

Home Language or English?

Implementing Program Policies and Teaching Strategies that Meet the Needs of Dual Language Learners

Presenter: John Gunnarson, Consultant, Early Care and Education,
Tel: (415) 488-4097, email: johngunnarson@gmail.com
NAEYC Annual Conference and Expo, Washington, D.C.

1. Study the research and current guidance.

- Current research: support the home language, use intentional strategies
- Head Start Performance Standards and Head Start Dual Language Report (2008)
- Tabors, Patton O. (2007). *One Child, Two Languages*, Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.

2. Research the demographics of your program.

- Teaching staff: languages spoken, skill levels, classroom placement
- Children and families: languages spoken, classroom placement, types of kindergarten

3. Develop an agency policy on how to support dual language learners.

- Ensure that policy is research-based and includes community input
- Plan implementation strategies
- Develop allies and support

4. Provide professional development for teachers on evidence-based practices for working with children who are dual language learners.

- **Support the child's home language:** Use the child's home language to have discussions that develop the child's vocabulary, creative thinking, and use of complex sentence structures.
- **Parallel Talk:** The adult describes what the child is doing or saying. When an adult uses Information Talk, she is acting like a broadcaster. She watches the action and describes it to the child, without expecting a response. *"Here comes Oscar the Grouch. He's riding in the car with Cookie Monster. Cookie Monster is in the back. He looking around and wondering where they're going to."*
- **Repetition and Extension:** The adult listens to the child, then uses the child's words in a more complete sentence or adds another sentence on the child's topic to extend the conversation further.
Child: *"Car go fast."*
Adult: *"Yes, your car is going very fast. It's coming around the table"*
- **Questions:** Close-ended questions typically have a short, right-or-wrong answer. *"What's your baby's name?"* Open-ended questions can be answered in many ways, and they stimulate more language use and encourage creative thinking. *"Your baby is so beautiful. Tell me about her."* *"What are those teddy bears thinking about?"*
- **Vocabulary:** Intentionally teach children rare words using Text Talk. Instead of always using "look" in your conversations with children, teach and use the words *stare, peek, glimpse, gaze, study, inspect, notice, recognize, observe, scrutinize, glare, identify, scan.*

Strategies that Support Oral Language Development for the Child who is an English Language Learner

Using the child's home language:

- When the child has no language, rarely speaks using the home language, or is very shy... → Use Self Talk and Parallel Talk in the child's home language.
- When the child uses only a few words or phrases in the home language... → Use Repetition and Extension in the child's home language.
- When the child responds to questions but still has limited vocabulary in the home language ... → Ask close-ended questions, make comments in the home language
- When the child has high language skills in the home language, a developed vocabulary, and has the self-confidence and disposition for talking in the home language... → Ask open-ended questions and engage in authentic conversations in the home language. Use complex sentences and introduce new vocabulary.

Using English---the child's second language:

- When the child is shy, has no English, or uses only a few words in English... → Use Self Talk and Parallel Talk in English.
- When the child can speak using simple sentences in English ... → Use Repetition and Extension in English.
- When the child responds to questions and has some vocabulary in English ... → Ask close-ended questions, make comments in English.
- When the child has high language skills in English, a developed vocabulary, and has the self-confidence and disposition for talking in English... → Ask open-ended questions and engage in authentic conversations in English.

Strategies that Support Oral Language Development for the Child whose Home Language is English

- When the child has no language, uses only a few words, or is very shy... → Use Self Talk and Parallel Talk.
- When the child consistently uses a few words and speaks in phrases... → Use Repetition and Extension.
- When the child begins to respond to questions and still has limited vocabulary... → Ask close-ended questions. Make comments.
- When the child has high language skills, a developed vocabulary, and has the self-confidence and disposition for talking... → Ask open-ended questions. Engage in authentic conversations.

Planning Form: Differentiated Strategies

Last Name	First Name	Self Talk, Parallel Talk	Repetition. Extension	Close-ended Questions	Open- ended Questions	Primary Support Teacher(s)
Cortez	Rosa		E		S	Maria (S), Dori (E)
Cotero	Juanita		E	S		Maria
Elliott	Monique	E				Dori
Graham	Nadiayh	E				Dori
Lee	Sabrina				E	Dori
Ramirez	Jose	E			S	Maria
Rodriguez	Carlos		E		S	Maria
Scoggins	Veronica		E			Dori
Tayllor	Freddie				E	Dori
Washington	Jamal			E		Dori