

Assessment Procedures for Dual Language Learners

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: *The learning outcomes of children who are DLLs are best supported with opportunities to interact and learn in each of their developing languages. Programs must ensure that children who are DLLs progress in each area of learning and development in the Framework while also promoting English acquisition. Children who are DLLs must be allowed to demonstrate the skills, behaviors, and knowledge in the Framework in their home language, English, or both languages.*

1302.33 Screening and Assessment

(2)(C) If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English, a program must use qualified bilingual staff, contractor, or consultant to:

- (i) Assess language skills in English and in the child's home language, to assess both the child's progress in the home language and in English language acquisition;
- (ii) Conduct screenings and assessments for domains other than language skills in the specific domain; and,
- (iii) Ensure those conducting the screening or assessment know and understand the child's language and culture and have sufficient skill level in the child's home language to accurately administer the screening or assessment and to record and understand the child's responses, interactions, and communications.

(3) If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English and qualified bilingual staff, contractors, or consultants are not able to conduct screenings and assessments, a program must use an interpreter in conjunction with a qualified staff person to conduct screenings and assessments as described in paragraphs (c)(2)(i) through (iii) of this section.

(4) If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English and can demonstrate that there is not a qualified bilingual staff person or interpreter, then screenings and assessments may be conducted in English. In such a case, a program must also gather and use other information, including structured observations over time and information gathered in a child's home language from the family, for use in evaluation the child's development and progress.

ECEAP Performance Standard E-4: Curriculum – Developmentally Appropriate and Culturally Relevant

Contractors must ensure a culturally relevant curriculum that:

Reflects the cultures of enrolled children.

Supports ongoing development of each child's home language, while helping each child learn English.

Includes and demonstrates respect for diverse family structures and cultures.

Focuses on the daily life of families in the community, rather than only on holidays, celebrations, or people far away.

Procedure:

English and dual-language learners are children who are developing the ability to understand and speak more than one language. Some children begin learning English for the first time when they enroll in preschool, while

others have been introduced to English from an early age by family members. To assess the knowledge and development of English and dual language learners accurately, it is important first to determine the primary language(s) of the children using the Home Language Survey.

If a child enters our preschool program and is a Dual Language Learner (DLL), the following steps for completing the assessment should be followed.

1. Staff will complete the TS GOLD Home Language Survey for all children to determine if they need to be assessed using the TS GOLD English Language Acquisition objectives, 37 and 38. The answers to the four questions on the Home Language Survey emerge from conversation(s) with the families. Objectives 37 and 38 are only for use with preschoolers, not infants and toddlers. **All Home Language Surveys are entered into TS Gold.**
2. Include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language.
3. To gain an accurate picture of what children can know and do, assessments will be done by staff in partnership with families, to the best of their ability, completing what they can by using observations. Assessments will be reviewed with parents and guardians.
4. To accurately complete the assessment, staff should follow the guidance in GOLD for assessing children who are dual language learners. Even if a child does not yet speak English, there are many objectives and dimensions on which a child can demonstrate his knowledge and skills without speaking. For example, a child can create a repeating pattern with cubes to demonstrate their knowledge of patterns, can pass out napkins during a mealtime to demonstrate one-on-one correspondence or pretend to write a letter in Spanish, with letter like forms. These are considered “language neutral” objectives and dimensions as they are not dependent on understanding a child’s home language in order to gather documentation and assess accurately. For “language dependent” objectives, a child can demonstrate his knowledge and skills in either or both languages. For example, if a child can count to 20 in Spanish and quantify, but only to 3 in English, the teacher would rate the child at the higher level since the goal for that objective is to assess the child’s math learning, not English skills. If staff don’t speak the child’s home language, they can enlist the aid of staff who do speak the child’s home language(s) and also ask families for their observations. This provides a more accurate assessment of the child’s knowledge, skills and abilities.
5. When sharing assessment information with families, translation and interpretation services are available; please follow procedures to arrange these services. Children and other family members should not be asked to serve as interpreters/translators.
6. When using assessment data to support curriculum planning, teachers should plan to support children’s home language development as well as English language acquisition.

Supporting Dual Language Learners in the Classroom

Dual Language Learners benefit from having intentional environmental supports throughout the classroom. These supports should be used often throughout the school day and should be meaningful and relevant to children.

Examples of environmental supports:

- Display a picture schedule in the classroom of children who are enrolled. Use this schedule throughout the day to walk children through the class routine and support their learning.
- Create word labels with pictures to identify where materials and other items belong.
- Write and display pictures and words in a different color to help children differentiate between languages.
- Create a name wall using each child's pictures with name for children to use in a variety of activities.
- Make sure that your classroom environment reflects the children's cultures and language in each learning center; on walls, board, and educational and play materials.
- Bring language and literacy activities familiar to children from their homes into classroom activities.

Dual Language Learners will also benefit from having intentionally planned instructional language supports throughout the day. When teachers intentionally plan and differentiate their instruction by using effective strategies, Dual Language Learners will benefit.

Examples of instructional language supports:

- Use pictures, preferably real photographs of objects, to make your content more understandable.
- Bring in real objects to explain new words or concepts. The more hands on and real life activities, the more children will comprehend.
- Sing Songs! Write words to familiar tunes that use new vocabulary.
- Provide many opportunities for children to use new vocabulary. Engage children in conversations about the content during snack and lunch, free choice, outside play, etc.
- Structure activities so that children can engage in telling stories or recounting events by expressing themselves through various means, such as speech, pointing, and role-playing.
- Accept silence or quiet observation as a way for some children to participate, especially when they first join your class.
- Invite families and other speakers of the home languages into the classroom to actively use their languages.
- Speak clearly, warmly and appropriately.
- Wait patiently for dual language learners to process what you say. Expect that dual language learners may need as much as five seconds or more to make sense of what you say.



- Even dual language learners who speak English well and who have been speaking English for a while may still need a longer “wait time” before they respond to you.