

Partnering with Parents of Dual Language Learners
Family Engagement, Language, and Literacy Webinar Series

Emily Adams: Hello, everybody, and welcome. We're so excited to have you here for this wonderful webinar on partnering with families of dual language learners. This is part of our Family Engagement, Language, and Literacy Webinar Series. I just wanted to welcome you and thank you. We had a great chat to get us started. And again, this is the third in our series on family engagement, language, and literacy. And this one is about partnering with parents of dual language learners. We have a ton of interest and a lot of participants, and we're so excited to see you and hear from everybody. We have some amazing speakers and some fabulous resources to share with everybody today.

So without further ado, I would love to introduce you to our wonderful presenters. We are very lucky to have today two fabulous presenters who are going to talk to us about this topic. So, first we will have Dr. Linda Espinosa. She is Professor Emeritus of Early Childhood Education at the University of Missouri, Columbia and has served as the co-director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University and as Vice President at Bright Horizons Family Solutions. She was a contributing author of the report from NASIM which you will hear all about. It's called Promoting the Educational Success of Children Learning English. Recently she also co-authored the California Early Learning Foundations, English Language Learners chapter, the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks English Language Development chapter, and Desired Results Development Profile 2010, English Language Development Assessment Measures. Dr. Espinosa has worked extensively with low income, Hispanic and Latino children and families throughout the state of California as a school administrator and program director in San Francisco, San Jose, and Redwood City. She developed and directed the Family Focus for School Success program in Redwood City, California which has received both state and national recognition. Dr. Espinosa was also a member of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Board committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy Project and a contributing author to Eager to Learn: Educating our Preschoolers, published by the National Academy of Science. And believe it or not, that's a shortened version of her bio. She's pretty spectacular and we're excited to have her here today, thank you. And then, later on, you're also going to meet Dr. Deborah Mazzeo. She serves as the Coordinator of Cultural and Linguistic Practices for the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning which you might know as NCECDTL. The primary focus of her work is to ensure that the NCECDTL resources authentically and respectfully reflect the population served.

Dr. Mazzeo has a rich background in early education and a range of experience working with dual language learners and culturally diverse populations of young children and their families. And I can tell you that from the bit that I've been working with Deb, she is also, we're really lucky to have her here. So, welcome both of you and thank you so much for offering your expertise to this webinar. Let's talk a little bit about what we're going to learn today. I know some of this might not be a surprise to you since, I think we were talking a little bit earlier, the presenters and I, about how wonderful a job Head Start and Early Head Start tends to do working with families. And especially families of dual language learners. I think we have a lot to offer here but for this particular webinar, we will talk about the value of engaging families to meet goals for dual language learning. We'll talk about a plan for how to engage families to support their children in terms of retaining their home language, but also supporting their learning English when that is the family's goal. And then becoming familiar with resources on supporting families of dual language learners.

And I just want to tell you one thing about the resources as we click through, and we'll probably remind you again as we get there, the power point that you see will have some live links. So when we talk about resources, you can click on those links and it will take you directly to the resources. So, go ahead and feel free to open those links up, but please come join us back here for learning about more resources. So with that, we'll go ahead and get started with just sort of a brief grounding in how the Head Start Program Performance Standards define dual language learners which is-A dual language learner is 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. So I think many of us have met children who are dual language learners either within the program or outside. But remember for our set standard, the term dual language learner may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms that are used such as bilingual, which would be speaking or learning two languages. English language learner, Limited English Proficient, English learner, and children who speak a Language Other Than English. So you may hear some other terms probably in other places and just know that there are some meanings that overlap a little bit and some are specific. But I think I'd also -- at this point I'm going to turn it over to Linda, to Dr. Espinosa who will share with you a little bit more about these definitions and it will be of particular interest for those of you who might be partnering with programs who offer k through 12. So, Linda, welcome and I'm going to pass it over to you.

Linda Espinosa: Thank you and I'm very pleased to be here on this special day of the year. But yes, on that topic of who are dual language learners. There are several different definitions that get used and I think it is important that we agree upon the terms so we understand who we're referring to. In the report that I'm going to talk about a little bit later, the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine report, we actually define dual language learners as birth to 5 children who have either one or both parents in the home who do not speak English. So they are systematically exposed to a language other than English in the home. Some federal agencies use the term dual language learners to refer to children ages birth to eight, and that's fine. But typically as children enter into the public k12 system, that term changes to English learner or English language learner. And that's the term that's used in the federal regulations around bilingual education. So, in most reports or descriptions or even in the communities that you work in, they will probably use the term EL or ELL, English Language learner to refer to the same group of children that we're referring to as dual language learners although they do go through a slightly different process for identifying and classifying children.

So why is it that we're focusing on engaging families of dual language learners? What is the rationale for spending our attention and resources on promoting these relationships between program staff and families and extended family of dual language learners? Let me just start by saying that I think it's been a tenant of early childhood education ever since I've been in the program and that's been many, many decades, that you cannot work with a child if you do not also work with the family of that young child because that's the context and the most powerful influence of that child's overall development. So in our report, in the National Academy's report, we do say that to promote school readiness in young dual language learners, we must establish strong, meaningful, and respectful partnerships with families. And believe it or not, that's kind of a forward thinking thought for the National Academy to come out with because we emphasize the word meaningful and respectful. And meaningful means it must be meaningful for both parties. Respectful means that both the program providers and the families need to feel respected and valued and cooperate with the basic understanding of equality and honoring each others backgrounds. Honoring what each other has to bring to that relationship. So why do we have this

current urgency around dual language learners? It has really kind of reached the top of the priority for educators in this country right now.

And some of the current demographics, I think are driving this heightened interest in dual language learners. For instance, there are more than 11 million dual language learners ages birth to eight. And DLL's represent almost one third of all children in the U.S. under eight years of age, that's one third and that's been a very rapid growth in this country particularly in the Southeast and most of you from the Southeast know what I mean. But also, in what have traditionally been primarily non minority communities for instance like in Missouri and North Dakota and Oklahoma. The populations have seemed to just explode overnight. Most dual language learners in the U.S. are Hispanic and speak Spanish in the home. Then that 62% followed by Chinese which is a much smaller number. But in my experience, the second language other than English that is spoken very highly by community. It very much depends what your community is. In parts of rural Iowa for instance, the second language is Burmese and the families have just relocated from Burma.

So it depends on relocation strength, it depends on the family's extended family background et cetera. So there's no general pattern except in certain states like California and Florida. The majority of dual language learners live in low income families which again, that combination of not speaking English in the home and coming from a family with limited economic resources creates some of these risk patterns that we see with EL's or ELL's. ELL's are less likely to be enrolled in prekindergarten programs, 41% to 48% and if you look at the difference between English only and dual language learners, in organized center care, that discrepancy is even larger. So between, certainly between birth to three, dual language learners tend to-if they're in out-of-home care, they tend to be in informal care with relatives or kip-n-kin or family childcare, some of which is licensed and some of which is not licensed. And then the final point there around kindergarten entry scores for dual language learners are $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 standard deviation below those of English only's in language and numeracy.

And it depends on which study you read but you're basically looking at a half to a year, to up to 2 years below in their language capacity. I won't go into all of the criticism of those studies but most of them really only assess the children in English so that's part of the issue with the widespread, sometimes misunderstanding, that dual language learners lag behind their English only peers in the language skills that are so important for future school success. However, if you look at third and fourth grade reading and math scores, according to the National Education of Educational Progress, National Assessment of Educational Progress, or any metric high school graduation or college enrollment, dual language learners do show up in lower proportions than English only. So, in order to change this trajectory, to start to improve the outcomes for children who have natural assets in order to prepare our programs and our schools to better meet the needs of dual language learners. One of the most important things that we can do is engage with our parents. To recognize and embrace the powerful role in shaping their children's development and be supportive in effective practices.

One of our most recent report that we've mentioned, our National Academy of Education -I'm sorry, of Science, Engineering and Medicine, our report titled Promoting the Educational Success of Children Learning English, has compiled all of the latest research for children ages birth to 21. So we really looked at everything that we know about children especially in the birth to three category, in the three to five pre-k category and then the k12 and college and career readiness. So with a committee of 18 experts, including people like a neuroscientist, a school superintendent, two professors of psycholinguistics, a

sociologist. So we had a wide, wide variety of experts and academics in this field who got together and worked for over two years and produced this particular report which was published in March of 2017. The chapters that I think are most relevant for this audience are really chapters four and five.

Chapter four goes into wonderful detail about the development of first and second language. It is really the developmental literature, the most current literature we have on how babies, any baby, develops a first and a second language. And chapter five focuses on what are best practices birth to five, including a large section on home visiting. So what I'm going to say now, for the next several slides, really comes from that report which I believe probably has the most scientific credibility- And a message that I hope we all can absorb and repeat because now we have the strength of science behind us to be able to message consistently to our families what we know and how we can work effectively together. So, what does that research say about engaging families of dual language learners? Obviously strong partnerships with families linked to improved outcomes for all children. So we've known this like I said before, for ages within the early childhood community.

This is nothing new but we also know now, it is effective for dual language learners as well. The families are critical for preserving home languages. And under that point, that is something that is relatively new because if families do shift to English, which sometimes they feel is in the best interest of the child to prepare them for kindergarten. Or they start to emphasize English interactions above and beyond the home language interactions, that can have negative consequences on the child maintaining the home language which we know is critical to acquiring English at high levels. And I want to say that again because it's somewhat counter intuitive but if you think language, is language, is language, and if the children have deep and extensive knowledge of one language, that is absolutely an advantage as they're learning that second language. But families seem to be that key ingredient that helps children maintain the second language.

If families insist upon it, and encourage it, and speak it in the home, with frequency and quality, then that child is much more likely to have deep levels of proficiency in the first language, which ultimately results in higher proficiency in English. And we'll come back to that again. The other issue around family's role in second language acquisition, from the report that may seem counter intuitive as well, but it's not, is that the earlier the child is exposed to a second language, the higher the proficiency level eventually will become. So that when children even in those birth to three years-and I'm talking just neurologically, I'm not talking socially or culturally or contextually, I'm talking neurologically, the brain is wired to learn and absorb languages. Sounds from every language in the world. And to absorb and learn those sounds and start to differentiate among them and start to learn the patterns that are unique to each language from birth actually. So birth to three is an ideal time for a child to start to be exposed to a second language. With the caveat- the current research, with the caveat that it should never, ever, ever be seen as a substitute for that child's first language and what the family speaks in the home. So there are a few little challenges within that one particular statement or those series of findings.

One of the things that we have found is that there are more barriers to engaging with families of dual language learners. And those barriers tend to revolve around language issues because there may not be anybody to communicate effectively with them. And it also may revolve around cultural issues. Does the family feel that the program will contribute to the family's preferences and their cultural norms and priorities. And is it accepting of the cultural practices of the family. Some of the issues have to do with logistics. Do they have ways to attend the program? Is the program close enough so that they don't have

to take public transportation or find other ways to attend every day. Or, get their child to school when they have to work two or three or more jobs to support their family. I think the barriers around engaging families start with our outreach efforts that we extend the embrace of the program to all of the families in our community who are eligible. And sometimes you have to do additional outreach when families are new to the community or they don't speak their language and they're not familiar with the registration or enrollment procedures that they have to go through.

So we have to look at our outreach as well as, then once the families are in our program, how do we continue to engage them successfully for the benefit of their child? Luckily, although it's not extensive, we do have an emerging research base on what has been effective for dual language learners. And again, the National Academy's report, in chapter five, does detail some of that literature and summarizes it. So what do we know about child outcomes for dual language learners? Effective family engagement is linked to improved child outcomes. And this is for dual language learners and others as well.

So in the biliteracy, like I said earlier, when the family maintains home language, the child has that opportunity to become fully bilingual. Cognitive, math, social-emotional skills. So basically across the board, when families engage with schools, they understand the goals of the school, they understand the program initiatives and priorities the program's way of doing things, and they are able to communicate what their priorities are, what their wishes for their child are, that's when you start to see these strong partnerships and the child thrives in that environment when you have that continuity. Long-term academic achievement, it helps the child and the family actually advocate for the child throughout the child's career. Increased parent/family involvement throughout schooling. The parents can act as advocates and with confidence throughout the child's schooling. Family culture and language preservation. So that obviously with the family's engagement, they then have the- sometimes they really feel like they need to have that permission and encouragement and support to preserve all those important aspects that have been handed down through their family over generations and centuries sometimes. And it goes without saying, it doesn't say it here but, it also is an advantage for the programs that receive that unique cultural perspective and linguistic skill that that family brings.

So even the non DLL families and children and staff in that program also receive those cultural benefits and advantages from embracing and including both that child and the child's families. So what do we know about the advantages of early bilingualism? So across the board, and I'm talking about studies, and these are empirical studies, these are not people's opinion. These are empirical studies, across many, many studies we found that children who have very well developed two languages in the-particularly in the birth to five age range, have what we call improved executive function skills. And that's where they can attend and keep their focus on the task at hand despite distracting, incoming stimuli. So they know how to focus on a task and keep focus over time to complete things. They can, when necessary, they can also shift their attention to a new task with new rules and new requirements.

They're able to mentally, cognitively shift conditions fairly easily. If you think about all of the aspects of cognitive and in some cases social-emotional development that executive function covers, it makes sense that when children have multiple experiences with learning and speaking in two languages with two different, at least two different groups of people, their mind is used to flipping between language which means flipping, they cognitively can make that shift into a different language, a different group of people. And what those new rules are because the language is different and typically the characteristics

of the group that you're speaking with changes as well. Children can do this fairly easily and by about 2 and half to 3 years of age, they can shift depending upon who their audience is and call on different linguistic resources they have. So a friend of mine always says, "Linda, young children are in fact linguistic geniuses and we have to understand that. They know how to move between languages and they learn them rapidly." And the study bears that out. Obviously communicative competence, they can communicate with different people in different languages.

The other thing that often is said, that when children are learning two languages, that their vocabulary is lower in both. What the studies are telling is that when the situation, when the conditions are comparable, young children actually know about the same number of words if you look across both languages. So what they know is typically distributed across what their home language is and whatever they've been exposed to in their second language. And typically they learn words associated with program like, line up and bathroom and maybe blackboard. Things that are related to your program and the words that you use there, they learn those in school and they may learn those in English only and it may or may not be transferred into their home language. Same with home language, they may learn certain vocabulary words because they've heard them since birth in their home language but those words may never have been used in a group setting in English. So those words may have never transferred. So you have to look at what these children know in both languages in order to get an accurate profile of what exactly they know linguistically. Because if you look only at one language, then their linguistic competencies will be underestimated. This webinar isn't on how you assess their language abilities but that's another important topic.

So, the other thing we have found out across many studies is that children who have more than one language tend to have better social skills. And this was inter-personally and intra-personally. So intra-personally, less likely to be - to have negative feelings about yourself and depressed symptoms. Externally less likely to engage in antisocial or aggressive or inappropriate behavior with peers. Even when you took social class into consideration. Stronger connections to culture and family. So obviously children who maintain their home language, who had two languages they can speak with their peers in English at school if they need to and they can speak in their home language with their grandparents when those opportunities arise. So that they don't lose that family wisdom that is passed down in the language of the family.

And not all words, by the way, not all words translate. So not all words have an exact translation. Some words you need to learn in a particular language. And typically, families will use words of affection and caring and nurturing to their children and they may or may not be used or even have translations. And the final advantage of early bilingualism, early and somewhat comparable bilingualism is this delayed onset of dementia or Alzheimer's. There is some Canadian studies that found that adults who had balanced bilingualism and they learned it when they were younger, even when their brain showed evidence of dementia, some sort of neural breakdown, they did not show symptoms for five years after monolinguals. So there's something about this prefrontal, cognitive neural density, that happens when you learn more than one language. You acquire more neural tissue and more neural connections in this prefrontal cortex of your brain. And that seems to be a buffer for early onset dementia or Alzheimer's.

And I can tell you, many members of the committee at our age, were very interested in this finding. And the other point is, it's never too late. Everybody can always learn a second language and gain these kinds of advantages. Some of the other aspect of bilingual development which sometimes are interpreted as

delays, but what we've found is that they are typical parts of learning two languages and oftentimes, they are just temporary. So they're not permanent aspect of bilingualism but oftentimes you will see young children, especially in the early stages of their second language acquisition, that they take longer to process and respond to linguistic prompts, especially when you're asking them something in their non dominant language. If you watch them very carefully, you can almost see their little brains work. That they will hear you. If the teacher asks them, "What did we see yesterday?"

There's a lot in there, they have to remember yesterday, what did you see yesterday and they start to process that. They may even need to translate it internally into Spanish and then re-translate it back into English because the person who asked was asking in English. And this may take double what a monolingual English speaker would take. So that processing time is an important aspect of how we set our expectations for children who have more than one language.

We need to give them time to be able to respond, and in the language in which -- hopefully in the language in which the prompt was given but sometimes they will respond with both languages or another language or whatever. Oftentimes it takes longer. Speech production may be slower. When you have those norms about when young children are expected to have certain expressive vocabulary in their repertoire, it may be later because remember, they're learning two languages. So they're what we call, what we think of is speech production or expressive language, it may be a little bit longer but it's not that they are lagging, it's that they are acquiring language in two languages. So, right away what we think of the norms need to be adjusted for children who have more than one language and with enough range in there that you can also accommodate children that have a little exposure to a second language to children who've had a lot of exposure to a second language. And that has again, important implications for when we assess children and determine how they're progressing. And the same thing is true with grammatical development may very.

And I'm sure, we always hear 2- and 3-year-olds, you know, misuse past tense, or not put in a no, or put in too many no's or whatever, so that grammatically they are still learning. In addition, if they have a first language that has a different grammatical structure as many, many languages do, there may be negative transfer. So the child might be constructing sentences as they've heard them constructed in a different language. Again, this is temporary. That's almost always temporary. So once they get to the next level of English language production, a lot of those grammatical mistakes, especially as they get to be about three and four and have sufficient exposure to English, a lot of those grammatical mistakes will start to resolve themselves. Just as with monolingual English only. So, let's chat for just a minute. I've shared with you some information from the report, now I want to hear from you. Have families shared concerns with you about their child learning more than one language at a time? And what kinds of worries do families have? Or, have you noted any of these advantages that I just mentioned in you work with children and families? And again, what we want you to do is write your responses, type your responses into the chat box, and then we can take a look at them.

Emily: Thanks Linda, I'm just going to jump in here as we kind of watch the chat. It looks like there's a lot of people sharing that they have heard some concerns from families. They're worried their child won't speak either language or they really just want them to learn English. This is not surprising. Yeah, that if I teach our child the language we speak at home, maybe they won't learn English is a common concern that families have. And Linda, I know you've sort of addressed that already that the research just shows

that that's not true and how wonderful that now that we can tell families with confidence that they definitely they should be very happy to be teaching their child their home language.

Linda: And I do think as providers, we now know enough to have a consistent message. When I was a principal 15 years ago, we didn't know enough to say these things. I think as a professionals if we all advocate with families that they continue to speak in their home language. If we just do that, and we do it with confidence, like I said, because that's where the science is, I think that will have a huge impact on the progress of children acquiring English as a second language. Across the board, I think that in and of itself is a huge message and will help the progress of DLL's.

Emily: Wow, yeah, I agree. And so many people are having very similar thoughts that came from families. So I think in the interest of time Linda, I'm going to ask you to keep going but people can feel free to continue chatting about this and if they have any other thoughts about some of these advantages that Dr. Espinosa was talking about, if you've seen some of that, then definitely please share that with us as well.

Linda: Okay, so I should continue then? And we'll come back to -- Okay, we'll come back to that hopefully in the Q and A as well. Let me just say one thing, too, because I know that families sometimes think English is a priority language and that their home language needs to take a back seat. The way I think about it as a provider, as a parent, as a researcher, everything, is that when a child, if it's my child or anybody's child, has a language other than English and they enter into a program, any kind of program, they have a language, it may not be English but if they have a deep and strong knowledge of that language, then the way we need to see these children is as potentially gifted. Because they have a language, not everybody else has that language, so they have some advantages towards monolinguals already. And secondly, because they have a language and will learn English, they will eventually, if we do our jobs, become gifted. They will have linguistic advantage that monolinguals don't have.

So in some ways, if the country shifts it's perception and we see kinds who only have English as somewhat disadvantaged and that in order to be advantaged in our school systems having more than one language actually is an important part of what we do. So anyway, that's just a side note from me. So, basic principle of best practices for early childhood education. The basic principle is systematic exposure to English because I said before that's important, but this ongoing support of home language is critical. Children who lose their first language, never become highly proficient in English. And we need to think of it that way. Because if we don't what we roll over that first language in our eagerness to get to English. So early proficiency in what they're speaking in the home and English, so they do need some English, hopefully it's not just a little bit but it doesn't overwhelm the home language, at kindergarten entry is critical to becoming academically proficient in second language.

And sometimes that's a hard idea or a hard notion for families to understand because again, I think it's somewhat counter intuitive. In order for them to be good in English, they first have to be good in their first language because that is the language that will carry them through their life. And I don't know how many times and in how many ways, but if we all say it and we all say it in different ways, with different pictures with different people, eventually I think it starts to stick. So, however, we might know this but families might feel that they must speak English to prepare their child for kindergarten. Actually, what we have in chapter 4 of the report, if you ever get around to reading it, what we need are strong language models in whatever language they're speaking. So if families try to speak English but they're not strong in English, what happens then is the amount of language interaction in the home goes down.

So children are put at a disadvantage right away because they're hearing less language. So families can typically communicate more, about a wider range of topics and in more responsive ways when they use they're home language. And if language, is language, is language, the child can use concepts, so if parents label things, talk with their child, eye to eye contact, start talking about what's going on in the very nurturing ways that parent have.

Doing it in their first language is going to allow for more interactions between the child and the parent. And for our family, it's just really important to keep talking with your child in the language that you're most comfortable with. And typically that's, if you're a dual language family, that most often is not English. So English comes into play, that is sort of our program. That's our job. That's what we will do in different ways.

Or sometimes families feel that their child cannot be bilingual or biliterate because of a disability. This is another finding of the report and we have a whole chapter on children with disabilities. Dual language children with disabilities. In fact what we've found that all children with any kind of a special need, including language impairments, language delays, or children who are on the autism spectrum on some level, in fact are better off when they have some of their early intervention in their home language and they are capable of learning a second language, English, just as everybody else is. So you would not want to restrict a child to one language just because that child appears to be a little language delayed or because that child has an IEP or a specified language disorder. That's not what the research is saying and I know it's sometimes a little hard to believe but I can send you some references around that. Learning two or more languages can cause a language delay. No. It may cause a little bit slower in each of the languages a language stalling if you will because they are learning both. And they may stop talking or not talking as much for a while but eventually this will resolve itself and children will become competent in both the languages. So no, it will not cause a language delay. And again, we have resources around that. Learning English is more important.

Many families fear it's got to be English and English is more important. Eventually the child needs to become proficient in English. Absolutely, the child needs to be able to read in English but not at the expense of the home language. And if we deny the knowledge the child has in the home language in some senses, I think we're cutting them off at the knees because they know a lot and we need to use that knowledge in whatever language that's in in order to leverage that into English knowledge and English language skills. So our report shows that families of dual language learners are committed to high quality early childhood education. And that's across national surveys and what not. Families of dual language learners want their children in quality early childhood programs. 15 years ago it wasn't uncommon for me to hear, well they don't want their children to go because of cultural issues. Not true. There's now empirical evidence, that is simply not the case. When programs are culturally and linguistically responsive, and accepting of families background and families languages, the families in fact do want to attend and there will be long waiting lists. That has been confirmed over and over again. When programs and families partner, young dual language learners are most likely to learn both languages and thrive academically. That's our ideal world. Strategies for family engagement. This is a quote from a report from Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff and Supervisors Who Work with Families.

The like there will take you to that document and all of competencies in there would apply to dual language learners as well. That it begins with the relationship with the trusting factor between families

and program. And that's sometimes the first and one of the most important things we do is help families feel they're judged that they're not judged, and they're valued, they're accepted and we appreciate the fact that they're there and learn from them. So it's how we represent ourselves, how we represent or families. Family engagement and DL learners, again, it's the same point, feel respected and supported. Sometimes, from the intake, how does your office respond to families when you don't speak the same language? You know, is there the feeling that they are welcome? That their culture is represented, that in some way they are not going to be treated differently, or their child being treated differently. And all of that, I mean, you could go through the program with those eyes and ask yourself that question. Take time to learn about families. And this is one of the things that we have found is the most important and I know Head Start has some resources on ways to accomplish this. But that when children enter we really do take the time to find out what has been the child's early language experiences, and we find out from families. What do you want? What are your feelings about your home language? In what ways can we assist you in helping your child adjust to this program? So it's our openness in communicating that you as a family can teach us as service providers about your child, the background, the kinds of exposures your child has had, who your child plays with, a lot of things about your child that we wouldn't necessarily see or know. The family knows this and by us taking that time, it sets the whole rest of the year off on a good foot. Build on families "funds of knowledge." I'm going to talk about that.

So, honor families 'funds of knowledge'. What do we mean by 'funds of knowledge'? Clearly the families come with the best information about themselves and their child. So things about their background, what do they do and how might that be of interest in the classroom. All of this is information they can share with us, we would not know otherwise. And this is where Head Start and Early Head Start really shines as a program. Because I think you do more of this, certainly more than k12, but more than most other programs. How do we honor that? An attitude of openness and willingness to learn from parents and families. And again, I do believe it's the attitude that we communicate that helps the parents feel that they are welcomed and they will embrace and partner with us. In group care settings, we begin by asking the family about what is important to them. And again, these questions are in one of the resources that you'll be provided. When possible, employ staff who speak the languages common in your community.

And we can enlist those people either through positions that we have or through volunteer positions. In my experience, many people in the community or in religious settings, or wherever else you have contact with, are eager to play a role with helping you within your program. Either translations or conversations or helping you set up a room. There are a whole variety of ways they can come in and become friends of your program or models for your program around a language you may not be familiar with. With family help, use the child's home language in the classroom or family child care home. And they may be the only ones that can help you with the labeling in that particular language or help you find books or help you understand how that a book can be pre-read in the family's home language and how they can help you do that. But they may be the only ones, if it's a low incidence language and you have no staff members who can assist with that. Ask family and community members to volunteer- and they can read, tell stories, have conversations. And in my experience, we've been really lucky with being able to follow through with that.

And in our home visiting programs, unfortunately, in the home visiting programs that have been evaluated or studied, dual language families are under-represented in general. There aren't as many and I think it has to do with outreach efforts. Of those that have participated, what we know is that

obviously when the home visitors and the families do not speak the same language, there are great challenges. So we should try to avoid that situation whenever possible. However, there's very little research on effectiveness of services for immigrant or DLL families. It doesn't mean these programs aren't very effective, it just means we don't have a lot of research on that particular subgroup yet...unfortunately. For families, they really appreciate a linguistic and cultural match between home visitors and others-and mothers. So mom's especially feel more comfortable when home visitors are culturally and linguistically similar to the mom. And that's what we found too in our family focus program. That you can make great headway when there was this kind of similarity. It helps to break the ice. These strategies are from Colorin, Colorado. You'll get a link to this website eventually.

But a two way communication system where information flows back and forth. Leverage everyday activities and many of you understand what that means. You help families use language when they're folding the clothing, or fixing dinner, or going to bed, grocery shopping, et cetera. We have resources to help you conduct these types of activities. The one that might be a little new for some of you is this idea of expanding social networking opportunities for DL families. And there are actually some apps that are being developed right now for dual language families and programs so that you can engage in rather frequent communication with your families through different software applications. The point is that families have some way of talking to each other to learn about the social expectations at school and with the school on a frequent basis. We have opportunities to make this happen. And these All About Me books, we've used these and we like them a lot.

They're fairly simple. You just put together, you can put together different types of paper and the child can write on them at school and write on them at home and you can send them back and forth and you can put pictures, you can put a whole variety of things in them. But this is a way that the child communicates about what's important to the child. The family communicates things that are going on. And you communicate things that are going on in the classroom. And you start sharing these back and forth. But they have literacy objectives as well as family engagement objectives as well as serve collaborative academic objectives that we can all share in. So let's chat. So what are your strategies for engaging families you have used when you do not speak the language?

Deborah Mazzeo: I think I'll go ahead while people are typing in the chat, and talk about some of the resources that are available on the ECLKC or Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website. So, under the specific topic area of Culture and Language, that's where most of the resources that I will be speaking to will be found. And a lot of them come from the Pange Language approach for language and literacy. So let me go ahead and just share with you this book, Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs. This is available for free actually, and it's electronically on the ECLKC site. There are 10 key multicultural principles that guide interactions with children and families and infuses diversity in the early learning settings. So I highly recommend you visiting and accessing the information. I'll tell you that principle number seven speaks directly to culturally relevant programming that requires staff who both reflect and are responsive to the community and families served.

Next is Gathering and Using Language Information That Families Share. You'll want to examine how your program reaches out to, recruits, and hires staff. Parents, volunteers or consultants who reflect the families in communities. Several of the questions you'll want to ask that are found in this resource are around language background. How many languages are they speaking, one, two or more? Dual language development, whether it's simultaneous or sequential. Language dominance, is one used more

frequently than the other? And more information about home language experiences. Who are the people they speak with? What are the experiences and activities they engage in with those speakers? These four documents are from the Importance of Home Language series. All four are available not only in English but also in Spanish, Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese, Haitian Creole and Russian. So I highly encourage you all to check these out. The Gift of Language, is the one that talks about dispelling some of those myths that Linda had talked about previously. Some of the myths about confusing children. The benefits of being bilingual reiterate those cognitive benefits, social and emotional, better school outcomes such as self control and flexibility, and some of the more global benefits like better job opportunities and higher pay. And then of course, getting back to the specific strategies to support DLLs when adults do not speak their language.

So we have including children's home language and cultures. And some of the examples in this document on the website is learning survival phrases in the child's language. Inviting the family to participate in the program. And then the bullets that follow are all separate documents too that provide these different strategies. Inviting and supporting cultural guides. Cultural guides are individuals who can help make children and families feel accepted and welcome and so those might be other staff members, community members from places of worship, or local colleges or universities. There's language modeling for infants and toddlers. Planning and organizing thematic instruction, supporting DLLs with schedules and transitions and then selecting culturally appropriate children's books which has a list of items to consider and a great bibliography of children's books in a wide variety of different languages including Farsi, Hmong, Somali, some of the tribal languages- Cherokee, Lakota, Navajo. And I know we are running out of time here.

I do want to just put a plug in for The Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices My Peers Community for those of you in Early Head Start or Head Start programs. I know there's been a lot of great conversation happening in the chat and I encourage you all to continue to carry on those conversations in the new CLRP community on my peers. This one last resource that I'll talk about before I turn it over to either Linda or Emily is Building Culturally and Linguistically Competent Services to Support Young Children and Their Families and School Readiness. So this is a publication actually from the Annie E. Casey Foundation that serves as a tool kit to provide guidance and resources to communities in building culturally and linguistically responsive services. And there are seven sections that include critical questions and tip sheets and check lists. Section three and section six are specific to learning about family and community and engaging families in effective communication. So with that, I will turn it over to Emily or Linda.

Emily: I'm going to go ahead and jump in and what I'm going to do now is just close this for the recording but I want everybody to know that we are still here and we're going to be answering questions. We have a few more resources to share with you if you're interested. For now I'm just going to thank you so much for joining us and participating in this webinar and wow have you been participating. Thank you. What a fabulous topic, thank you so much both to Dr Espinosa and Dr. Mazzeo. You have been completely fabulous. And again, please feel free to stay with us. We'll be here for answering questions and a few more resources for another 15 minutes or so. And other than that, thank you so much for joining us.

[End video]