mentor-coaching practices. Available in Spanish. Available at www.mhsqic.org.

A CREATIVE ADVENTURE: SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING THROUGH ART, MUSIC, MOVEMENT, AND DIALOGUE. 2000.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation, Head Start Bureau. Washington, D.C.: Author.

This multimedia kit focuses on the importance of creative opportunities in a child's development and suggests activities to stimulate creativity at home or in the classroom. Contents include a videotape, media guide, and poster. Available in Spanish.

Available at www.headstartinfo.org

Continued on page 61

WEBLIOGRAPHY

The following Web sites about English language learners are recommended as further resources for teachers, parents, and administrators

www.cal.org/topics/prek-12literacy.html

CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS (CAL) is a private, non-profit organization of scholars and educators who use the findings of linguistics and related sciences in identifying and addressing language-related issues. CAL conducts a wide range of activities, including research, teacher education, analysis and dissemination of information, design and development of instructional materials, technical assistance, conference planning, program evaluation, and policy analysis. CAL's Language and Literacy Division specializes in projects that center on literacy acquisition in the elementary and secondary grades, particularly among learners for whom English is a second language. CAL is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and contains the library of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics.

www.CLMER.csulb.edu

CENTER FOR LANGUAGE MINORITY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (CLMER) promotes equity in schools and society. A priority is the creative use of technology in service to communities at a local, national, and international level. CLMER is based at the College of Education, California State University, Long Beach.

www.crede.uscs.edu

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATION, DIVERSITY AND EXCELLENCE (CREDE) is a Federally funded research and development program focused on improving the education of students of all ages whose ability to reach their potential is challenged by language or cultural barriers, race, geographic location, or poverty. Located at the University of California, Santa Cruz, CREDE offers a wide range of multi-media products, print publications, and a useful Web site for practitioners, researchers, and educators.

<http://clas.uiuc.edu>

EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES (CLAS) Institute identifies, evaluates, and promotes effective and appropriate early intervention practices and preschool practices that are sensitive and respectful to children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. CLAS is a Federally funded collaborative effort of several universities, ERIC libraries, and the Council for Exceptional Children.

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WEBLIOGRAPHY

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www.ael.org/eric/

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON RURAL EDUCATION AND SMALL SCHOOLS (CRESS) encompasses American Indians and Alaska Natives, Mexican Americans, Migrants, and Outdoor Education. It acquires and screens materials, keeps a bibliographic database (including Web-based materials), answers requests for information, develops and disseminates free and low-cost publications, and conducts workshops. The host institution for ERIC/CRESS is AEL (Appalachian Educational Laboratory) in Charleston, WV.

www.cal.org/ericll

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS (CLL) is operated by the Center for Applied Linguistics, a private non-profit organization. ERIC/CLL provides a wide range of services and materials for language educators, most of them free of charge. All publications focus on current trends and issues in the language education field, including bilingual education and English as a second language.

www.headstartinfo.org/infocenter/literacy_tk/links_jun04.htm

LINKS TO LITERACY. VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1 is a compilation of Internet sites designed to support Head Start's literacy initiatives. Three web sites are posted. The Center for Applied Linguistics site discusses the benefits of knowing two languages. The Colorin' Colorado site identifies activities and resources parents can use with their children and is in English and Spanish. The Public Library Association site reports on the results of early literacy programs provided by public libraries.

www.NABE.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION (NABE) is a professional organization at the national level devoted to representing both English language learners and bilingual education professionals. It represents over 5,000 educators and parents with affiliate organizations in 28 states. NABE advocates for a variety of programs that provide language supports to English Language Learners.

www.ncela.gwu.edu

NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION & LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (NCELA) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Its mission is to collect, analyze, and disseminate information relating to the effective education of linguistically and culturally diverse learners in the U.S. NCELA provides information through its Web site and topical publications and produces the Office of English Language Acquisition's weekly electronic news bulletin, *Newsline*.

<http://nnell.org>

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR EARLY LANGUAGE LEARNING (NNELL) includes educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children. Its mission is to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own.

www.ed.gov/offices/OELA

OFFICE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENT, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS (OELA's) mission is to identify major issues affecting the education of English Language Learners and to assist and support state and local systemic reform efforts that emphasize high academic standards, school accountability, professional training and parent involvement. OELA was formerly the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA).

www.TESOL.edu

TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (TESOL'S) mission is to ensure excellence in English language teaching to speakers of other languages. TESOL values professionalism in language education; individual language rights; accessible, high quality education; collaboration in a global community; interaction of research and reflective practice for educational improvement; and respect for diversity and multiculturalism.

PRINT (continued)

CELEBRATING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN HEAD START. 2000.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation, Head Start Bureau. Washington, D.C.: Author.

The study was commissioned by ACYF in order to better understand the diversity in language and culture of the Head Start population, to identify the range of services provided to this population, and to describe barriers faced by Head Start programs as they address the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Available at www.headstartinfo.org

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FOCUS GROUP REPORT: IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS. 2002.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children and Families, Head Start and Early Head Start. Prepared by Educational Services, Inc., Washington, D.C.

The goal of the two-day focus group was to solicit specific recommendations regarding effective approaches for addressing the opportunities and challenges presented by working with

HS/EHS children and families who are English language learners. Participants included parents, program staff, and researchers.

Available at www.headstartinfo.org

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND EARLY LITERACY: SERVING CULTURALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES IN EARLY HEAD START. TECHNICAL PAPER NO. 5. 2001.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau. Prepared by Early Head Start National Resource Center @ ZERO TO THREE. Washington, D.C.: Author.

This paper focuses on early language development in children from culturally and linguistically diverse families and the implications for later literacy development. Guidelines are provided for program implementation. Two Early Head Start programs are profiled and their language policies are described.

Available at www.ehsnrc.org

MULTICULTURAL PRINCIPLES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS. 1992.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Developed by the Head Start Multicultural Task Force, the 10 principles listed in this document were

expanded by regional and national staff within ACF and experts in the field of multicultural programming. These principles stand as a challenge to Head Start grantees and delegate agencies to focus their efforts on individualizing services so that every child and family feels respected and valued. This publication was incorporated into the revision of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, 1996. Available in Spanish.

Available at www.headstartinfo.org

SUPPORTING THE HOME LANGUAGE AND PROMOTING ENGLISH ACQUISITION WITHIN MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START.

Yandian, S. and J. Jones. 2002. Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development.

The intent of the paper was to: 1) summarize the relevant research around first and second language development; 2) provide guidance on creating language rich environments in both English and Spanish; and 3) provide suggestions for achieving the mandated documentation on Head Start children's progress towards English acquisition. The paper includes discussion of simultaneous vs. sequential bilingualism and culture and language; recommendations include best practices and selected teaching strategies that support early childhood bilingualism. *Available at www.mhsqic.org/init/seclang/secondlang.pdf*