FOUNDATIONFOR**CHILD**DEVELOPMENT

PreK-3rd: Challenging Common Myths About Dual Language Learners

An Update to the Seminal 2008 Report

by Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D.

10

PreK-3rd
Policy to Action Brief

No. Ten
August 2013

PreK-3rd Policy to Action Briefs

PreK-3rd Policy to Action Briefs seek to promote the idea of PreK-3rd and to provide guidance for its implementation. The goal of PreK-3rd Grade Education is the creation of a seamless learning continuum from PreK to Third Grade.

PreK-3rd is a national movement of schools, districts, educators and universities seeking to improve how children from ages 3 to 8 learn and develop in schools. While these different efforts use a variety of names, all are working to connect high-quality PreK programs with high-quality elementary schools to create a well-aligned primary education for all our nation's children.

What is PreK-3rd Education?

PreK-3rd approaches require that educational standards, curricula, assessment and professional development are strongly aligned across high-quality PreK, Kindergarten, First, Second and Third Grades.

The PreK–3rd approach consists of:

• Public funding for Full-Day education starting at age three, including:

  – Voluntary, Full-Day PreK for three- and four-year-olds

  – Required, Full-Day Kindergarten

• Aligned educational strategies within and across grades, including:

  – Aligned standards, sequenced curriculum, instruction, and assessments

  – Well-rounded curriculum, including literacy, math, arts, physical education, social and emotional learning and science

  – Regular joint planning and shared professional development among all PreK, Kindergarten, and 1st–3rd grade teachers and staff

• Principal leadership to support joint professional development and teacher collaboration around PreK-3rd curriculum and instruction

• Family engagement focused on supporting what children learn in school and on promoting a Dual-Generation strategy

Introduction

With the continued demands for external accountability and the rigorous grade-level expectations in English Language Arts specified in the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS), educational policymakers are focusing increased attention on young children (ages 3-8) from non-English speaking backgrounds. Young children who speak a language other than English in the home and are not fully fluent in English have been identified as Dual Language learners (DLLs). The term, dual language learners has been adopted by the Office of Head Start and the United States Department of Education to highlight and promote the linguistic assets of young children and families who speak languages other than English.[i] Since 2008, when the first edition of this policy brief was published, the scientific community has greatly advanced our knowledge of both how children acquire two languages during the PreKindergarten years and the consequences of growing up with more than one language.

Our educational systems are challenged to capitalize on the linguistic, cognitive, and social talents of young children who are developing capacities in more than one language.

The rate of growth of DLL children in the Early Care and Education (ECE) systems as well as the public schools continues to exceed projections with 10 states experiencing more than 200% growth from 1990-2010.[ii] In some parts of the country more than 50% of the PreKindergarten population come from non-English-speaking homes.[iii] As a group, DLL students have often struggled to become proficient in English, chronically been in the lowest levels of academic achievement, and had school drop out rates almost twice those of native English speakers.[iv]

The confluence of these factors has created an urgent need to design and implement instructional approaches and school structures that are based on our latest scientific evidence about how to best support full English proficiency and high academic achievement for DLL students. Our educational systems are challenged to capitalize on the linguistic, cognitive, and social talents of young children who are developing capacities in more than one language.

Fortunately, in the past 15 years, there have been advances in neuroscience, rigorous research on the processes and consequences of dual language development, and program evaluations and international research on multi-lingual development that can provide useful guidance on best policies and practices for young DLL children.

When carefully analyzed, this new research often challenges commonly held beliefs and myths that have influenced the instruction, assessment practices, and organizational structure of educational programs that serve DLL children ages 3-8 years. This brief presents two new and updates five commonly held beliefs about the development and learning of young children who are learning English as their second language and presents current research evidence that can better guide our policies.

Underlying this perspective is the belief that a consistent, coherent approach to early education that provides continuous, enhanced learning opportunities from PreKindergarten through Third Grade offers the best chance for improved academic performance. DLL children in PreK-3rd programs would have the advantage of six years of continuous schooling with a consistent approach to language development, common curriculum, and aligned assessments to master the essential elements of the English language while learning challenging academic content. Their teachers would also have more opportunities to forge partnerships with parents, and increase the likelihood of the children's positive adjustments to early schooling. Creating a sound foundation in basic and academic language, as well as conceptual development and reading proficiency, by the end of Third Grade sets the stage for future school success.

MYTH 1: Learning Two Languages During the Early Childhood Years Will Overwhelm, Confuse, and/or Delay Acquisition of English.

When we hear PreKindergarteners inserting Spanish into their English sentences or school-age children alternating between the two languages while socializing with their peers, it is easy to conclude that they are confusing the two languages. Since language learning is such a monumental and challenging task during the first years of life, it is also reasonable to believe that expecting young children to learn not one—but two—languages, as they are just beginning to learn the complexities of understanding and using language may delay overall language development.

In fact most young children throughout the world successfully learn more than one language from their earliest years. Recent research from developmental cognitive neuroscientists and psycholinguists on the processes and consequences of learning two languages during the infant-toddler years has continued to underscore the extensive capacity of the human brain to learn multiple languages during the early childhood years, as well as the ability of the child to sort the sounds of each language into separate categories and interpret contextual cues to know when it is appropriate to use which language.[v]

There is wide scientific consensus that bilingual infants develop two separate but connected linguistic systems during the first year of life.[vi] We now know that infants have the innate capacity to learn two languages from birth and that if the early dual language exposure is sufficient in quantity and quality, young children can successfully become fully proficient in both languages.

The most current scientific research suggests that the development of two languages from a child's earliest years has specific impacts on a variety of cognitive functions discernable as early as seven months of age that are persistent throughout childhood and may even offer some protection from symptoms of Alzheimer's.[vii] Enhanced executive function abilities such as working memory, inhibitory control, attention to relevant vs. irrelevant task cues, and mental or cognitive flexibility, as well as improved language skills, have been linked to early bilingualism when proficiency in each language is roughly balanced.[viii] These abilities have been portrayed as the biological foundation for school readiness, providing the platform upon which children's capacities to learn (the "how") educational content (the "what") depends. It has been found in multiple studies that there is a bilingual advantage when comparing monolinguals and bilinguals on tasks that require selective attention, cognitive flexibility, and certain literacy skills such as decoding when the two languages have similar writing systems.[ix] Notably, these advantages have been found across all socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups, and as noted above, are linked to the level of bilingualism; those children who had more balanced skills in each language showed greater advantage.

These studies have also demonstrated that knowing more than one language does not delay the acquisition of English or impede academic achievement in English when both languages are supported.[x] Research on children who learn English after their home language has been established—usually around three years of age—has also shown that most young children are capable of *adding* a second language and that this dual language ability confers long-term cognitive, cultural, and economic advantages.[xi] The early childhood period from 3-8 years of age is critical for developing mastery of the sounds, structure and functions of language and thus an ideal time to expose children to the benefits of two languages.[xii] Current research has clearly indicated that young dual language learners should be given opportunities to develop high levels of proficiency in both of their languages because the advantages are significant and lasting.

In the brain, the ability to hold onto and work with information, focus thinking, filter distractions, and switch gears is like an airport having a highly effective air traffic control system to manage the arrivals and departures of dozens of planes on multiple runways. Scientists refer to these capacities as executive function and self-regulation—a set of skills that relies on three types of brain function: working memory, mental flexibility, and inhibitory-control. *Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (n.d.). Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning*

Myth 2: The Language Development of Dual Language Learners Looks the Same as Monolingual Language Development.

When young children learn more than one language their experiences in each language alter the neural patterning and language processing systems in the developing brain.[xiii] During the first year of life, an infant is able to perceive and process all sounds of all spoken languages, but sometime between 8-10 months this speech perception starts to narrow. By the end of the first year of life, infants have lost some of their ability to discriminate sounds that they do not regularly hear. After seven years of age, the human capacity to hear and process unfamiliar phonemes (the sounds of language) has dramatically decreased.[xiv] This is one reason why the PreK-3rd years are an ideal time for children to learn a second language.

Recent studies from cognitive neuroscientists have found differences in brain activity in the areas of the brain that process language across bilingual and monolingual PreKindergarteners.[xv] Young bilingual children develop more widely dispersed and evenly distributed neural pathways across both brain hemispheres. The unique linguistic challenges faced by young DLL children lead to different sets of skills than those of monolinguals. The cognitive demands of processing input in two languages, may lead to slower word retrieval in each language, but enhanced abilities in other areas.[xvi] While it may take DLL children longer to respond to language tasks that require word retrieval, and they may not know as many words in each language, the additional cognitive challenges of switching between languages is also associated with increased cognitive control and executive function skills. In short, all language experiences influence cognitive and linguistic learning mechanisms and since DLL children are developing unique neural connections and pathways, their brain development and learning will look different from monolingual children.[xvii]

While language differences have been reported in studies of young DLL children, these differences should not be interpreted as language delays due to learning in more than one language. Most often, these differences are evident only in certain areas of language development, e.g., vocabulary and rapid word retrieval, but other areas, e.g., phonological awareness and decoding skills, may be comparable. It is also important to note that learning expectations or state standards developed for monolingual English speakers may not be appropriate for DLL students.

Finally, there are important socio-cultural differences both between DLL and non-DLL students and within the DLL population that affect the development of important language and literacy skills. For example, young DLL children are much more likely than native English speakers to have parents without a high school education, to live in low-income families, and to be raised in cultural contexts that do not reflect mainstream norms in the United States.[xviii] The language and early literacy development of DLL children also follows unique trajectories toward full English proficiency with significant implications for instructional planning. These background and developmental characteristics of young DLL students need to be understood when making judgments about individual children's progress and making inferences about program effectiveness.[xix]

Myth 3: Total English Immersion from Prekindergarten Through Third Grade Is the Best Way for a Young Dual Language Learner to Acquire English.

Common sense suggests that the more time children spend listening to and speaking English, the more rapidly they will master the fundamentals of the English language. For adults and older children who have a well-established first language, this may be the case. It is true that young children need sufficient input and opportunities to use a second language in order to gain fluency. Many educators are also concerned that young children will be confused and their acquisition of English language and literacy skills will be delayed if they are not instructed in English-only programs from the very beginning. The reasoning is logical: since children during their first five years of life are primed to learn language and eventually they will need to master English Language Arts, it is best if they are introduced to an English-only instructional environment as early as possible.

Much research on the effects of early English immersion programs for DLL students contradicts this belief. For young children who are actively processing and have not yet mastered the fundamentals of their first language, completely shifting to a new, unfamiliar language during the early childhood years may negatively impact the ongoing development of their home language, as well as academic achievement in English in the long run.

The evidence suggests that children in English immersion ECE programs tend to lose their ability to communicate in their first language, start to prefer the English language, frequently develop communication problems with their extended families, and experience depressed academic achievement in English.[xx] While English can be successfully *introduced* during the PreKindergarten years, if it replaces the home language, and children do not have the opportunity to continue to learn in the language they know, advanced linguistic, conceptual, and academic development is at-risk. Systematic, deliberate exposure to English during early childhood combined with ongoing opportunities to learn important concepts in the home language results in the highest achievement in both the home language and English by the end of Third Grade and beyond.[xxi]

The conclusions from recent studies suggest that young children are capable of learning academic content in two languages, that they benefit cognitively and socially from learning more than one language, that transitioning to English too soon may cost them in the long run, and that many early literacy skills learned in Spanish clearly transfer to English. The children who were taught in English-only classrooms or transitioned to English instruction before they demonstrated well established oral language abilities in their own language and had achieved high levels of English oral proficiency did not fare as well as those who had the opportunity to learn through two languages.

The most recent evidence suggests that support for the home language during the PreKindergarten years will *help*, not hurt, long term attainment in English. Young children can learn nursery rhymes, songs, extended vocabulary and early literacy skills in English *and* their home language with adult support. DLL children who receive systematic learning opportunities in their home language during the early years consistently out-perform those who attend English-only programs on measures of academic achievement in English during the middle and high school years.[xxii] These dual language learning opportunities can be provided during designated instructional times throughout the day in each language, in addition to extended activities conducted in the home by family members in the child's first language. Encouraging DLL children's families to continue to talk with, read to, sing to, and use the home language in everyday activities will promote continued development of children's first language while they are also acquiring English in their PreK-3rd settings.

MYTH 4: Because Schools Don't Have the Capacity to Provide Instruction in all the Languages Represented by DLL Children, Programs Should Provide Instruction in One Common Language—English.

Early education programs throughout the country are reporting not only more DLL children, but also more different languages represented among their children and families. Head Start has documented more than 140 different languages among their families enrolled in 2009-2010 with approximately 30% of all children identified as dual language learners.[xxiii] The state of California has reported that approximately 25 percent of all K-12 students speak a language other than English at home and more than half of all four-year-olds are children of immigrants (PPI, 2012).[xxiv] In some communities the concentration of DLLs is even more dramatic; In Los Angeles County, more than 55 percent of the five year olds entering Kindergarten in 2009-2010 were children whose primary language spoken in the home was not English with 88% being from Spanish-speaking homes.[xxv] At the same time less than 10 percent of our teachers are fluent in more than one language and few teachers certified in early childhood education have any training in cultural and linguistic diversity.[xxvi]

With such a daunting challenge facing our educators, it seems reasonable to expect most programs will implement English-only instructional approaches. While reasonable, this would be a misguided conclusion. From the preceding discussion, it is clear that young DLL children need frequent and intentional support for the home language while they are acquiring English in order to benefit academically, socially, and cognitively from their emergent bilingualism. Even when teachers do not speak the child's home language, there are many specific teaching practices that will support continued development of the home language.[xxvii] Teachers and ancillary staff can support children's home language throughout the day in all kinds of learning situations recognizing that most ECE teachers are monolingual English speakers; they can also train parents, community members, and volunteers to work with DLL children in their home language. In addition, research has shown that multiple long-term benefits are accrued when teachers promote literacy skills in children's home language as well as English.

English Language Development (ELD)

Instructional strategies that promote ELD and support DLL children's home language development:

- Early in the school year, teachers meet with parents to learn critical information about the child and family.

- Visual displays that represent the languages, cultures, and family practices of the children enrolled in the classroom.

- Provide books and materials that authentically represent the cultures and languages of your students and families. Have students help you understand and read them or elicit a volunteer or parent to help you with this.

- Have key vocabulary words introduced in child's home language by parent or community volunteer.

- Pre-read stories in child's home language.

- Use similar words in home language to bridge into English.

- Use pictorial, real world objects, and concrete experiences to convey meaning of words and concepts.

- Use visual cues and physical gestures and signals linked to specific content vocabulary to imprint meaning.

MYTH 5: Spanish-Speaking Latinos Show Social As Well As Academic Delays When Entering Kindergarten.

The academic achievement gap for young Latino dual language learners continues to be significant at Kindergarten entry and persists throughout the school years.[xxviii] Low-income Hispanic DLL children consistently score significantly below the national average in math and reading achievement at Kindergarten entry. These educational achievement disparities persist as DLL students continue to have substantially lower levels of academic achievement, including high school completion and college enrollment and completion rates, than their peers from English-only backgrounds.[xxix] Although these academic discrepancies are well documented and well known among the educational community, very little comparable attention has been paid to the social competencies of young DLL children.

We know that the emotional and social health of young DLL children is important to their school adjustment and academic achievement. Young children need to be able to regulate their emotions, follow directions, form positive social bonds, and express their feelings appropriately to succeed in school. According to multiple measures of family risk factors (i.e., poverty, immigrant status, English language fluency, access to mental and physical health services) Latino DLL children would appear to be at greater risk than their non-Hispanic peers for poor mental health. However, several researchers have found that children from low SES Mexican immigrant families had lower levels of internalizing and externalizing symptoms than both their White and African-American peers.[xxx] In one study, teachers rated the children of Mexican immigrant families at Kindergarten entry as more socially and emotionally competent than their peers from similar socio-economic backgrounds. This is remarkable given the multiple risk factors associated with the Mexican immigrant families and yet these children showed distinct social and behavioral advantages at Kindergarten entry.

In addition, as described above, PreKindergarten-aged DLL children have been repeatedly shown to have more advanced executive function skills. Dual language learners consistently outperform monolingual children on tasks that require focused attention, inhibitory control, planning and working memory abilities, and mental flexibility.[xxxi] These advantages for bilinguals have been found during the first year of life across language, ethnicity, and SES groups. Several researchers have found advantages for bilingual children on executive control tasks when comparing lower SES Spanish-English bilingual children with middles-class monolingual English-speaking children. However, these advantages are found only when the child has developed advanced levels of bilingual proficiency; one researcher has suggested, "intensive experience and practice with more than one language may be required to reap benefits in executive control".[xxxii]

These largely unrecognized social-emotional and executive function strengths among a population often viewed only through the "at-risk" lens offers a potential source of resilience that school personnel should recognize, support, and enhance. Since young low-income Spanish-speaking DLL children are judged to be at least as, if not more, emotionally and socially competent than their peers, something about Hispanic child-rearing practices has promoted their children's ability to control their emotions and get along with others at school entry—two highly-prized social competencies for school success. The ability to plan, initiate, and carry out tasks while disregarding distracting input also has enormous implications for successful school performance.

MYTH 6: Native English Speakers May Experience Academic and Language Delays in Dual Language Programs.

Dual language programs educate all children in two languages, typically, English and another language. Over the past decade, dual language programs have grown tenfold, with an estimated 2,000 currently operating in the U.S. The goal is to promote bilingualism and biculturalism for all the students enrolled. In these classrooms all the students experience the benefits and challenges associated with learning a second language during the early childhood years as well as the richness of socio-cultural integration.

Many parents and educators are reluctant to enroll native-English speaking children in programs where much of their academic instruction is in a language the children have not mastered. They fear that their children may "lose ground" over the PreK-3ʳᵈ years compared with their monolingual English-speaking peers. Since most important achievement testing is conducted in English, and the stakes for academic failure are higher than ever, there is also the fear that the students will be disadvantaged by the amount of instructional time spent learning a second language.

In fact, the data from recent evaluations shows that a balanced dual language approach is an effective model for both DLL students *and* native English speakers. It is one of the few instructional approaches that can fully close the achievement gap for DLL students while not showing any adverse effects for non-DLL students. All students seem to benefit cognitively, academically, and culturally when they develop proficiency in more than one language as measured by standardized achievement testing in addition to positive reports from parents, teachers, and administrators.[xxxiii]

In one landmark longitudinal study, when the dual language model was consistently implemented over the early elementary and through high school grades, the achievement gap between DLL students and native English speakers was closed; the educational experience also became more inclusive for all students with students reporting friendships across class and language barriers.[xxxiv] "In the long run, dual language schools have tremendous benefit," says author Jo Anne Kleifgen. "You have young adults with strong skills, who graduate from high school, who can communicate in more than one language."

Myth 7: If the Instruction in Your Program is Delivered Primarily in English, You Do Not Need to Worry About DLL Children's Progress in Their Home Language.

With the increased demands for accountability, educators need to frequently assess children's progress, identify those who may be in need of specialized services, monitor the effectiveness of their interventions, and frequently adapt instructional approaches based on assessment feedback. Accurate and valid assessment information that is linked to improved instruction is critical to the academic achievement of young DLL students. In addition, the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grants (RT-ELC) require states to implement a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) that is "valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used including English learners." The primary purposes of the KEA are to inform instruction and services in the elementary grades and to help close the achievement gap at Kindergarten entry. Consequently, ECE assessment measures, and assessment procedures, as well as statewide assessment systems have all received recent scrutiny.[xxxv]

Since all dual language learners will need to be assessed in English Language Arts eventually and many young DLL students receive most of their instruction in English, it is often concluded that assessing DLL students' progress in English provides all the information needed to make educational decisions. However, there are many important features of DLL students' abilities in their home language as well as aspects of their early language learning contexts that directly influence their growth and achievement in English.

The educational performance of DLL students may vary due to many factors: the family's socio-economic status, the educational level of the mother, the quality of early language experiences in the home language, the age of exposure to English, as well as differences in cultural beliefs and child socialization practices across families.[xxxvi]

DLL children learn a second language in fairly predictable stages and frequently make grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic mistakes in English as they are experimenting with their new language and learning its rules and structure. In contrast, the assessment in the home language often shows that the child does not make errors when he produces sentences in that language. Depending on the literacy experiences at home, young DLL children may know certain words in the home language, but not in English, and as a result, they may have a smaller vocabulary than English monolinguals.[xxxvii] For example, they may know the names of objects in the kitchen and home in Spanish but not in English. The child may also know words such as recess, chalk, line, scissors in English because of these are the words they are exposed at school, but never learn the same words in Spanish because there was no need or opportunity to do so in the home. In

these cases the child may look like he has limited vocabulary in each language. However, when the total number of words the child knows in both languages is considered together, frequently it is comparable to the number and range of vocabulary words monolingual children know.

Thus, both the child's home language and English should be assessed at program entry because assessing the child only in English will underestimate the child's knowledge and true abilities. The assessment in both English and the home language will help determine what the child has learned and is capable of doing as well as the child's level of language development. This information is critical when making judgments about a child's potential for further learning as many of these linguistic and conceptual skills can be transferred to English. A child who demonstrates difficulties in both languages should be referred for an evaluation to determine the need for additional services.[xxxviii]

An example of a recent policy regarding the assessment of young DLL students is the new Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (2010), which has identified English Language Development as an essential domain of learning for DLL students. The Framework states, "programs are to ensure that children have opportunities to interact and demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language." (p.4). In addition, the document describes the assessment process for DLL students.

> With the exception of assessing a child's English language development, assessment does not depend on a child's understanding or speaking abilities in English, but on the specific knowledge, skills, or abilities that the assessment measures. For example, a child can demonstrate an understanding of book knowledge or science concepts in the home language. Assessing a child who is a DLL only in English will rarely give an accurate or complete picture of what the child knows or can do.
>
> Programs need to choose assessment instruments, methods, and procedures that use the language or languages that most accurately reveal each child's knowledge, skills, and abilities. The assessment data gathered in the home language can be used to inform instructional practices and curriculum decisions to maximize the child's learning. Programs are to use culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments to capture what children who are DLLs know and can do in all areas of the Framework (p.5).

As the language and literacy development of DLL students follows pathways that are specific to children growing up with more than one language and their achievement in English is influenced by many factors associated with being bilingual, it is important for educators to understand what the child knows and can do in any language—not just English.

Summary and Conclusions

A careful review of current research from a variety of disciplines about the nature of dual language development and the impact of different educational approaches for children ages three to eight, in some areas runs counter to the conventional wisdom.

Conclusions from the current science suggest that young DLL children are quite capable of learning academic content in two languages. In fact, they benefit cognitively from learning more than one language. Transitioning to English too soon may cost them in the long run, and many early literacy skills learned in the home language transfer to English. All children appear to benefit cognitively, linguistically, culturally, and economically from learning more than one language. Finally, it is critical to obtain accurate and valid assessment information for DLL students in order to design developmentally appropriate and academically challenging instruction.

Based on these conclusions, the implications for educational policy at the federal, state, and local level are clear.

1. **Support DLL students' home language and literacy development while also promoting their English language development (ELD).** All young children are capable of learning two languages; becoming bilingual has long-term cognitive, academic, social, cultural, and economic benefits— it is an asset. (See Illinois Preschool Policies, 23. Adm. Code Part 228 for an example of a state policy that requires districts to identify and provide language services to young DLL children, information can be found at: http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/pdfs/preschool_faq092611.pdf)

2. **Family engagement policies and practices need to be examined through the lens of diversity.** Traditional models may need to be expanded to include a focus on developing meaningful relationships with extended family members and a better understanding of family expectations for their children's development and learning. Family partnerships that are mutually respectful, engage in two-way communication and incorporate important cultural and family background information offer promise for stronger home-school connections.

3. **Review current state early learning standards and expectations** to ensure they are appropriate for DLL students. Where necessary, expand standards to address unique features of dual language development and instructional supports, including attention to executive function skills, that explicitly promote English acquisition while supporting continued home language development.

4. **Design, implement, and evaluate instructional strategies** that help develop essential academic concepts in DLL students home language and within cultural contexts that are familiar and culturally consistent with diverse language groups.

5. **Provide professional development and training to all ECE teachers and staff** on specific instructional strategies that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and promote English language development (ELD).

6. **Support bilingualism for all children whenever possible;** dual language programs are an effective approach to improving academic achievement for DLL children while also providing many benefits to native English speakers.

7. **Assess all DLL children's linguistic and conceptual knowledge in both their home language and English.** Assessing the child only in English will underestimate the child's knowledge and true abilities. This may require investment in the development of linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate assessment tools for young DLL children across all domains of development.

Finally, recognizing the PreK-3rd Grade period (3- 8-years-old) as critical for language development is necessary for providing the continuity and extended time for children to fully benefit from these policies. With regular and continued application of these findings, we can improve the educational outcomes for DLL children as well as the social and economic health of our diverse communities. However, it will require that we all let go of outdated misconceptions and diligently inform our practices with current scientific information.

Dr. Linda M. Espinosa, is currently Co-PI for the Center for Early Care and Education Research—Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL) at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and Lead Consultant for the Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners Project at the California State Department of Education, Child Development Division. 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 (NIEER) at Rutgers University and Vice President of Education at Bright Horizons Family Solutions. Her recent research and policy work has focused on effective curriculum and assessment practices for young children from low-income families who are dual language learners.

Endnotes

i   Office of Head Start. (2008) *Dual Language Learning: What does it take?* Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Individualization/Learning%20in%20Two%20Languages/DLANA_final_2009%5B1%5D.pdf

ii   National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR). (2012). *Dual Language Learners in State Early Learning Guidelines and Standards*. Available at: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/center/state-guidelines/dll_guidelines.html

iii   Karoly, L. A., Ghosh-Dastidar, B., Zellman, G. L., Perlman, M., & Fernyhough, L. (2008). *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California* (TR-539). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

iv   Rumberger, R.W., & Tran, L. (2007). State language policies, school language practices, and the ELL achievement gap. In P. Gándara, P. & M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Forbidden Language: English Learners and Restrictive Language Policies* (pp. 86-101). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

v   Conboy, B.T. & Kuhl, P.K. (2011). Impact of second-language experience in infancy: Brain measures of first- and second-language speech perception. *Developmental Science*, 14, 242-248.

vi   Conboy, B.T., & Mills, D.L. (2006). Two languages, one developing brain: Effects of vocabulary size on bilingual toddlers' event-related potentials to auditory words. *Developmental Science*, 9(1), F1-F11.

vii   Craik, F. I. M., Bialystok, E., & Freedman, M. (2010). Delaying the onset of Alzheimer disease. Bilingualism as a form of cognitive reserve. Neurology, 75, 1726-1729.

viii   Bialystok, E. (2008). Second-language acquisition and bilingualism at an early age and the impact on early cognitive development. In: Tremblay, R.E., Barr, R.G., & Peters, R.DeV (Eds.), *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, 1-4. Available at: http://www.child-encyclopedia. com/documents/BialystokANGxp_rev.pdf

ix   Bialystok, E., & Feng, X. (2010). Language proficiency and its implications for monolingual and bilingual children. In A.Y. Durgunoglu & C. Goldenberg (Eds.), *Dual Language Learners: The Development and Assessment of Oral and Written Language*. (pp. 121-138). New York: Guilford Press

x   Barnett, W.S., Yarosz, D.J., Thomas, J., Jung, K. & Blanco, D. (2007). Two-Way and Monolingual English Immersion in Preschool Education: An Experimental Comparison. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22(3), 277-293.

xi   Bialystok, E. (2009). *Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent*. Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 12, 3-11.

xii   Conboy, B.T. & Kuhl, P.K. (2011). Impact of second-language experience in infancy: Brain measures of first- and second-language speech perception. *Developmental Science*, 14, 242-248.

xiii   Kuhl, P.K., García-Sierra, A., Conboy, B., Percaccio, C., & Romo, H.D. (2010). "Bilingual language development: brain measures of phonetic learning, variation in language input, and language outcomes." Symposium presentation at the 2010 International Conference on Infant Studies, Baltimore, MD, March 10-14, 2010.

xiv   Kuhl, P. K. (2004). Early language acquisition: cracking the speech code. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 5(11), 831--843.

xv   Conboy, B.T., Rivera-Gaxiola, M., Silva-Pereyra, J.F., & Kuhl, P.K. (2008). Event-related potential studies of early language processing at the phoneme, word, and sentence levels. In A.D. Friederici & G. Thierry (Eds.), *Early Language Development: Bridging Brain and Behavior, Trends in Language Acquisition research series*, Vol. 5 (pp. 24-64). Amsterdam/The Netherlands: John Benjamins.

xvi   Barac, R. & Bialystok, E. (2012). Bilingual effects on cognitive and linguistic development: Role of language, cultural background, and education. *Child Development*, 83(2), 413-422.

xvii   Bialystok, E. (2009). Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 12, 3-11.

xviii   De Feyter, J. J., & Winsler, A. (2009). The early developmental competencies and school readiness of low-income immigrant children: Influences of generation, race/ethnicity, and national origin. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24, 411-431.

xix   Espinosa, L. (2010). *Getting it Right for Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds: Applying Research to Improve Practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

xx   Thomas, W. & V. Collier. (2003). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence. Available at: http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/ResBrief10.html

xxi   Collier, V.P. & Thomas, W.P. (2009, November). *Educating English Learners For a Transformed World*. Albuquerque, NM: Fuente Press.

xxii   Ibid

xxiii   Office of Head Start. Early childhood learning and knowledge center. National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness. Available at: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/center

xxiv   California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit. (2012). *Statewide English Learners by Language and Grade*, 2010-11. Available at: http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/LEPbyLang1.asp?cChoice=LepbyLang1&cYear=2010-11&cLevel=State&cTopic=LC&myTimeFrame=S&submit1=Submit

xxv   Espinosa, L. (2009). *Los Angeles Unified School District Early Childhood Education for English Language Learners Plan*. Internal LAUSD Working Document. Los Angeles, CA.

xxvi   Pianta, R. C., & Hadden, D. S. (2008, June). What we know about the quality of early education settings: Implications for research on teacher preparation and professional development. *The State Education Standard*. Washington DC: National Association of State Boards of Education.

xxvii   Espinosa, L. (2010). *Getting it Right for Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds: Applying Research to Improve Practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

xxviii   Gandara, P. R. Rumberger, J. Maxwell-Jolly, & R. Callahan. (2003). English learners in California schools: Unequal, outcomes. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 11(36). Available at: http://epaa.asu.edu/epaav11n36/v11n36.pdf.

xxix   Rumberger, R. W. (2004). What can be done to reduce school dropouts? In Gary Orfied (Ed.), *Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis* (pp.243-254). Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

xxx   Crosnoe, R. (2007). Early child care and the school readiness of children from Mexican immigrant families. *International Migration Review*, 41, 152-181.

xxxi   Bialystok, E., & Viswanathan, M. (2009). Components of executive control with advantages for bilingual children in two cultures. *Cognition*, 112, 494–500.

xxxii   Bialystok, E., Barac, R., Blaye, A., & Poulin-Dubois, D. (2010). Word mapping and executive functioning in young monolingual and bilingual children. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 11, 485-508.

xxxiii   Collier, V.P. & Thomas, W.P. (2009, November). *Educating English Learners For a Transformed World*. Albuquerque, NM: Fuente Press.

xxxiv   Thomas, W. & V. Collier. (2003). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence. Available at: http://www.crede.ucscedu/research/llaa/l.l_final.html.

xxxv   Espinosa, L. M., & García, E. (2012, November). *Developmental assessment of young dual language learners with a focus on kindergarten Entry Assessments: Implications for state policies*. Center for Early Care and Education Research-Dual Language learners (CECER-DLL).

xxxvi Castro, D., Garcia, E., Espinosa, L., Genesee, F., Gillanders, C., Hammer, C., LaForett, D., Peisner-Feinberg, E., & Tabors, P. (Under review). *Conceptual framework for the study of dual language learners' development*. Center for Early Care and Education Research-Dual Language learners (CECER-DLL).

xxxvii Bialystok, E., & Feng, X. (2010). Language proficiency and its implications for monolingual and bilingual children. In A.Y. Durgunoglu & C. Goldenberg (Eds.), *Dual language learners: The development and assessment of oral and written language*. (pp. 121-138). New York: Guilford Press.

xxxviii Paradis, J. (2010). The interface between bilingual development and specific language impairment. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 31, 227-252.

FCD PreK-3rd Policy to Action Brief Series

PreK-3rd Policy to Action Briefs seek to promote the idea of PreK-3rd and to provide guidance for its implementation. The goal of PreK-3rd Grade Education is the creation of a seamless learning continuum from PreK to Third Grade.

PreK-3rd is a national movement of schools, districts, educators and universities seeking to improve how children from ages 3 to 8 learn and develop in schools. While these different efforts use a variety of names, all are working to connect high-quality PreK programs with high-quality elementary schools to create a well-aligned primary education for all our nation's children.

- No. 1 The Case for Investing in PreK-3rd Education: Challenging Myths about School Reform

- No. 2 PreK-3rd: What is the Price Tag?

- No. 3 PreK-3rd: Teacher Quality Matters

- No. 4 PreK-3rd: Putting Full-Day Kindergarten in the Middle

- No. 5 PreK-3rd: How Superintendents Lead Change

- No. 6 PreK-3rd: Raising the Educational Performance of English Language Learners (ELLs)

- No. 7 PreK-3rd: Principals as Crucial Instructional Leaders

- No. 8 PreK-3rd. Next Steps for State Longitudinal Data Systems

- No. 9 PreK-3rd. Getting Literacy Instruction Right

FCD Case Studies

The FCD Case Studies Series can be found at http://fcd-us.org/resources/fcd-case-studies

2013

- The Promise of PreK-3rd: Promoting Academic Excellence for Dual Language Learners in Red Bank Public Schools

2012

- Into the Fray: How a Funders Coalition Restored Momentum for Early Learning in Minnesota

2011

- The Power PreK-3rd : How a Small Foundation Helped Push Washington States to the Forefront of the PreK-3rd Movement

- Effectively Educating PreK-3rd English Language Learners (ELLs) in Montgomery County Public Schools

2010

- Lessons for PreK-3rd from Montgomery County Public Schools

- Working Together to Build a Birth-to-College Approach to Public Education: Forming a Partnership Between the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund

2009

- Education Reform Starts Early: Lessons from New Jersey's PreK-3rd Reform

- On the Cusp in California: How PreK-3rd Strategies Could Improve Education in the Golden State

2004

- Early Education for All: A Strategic Political Campaign for High-Quality Early Education in Massachusetts

2003

- How Florida's Voters Enacted UPK When Their Legislature Wouldn't

2002

- Achieving Full-Day Kindergarten in New Mexico: A Case Study

2001

- Universal Prekindergarten in Georgia: A Case Study of Georgia's Lottery-Funded Pre-K Program

FOUNDATIONFOR**CHILD**DEVELOPMENT

295 Madison Avenue, 40th Floor
New York, NY 10017
(212) 867-5777 phone
(212) 867-5844 fax
www.fcd-us.org

Connecting Research with Policy for Social Change since 1900