

Engaging Dual-Language Learners in Head Start Preschool Classrooms

Many early childhood professionals work with children and families with first languages that are different from their own. In these cases, early childhood professionals may find it difficult to create engaging learning environments for children who come to class without understanding English. Creating supportive, stimulating educational environments for dual-language learners is a priority for many teachers. This training topic provides an opportunity for professionals in early childhood education to share their experiences and develop effective strategies for supporting the development of dual-language learners in the Head Start context.

Goal To enhance the strategies used by Head Start staff to provide a supporting, stimulating, and equitable educational environment for dual-language learners.

Objectives Participants will:

- ▶ Develop a deeper understanding of the language and social development of dual-language preschoolers and the implications for classroom practice
- ▶ Learn practical strategies that can create a supportive and stimulating educational environment for young dual-language learners
- ▶ Gain access to on-site and on-line resources that can support their ongoing professional development in this area

Method and Content

This workshop has three distinct sections, each designed to build on the others.

- ▶ Exercise One: Reflecting on Our Experiences With Dual-Language Learners
- ▶ Exercise Two: Considering Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practices for Dual-Language Learners
- ▶ Exercise Three: Sharing Strategies and Resources

Exercise One provides the opportunity for staff to reflect on their own experiences as teachers of dual language learners as they identify questions to explore. In Exercise Two, staff consider the notion of developmentally and culturally appropriate practice for dual-language learners. In Exercise Three, the group will share and discuss strategies for creating supportive and stimulating educational environments for dual-language learners.

What You Need:

- ▶ Time – this training should take a minimum of 1.5 hours, not including Workshop Leader preparation. For more information on **Workshop Time Management**, see the ***Introduction to the Tell Me A Story Workshops***.
- ▶ A training space large enough to accommodate the members of the training to participate in large (e.g., 20 people or more) and small (e.g., 3-6 people) group discussions. For large groups (e.g. more than 20 participants), you may want to consider including 2 workshop leaders to help manage and respond to participant needs. For more information on considerations with **Group Size**, see the ***Introduction to the Tell Me A Story Workshops***.
- ▶ Seating for your training group

Workshop Leader Preparation

Read through all the workshop materials first. Take the time to reflect on your own responses to the exercise questions. It is important to acknowledge your own comfort level and biases with the subject matter before leading the workshop. You may want to use the Short Paper “Self-Reflection and Shared Reflection as Professional Tools” for yourself, or make it available to your participants. Consider whether this type of training, in which staff are asked to discuss their feelings about their work and the children and families served, is common or rare in this program. Take into account how much practice your training group has had with discussion of this kind and review the Workshop Leader strategies provided for you to support your role in facilitating a positive training environment. The content of this training may bring up strong personal or political beliefs about language policy. Consider the needs of your group as you present or modify the resources in this training. You can modify the materials to reflect the language policies of your state or program, or your current situation. Be sure to keep the level of the discussion on developmentally appropriate practices for young children, and encourage all participants to provide evidence (and consider counter-evidence) as they discuss these ideas. Be careful to maintain confidentiality and change situations enough so that they do not disclose personal information about staff or families.

There are two activities in particular that can be modified based on the needs of your group.

In Exercise 2, you have the option of 1.) reviewing the stages of language acquisition and considering the implications for children’s social-emotional development, or 2.) discussing a vignette (either the one provided or one you create) about a multilingual class. Reviewing the stages of language acquisition may be a good choice for participants who have some experience with dual-language learners and who would benefit from understanding these stages. The vignette may be more appropriate if teachers have little experience with dual-language learners or in mixed groups, in which some teachers have considerable experience and others have little experience. You might also consider whether vignettes are a more effective method than direct information for trainings with your population of teachers.

In Exercise 3, you will provide the teachers with strips of paper, each of which includes a specific classroom situation involving dual-language learners. You may choose to use the strips suggested, or develop your own strips based on situations that are more common at your center. In addition, you may choose to supplement the strips with situations that arise during the training.

These options are provided since centers vary so much demographically. You may choose to make additional modifications, or no modifications at all, depending on your center, your level of comfort, your experience leading trainings, or any other factors.

Prepare a training packet for each participant with the following materials:

- Handout A: Notebook paper for participants' own use
- Handout B1: Stages of Language Development OR Handout B2: Vignette
- Handout C: Supportive and Stimulating Classroom Environments
- Handout D: Online Resources About Dual-Language Learners
- A blank piece of paper
- A Workshop Evaluation Form
- Pen or pencil for each participant

- Markers for Workshop Leader
- Five large pieces of paper

Preparing the Workshop Space:

- Prepare the training space by positioning chairs so that the participants can begin as a large group, and then move easily into smaller groups.
- Place a training packet on each chair in the room.
- Prepare one large piece of paper, entitled "Parking Lot for Ideas."



- Prepare large pieces of paper with the following headings:



- Prepare strips of paper for Exercise Three. See instructions on making strips at the beginning of Exercise 3.

Introduction to the Training

Workshop Leaders are encouraged to use their own words to introduce the training. Some key points to consider are:

- ▶ Welcome the group and review logistics – general agenda, time frame, when to expect breaks, materials, sign-in sheet, etc.
- ▶ The topic of the training is “Engaging Dual-Language Learners in Head Start Preschool Classrooms.”

*“This training offers a chance to work on some of the issues the group discussed in the training, *Engaging Families Across Language and Culture*. In this training, we’re going to get the opportunity to think in more depth about how to engage children in classroom environments when they are not familiar with the language or languages of instruction.”*

- ▶ The objectives of today’s workshop are:
 - Develop a deeper understanding of the language and social-emotional development of dual-language preschoolers
 - Learn practical strategies that can create a supportive and stimulating educational environment for young dual-language learners
 - Gain access to on-site and on-line resources that can support their ongoing professional development in this area
- ▶ Explain the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet as follows: during the training, if a question, suggestion, or concern unrelated to the training exercise, but related to the topic is offered, the Workshop Leader will record it on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet. Refer back to these ideas at the end of the training for further discussion as time permits.
- ▶ Review the Training Ground Rules, which are a short list of statements intended to promote a safe, positive environment for all participants. The list can be printed on a piece of paper for all to see, but reviewing the rules and asking for group agreement is the most important step before beginning the exercise.

Training Ground Rules

There are no right or wrong answers in any of the activities we will be doing today. Everyone’s opinions and feelings are respected here.

One at a time. We want to hear what everyone has to say so it is important to remember that group discussion requires strong listening skills.

Learning takes time. We will not rush one another when trying to understand and participate.

Maintain Confidentiality. While sharing our experiences we do not need to use names of children, parents or staff.

Exercise One: Reflecting on Our Experiences With Dual-Language Learners

The intent of Exercise One is to help participants focus on the workshop topic through thinking about their experiences with dual-language learners. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to develop questions that have arisen as they have worked with dual-language learners. If some of the participants have not worked with dual-language learners, they can consider any questions, hopes, or concerns they have about working with this population.

- ▶ Ask participants to think about all of their experiences working with dual-language learners – including children whose languages they share and children whose languages they do not share. They can think about particular children, or particular situations, that have stuck with them.
- ▶ Explain that you are going to ask them to share some of the:
 - **Successes** they may have had teaching dual-language learners (i.e., “It’s great when...”)
 - **Challenges** they may have had teaching dual-language learners (i.e., “It can be difficult when...”)
 - **Questions** that they have about teaching dual-language learners (“I wonder if...”)
 - **Hopes** they may have for their dual-language learners (“My hopes are...”)
 - **Comments** they may have about teaching dual-language learners.
- ▶ You may ask them to write down their ideas privately on their own paper (Handout A) before asking them to share with the group. This may provide some participants with time to jot down notes or to speak in small groups. Alternatively, you may choose to ask participants to write directly on the chart paper. This will be quicker and may be preferred if you are short on time or have a talkative group. Ideas generated from this discussion may also be added to Handout C for future use.
- ▶ Once participants have written their ideas on the chart paper, lead a discussion of their ideas. In this discussion:
 - Focus on identifying **common themes** across the responses that you will explore in this training and also remaining open to different opinions and ideas.
 - Remember that the training will focus on a.) language and social-emotional development, and b.) creating a supportive and stimulating classroom environment
 - Acknowledge the challenges as important, and try to reframe some of them as **questions** to explore. You may even rephrase them as questions and add them to the question chart paper.
 - Be positive about the contributions dual language learners can make to classrooms.
 - Keep the training focused on how to interact with the children. While you should acknowledge the challenges and successes in developing relationships with parents, be sure to focus your discussion on the children and how those relationships support the children. There is another training addressing relationships with parents; it might be important to do or revisit one or more of those trainings if multiple issues related to parents surface.
- ▶ As the discussion ends, thank the participants for sharing their ideas.

Table 1. Sample Responses for Exercise One

Initial statement prompt	Examples of potential responses
It's great when:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have had children come to me speaking no English, and they learn so many new words so fast!• The kids love it when I say a few words in their native language!• The kids help each other sometimes, explaining to each other what we're doing.
It can be difficult when:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have one child that isn't speaking at all.• It's hard explaining the activities to kids when I don't speak their language.• I have so many different languages in my class. I can't learn them all! (Note how this challenge can be turned into a question, below).
I wonder:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it better to make the kids speak English, or should I let them talk to each other in their native language?• How can we get dual language learners to participate in read aloud or circle time?• How do I deal with having kids that speak so many different languages? I can't learn them all!
Hopes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children maintain and continue to learn in their native languages.• Children all learn English.• Children behave well.

Transition to Exercise Two

Provide participants with the bridge that will shift their focus as they consider how the personal ideas and experiences they discussed in Exercise 1 can be enhanced through a deeper consideration of child development. Encourage participants to remain in contact with their own experiences as they use a Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice framework.

"We have made a list of important questions, concerns, and comments about teaching dual-language learners. In the next activity, the group will consider how thinking deeply about the language and social-emotional development of dual-language learners can help us better understand dual-language learners and our own teaching practices."

Exercise Two: Considering the Implications of Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practices for Dual-Language Learners

In Exercise Two, participants use and expand their knowledge of Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice to address some of their concerns and/or challenges of working with dual-language learners. The purpose of this exercise is for teachers to consider how classroom activities can support the developmental needs of dual language learners across several areas of development – social-emotional development, language development, cognitive development, and physical development.

Workshop Leader Strategy:

You have two options for Exercise 2. You may choose to provide participants with Handout B1 and discuss the stages of language acquisition, how teachers see them in their classrooms, and the implications for social-emotional development. This activity is especially well suited to teachers who have experience teaching dual language learners.

Alternatively, you may choose to provide participants with Handout B2 and use the vignette provided (or develop your own) as a prompt for discussing many of the same issues. The vignette may provide participants with some background information that could be especially useful if teachers are new to teaching dual language learners or have not taught that population of students yet.

Option 1: Language Acquisition and its implication for social-emotional development

- This exercise should be informed by the specific challenges and questions teachers generated about dual-language learners from their practice. The main goals of this exercise are:
 - Teachers will understand that dual-language learners go through stages in their acquisition of English, and move through those stages at different rates
 - Teachers will realize that children may take seven years or more to become fully bilingual, even if they have enough language for social conversation
 - Teachers will identify ways to include dual-language learners in classroom activities in ways that foster their social and language development.
- Explain to participants that dual-language learners develop a second language over many years by going through various stages. Explain that you will discuss those stages and consider what the social-emotional needs of a child at that stage of language use may be.
- Provide participants with Handout B1. Pull out the chart paper with the heading “Social-Emotional Needs of Dual-Language Learners.”

- ▶ Review the stages of language use with the teachers. If teachers have experience with dual-language learners, review each of the stages, asking teachers to jot down a child's name or an experience they had with a child at that stage.
- ▶ Emphasize that full language fluency takes many years to develop. This level of fluency requires a wide, varied, extensive vocabulary, flexibility in language use across settings and contexts, and an understanding of the diverse ways language is used in a culture. Many of the children teachers consider to be fully bilingual may in fact have social language fluency. These children have high levels of oral language skills and are able to communicate well with others. They have a good enough vocabulary to communicate effectively, but do not have as deep and extensive experience with and knowledge of the language as children with full language fluency.
- ▶ Lead a discussion with the teachers of what language use may look like across each of the stages.

Sample Handout B1

Language use	Examples from children in my classroom
Full language fluency	(Rarely if ever see in preschool) Bella has been fully bilingual since birth – her parents speak English to her and her grandparents speak Russian. She knows her letters in both languages.
Social language fluency	Michal hasn't been speaking English long, but already she speaks English so well in the classroom – maybe his vocabulary isn't huge yet, but he gets by
Productive language	Sammy said his first English sentence last week "I want more cookies!"
New language use	Katya says "no" and "book"
Nonverbal period	Assim stopped trying to speak – he will point and mutter
Use of home language exclusively	Sara only speaks Spanish

- ▶ After each stage, ask teachers to consider what the social-emotional needs of the children at that stage might be. (Prompts may include: What would it be like to be this child? How would the child feel? How would the child communicate with peers? What would the child do during a lesson?). Emphasize the need for **inclusion** in classroom activities and **interactions** with adults and peers at all levels. However, also note that some children will need **quiet times** away from interactions and language, which may be overwhelming at times. Record their comments on the chart paper.

Sample Comments, Based on Language Stages:

Language use	Social-emotional implications
Full language fluency	Child can participate fully if the child's cultural and linguistic background are respected
Social language fluency	Child may be uncomfortable speaking with strangers or in new situations, may need help with new teachers and students
Productive language	Child may be excited to use new language, but also get nervous sometimes. Still needs both nonverbal and verbal support.
New language use	Child needs encouragement and opportunities for interaction – may be nervous about communicating
Nonverbal period	Child may be realizing no one understands him/her yet, need for quiet should be respected, while the child is also included in activities nonverbally (clapping, movement, etc.)
Use of home language exclusively	Child may be feeling isolated, may need some quiet time away from the group, as well as opportunities to be included and interact with the group

- Begin the transition by reviewing that the children may find it difficult to participate in classroom activities, even though they are bright, curious, and have experiences to share. Emphasize that inclusion in classroom activities through positive and supportive interactions is very important. Explain that next we will discuss strategies for inclusive interactions.

Option 2: The Multilingual Classroom

- In this Exercise participants explore a vignette, highlighting the perspectives of two children with different language backgrounds. It begins with a large group reading of the vignette, a small group discussion, and a large group discussion.
- The small and large group discussions in this exercise are most effective when participants are encouraged to “get into” their character. While a lively group discussion is the goal, participants can be encouraged to express their feelings in a way that permits turn-taking and productive discussion. Maintaining this environment of trust and respect is your responsibility as the Workshop Leader.
 - Ask participants to locate Handout B2 in their training packets.
 - Ask the group to follow along as you read the story aloud.
 - To work on the questions presented at the end of the story, the group is divided into four smaller groups and asked to move their chairs to aid in small-group discussions.

Workshop Leader Strategy: Creating Smaller Groups

Four small groups should be created. You have some options in breaking into the four smaller groups. For example, you can:

- Count off 1 through 4 and assign the groups by each individual’s number. This works well if you feel the participants work fairly well together overall and will engage in the activity easily.
- Assign participants to groups ahead of time. This strategy is especially useful in groups that could benefit from interacting with other specific participants. This may be used to avoid unproductive conversations or training activities, or to enhance the conversation through new combinations across professional roles.

Small Group Discussion

You will consider the perspectives of the two children mentioned in the vignette. As a group, fill out the chart, considering the particular perspective of that child.

Sample Charts:

Assim		
<p>How are you feeling?</p> <p>Sad, isolated, lonely, confused, interested, hopeful, curious, overwhelmed</p>	<p>What is your language use in the classroom?</p> <p>None to little</p>	<p>What are your social-emotional needs in the classroom?</p> <p>To feel respected, to feel like I belong, to know how to participate even if I can’t speak or understand English well yet</p>
<p>What strategies might Alicia and Sebastian try to support you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using nonverbal communication for transitions, routines, and during activities. Maybe a raised hand to show it’s quiet time, stomping feet as we turn pages in a book, etc. • Regular routines so I know what to expect even if I don’t understand what is said • Regular communication with my parents – learning a few important phrases • Having a buddy, being included • Having some quiet time when I’m overwhelmed 		

Sample Charts: (continued)

Clara		
<p>How are you feeling?</p> <p>Confused, frustrated, excited, curious, engaged, angry</p>	<p>What is your language use in the classroom?</p> <p>I use some English and some Spanish, but I still have trouble with enough vocabulary</p>	<p>What are your social-emotional needs in the classroom?</p> <p>To participate more fully, to make friends, to feel understood and respected</p>
<p>What strategies might Alicia and Sebastian try to support you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use more nonverbal communication • Support me in free play, maybe with a buddy • Regular communication with my parents – tell them about what we’re learning and doing so they can help me • Some quiet time when I’m overwhelmed or frustrated 		

Also ask them to fill out the questions, if there is time.

Ask the small groups to discuss the questions, approximately 20 minutes. Toward the end of the 20 minutes, each group is instructed to select a member to report back to the larger group.

Large Group Discussion

- Ask the small groups to finish up their discussions and then direct the group’s attention to the graph displayed on the large piece of paper and the identical worksheet in their packets (Handout B2).
- Briefly review the charts, and discuss the questions after the charts. Be sure to emphasize **both** language development **and** social-emotional development.

How are Assim’s and Clara’s experiences and needs similar?

They are learning English, and feeling isolated and frustrated sometimes.

How are Assim’s and Clara’s experiences and needs different?

Assim is being withdrawn, and Clara is being outgoing.

Any surprises?

Other comments or questions:

Transition to Exercise Three

Provide participants with the bridge that will shift their focus as they consider how additional resources might inform the discussions they have already begun.

"We have discussed how the needs of dual language learners are complex, and it is important to consider their language and social-emotional development. In the next activity, the group will consider strategies for supporting DLL's in classrooms."

Exercise Three: Sharing Resources and Strategies

Exercise Three provides an opportunity to reflect on how to meet the needs of dual-language learners by providing supportive and stimulating environments. Explain that now we are going to talk about strategies for meeting the needs of dual-language learners. Emphasize that classrooms need to be both **supportive** (i.e., responsive and interactive) as well as **stimulating** (i.e., interesting and cognitively challenging).

- ▶ First, expand on the “Successes” chart paper developed in Exercise 1. How are these “successes” supportive or stimulating? Add the “Suggestions” piece of chart paper.
- ▶ Handout C has two sides. The first side provides strategies for creating supportive environments for dual-language learners. The second side provides strategies for creating stimulating environments for dual-language learners. The purpose of having two sides of the handout with different but related topics is to emphasize that the environments should be **both** supportive **and** stimulating.
- ▶ Put the following prompts on strips of paper and ask teachers in groups of 3 to find strategies on the chart paper or on Handout B that might help with the issues raised on the strips. (Or use the challenges on the chart paper. Or develop your own that reflect the types of issues encountered by teachers in your setting.)
 - **Alicia has trouble getting her young dual-language students to listen to her read-alouds.**
 - **Shawn finds that Paola seems to be bothering other students by making funny noises and pushing during free play. Paola has little English.**
 - **Vendula has not spoken since she entered the classroom (after moving here from the Czech Republic). She sits alone in the book area.**

- **Min sits at the very edge of the circle at circle time. He is looking a lot at the other children and is beginning to poke them. He does not yet speak English.**
 - **Mary has been spending extra time with her dual-language students using flash cards instead of having them do science and social studies centers, but the children get distracted by watching others do those activities.**
- After the participants have discussed these situations, and how they relate to suggested strategies, come together again as a whole group. Ask participants to share their responses to the strategies on Handout B. As a group, consider which strategies might be helpful in addressing the challenges they have in their classrooms.
 - Discuss the role of the **supportive** (i.e., responsive and interactive) and **stimulating** (i.e., interesting and cognitively challenging) classroom. Ask participants to consider how both roles are important. Ask if they have new ideas about how supportive and stimulating classrooms could support dual language learners – and add to the chart paper.
 - Handout D includes links to online resources that will support continued learning for teachers on this topic. When you provide this handout to participants, be sure to include specific site-based or local resources that might be helpful.

Workshop Leader Strategy: Using the Handout Material

Handout C offers strategies to use for creating a supportive and stimulating classroom environment. You should integrate this content throughout the training and also go through the strategies point by point at the end of the training. Additionally, you should add contributions that participants make to Handout C. This way, you will incorporate ideas generated by the group and use those ideas in the future.

It is important that participants also have the opportunity to ask questions about these strategies. You may choose to:

- Ask participants if they have any questions throughout the training and offer answers immediately
- Ask participants to hold their questions until the end of the training and then respond to them during a “Question & Answer Period”

In any case, participants should leave the training feeling as if their questions have been answered.

Participants may feel the need to discuss specific children. While this kind of experiential learning should be encouraged, you should remind participants that names and details identifying a specific child should be regarded as confidential material, and the sharing of this kind of specific information must be in keeping with the program’s confidentiality policy.

Handout A

My Joys, Concerns, Questions and Hopes for Dual-Language Learners*

It can be great to work with dual-language learners when . . .	It can be difficult to work with dual-language learners when . . .
When I work with dual-language learners I wonder if . . .	My hopes for my dual-language learners are . . .

* Note that dual-language learner is just one term that is used to describe children who speak more than one language. These children are sometimes described as bilingual, second language learners, multilingual (if they speak more than two languages), English language learners, etc. In this training, we use the term dual-language learners to emphasize that the children are still learning their home language (or other language/s) in addition to learning English.

Handout B1

Stages of Children's Use of a Second Language

Children go through various stages when learning a new language. They move through these stages at their own pace, and may not go through all of these specific phases. It can take about seven years or more to develop full language fluency (From Tabors, 2008).

Language use	Examples	Examples from children in my classroom
Full language fluency	Uses varied and comprehensive vocabulary, fluent language use in varied settings	
Social language fluency	Uses the new language fluently in social settings	
Productive language	Can use the new language to form new sentences	
New language use	Speaks single words or phrases in new language	
Nonverbal period	Showing, requesting, protesting, imitating, spectating, rehearsing, experimenting with sounds	
Use of home language exclusively		

Handout B2

The Multilingual Classroom

Vignette

Assim and Clara attend Alicia and Sebastian’s Head Start preschool classroom. Assim has been very quiet and withdrawn since he arrived in the classroom; no one else speaks or understands his language, Arabic. Assim sits alone and sometimes mutters quietly to himself. His parents explain through an interpreter that he is active and social at home, though he has become more quiet since the move. Clara speaks a different dialect of Spanish than anyone else in the class. Sometimes she is able to make her needs known through a combination of English and Spanish. Her parents hope to see her continue to be bilingual, and say that at home she is active and well-behaved, helping with the new baby. Alicia and Sebastian are proud of how quickly Clara seems to be learning English, however she can become very frustrated and agitated. Alicia has noticed that this frequently happens when she has to sit for a long time for circle time or read-alouds. In fact, Alicia has noticed that many of the dual-language learning children become very distracted during sitting times. They start to whisper to each other, or try to move out of the circle, or just look away. Sebastian has noticed that free play is also very challenging. Assim tends to sit in one place by himself, while Clara moves very quickly through activities and has begun shoving and acting out. Alicia and Sebastian have also noticed that the other children who speak and understand English well seem unsure of how to interact with the children who don’t speak English.

You will be asked to think about the perspectives of Assim and Clara in this vignette. Consider how members of this group might answer the questions below.

Assim		
How are you feeling?	What is your language use in the classroom?	What are your social-emotional needs in the classroom?
What strategies might Alicia and Sebastian try to support you?		

Clara		
How are you feeling?	What is your language use in the classroom?	What are your social-emotional needs in the classroom?
What strategies might Alicia and Sebastian try to support you?		

How are Assim's and Clara's experiences and needs similar?

How are Assim's and Clara's experiences and needs different?

Any surprises?

Other comments or questions:

Handout C - Side 1

Strategies for Creating a **Supportive** Classroom Environment for Dual-Language Learners

- ▶ **Use a predictable** classroom routine with **predictable** activities, so that children can participate in the classroom even if they do not understand what is being said
- ▶ **Gesture** and use other types of nonverbal communication
- ▶ **Talk** about what is happening, narrating classroom events (“I am going to open this box.” “Tommy is eating pizza.”)
- ▶ **Simplify** your language when speaking to beginning speakers (and use gestures along with the language)
- ▶ **Repeat** key words in a sentence
- ▶ **Link** what children know to what they do not know using **individualized** interactions
- ▶ Provide a **safe haven** in the classroom where children spend some time in quiet activities to give them a break from challenging interactions (a quiet house corner, a puzzle area, some manipulatives)
- ▶ **Explain** to English-speaking peers that dual-language learners use different words when they are at home, so they begin to understand why the child is not communicating in English
- ▶ **Provide** English-speaking peers with strategies for interacting with DLL peers (inviting the child to play, using gestures, using words the child knows)
- ▶ **Encourage** English-speaking and DLL peers to interact by having them sit next to each other, creating a buddy system, or giving them shared activities
- ▶ **Display** letters, words and numbers in the children’s **native languages**, along with English letters, words and numbers
- ▶ **Include** books in the children’s **native language** in your classroom library
- ▶ **Encourage** parents, staff, or other speakers of the children’s native language to read books in the child’s native language, provide information on classroom content in that language, and link English to native language vocabulary

Side 2

Strategies for Creating a **Stimulating** Classroom Environment for Dual-Language Learners

- **Explore** rich and **engaging content** in your classroom, especially science, math and social studies topics
- **Choose curricular topics** that are meaningful and that children can explore in **hands-on** activities
- **Identify instructional goals** that are individualized to the child's developmental level and are connected to meaningful content
- **Use manipulatives** that children can touch and explore
- **Teach content multiple ways** including through language, touch, and movement
- **Use** the child's native language to provide support for new topics whenever possible
- **Reread** books with a specific purpose for each reading, emphasizing accessible language rather than sticking strictly to the book's text, and in an engaging manner
- **Read** books with predictable text
- **Incorporate** gesture and movement into read-alouds, along with chanting of important words in the book
- **Involve** parents by informing them of curricular topics and encouraging them to introduce vocabulary and do activities on those topics both at school and at home
- **Include** the children's language and culture in the classroom – including the alphabet, books, stories, songs, food, dance, and whichever aspects of culture the parents are willing to share
- **Support** outdoor play, using predictable routines
- **Provide** a refuge or haven from stimulation that is available at all times, so students can retreat when overwhelmed by the demands of classroom life

Handout D

Resources for Working with Dual-Language Learners

Colorin Colorado (<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>)

A bilingual (Spanish/English) website for families and educators of English language learners. This site includes a lot of information for those supporting the language and literacy development of English language learners (preK-grade 12).

Center for Applied Linguistics (<http://www.cal.org/>)

A resource on multilingualism.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: Dual Language Learners and their Families (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners>)

A resource from the Office for Head Start on ways to support Dual Language Learners and their families.

Learning Castle (<http://www.languagecastle.com>)

Karen Nemeth, M.Ed. produced and maintains this website on multilingual early childhood classrooms.

Wrapping Up

Pulling things together at the end of the training is an important step for everyone. As a workshop gets close to the end and people are feeling tired, it can be tempting to skip this part. Let people know that you will get them out of the workshop on time, but want to take a few more minutes to wrap up the time you've spent together.

1. Review Key Concepts

- ▶ Be sure to brainstorm at that point with the teachers about what else have we left out, what have we missed, include it in the summary.
- ▶ Encourage them to talk to each other and learn from each other.

2. It is important that participants end the training with an understanding of what knowledge and skills they might take from this experience. After sharing the messages in Handout C and reviewing the successes and suggestions developed by the participants, the Workshop Leader can ask the group how they think they support dual language learners.

3. End on a positive note. Remind the group that this workshop is a first step in supporting the language and social-emotional development of the dual-language learners served by the program. Encourage participants to use the exercises as a way to rethink their classroom practices and encourage supervisors to continue to check in with teaching teams about the strategies proposed in the training.

4. Express your appreciation. Let the group know how much you appreciate their time and hard work. Thank them for sharing their ideas with you and being willing to think about change together.

5. Make yourself available. After the training, be willing to answer questions and respond to concerns on an ongoing basis. If the Workshop Leader cannot be available, an on-site staff member should be designated in this role and announced at the end of the training.

6. Collect Attendance and Evaluation Forms. Pass out evaluation forms. Ask participants to sign an attendance sheet and complete an evaluation form. Remind participants that these forms are anonymous and collected for the purpose of improving future trainings. During this time, you might also want to title and date any large group work so you can save it for future reference.

Extending Learning and Supporting New Skills

In order to extend the workshop's content to changes in professional skill and behavior, the Workshop Leader and administrators should consider these follow-up activities:

Provide Supportive Supervision for Individuals and Teams. Individual and team supervision is an ideal time to reflect on the language and social-emotional development of dual-language learners.

Create Action Plans. Challenges such as the ones presented in this training require a good deal of reflection and planning to work through. Rather than make suggestions alone, supervisors or the Workshop Leader should work with individuals and teams to document their ideas along with the advice of supervisors and consultants. Such reflection can lead to a plan in which all can invest their efforts in creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment.

Workshop Leader Reflection

The Workshop Leader should take some time to review the training experience once it is over, read through and tally the evaluation forms, and review the results. Some additional questions to consider are:

Was I prepared? Did I have all the materials I needed? Was the room adequate? Did I feel confident with the topic?

Did the training go as I imagined it would? Did the group respond the way I thought they would? Were there any surprises? Were there any elements of the training that went especially well?

Were the participants engaged? Did the group size seem appropriate? Who seemed comfortable enough to share their thoughts with the group? Who did not seem comfortable? Do I know why? Did I get the feeling that the participants understood the exercises and materials? Who was present and who was missing today? Is there anyone I need to follow-up with immediately?

What were some of the themes that people talked about in this training? Was there a group of issues that the responses and discussions had in common? Are any of these issues a surprise? How can I use these issues in future trainings to make the exercises more effective?

What would have made this training better? In hindsight, what could I have done differently? Why? How can I use that information to make the next training even more successful?

Did I gain new knowledge from this training? What did I learn? In addition to new information on the training topic, did I gain any new knowledge about the training group or individuals in the training group? Did I learn something new about myself as a Workshop Leader?

Workshop Evaluation

Title of the Workshop: Engaging Dual-Language Learners in Head Start Preschool Classrooms

Location _____ Date _____

Please rate how well the training met the objectives below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not Good
Objective 1: Develop a deeper understanding of the language and social-emotional development of dual-language preschoolers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 2: Learn practical strategies that can create a supportive and stimulating educational environment for young dual-language learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 3: Gain access to on-site and on-line resources that can support their ongoing professional development in this area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall rating of this workshop:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of information presented:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's knowledge of subject:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's presentation style:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like to learn that was not presented in this workshop?

Would you like more trainings that expand on this topic? Yes No (Please circle one)
I would like more training on:

Additional Comments:

Additional Resources

Additional Resources all available online at:
www.childrenshospital.org/familyconnections

Short Papers for Families:

The Ability to Cope: Building Resilience in Yourself and Your Child

Parenting Through Tough Times: Coping With Depression

Self-Reflection in Parenting: Help for Getting Through Stressful Times

Short Papers for Staff:

Better Communication With Children: Responding to Challenging Subjects

Encouraging an Expressive Environment: Supportive Communication From the Inside Out



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