

## Supporting English Language Learners

**Time:** 2 hour workshop: 3 hour option.

### Objectives

In this workshop participants will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the development of home language and acquisition of a second language.
- Acquire strategies for supporting home language development and English language learning
- Collect ideas for literacy materials, props, and vehicles to meet the needs of English language learners.

This workshop supports participants' understanding of:

All Preschool Language Arts Literacy Expectations with particular focus on Expectation 2.

All Kindergarten Language Arts Literacy Standards with particular focus on Standards 4 & 7.

### Materials Required

- L2 Overheads #1 - 10 or L2 PowerPoint slides 1 - 15
- Chart pad, markers, tape
- A non-English poem or short book

For 3 hour option

- Copies of L2 Handout "Post Office Survey"
- *The Other Side* by J. Woodson.

### Additional Materials

Reading Tabors, P.O. (1997) *One Child, Two Languages* is recommended for all trainers but particularly those with limited knowledge in this topic.

NAEYC Brochure # 581 Latino Literature for Young Children

NAEYC Position Statement: Responding the Linguistic and Cultural Diversity (available online)

### Handout List

L2 Agenda

Activity 1a Supporting English Language Learners

Activity 1b Supporting English Language Learners

Scaffolding English Language Acquisition

Supporting English Language Fluency

Post Office Survey (for 3 hour option)

### Essential Messages

- Adults need to provide children who do not speak English with opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing in both English and their native language. Experiences and materials need to be available in both languages.

- Supporting children's in communicating effectively in their own language helps to develop the capacity of the children to learn a second language. A strong basis in the first language promotes literacy achievement in the second language.
- Focus on maintaining and supporting primary language development while supporting English acquisition, not on replacing the first language with English.
- Teachers need to make modifications in the presentation of vocabulary, directions, storytelling, reading and other oral language communication when working with children who do not speak English as their native language.
- Teachers need to understand their own personal biases and attitudes, be culturally sensitive, and be willing to learn about and accept the range of differences in their classroom.

## **Trainers' Agenda**

### **1. Opening Activity: (15 minutes)**

Give each table a piece of chart paper and markers.

Open the session by saying "Today we are going to focus on supporting English language learners. At your table, I want you to brainstorm as a list of as many different languages you can." Allow 3-4 minutes, and then say: "Now I want you to write one word in that language for each language on your list and its English translation." Allow 3-4 minutes for them to work. Ask whoever has the list to count up the number of languages on the list and to circle that number at the top, and to then count up how many languages someone knew a word and to write that number next to the number at the top. Ask each table to report back to the whole group what those two numbers are. As they call out their numbers, write them on the flip chart in two columns labeled "languages" and "words". When all numbers have been written, read them horizontally (e.g. 26 languages, 6 words; 16 languages, 7 words; etc). Pose the question: "What do these numbers mean?" Typical response will be that we know the names of more languages than words in a language. Next ask each group to read off the languages that someone knew a word in. Note which languages were most frequently known by the groups. Typically this will be Spanish, French, German, and Yiddish though it will be dependent on the diversity of the participants. "words" on their lists. Pose the question: "What do these words have in common?" Typically, they will be numbers, colors, food, items of clothing and bathroom words. Summarize the activity by pointing out that collectively we know a few words in a few languages and that these words are generally nouns and simply adjectives. Note that young children when they begin to talk typically learn to say nouns or what a thing is called, and then simply adjectives. This is the way language is acquired regardless of the language or the age of the second language learner.

Use L2 Overhead 1 or PowerPoint slide 2-3 to provide basic demographic information about NJ.

### **NJ Demographics**

- **As of 2001, NJ ranked 7th in % of limited-English-speaking residents**
- **42% increase from 1990**
- **Currently 249,000 K-12 students statewide have a home language other than English**
- **57,000 have limited proficiency in English**

**166 languages are spoken by limited English speaking students statewide including**

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>Portuguese</b>	<b>Mandarin</b>	<b>Korean</b>	<b>Vietnamese</b>
<b>Hindi</b>	<b>Urdu</b>	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Hmong</b>	
<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Russian</b>	<b>Gujarati</b>	<b>Haitian</b>	
<b>Polish</b>	<b>Albanian</b>	<b>Hungarian</b>	<b>Creole</b>	

## **2. Welcome and Logistics (5 minutes)**

Use Handout L2 “Agenda” to review agenda and session objectives.

## **3. Introducing the Topic: Foundations (20 - 25 minutes)**

Use L2 Overheads 2 - 5 or L2 PowerPoint (slides 4 - 9) to introduce this topic.

Begin by saying “One of the widespread and harmful myths about young children who speak little or no English, is that because they are young, they will learn a second language automatically, quickly, and easily – with no special attention to their needs for an optimal environment.”<sup>1</sup> Continue by adding, “If this were true, then there wouldn’t be such a gap in achievement in our schools today.”

Show L2 Overhead 2 or L2 PowerPoint slide 4 & 5 and annotate as noted.

### **NJ 2003 Literacy Achievement**

- **22% of NJ 4th graders tested “partially proficient” in language arts literacy**
- **42% of 4th graders in high poverty districts scored a “partially proficient”**
- **69% of limited English speaking children scored “partially proficient”**

These are results of the 2002-03 NJ ASK test in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. 22% is all the NJ 4<sup>th</sup> graders; 42% is 4<sup>th</sup> graders in low income districts, and 69% is those identified as limited English proficient.

### **ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

**Children who speak a non-English language at home and children of Hispanic/Latino backgrounds are at significantly greater risk of reading difficulties and subsequent academic underachievement.**

Invite comments: What do you think of this? Why is this so? Does this surprise you in any way?

Show L2 Overhead 3 or L2 PowerPoint slide 6 & 7 and annotate as noted.

### **What We Know From Research**

- **High quality language and literacy environments help children develop skills that most strongly predict later literacy achievement:**
  - **Vocabulary/Listening Comprehension** Having a good vocabulary and understanding the meaning of words. Knowing vocabulary can help children use context clues as they begin to read
  - **Extended discourse** Being able to talk well.

<sup>1</sup> Tabors, P.O. (1997). *One Child, Two Languages*.

- **Phonological Awareness** Understanding sounds and rhythms of speech, rhyming and sound similarities.
  - **Print concepts (forms & functions)** Understanding that printed word takes many formats (lists, signs, menus) and serves different purposes (we write different forms for different functions. (a thank you note, order taking, phone book, informational, etc.)
  - **Letter identification** Being able to recognize letters, as letters (as opposed to numbers or other shapes, and being able to spot particular letters (there is a B... like in my name Isabel) is an important skill on the way toward reading and writing.
- **A solid foundation in English oral fluency is highly desirable prior to formal English literacy instruction for children who are not learning to read in their first language (Snow et al., 1998).** Children need to have a good vocabulary in English before teaching reading. Children's reading achievement is linked to vocabulary. For ELL's in preschool and kindergarten, we need to focus on developing that oral fluency first.
  - **A strong basis in the child's first language promotes literacy achievement in the second language.** Supporting a child's first language helps them to become literate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> language. For example, as a child learns the *ins* and *outs* of social language in their first language, they are learning language and its use. This knowledge supports the acquisition of a second language as they learn *what this language is*.

Continue with L2 Overhead 4 or L2 PowerPoint slide 8. Read text.

### **Language as a Foundation for Learning to Read**

**“Excellent literacy instruction in multilingual settings may be possible only if children’s home languages are taken into account in designing instruction.”**

**National Reading Council, 1998**

**“Oral and written language experiences should be regarded as an additive process, ensuring that children maintain their home language while also learning to speak and read in English.”**

**International Reading Association, 1998**

Ask: Why do you think home language development is considered important? Solicit responses.

Continue with L2 Overhead 5 or L2 PowerPoint slide 9 and link text to their responses.

### **Why Home Language Development?**

- **All children are cognitively, linguistically and emotionally connected to the language of their home.**
- **Children are more likely to become readers and writers of English when they are already familiar with the vocabulary and concepts in their primary language.**

- **Experiences with their own language allow children to develop phonemic awareness and other oral language skills which predict later reading success.**
- **Many early literacy and other cognitive skills transfer from one language to another. Students literate in their first language will apply these skills to the second language.**

**4. Activity: How do English language learners communicate?** (20 - 25 minutes)

Show L2 Overhead 6 or L2 PowerPoint slide 10. Read aloud and proceed to activity.

### **Bilingual Children**

**Children acquire language within a variety of cultural and linguistic settings and in the context of their homes and communities.**

Divide into groups of 5-6 participants. Give each group two pieces of chart paper and markers. Ask them to write on one piece of chart at the top: "What have they noticed about the ways ELL children begin to communicate in English?" Ask them to write on the other piece of chart paper at the top: "What have they noticed about the ways bilingual children continue to communicate in their first language?" Tell the groups to select a recorder and brainstorm ideas based on the children in their classroom. To clarify, rephrase and expand for participants: "Focus on listening, speaking and writing. How do ELL children begin to understand, speak and write English? How do they continue to understand and communicate orally and in writing in their first language?" Allow 10 - 15 minutes for groups to brainstorm.

Ask groups to report out.

*Trainer's Note: If there are more than 5 groups, ask each group to present 1 idea from each of their 2 charts in a round robin format. Groups should present an idea not previously mentioned by another group.*

**5. Discussion** (10 - 15 minutes)

Show L2 Overhead 7 or PowerPoint slide 11 & 12 and link to the groups ideas presented.

### **Bilingual Development**

#### **Bilingual children:**

- **Exhibit the same language milestones as monolingual children**
- **May acquire vocabulary at a slower rate and have more limited total vocabularies in each language**
- **Have a combined vocabulary in both languages likely to equal or exceed that of the English-only child**

### **Language Development**

**Children develop language as a function of:**

- 1. Amount of Input = number and variety of words spoken to a child.**
- 2. Opportunities to use language to interact with other children and adults.**

Show L2 Overhead 8 or PowerPoint slide 13

### **Learning a Second Language: Developmental Sequence**

There will be differences in the way that children progress in learning a second language.

- 1. Use their home language** When children first enter a classroom speaking another language, there are only 2 options: They can continue to speak their home language, or they can stop talking all together. Some children will pursue option 1 and speak their language to ask questions and make comments.
- 2. Nonverbal period** Sooner or later they realize that only some or none can understand them. They will stop talking to those that don't understand them. Children will only attempt or initiate conversations with those who understand them. While children may not communicate verbally, most communicate nonverbally in varying ways: Attention getting; Requesting; Protesting, Joking, Imitating.

Ask for examples of children's nonverbal communications.

### **3. Use individual words and phrases in new language and some children code switch**

Children realize that in order to communicate with some children and adults or to function in school, they need to learn a new language. Their initial communication is in content words (e.g. milk, blocks, three) and/or frequently heard phrases (e.g. I'm mommy; No, Stop! Okay; Look it; Be careful). Some children will use both English and their first language in the same sentence or phrase.

- 4. Begin to develop productive use of the second language** Building their own sentences as they continue to construct knowledge about the new language. Typically they make many mistakes as they adopt and adapt the English they hear and are learning.

### **6. Activity: Classroom Strategies (20-25 minutes)**

Begin the activity by saying: "Now let's focus on some of the strategies and ways we can use to support English Language Learners in the classroom." As teachers often sit with those from their own buildings, divide the group into small groups of 5 - 6 to mix participants.

*Trainer's Note: In the Talk to Trainers section at the front of the Trainer's Manual, there are a variety of techniques included for dividing groups in the discussion of Activities. Select one.*

Distribute copies of the two L2 Handouts "Activity: Supporting English Language Learners". Ask each person to take 5 minutes to jot down ideas for each of the boxes. After 5 - 7 minutes, instruct participants to share with others in their group. Allow 8-10 minutes for sharing in small groups. Encourage participants to add ideas to their lists from other participants.

*Trainer's Note: If group size is more than 25 participants, ask half of the participants to work on one sheet and the other half to work on the other, but distribute both sheets to each for later note taking.*

Ask each group to report out by sharing 1 idea for each box. Encourage participants to add ideas to their sheets as they strategies not listed.

**7. Discussion (10 - 15 minutes)**

Distribute L2 Handouts entitled “Scaffolding English Language Acquisition” and “Supporting English Language Fluency.” Provide a few minutes for participants to read and review. Call attention to strategies not previously mentioned by any groups.

Use L2 Overhead 9 or PowerPoint slide 14 which is the Home Language Support section on their handouts. Review and encourage participants to share ways they use these strategies. Encourage participants to add any other strategies not included.

**8. Closure (10 minutes)**

Ask participants to share with a partner one new strategy they will try in their classroom. Show L2 Overhead 10 or PowerPoint slide 15 and read aloud.

**Remember....**

- **Teacher expectations significantly influence the quality of students learning opportunities.**
- **Teachers who have low expectations for students do not feel confident they can teach those students, and as a result attribute students' failure to lack of intellect and deficient home lives.**
- **Teachers with strong self-confidence and feelings of efficacy in their teaching abilities have high expectations for all students.**

Remind participants that in gathering documentation for ELAS, to use both the child's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> language. For 3-year olds, scores should be based on their 1<sup>st</sup> language. For 4's and Kindergarten children, they should provide 2 scores, one for English and one for their 1<sup>st</sup> language as appropriate.

Close with reading a favorite poem or short book in a language other than English. If you cannot read it, ask a participant who speaks the language to read it for the group.

**Additional Activity for 3 Hour Session**

**9. Activity: Supporting Cultural Diversity (35 - 40 minutes)**

Begin this activity by saying “For this activity, we are going to explore in more depth cultural diversity.”

Read the children's book, *The Other Side*, by J. Woodson. (2001).

Ask participants to find someone in the group who they do not know well to form pairs or triads. Once pairs/triads are formed, say: Share a *fence* or *barrier* from your own life.

Allow 10-12 minutes for partners to talk.

Encourage two or three people to share their *fence* or *barrier* with the whole group.

Distribute L2 Handout "Post Office Survey". Instruct participants to complete the survey independently.

Provide 8-10 minutes for individual work.

Divide the participants into groups of 5 – 6 by having each pair/triad from prior activity, join with 2 other pairs. Ask participants to share their responses with their small group.

Allow 15-20 minutes for small group sharing.

**10. Discussion** (15 - 20 minutes)

Call the whole group back together. For each item, encourage 1 or 2 participants to share their responses with the whole group. Comment on similarities and differences.

Facilitate discussion by asking the following questions:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What parts were easier or harder to do or share with others?
- How is this awareness of similarities and differences applicable to your work with children and families?
- How do they learn or find out about the cultures of children and families in their class?

Brainstorm with the whole group ways they support diversity in the classroom. Chart answers. Encourage participants to move beyond holiday celebrations.

Review the chart and ask if there are any strategies on the list that may be leaning towards more towards supporting stereotyping.

*Trainer's Note: Activities which may support stereotyping include those with a tourist approach (e.g. study of different countries, customs not based on children's present day experiences, multicultural week or month)*

Comment: When the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the teacher and children are different, it is especially important that teachers spend time learning about their backgrounds, environments, and experiences. Teachers need to be careful not to make assumptions. Racial and ethnic generalizations about particular groups may or may not be apply to any child or family. It is important to collect and incorporate information relevant to the child and family. Different cultures place different value and norms on spoken and written language. Regardless of whether there are English Language Learners in your classroom or not, good early childhood education programs support linguistic and cultural diversity, and implement multicultural and anti-bias education.

**11. Closure:** (same as above)