

Strong, Focused Leaders Ensure ALL Children's Language and Literacy Success



Research has clearly demonstrated that when staff have strong and clearly articulated expectations for high-quality teaching practices, and the improved systems that support them, children progress optimally. Successful leaders come to work each day with the goal of ensuring that **every** child learns, thrives, and closes any achievement gap they experience when s/he enters EHS/HS.

To make that happen, **leaders** must ENSURE strong language and literacy systems and practices for each child – no matter what language/s they use–ALL DAY...EVERY DAY...for EVERY CHILD! This can only occur in a program in which all your systems are laser-focused on child progress and when ALL staff see how their efforts directly contribute to children's achievement.

EACH of the following practices and systems are essential to assuring children's optimal learning.

- **Program goals** that clearly state program plans and intentions to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to the diverse populations they serve.
- **Human Resources** recruitment, expectations, job descriptions, and processes that are clearly articulated and followed to ensure that new teaching staff are already skilled language models in the language/languages they will use with the children.
- **Explicit expectations** for existing teaching staff who do not yet have high-levels of language modeling skills, including
 - training;
 - on-going follow-up and practice that enables staff to meet the expectation that they will become proficient, and change the ways they teach; and
 - coaching, mentoring, and supervision so they integrate the new skills into their daily teaching practices.
- **Staff's needs** and progress are supported and tracked by
 - *Annual Self-Assessment*
 - *Community Assessment* (with changes in the demographics of the population taken into account for outreach practices)

- *Budgeting practices* that incorporate consideration for
 - providing stipends for staff who have sufficiently proficient language skills to work in multiple languages as teaching staff, translators, interpreters, or family engagement staff;
 - training staff to develop high levels a skills in translation and/or interpretation;
 - hiring, contracting with, and supervising highly skilled translators and interpreters.
- *Professional Development Plans* reflect
 - each staff person's next steps for improving their skills in working with diverse children and families, and
 - specific mentoring or coaching practices that assure staff are developing, and using their skills with increasing competence and ease.
- *Regular supervisory walk-throughs*
- *Communities of Practice* among teaching staff who are supporting each other's growth
- *Annual evaluations* that
 - specifically align with the above items;
 - identify staff strengths, progress, and next steps in working with children and families with diverse cultures and languages; and
 - include specific supervisory intervention if planned progress is not made.
- *Governing Bodies* (including Board, Policy Council Parent Committees, Tribal Governments, etc.) who
 - are trained on the research about the best practices when working with DLLs and culturally diverse children and families, and
 - exercise authority over involvement in hiring highly skilled staff and budget considerations including translation equipment, etc.
- *Classroom Language Models (CLMs)* adopted program-wide and implemented with consistent, reliable supervision and support
 - teachers are trained, mentored, and supervised to ensure they consistently use planned, specific teaching practices with sufficient duration and intensity to assure language and literacy progress for children who are Dual Language Learners and those who are not.

- *Family Engagement and Education staff* focus specifically to engage
 - ALL families to support their child’s language and literacy development at home,
 - the families of Dual Language Learners to promote their home language at home and to share their language and culture/s in a variety of ways in the classroom and the program, and
 - support family engagement goals which focus family’s encouraging their home language throughout their children’s lives

- *Translation and Interpreting Policies and Practices* focus on
 - the fact that translators and interpreters are the “face and voice of the agency” and, therefore, they **MUST** thoroughly understand EHS/HS and be highly competent translators and/or interpreters whose expertise has been verified;
 - the different skill sets required of interpreters and translators; and
 - the understanding that the positions may require different people since interpretation requires a different set of skills than translation, and
 - ensuring that those hired are trained in the ethics of the profession regarding confidentiality, neutrality, etc.



This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0001 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>