Dual Language Learners Program Assessment: User's Guide

A Coordinated Approach Across Management Systems and Program Services

> Dual language learner (DLL) means a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time, or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language. The term "dual language learner" may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms frequently used, such as bilingual, English language learner (ELL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), English learner, and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE). Terms, 45 CFR §1305.2

The Dual Language Learners Program Assessment (DLLPA) assists Head Start, child care, and pre-K program assess their management systems and services to ensure the full and effective participation of children who are DLLs and their families. In Head Start, this comprehensive management structure is referred to as a coordinated approach (Management system, 45 CFR § 1302.101(b)(2)). A coordinated approach is not new to Head Start as this informs both management systems and program service delivery. The DLLPA helps programs promote school readiness for children who are DLLs and the engagement of their families.

The DLLPA can also help your program ensure the integration of culturally and linguistically responsive practices for all children. For Head Start programs, it is necessary to respect and incorporate families' cultures and languages into management systems and services provided. All program services need to actively promote the development of a positive cultural and individual identity for all children and their families.

> Most Head Start children who are DLLs speak Spanish at home. However, more than 140 languages are spoken by Head Start children and their families (Office of Head Start – Services Snapshot: National All Programs (2016–2017)

Program staff are also members of cultural groups that need to be acknowledged. These imperatives are woven into the Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders.

The dual purposes of the DLLPA—to assess systems and services for children who are DLLs and their families and to integrate culture and language for all children and families—makes this an invaluable tool for all Head Start and early learning programs.

To help you better understand the DLLPA, this guide addresses:

▸ What is its purpose?

▸ Who is it for?

▸ How is it organized?

▸ How is it scored?

▸ How is the data used?

▸ How do you get started?

▸ 10 Steps for Your Program to Follow

What is its purpose?

The DLLPA is a self-assessment tool for Head Start, child care, and pre-K programs. It helps to assess management systems and services to ensure the full and effective participation of children who are DLLs and their families. In fact, a coordinated approach is mandated in [Subpart J—Program Management and Quality Improvement, 45 CFR § 1302](#) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). Make the DLLPA part of your program's continuous improvement efforts. As part of your program's planning cycle, it can provide information that clarifies or expands data collected from other sources, including other program assessment tools. It is another resource for your program's toolbox.

The DLLPA focuses on continuous improvement in delivering Head Start and Early Head Start services to children who are DLLs and their families. It replaces the Program Preparedness Checklist 5 (PPC5) and the Organizational Capacity Checklist (OCC).

Using the DLLPA allows your program to:

- Review the HSPPS foundational to a coordinated approach for children who are DLLs

- Focus on the systems and services that support a program-wide coordinated approach for children who are DLLs

- Note the strengths of your program's coordinated approach

- Assess the integration of culturally and linguistically responsive practices for all children

- Identify priorities for improving program management and quality services

- Generate creative and open reflection for next steps

- Access related resources

Who is it for?

The DLLPA is designed for Head Start and other early childhood programs that:

- Implement a coordinated approach to service delivery

- Integrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness

- Serve infants, toddlers, and preschoolers

- Use various program service delivery options (e.g., center-based, family child care, home-based)

How is it organized?

The DLLPA has 10 sections, each of which is grounded in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), reflects current research, and identifies culturally and linguistically responsive practices. In fact, the entire DLLPA is anchored in the regulation requiring a program-wide coordinated approach to ensure full participation of children who are DLLs and their families (45 CFR § 1302.101(b)(2)). The DLLPA also incorporates other HSPPS regulations that refer to children who are DLLs, as well as citations from the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The identified HSPPS inform meaningful integration of culture and language. Each HSPPS includes one or more of these terms:

▸ "Children who are DLLs and their families"

▸ "Culturally and linguistically appropriate"

▸ "Culture and language"

▸ "Subgroups of children," which implies children who are DLLs and others

Sources for these best practices include the Office of Head Start (OHS); the National Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Centers; and the Equity, Inclusiveness, & Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices Workgroup (EI&CLRP). Source documents include the HSPPS Preamble; the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs; the Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders; the Planned Language Approach (PLA): Research Base; PLA Classroom Language Models: A Leader's Implementation Manual; and other Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) publications.

The 10 sections are grouped as management systems or program service areas.

Management Systems	Program Service Areas (Program Operations, 45 CFR § 1302)
1. Communication	Education and Child Development Program Services
2. Human Resources	5. Teaching and the Learning Environment
3. Training and Professional Development	6. Curricula
	7. Child Screenings and Assessments
4. Program Planning and Service System Design	8. Health Program Services
	9. Family and Community Engagement Program Services
	10. Transition Services

Following the HSPPS citations for each management system and program service area, there are a series of questions that target culturally and linguistically responsive best practices. They are examples of how the HSPPS might be implemented effectively in your program.

The questions about these effective practices that support the regulations are drawn from a variety of sources. They are not exhaustive. In fact, you may want to ask some additional questions that reflect the uniqueness of your program and the children and families you serve.

Answer the questions by rating your program's implementation of these practices. On a scale of 1–5, indicate how well or how frequently your program engages in the effective practice. Use "N/A" if you don't feel the practice is relevant to your current situation or circumstance.

You can record details of your program's implementation in a Notes box, including:

▸ How the HSPPS or best practices are being implemented in your program

▸ Challenges, next steps, or questions about the data

▸ Other practices that capture the unique facets of your program's coordinated approach or integration of culture and language

At the end of each section, you will find links to useful resources targeting the specific system or service areas addressed in the tool. Many of these resources are available in Spanish and other languages. The list is not exhaustive. You also might look at resources you're already using in your program's efforts to provide services to children who are DLLs and their families.

Refer to the 10 Steps for Your Program to follow for an overview of the DLLPA and its use.

How is it scored?

In every section, rate the response to each question on a scale of 1–5, lowest to highest. When answering, use your best judgment of your program's current practice. Some questions should be answered based on the frequency of implementation. How often or consistently is the practice implemented? In other sections, indicate the quality of implementation. How well you think the system or service is put into practice?

The minus (-) and plus (+) symbols are used to distinguish the lowest and highest values of the rating scale, respectively. Use "N/A" if you don't feel the practice is relevant to your current situation or circumstance. The section total and the total scores in the Scoring Summary exclude the "N/A" responses.

When you use the DLLPA online, your ratings will be automatically recorded and tallied

at the bottom of each section. The average score for each section will also be computed. Once you have completed the DLLPA, you will receive a total summary score.

When using a printed version, you must tally the ratings of each section manually. A score sheet is provided for the total score and the average score of each section. You can also calculate the summary score for the entire DLLPA.

There is no scorecard that compares your program's ratings to those of other programs. There are no norms for program comparisons. In fact, the data from the DLLPA is used only by your program. Your program can decide what a rating means. Is a rating of 3 "adequate" or a 4 "very good?" It's up to you!

How is the data used?

Your program will need to analyze and interpret its DLLPA results. Consider trying several of these approaches to using your data:

> You will notice the management systems and program service areas identified in the DLLPA reflect those in the Head Start Management Systems Wheel. They are also integrated into the culturally and linguistically responsive practices you rated.

- ▶ Look at the ratings within each section to develop a set of goals and priorities for that particular system or service area

- ▶ Rank the section totals from lowest to highest

  - » Low scores indicate areas of likely program improvement

  - » Discuss goals and priorities

- ▶ Review all "Notes" and use the information to support your planning and assessment

- ▶ Compare the data from the DLLPA to information identified in your program

planning and community assessment processes

▸ Determine your next action items

▸ Celebrate your successes

▸ Access resources to help your program implement improvements

Use this information for a variety of management purposes:

▸ Identify program strengths

▸ Identify continuous improvement goals and strategies

▸ Plan training and professional development opportunities

▸ Write reports

▸ Prepare re-funding applications and grant proposals

▸ Track progress through ongoing monitoring

Using the results of the DLLPA can help your program ensure a coordinated approach for children who are DLLs and their families. By building stronger systems and services, your program can help ensure a culturally and linguistically responsive environment for all children and their families.

How do you get started?

How you use the tool depends upon your program's size, needs, and priorities. There is not a right or wrong way. There are many approaches. Select one or more ways to use the DLLPA that makes sense for your program.

All program staff can participate. Consider having your:

▶ Leadership and management teams complete the entire DLLPA as part of your program's planning process. Managers of the human resources or financial systems should be included.

» Share the results with the agency's governing board/Tribal Council and Policy Council to establish goals, monitor and report progress, and plan or document program improvement efforts.

▶ Education managers complete one or more sections over a six-month period.

» Use the results to guide professional development plans and the work of supervisors and coaches.

» Use sections of the DLLPA as a foundation for education staffs' self-reflection or self-evaluation activities.

▶ Family service staff complete relevant sections and focus on culturally sensitive ways to promote partnerships and communication with families.

▶ Staff in other service areas complete sections. Depending on their specialty, they can rate the sections with an eye to children with identified disabilities or suspected delays or they can take a look at the nutrition and transportation services.

To help answer the questions, **have documents and data sources handy,** such as:

▶ Community assessment

- ▸ Program Information Report (PIR)

- ▸ Personnel policies

- ▸ Aggregated child assessment data

Use a holistic approach to consider how culture and language are integrated into and across your program's comprehensive services.

- ▸ Be sensitive to the intersection of the regulations that apply to children who are DLLs with identified disabilities or suspected delays

  - » The HSPPS also require that programs implement a coordinated approach to ensure the full and effective participation of children with disabilities.

- ▸ Pay attention to all regulations as you assess your program-wide coordinated approach and the integration of culture and language, not just the ones cited in the DLLPA.

- ▸ Consider fiscal implications and the cost of services or activities that may need to be added to your budget, including:

  - » Interpretation or translation services

  - » Recruitment of bilingual staff

  - » Purchase of culturally responsive classroom materials

  - » Professional development opportunities

10 Steps for Your Program to Follow

Dual Language Learners Program Assessment (DLLPA)

The DLLPA self-assessment tool helps programs take a look at their implementation of a coordinated approach for children who DLLs. It also ensures culturally and linguistically responsive practices for all children. With this tool, you can assess both systems and services in your program.

Getting Ready

☐ 1. Determine:

>> Who in your program will fill out the DLLPA: Management team? Teams representing different systems and services?

>> How they will fill it out: Individual sections? The entire tool?

☐ 2. Decide which program options to review: Only center-based and family child care? Only home-based? All options?

☐ 3. Review the 10 sections, including Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) that refer to children who are DLLs, culture, and language, and questions referring to relevant program practices which support the regulations.

☐ 4. Gather supporting documents or information to answer the questions (e.g., Program Information Report (PIR), community assessment, aggregated child data, screening data).

Completing the Tool

☐ 5. Score each question 1 (low) to 5 (high), or N/A (not applicable or don't know).

☐ 6. Review your score at the end of each section. Online scoring is automatic; tally your score manually if using a printed version.

☐ 7. Comment in the Notes section, if applicable.

What's Next?

☐ 8. Focus on areas of strength (higher scores). Congratulate yourself!

☐ 9. Identify areas needing improvement (lower scores).

☐ 10. Plan action steps using results from the DLLPA and resources from the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC).