



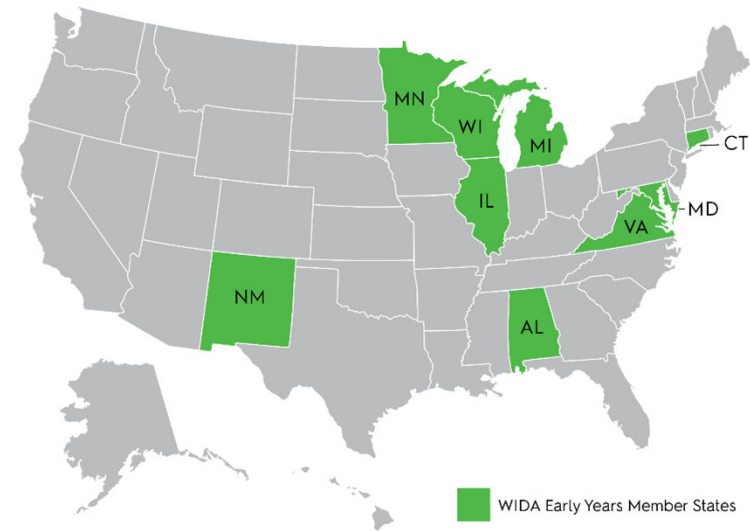
The Dual Language Learner Landscape: What We Know and What We Need

August 31, 2021

Lorena Mancilla, Ph.D. | Director of WIDA Early Years

What is WIDA Early Years?

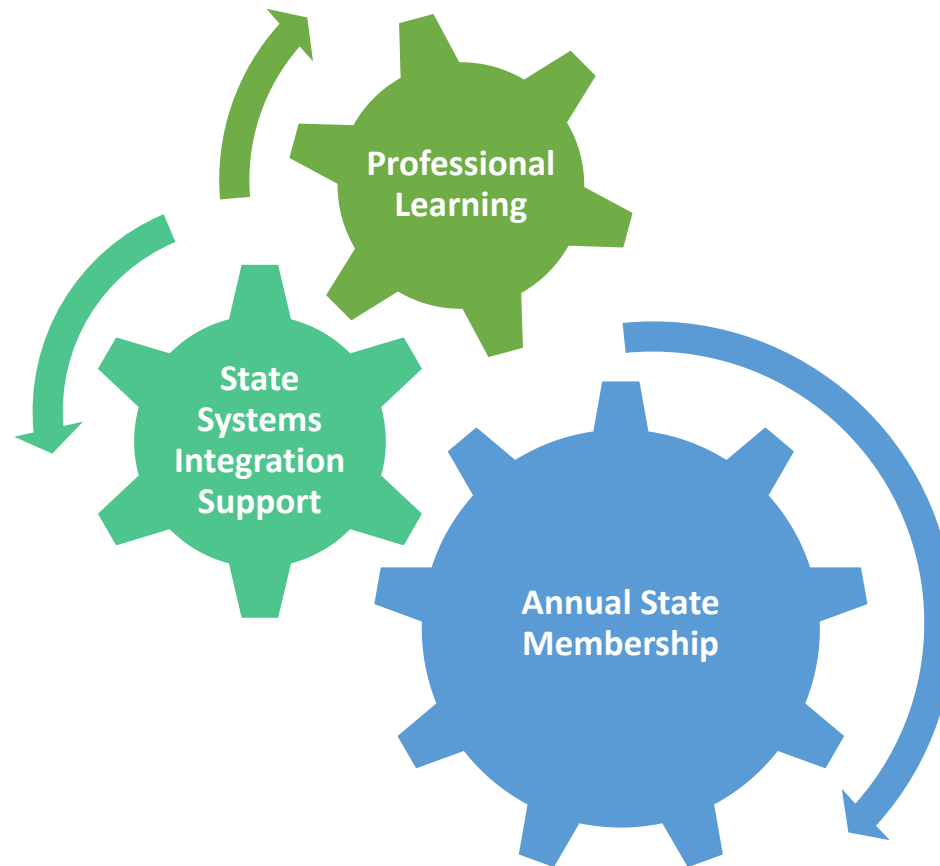
WIDA Early Years promotes equitable early care and education (ECE) opportunities for young multilingual children.



Early Years membership provides states access to tools, resources, and services designed to support the unique needs of young multilingual children.



What do we offer?



Overview

- National Landscape and Demographics
- Identification of Young Children as DLLs
- Instructional practices for DLLs
- State Highlight: Illinois



What informs this presentation?

2017

The National Academies of SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

CONSENSUS STUDY REPORT

Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English

Promising Futures

2020

SECTION 2, CHAPTER 6

ADDRESSING EQUITY IN THE ECE CLASSROOM: EQUAL ACCESS AND HIGH QUALITY FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia

2018

GROWING SUPERDIVERSITY AMONG YOUNG U.S. DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

2020

NIEER Pre-K Data Snapshot: How Well Are State Pre-K Programs Designed to Support Dual Language Learners?

Karin Garver, M.A., October 2020

Introduction

High quality early childhood experiences are proven to have a positive impact on the educational development of young dual language learners (DLL) and are according to the 2016 National Research Council Quality Strategy Program, 52% of children born through age five with a parent or guardian speaking English in the home do not attend any kind of early care and education program. In terms of public program programs, few states are even tracking the extent to which young DLL are served. In The State of the Field 2019, NIEER reported that only 26 of the 48 state-funded pre-kindergarten programs had reported data on the number of DLL enrolled in public pre-kindergarten programs, and only two of those programs served DLL. It is a growing opportunity for their participation in the state's early care and education system to support DLL in public pre-kindergarten programs.

According to NIEER's most recent National Quality Study, states did show significantly less intent to which policies are in place to enroll and support preschool DLL with public and private preschools. This DLL are currently in every state, though the percentage of children are nearly five times more when compared to 14% in California and Texas. In addition to the potential benefits of attending a high quality preschool program, this data snapshot also results from the 2020 State of the Fieldwork snapshot to explore what connections, if any, there are between state pre-K enrollment and the public pre-kindergarten and dependent policies to support DLL.

Program Eligibility Policies

Despite the known advantages of high-quality preschool for DLL, only 27% of state programs (23 of 43) specifically prioritize children with a home language other than English for enrollment in public pre-kindergarten programs. Another 12 programs are somewhat flexible. The 10 states that are more restrictive are: Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and West Virginia. However, the intent to provide universal preschool has not been reported for all of those states, and it is unclear how well they perform at enrolling and enrolling DLL children. Many of the remaining 20 state programs specifically identify risk factors that could include children with a home language other than English. However, more research is needed to determine how well they perform for DLL children.

Pooling in the 12 programs in states with young DLL populations of 25% or more, or three specifically target DLL children (New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah). The remaining programs are in California, New York, Florida, and New Jersey. However, Nevada, Indiana, and Missouri, are also 100% enrollment for DLL as a criterion for eligibility. However, 12 programs above Florida, New York, California, Texas, and New Jersey do not have any data on program enrollment for DLL. For those programs, it is not clear if they are not enrolling DLL but rather not reporting enrollment data that have the potential to enroll DLL enrollment.

2018

Special Report: Supporting Dual Language Learners in State-Funded Preschool

2021

Taking Stock of Dual Language Learner Identification and Strengthening Procedures and Policies

Melissa Lazarus, Maki Park

Executive Summary

Overview of young children in the United States

Over 10 million young children in the United States live in households where a language other than English is spoken by a parent or caregiver. Despite the size and growth of the Dual Language Learner (DLL) population, and their distinct linguistic assets and learning support needs, educational policies for systematically identifying these children are more recently beyond a few local initiatives and isolated, beginning in some individual states. Collecting information about DLLs — all of a minimum, the number in a given program or system — is critical to determine whether these young children are being effectively and equitably served in their early years.

Gathering information about DLLs is critical in order to determine whether these young children are being effectively and equitably served in their early years.

This issue brief offers a framework of the most critical elements that would ideally be included in standardized comprehensive DLL identification and tracking processes for early childhood systems, based on program and policy needs. It is a companion piece to a report from the Migration Policy Institute's (MPI) National Center on Immigrant Resiliency.

2018

Understanding Many Languages: Preparing Early Educators to Teach Dual Language Learners

By Abby Cooperman Felgel, Ph.D., Lee J.E. Austin, Ed.D., and Alyson Owen, Ed.D.

Summary

The population of children served in early care and education (ECE) settings is culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse and becoming more so. It is important that early childhood degree programs deliver content on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices so that upon program completion, teachers are prepared to support the learning and development of dual language learners (DLL) in their classrooms. Creating the conditions in which early childhood teacher education faculty and degree programs can successfully prepare a robust and diverse cadre of early educators who are able to teach dual language learning children in their classrooms will require investment and reform in early childhood degree programs to ensure that they can face to face challenge.

Key Findings

- Early childhood degree programs need to ensure that content and methods used address the complex and diverse needs of young children, including those with diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Only one quarter of programs are currently working with a diverse range of students to meet the needs of diverse early childhood learners.

Policy Recommendations

- Increase the rigor of the content and methods used in early childhood degree programs.
- Increase the diversity of early childhood education faculty to strengthen and provide the ability to address the needs of diverse early childhood learners.

2021

Understanding the Invisibility of Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Systems: A Framework for DLL Identification

MAY 2021

BY MELISSA LAZARUS AND MAKI PARK

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Plus, our experience working with states

WIDA Early Years Member States



National Landscape and Demographics



Defining Labels

Multilingual
Children

Dual
Language
Learners
(DLLs)

Multilingual
Learners

English
Language
Learners
(ELLs)

English
Learners
(ELs)

Limited
English
Proficient
(LEP)

Multilingual children are...

- Children ages birth to 5 years
- Culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse
- Simultaneously or sequentially learning two or more languages
- Exposed to multiple languages in their homes, communities, and/or early care and education settings



These children develop and use language in dynamic ways.

Various Labels and Definitions

Ages 0-5, not in PreK-12 system:

Dual language learners are children learning two (or more) languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language

- ACF and HHS

Ages 3-21, in PreK-12 system:

The term **English Learner**, when used with respect to an individual, means an individual—(A) who is aged 3 through 21; (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; (C)(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual—(i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

- Sec. 8101 of ESEA

“In its research, MPI defines a DLL as any young child [ages 0-8] who has at least one parent who speaks a language other than English in the home, as recorded in U.S. Census Bureau data.”

- Migration Policy Institute (2021)

Federal Definitions

Research Definitions

“There is a lack of consensus among policy makers, practitioners, and researchers on the terminology to be used in relevant policies and practices (NASEM, 2017).”



Why examine labels and definitions?

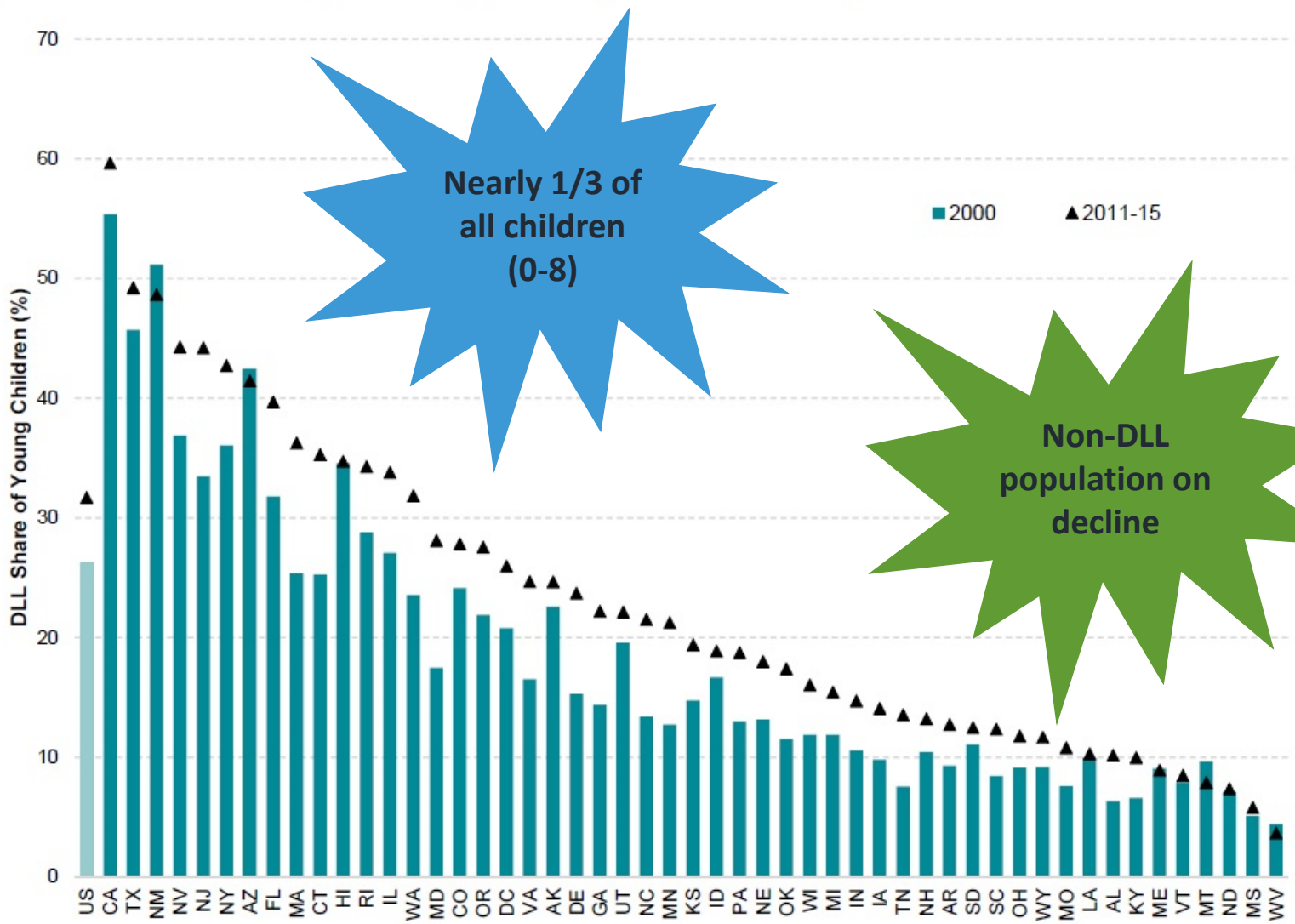
“The names we use mean something. By looking at children through a monolingual and monoglossic lens and insisting on categorizing them as LEPs or ELLs, the U.S. educational system perpetuates educational inequities and squanders valuable linguistic resources.”

- García (2009)

“The labels placed on students who are acquiring English as an additional language can create mindsets, define opportunities, and determine investments. Labels not only affect how students are educated, they can also influence how students perceive themselves.”

- Santos (2015)

Figure 1. DLL Share of Young Children (ages 0 to 8), Nationwide and by State, 2000 and 2011–15



Source: [Migration Policy Institute \(2018\)](#)



DLL Demographics: Ages 0-5

National

- 33% of children are DLLs (7.4 million)
- 49% are ages 0-2
- 60% are Latino
- 59% speak Spanish at home
- 95% are U.S. born
- 69% have at least 1 foreign-born parent

Maryland

- 33% of children are DLLs (137,000)
- 49% are ages 0-2
- 46% are Latino
- 48% speak Spanish at home
- 94% are U.S. born
- 82% have at least 1 foreign-born parent



*Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), pooled for 2015-19
Source: [Migration Policy Institute \(2021\)](#)*

Identification of Young Children as DLLs



What We Know and What We Need

- Gathering and sharing data on DLLs can help ensure they are receiving the services they need
- There is little to no guidance and/or policy at the federal, state and local level
- There is a need to clarify the purpose for identification of DLLs and understand the difference between “DLL” and “EL”
- There is no consensus on how to define English “proficiency” for DLLs

What We Know and What We Need

- There is a critical need for assessment tools that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate
- The ECE workforce is not equipped with the linguistic and cultural competency, knowledge and skills necessary to administer language assessments to DLLs and interpret data
- There is a lack of DLL expertise at state agencies and teacher education programs
- We need more research on assessment of DLLs

MPI's Framework for DLL Identification

Framework elements:

- Identifying young children who have exposure to a language other than English in their home environment;
- Collecting comprehensive information about DLLs' language environment and experiences;
- Obtaining in-depth information about DLLs' individual language and preliteracy skills in English and in their home language(s)
- Making these data and other relevant information accessible to programs and policymakers across early childhood and K-12 systems

MPI's Framework for DLL Identification

Foundational system elements necessary include

- Comprehensive state early childhood data systems aligned with K-12 systems
- Professional development on DLL assessment, instructional needs, and family engagement
- Effective, culturally relevant, and age-appropriate assessments and tools for use with children ages 0-5

Recommendation: Use of a Protocol

Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile Protocol (NYSED, 2017)

1. Parents complete EMLLP Profile for PreK Students
2. Family interview
3. Child interview
4. Review developmental screenings
5. Plan for instruction

- Protocol is used to develop a linguistic profile of a child
- Protocol does not determine “proficiency”
- Protocol is recommended but not required
- Unclear how widely the protocol is used in preschools

Instructional Practices for DLLs



What We Know and What We Need

- Instruction for DLLs must help them master early learning concepts/content and develop English, while supporting their home language development
- There is a critical need to develop language program models appropriate for DLLs
- To promote equity for DLLs, we must challenge ideas of “best practice for all”
- Teachers’ unchecked biases and language ideologies may inform their practice

What We Know and What We Need

- Teachers must be prepared to adapt their practice to meet the language development needs of DLLs
- Ongoing assessment of DLLs' learning and language development and two-way communication with families is vital for planning equitable instruction
- We need more research on instructional practices appropriate for DLLs

Benefits of Bilingualism

“Scientific evidence clearly points to a universal, underlying capacity to learn two languages as easily as one. Children who are dual language learners have an impressive capacity to manage their two languages when communicating with others...Recent research evidence also points to cognitive advantages, such as the ability to plan, regulate their behavior, and think flexibly for children and adults who are competent in two languages.”

- NASEM (2017)

State Highlight: Illinois



Identification and Services for DLLs in IL State-Funded Pre-K

An EL student in preschool:

- (a) comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken by the student and/or by the student's parent, guardians, or anyone else who resides in the household; and
 - (b) does not demonstrate English language proficiency during a research-based English language proficiency screening procedure that is developmentally appropriate for the student.
- Home language survey (HLS) must be administered by the 1st day of attendance (2 questions)
 - If “Yes”, then child must be screened for English language proficiency



Source: [IL Preschool FAQ \(2014\)](#)

State Rules for Screening Procedures

- Be age and developmentally appropriate;
- Be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the children being screened;
- Include one or more observations using culturally and linguistically appropriate tools;
- Use multiple measures and methods (e.g., home language assessments; verbal and nonverbal procedures; various activities, settings, and personal interactions);
- Involve family by seeking information and insight to help guide the screening process without involving them in the formal assessment or interpretation of results; and
- Involve staff who are knowledgeable about preschool education, child development, and first and second language acquisition.

Screening procedures may be modified to accommodate the special need of students with IEPs.



Source: [IL Preschool FAQ \(2014\)](#)

Language Instruction Program Models

- Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Program
 - Must be implemented in attendance centers that enroll 20 or more preschool ELs who have the same home language
- Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) Program
 - Must be implemented in attendance centers that enroll 19 or fewer preschool ELs who have the same home language; TBE can also be offered
- Preschool teachers providing native language/ESL instruction must have the appropriate endorsement or approval

