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Read About It



Dual Language Learners: A Screening Guide for Program Leaders

How can parents and early childhood professionals know if a child is at risk for health, sensory, cognitive, physical, language, or social-emotional delays? Early screening is the first step in the assessment process for all children in Head Start and Early Head Start. If the screening results show an area of concern, teachers work with disabilities coordinators to schedule further testing. But is this process different for children who are dual language learners (DLLs)?

Screening Dual Language Learners in Early Head Start and Head Start: A Guide for Program Leaders includes the tools to plan, implement, and evaluate the screening processes. This document from the **National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness** (NCCLR) shows how to make informed decisions about which screening instruments to use, and how to implement high-quality screening practices for children who are bilingual.

Take a Look

Screenings serve an important purpose in Head Start. They are the first step to identify children who may need more testing to see if they have a delay in development. Performance standards state that grantees must provide for developmental, hearing, and vision screenings of all Early Head Start and Head Start children within 45 days of the child's entry into the program. To help you understand developmental milestones, watch the video **Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!** This initiative is a coordinated federal effort to encourage healthy child development. It helps families and providers celebrate milestones, promote universal screening, identify possible delays and concerns early, and enhance developmental supports.

From birth to 5 years, children should reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move. **"Learn the Signs. Act Early."** is a campaign with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It gives resources and information about developmental milestones and urges parents and caregivers to *act early* if they see a problem. You can test your knowledge of children's development with the **Milestones Quiz** which is part of the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign.

Try It Out!

This month, Dr. Amy Santos and Dr. Lillian Durand shatter three common myths about children who are DLLs and have a disability. Here's what they said:

MYTH	FACT
1. If children are encouraged to speak more than one language, it will cause developmental delays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being bilingual does not cause language delay. • Children with higher language and early literacy skills in their home language are more likely to also have higher reading achievement and academic outcomes in English. • First language development supports second language acquisition.

MYTH	FACT
2. If children are taught with more than one language, it will cause developmental delays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers who use more than one language help children develop their home language, and that provides a solid foundation for English language acquisition. • When screenings and assessment tools are not available in a child's home language, teachers need to gather even more careful additional information—such as ongoing classroom observation and information from the family—to get accurate information about a child's development.
3. If children have a disability and have to learn another language, it will cause them to struggle more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children need more than one language to be able to communicate across their natural environments. • Children with disabilities, such as speech and language impairment, intellectual disabilities, and autism, can learn more than one language. • Children with disabilities who are also DLLs need intentional and targeted support in all of the languages they speak. This approach is likely to yield the best outcomes.

Improve Your Practice



Check out the 15-minute In-service Suites from the NCQTL

Ongoing Child Assessment: Children with Disabilities

Assessment information helps teachers adjust their teaching for the needs of the children in their class. In the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning's (NCQTL) **Ongoing Assessment** suites, tools like the **Decision Making Chart** show what actions to take if a child is making progress, not making progress, or has accomplished their goal. The **Guide for Supporting Teachers: Making Decisions to Adjust Teaching** lists discussion questions for supervisors, such as: What

adjustments can be made if a child is not making progress? Other questions include: What is the

next step for a child who has met a learning objective? Conversations with supervisors about these topics can help teachers decide how and when to make changes to a child's individual teaching program. You can find more tools for teachers and supervisors in the **NCQTL portal** on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.

Families Too!

Families may not know that a child's school readiness and school success is directly tied to how well the child masters the language spoken at home. The **Importance of Home Language Series** handouts emphasize the benefits of being bilingual, the importance of maintaining the home language, and the value of becoming fully bilingual. For families of DLLs, the **Language at Home and in the Community** handout shares eight things to do at home to help children learn their home language.

Special Events

The next **Disabilities Dialogue** is July 23. This webinar series is for Head Start disabilities coordinators, hosted by NCQTL. Guest experts share information especially for those who provide services to children with disabilities and their families. Email ncqtl@uw.edu to learn more about specific dates and times.

The **Division for Early Childhood's 31st Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and their Families (DEC)** takes place in Atlanta, GA, Oct. 7–9.

We Want to Hear from You!

The Head Start Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by NCQTL. Email Kristin Ainslie at ncqtl@uw.edu to submit questions or suggestions for future newsletter topics.

Select this link to view previous **Head Start Disabilities Services Newsletters** on the ECLKC.

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