

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

Spanish

Mandarin

Urdu

Arabic

Polish

Hungarian

Haitian Creole

Vietnamese

Portuguese

Hindi

Japanese

Russian

Albanian

Gujarati

Korean

Hmong

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”

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.

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
 - Extended discourse
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Print concepts (forms & functions)
 - Letter identification
- 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).
- A strong basis in the child's first language promotes literacy achievement in the second language.

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

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.

Bilingual Children

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

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.
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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.

Learning a Second Language Developmental Sequence *

1. Use their home language
2. Nonverbal period
3. Use individual words and phrases in new language and some children code switch
4. Begin to develop productive use of the second language

* Tabors, P.O. (1997). *One Child, Two Languages*.

HOME LANGUAGE SUPPORT

- Provide a portion of instruction & interact with children in home language.
- Incorporate children's home languages into the daily classroom activities through song, poetry, dances, rhymes, counting, & books.
- Create materials in the children's home language to represent familiar stories, songs or poems.
- Make efforts to learn the students' home languages. Even a few words or phrases will communicate respect and value.
- Use bilingual paraprofessionals, family & older student volunteers.
- Provide books and other printed materials in home languages.
- Use Environmental Print in both languages.
- Encourage children and families to share & record stories in L1.
- Provide computer programs that support home languages.
- Encourage parents to converse and read with their children using their own strongest language.

Remember....

- Teacher expectations significantly influence the quality of student 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.