



Transforming State Systems to  
Improve Outcomes for Children  
with Disabilities



# Harnessing the Potential of Multiple Languages & Family Partnerships in Early Childhood Intervention & Special Education

Webinar Moderators:

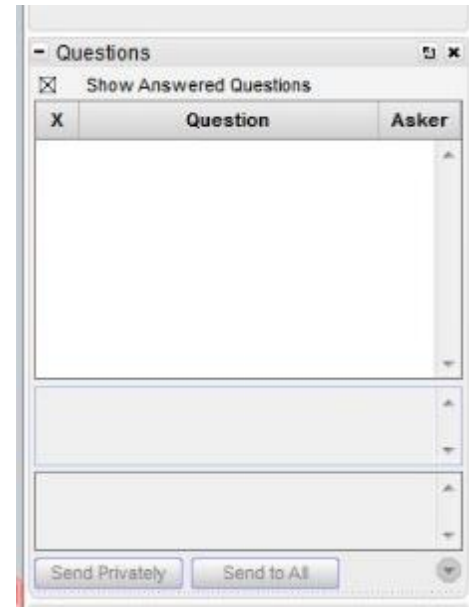
Taletha Derrington and Lauren Artzi

*National Center for Systemic Improvement*

December 12, 2017

# Webinar Format & Questions

- Throughout the presentation, submit your questions into the question pod.
  - For technical issues/questions, a webinar team member will try to assist you as soon as possible.
  - For content related questions, there will be a time for **Q&A** at the end of the presentation. Submit your questions and we will share them with the presenters.



# Systemic Improvement



Today's webinar is the second in a series on language learning following NCSI's Part B webinar:

“What Research Says About Identification and Assessment of English Learners with Disabilities”

<https://ncsi-library.wested.org/resources/20>

# Presenters

Doré LaForett

- FPG Child Development Institute,  
UNC-Chapel Hill

Lorraine Cooke

- Egenolf Early Childhood  
Development Center

Mercedes Rosa

- Statewide Parent Advocacy  
Network



# Topics of Today's Webinar

- What research says about dual language learners (DLLs) in early childhood (0–5 years):
  - Capacity and developmental trajectories
  - Benefits across developmental domains
- Voices from the field on what works:
  - Early childhood program success story
  - Partnering with families of DLLs

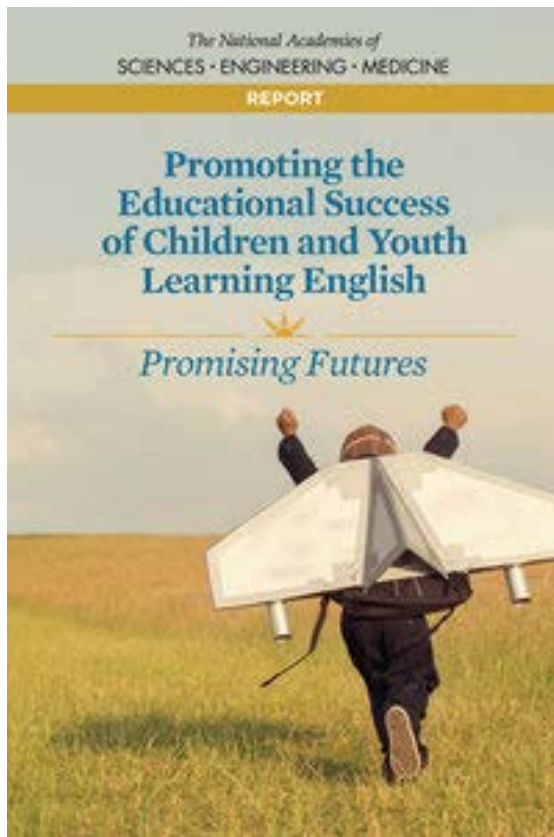
# Webinar Objectives

- Summarize current research on capacity and developmental trajectories of young DLLs.
- List the developmental domains that benefit from learning more than one language when children are young.
- Identify components of an early childhood center-based program that support DLLs and their families.
- Explain how family organizations can support families with limited English proficiency, their children, and early childhood programs.

# DLLs and the SSIP

- Part C SIMRs—Majority related to social-emotional skills and knowledge and skills
- Part B SIMRs—Many focus on outcomes up to and including the third grade; 2 states are focusing on preschool outcomes
- ALL states serve DLLs, and ALL SIMRs will be affected by the success of DLLs

# NASEM Report— A KEY Resource



<http://www.nap.edu/24677>





# Research: Normative Dual Language Development

Doré R. LaForett, PhD  
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

# Dual Language Development— Capacity



- No evidence that exposure to two languages is a developmental risk
- Capacity for competence in both languages with adequate exposure, developing skills in:
  - Vocabulary
  - Morphology
  - Syntax
  - Pragmatics

(National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2017)

# Dual Language Development— Trajectories

- Exposure to both languages before age 3, milestones:
  - Have many of the same language trajectories and skills as monolinguals
  - Reach language milestones at the same time
- Past age 3, milestones come months or years later.
- What's different for DLLs?
  - May take longer to learn differences in languages
  - May use alternate learning strategies
  - Proficiency may reflect varied input and quality
- This is normative—does not indicate a language disorder, impairment, or disability.

(NASEM, 2017; National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning [NCECDTL], n.d.)

# Dual Language Development— Language Discrimination



- Strong language discrimination abilities, beginning in infancy
- May take longer to learn certain phonological properties
- May use alternate learning strategies to discriminate between the two languages

(NASEM, 2017)

# Dual Language Development – Vocabulary & Grammar

- Appear to have smaller vocabularies – when assessed on one language
- Total “conceptual vocabulary”
  - when assessed on both languages - exceeds monolinguals’ vocabulary
- For grammar, same as monolinguals on:
  - General developmental patterns
  - Rates
  - Milestones
- But separate grammatical systems from early development

# Dual Language Development— Codeswitching

- Normal part of dual language development, bilingual talk
- Often strategic:
  - To substitute unknown words
  - To adjust to the listener's language
  - For emphasis

(NASEM, 2017)



# Dual Language Development— Cognitive Capacity

- “Executive function” advantages:
  - Focus attention
  - Reason about others’ mental states
  - Metalinguistic awareness
  - Spatial and working memory
- Practice with cognitive flexibility
- Occurs when both languages are strong



(NASEM, 2017; NCECDTL, n.d.)

# Dual Language Development— Math Skills



- Descriptions of math concepts can differ by language:
  - Can affect understanding
- Knowing a math concept in one language:
  - Potential to know or learn same concept in other language

(NASEM, 2017)



# Dual Language Development— Social and Emotional Skills

- Underresearched
- Comparable to or better than monolinguals
- Advantages:
  - Greater self-control and interpersonal skills
  - Fewer behavior problems
  - Better approaches to learning

(Center for Early Childhood Education Research—Dual Language Learners [CECER-DLL], 2011; NASEM, 2017)



# Dual Language Development – Benefits



- More communication capacity
- Improved cognitive skills
- Maintain family & cultural ties
- Learning
  - Home language skills predict school success
- Economic

# Dual Language Development – Language Loss

- When exposed to English in preschool, preference for it over home language
- Risks of home language loss:
  - May lose ability to communicate with family members
  - Risk becoming estranged from cultural & linguistic heritage



# Questions?





# Voices From the Field: Supporting Young Children's Dual Language Development

Lorraine Cooke, EdD  
Executive Director  
Egenolf Early Childhood Center



# The Egenolf Early Childhood Center

History  
Demographics  
Commitment to quality

# Egenolf Staffing to Support DLLs

- Teachers
- Teacher Assistants
- Family Workers
- Security Guards
- Before and After Care Staff

# Intake Procedures

- Identify the family home language and language preference(s).
- Explain program design.
- Tour the classroom.





# Classroom Assignment

- Match child's placement to teacher/teacher assistant:
  - Language
  - Strive for classroom diversity:
    - Gender
    - Language
    - Culture
  - Classroom environment supports home language:
    - Labeling
    - Books
    - Pictures

# Curriculum Delivery

- Home language used whenever possible
- Morning meeting and individual and group story book reading in multiple languages
- Children placed in small groups by home language
- Children can choose different groups during worktime

# Parent/Family Conferences

- Conducted by staff skilled in language of family choice.
  - Interpreters provided if/when necessary.
- Parent/family group meetings always include an interpreter.
- Center staff accompany all families to school special education meetings on evaluation or intervention.



# Collaborations

- Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)
- Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ)
- Children's Specialized Hospital
- Elizabeth School District

# Outcomes



- Children supported in English and native language communication
- Parents/families build pride and confidence in communicating and partnering in an educational setting:
  - Families' native language is respected.
  - Desire to learn English is inspired.

# Celebrations

- Multicultural days in the classroom
- Parent/family engagement activities:
  - Book readings
  - Performances
  - Clothing
  - Art
  - Music

# Questions?





# Voices From the Field: Role of Family Organizations

Mercedes Rosa  
Project Director  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network



# SPAN Foremost Commitment



Is to children with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, *language, or immigrant status*; involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice system; geographic location; or family or other special circumstances.

# SPAN Focus

- Engaging families at individual and systems improvement levels
- Changing demographics and disparities
- Measuring impact and outcomes
- Providing targeted parent and professional development

# SPAN Activities

- Parent trainings in multiple languages:
  - Early intervention (EI)
  - Transition from EI to preschool special education
  - Rights of immigrant and limited English proficiency (LEP) families and children in EI, education, and health
  - Leadership development

# SPAN Activities

- Individualized assistance to families with LEP:
  - Navigating systems
  - Partnering with EI, special education, and other professionals
  - Advocacy skills
  - Resources
- Partnering with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and providers

# Underlying Principles

- Strengths-based
- Family-centered
- Building empowerment, not dependence
- Relationship-based
- Solution-focused
- Continuous quality improvement



# Starting Place

- Identify small group of parents from targeted community and community cultural liaisons.
- Communicate with them in their preferred language and provide them with support.
- Ask for their help in planning, implementation, and evaluation.



# Factors Affecting Family Partnership

- Immigrant and LEP parents' beliefs and perceptions
- Specific professional practices that encourage immigrant and LEP parent involvement at all levels and guide their engagement



# How do we get there?

- Engaging and partnering with immigrant/LEP families requires:
  - Vision, leadership, partnership, and investment
  - Active listening and cultural reciprocity
  - Tangible, emotional, and environmental supports
  - Mechanism(s) to track the contributions and outcomes of their engagement—“You treasure what you measure”







# Critical Supports

- Start where families are
- Connect to peers
- Focus on empowerment through relationships and capacity building
- Lead together!

# Partner With Immigrant CBO and Parent-Led Organizations

- These organizations help systems:
  - Recognize and understand the barriers to participation by families
  - Make changes to address barriers
  - Engage families in all processes
- Fundamental ingredients:
  - Mutual respect for skills and knowledge
  - Mutually agreed-upon goals
  - Trust and honesty
  - Clear and open communication
  - Shared planning and decision making



# Our Lessons Learned

- Identify and partner with CBOs and service delivery systems.
- Ensure that representative staff are involved.
- Ask immigrant/LEP families what they need and what works for them:
  - Don't assume or presume readiness, capacity, language ability
- Be flexible and determined.
- Conduct ongoing evaluation and debrief learnings to improve outcomes.



# Questions?



# Discussion



# References

- Center for Early Care and Education Research—Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL; 2011). Research brief #7. Social-emotional development in dual language learners: A critical review of the research. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author. Retrieved from [http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/sites/cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/images/%232817\\_ResBrief%237\\_FinalRvsd-2.pdf](http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/sites/cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/images/%232817_ResBrief%237_FinalRvsd-2.pdf)
- National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures*. Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/24677>
- National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/national-center-early-childhood-development-teaching-learning-ncecdtl>
- National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness. (n.d.). *Culture and language*. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language>

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# Helpful Resources

Center for Early Care and Education Research–Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL),  
<http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/>

CECER-DLL Research Reports & Briefs, <http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/document-library>

Center for Parent Information & Resources, [www.parentcenterhub.org](http://www.parentcenterhub.org)

Equity Alliance, [www.equityallianceatasu.org/about](http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/about)

Equity Assistance Centers, [www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html)

IRIS Center, Dual Language Learners with Disabilities: Supporting Young Children in the Classroom, online module, <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/dll/>

IRIS Center, resource locator, <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator/#content>

Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (2012). *Cultural reciprocity in special education: Building family–professional partnerships*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

<http://products.brookespublishing.com/Cultural-Reciprocity-in-Special-Education-P615.aspx>

– Q&A with authors, <http://archive.brookespublishing.com/author-interviews/kalyanpur-72315-interview.htm>

National Center for Cultural Competence, <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/>

– Self-Assessments, <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/assessments/>

Regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers, [http://www.parentcenterhub.org/parent-centers\\_trashed/rptacs/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/parent-centers_trashed/rptacs/)

# NCSI Staff Contacts

- **Taletha Derrington**, American Institutes for Research, [tderrington@air.org](mailto:tderrington@air.org)
- **Lauren Artzi**, American Institutes for Research, [lartzi@air.org](mailto:lartzi@air.org)
- **Diana Autin**, SPAN & NE-Parent Center Assistance and Collaboration Team (NE-PACT), Region 1 Parent Technical Assistance Center, [diana.autin@spannj.org](mailto:diana.autin@spannj.org)
- **Jeffri Brookfield**, WestEd, [jbrookf@wested.org](mailto:jbrookf@wested.org)
- **Debra Jennings**, SPAN & Center for Parent Information and Resources, [debra.jennings@spannj.org](mailto:debra.jennings@spannj.org)
- **Patrice Linehan**, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, [patrice.linehan@nasdse.org](mailto:patrice.linehan@nasdse.org)
- **Mariola Rosser**, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, [mariola.rosser@nasdse.org](mailto:mariola.rosser@nasdse.org)



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