



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau



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ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs) and LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

The following publications and organizations have information for early care and education professionals who are working with children who are English language learners in order to help the children develop language and literacy abilities.

■ *The Young Child's Memory for Words: Developing First and Second Language and Literacy* (2004), by Daniel R. Meier, published by Teachers College Press, presents innovative strategies and practical guidelines for language and literacy development in multilingual and multicultural settings. Effective, research-based teaching practices will help early childhood and elementary teachers to develop children's skills and their love of reading. Proven strategies support English language learners and emphasize linking preschool and kindergarten language and literacy teaching. For additional information, contact the Teachers College Press at 800-575-6566 or on the Web at <http://www.teacherscollegepress.com/index.html>.

■ "Diversity, Child Care Quality, and Developmental Outcomes" (Winter 2003), in *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* Vol. 18, Issue 4, by Margaret Burchinal, Debby Cryer, published by Elsevier Inc., presents data from two previous studies of child care experiences in the United States to determine whether standard measures of child care quality were less reliable or valid for African American and English-speaking Latino children than for white children. The studies used were the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care. Data on child care quality showed comparably high levels of reliability and similar levels of validity for white, African American, and Latino children. Analyses tested whether cognitive and social skills were related to child care quality, the match between child's and caregiver's ethnicity, and the match between the mother's and caregiver's beliefs about childrearing. Results indicate that children from all three ethnic groups showed higher levels of cognitive and social skills on standardized assessments, previously shown to predict school success, when caregivers were sensitive and stimulating. Children's skills were not consistently related to whether the child's and caregiver's ethnicity matched or whether the mother's and caregiver's beliefs about childrearing were similar. Data suggest that children from all three ethnic groups benefit from sensitive and stimulating care on child outcomes related to school success. The global dimension of quality may be reflected in very different types of practices that reflect cultural differences. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/08852006>.

■ *Effective Reading Programs for English Language Learners: A Best-Evidence Synthesis* (2003), by Robert E. Slavin and Alan Cheung, published by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, reviews experimental studies of reading programs for English language learners, focusing on comparisons of bilingual and English-only programs and on specific, replicable models that have been evaluated with English language learners. Results from the review show that while the number of high-quality studies is small, existing evidence

favors bilingual approaches, especially paired bilingual strategies that teach reading in the native language and English at the same time. Whether taught in their native language or English, English language learners have been found to benefit from instruction in comprehensive reform programs using systematic phonics, one-to-one or small group tutoring programs, cooperative learning programs, and programs emphasizing extensive reading. The appendix includes the table “Disposition of Studies: Language of Instruction.” This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/techReports/Report66.pdf>.

■ “English Language Learners: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Children, Families, and Providers” (August 2003), a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation by Linda M. Espinosa, presents ideas for meeting the early care and education needs of English language learners. Social institutions should value and benefit from racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Children living in poverty, children born into middle-class homes, and children with professional parents all have some similar experiences with language in their homes. However, their experiences are quantitatively different. By age 4 years, welfare children have heard ten thousand words, children with working class parents have heard twenty thousand words, and children with professional parents have heard fifty thousand words. Ways to promote English oral language fluency are listed and implications are provided for policy. This resource is available from the University of Missouri-Columbia’s Department of Education at 573-882-8311.

■ *Literacy for English-Language Learners: Four Key Issues* (November 2002), a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation by Diane August at the U.S. Department of Education’s First-Annual Summit on English Language Acquisition, Washington, DC, discusses what is known about reading in a second language, including effective instructional practice. The presentation focus on three key areas that impact the development of literacy in English language learners: first, the relationship between first and second language literacy; second, the relationship between English language proficiency and English literacy; and third, what constitutes optimal literacy instruction for second -language learners. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.cal.org/acqlit/resources/Literacy-OELA-11-13-02.pdf>.

■ “Language and Literacy for All Children” (2002), in *Head Start Bulletin* No. 74, by Patton O. Tabors, published by the Head Start Bureau, examines what researchers can recommend to teachers who are working in the early childhood classroom with children from diverse linguistic backgrounds to help the children develop language and literacy abilities including alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, book and print concepts, vocabulary knowledge, and discourse skills. It discusses how home languages and literacies of the English-learning children can be incorporated into the classroom in ways that would be socially useful and cognitively challenging for all the children. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin74/hsb74_04.htm.

■ *Identifying Strategies to Support English Language Learners in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs: English Language Learners Focus Group Report* (April 2002), by the National Head Start Child Development Institute, reports on a two-day focus group convened to obtain recommendations regarding effective approaches for addressing the opportunities and challenges presented by working with young children and families who are English language learners in all Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. The report underscores the benefits of exposure to two languages as an asset that should be fostered. All programs should

possess the capabilities to provide support for children's home languages and implement effective practices that will assist children in becoming bilingual with the necessary foundation to develop their capacities to become biliterate as well. Major recommendations to the Head Start Bureau are listed under the following topics: curriculum and instruction, child assessment, qualified staff, staff training, partnering with parents, national leadership, and research. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.mhsqic.org/init/seclang/englishlanglearners.pdf>.

■ “Early Childhood Study of Language and Literacy Development of Spanish-Speaking Children: Theoretical Background and Preliminary Results” (2002), a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, by Patton O. Tabors, Mariela M. Pérez, and Lisa M. López at the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) Conference, describes an ongoing study of the language and literacy development of young children who come from Spanish-speaking homes in and around Boston; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Puerto Rico. The purpose of this longitudinal research is to identify different ways that parents and schools can help children be more successful in school. The research will result in more appropriate and effective ways to both predict and assess the literacy skill development of young Spanish-speaking children. This Microsoft Power Point presentation is available on the Web at http://www.cal.org/acqlit/subproject1/Subpr1_Tabors_NABE_021.pdf. Additional information about this project is available on the Web at <http://www.cal.org/acqlit/subproject1/>.

■ *Second Language Issues in Early Literacy Instruction* (July 2002), by Robert Rueda, presentation at the Third Annual Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) Summer Institute, discusses personal, interpersonal, and community factors that impact early literacy instruction for English language learners in early elementary schools. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.ciera.org/library/presos/2002/2002csi/2002csirueda/02csirrp.pdf>.

■ “Young Bilingual Children and Early Literacy Development” (2001), in *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, by P.O. Tabors and C.E. Snow, eds. S.B. Neuman and D.K. Dickinson, published by Guilford Press, summarizes what is known about early literacy development in young bilingual children. It notes that there are many pathways young children can take towards literacy. Recommendations include encouraging parents to maintain their first language at home and to use it for literacy activities; gathering information about each child's individual language and literacy background; and developing ways to assess bilingual children's language and literacy abilities.

■ *What Teachers Need to Know about Language* (August 2000), by L.W. Fillmore and C. Snow, identifies five teacher functions for elementary and secondary teachers: communicator, educator, evaluator, educated human being, and agent of socialization. In addition it discusses what teachers need to know about language, presents a rationale for why current and prospective teachers need to know more about language, and specifies what sorts of knowledge teachers need, including requisite knowledge about oral language, then oral language used in formal and academic contexts, and then written language. In the final section, it suggests courses that teacher preparation programs should offer to teacher candidates. A discussion of how to work with children from diverse backgrounds and English Language Learners is included in the document. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.cal.org/ericll/teachers/teachers.pdf>.

■ *A Commentary On What Teachers Need to Know About Language* (2000), by Sue Bredekamp, Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, comments on *What Teachers Need to Know about Language* (2000) by Lily Wong Fillmore and Catherine Snow. The context of early childhood education is described, and the key language issues that teachers of young children are confronted with are identified. The five teacher functions that Fillmore and Snow identify include: communicator, educator, evaluator, educated human being, and agent of socialization. Although oral language development is a primary goal in early childhood programs, the learning experiences and teaching strategies provided do not always support this goal. Preschool programs must work to promote language development in all children. The issue of teacher qualifications in early childhood education must be addressed. Teachers of young children must obtain more education, better compensation, and greater respect. Their role in supporting children's language acquisition alone is the bare minimum of what they have to contribute to children's well-being and future potential. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0007bredekamp.html>.

■ “Two or More Languages in Early Childhood: Some General Points and Practical Recommendations” (July 1999), an *ERIC Digest*, by Annick De Houwer, ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics, discusses some common myths about children growing up bilingual and offers suggestions that can help children to become fluent users of two or more languages. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/earlychild.html>.

■ “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children,” A joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)” (1998), in *Young Children* Vol. 53, No. 4, published by NAEYC, provides guidance to teachers of young children in schools and early childhood programs (including child care centers, preschools, and family child care homes) serving children from birth through age 8. The statement summarizes the issues and reviews what is known from research on young children's literacy development; describes what constitutes developmentally appropriate practice in early literacy over the period of birth through age 8; and makes recommendations for teaching practices and policies. This resource is available on the Web at http://naeyc.org/resources/position_statements/psread0.htm.

■ *Educating Language-Minority Children* (1998), eds. Diane August and Kenji Hakuta, Committee on Developing a Research Agenda on the Education of Limited-English-Proficient and Bilingual Students, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, discusses a broad range of educational issues: how students learn a second language; how reading and writing skills develop in the first and second languages; how information on specific subjects (for example, biology) is stored and learned and the implications for second language learners; how social and motivational factors affect learning for English language learners; how the English proficiency and subject matter knowledge of English language learners are assessed; and what is known about the attributes of effective schools and classrooms that serve English-language learners. For more information, contact the National Academy Press at 888-624-8373.

■ *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998), by C. Snow, M. Burns, and P. Griffin, published by National Academy Press, describes the conditions under which reading is most likely to develop easily. Identified conditions include stimulating preschool environments, excellent reading instruction, and the absence of any of a wide array of risk factors. The authors also provide recommendations for practice as well as recommendations for further research. This resource is available on the Web at <http://books.nap.edu/books/030906418X/html/index.html>.

■ *One Child, Two Languages: A Guide for Preschool Educators of Children Learning English as a Second Language* (1997), by P.O. Tabors, published by Brookes Publishing Co., offers the specific techniques needed to facilitate the natural progression of second-language acquisition in young children. This process involves adding a second language to a first language rather than replacing a first language with a second. Teachers will learn how to create a supportive classroom environment for children learning English as a second language with effective ways to measure progress, address individual differences, and work with parents. The importance of children's home languages and cultures is emphasized with strategies to support first-language acquisition.

■ *Developing the Young Bilingual Learner* video (Stock No. 801) was produced for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) by the Resource and Instruction in Staff Excellence (RISE). The video explores personal conversations with bilingual learners, researchers, and teachers to find answers to critical questions asked by all early childhood teachers on teaching children who are bilingual or learning English as a second language. For additional information, contact NAEYC at 800-424-2460 or on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org>.

National Organizations

The following national organizations provide resources to assist professionals in serving children with limited English proficiency.

- **Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)**
4646 40th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-362-0700
World Wide Web: <http://www.cal.org>

CAL is a nonprofit organization formed of a group of scholars and educators who use the findings of linguistics and related sciences in identifying and addressing language-related problems. CAL carries out a wide range of activities including research, teacher education, analysis and dissemination of information, design and development of instructional materials, technical assistance, conference planning, program evaluation, and policy analysis.

CAL has compiled digests from the former ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics and briefs from the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) and is making them available for easy reference and use in workshops and trainings. CAL digests are available in four series. Additional information about the Cal digests series is available on the Web at <http://www.cal.org/resources/caldigests.html>.

■ **Early Childhood Equity Alliance (ECEA)**

1403 34th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122
206-324-4744

World Wide Web: <http://www.rootsforchange.net>

ECEA nurtures and connects people engaged in racial and social justice education and action with and for young children, families and communities. It focuses on four areas of work: (1) to end isolation and strengthen ties by creating ways for individuals and groups to share resources, strategies, and lessons learned; (2) to support local education, leadership, and actions to strengthen communities and create places where all children belong, grow, and learn; (3) to expand the knowledge-base for change by initiating and supporting participatory action research; and (4) to support the first three goals by maintaining and strengthening ECEA's structures and capacity. A number of resources are available from their Web site for teachers working with linguistically and culturally diverse young children. The Web site is also available in Spanish.

■ **National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)**

1030 15th Street NW
Suite 470
Washington, DC 20005
202-898-1829

World Wide Web: <http://www.nabe.org>

NABE is a professional organization that represents both English language learners and bilingual education professionals. NABE represents over 5,000 educators and parents and has affiliate organizations in 28 States. NABE supports the education of English language learners by providing professional development opportunities for their members; collaborating with other civil rights and education organizations to ensure that the needs of language minority students are met in every State; and by lobbying Congress for adequate funding of all programs that serve English language learners.

■ **National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instructional Educational Programs (NCELA)**

2121 K Street NW, Suite 260
Washington, DC 20037
800-321-6223
TTY: (202) 775-9193

World Wide Web: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu>

NCELA supports the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA) in its mission to respond to Title III educational needs, and implement No Child Left Behind (NCLB) as it applies to English language learners. NCELA is authorized to collect, analyze, synthesize, and disseminate information about language instruction educational programs for limited English proficient children and related programs.

■ **U.S. Department of Education**
Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic
Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA)

330 C Street SW

Washington, DC 20202

202-205-5463

World Wide Web: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html?src=mr>

OELA is organized around three regional clusters (Eastern, Midwestern, and Western). These regional clusters provide technical assistance and support school districts meet their responsibility to provide equal education opportunity to limited English proficient children.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.