Ready for Success: Supporting Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Head Start and Early Head Start Webcast

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Amanda Bryans: Good morning, or—depending on where you are in the country— good afternoon! My name is Amanda Bryans and I'm the Director of the Educational Development and Partnerships Division at the Office of Head Start. Welcome to the first Webcast in our 2009-2010 professional development series on supporting dual language learners in Head Start and Early Head Start on their journey to be ready to succeed in school and in life.

The Office of Head Start is excited to be offering this professional development series to help programs improve their outreach, services, and outcomes for dual language learners. From the outset more than 40 years ago, Head Start has worked to create high quality environments in classroom and home-based settings—environments that show support and respect for all children, including the growing number of children who speak languages other than English.

In Head Start and Early Head Start, we must offer services that build on the diversity of our children, families, and communities. We must build learning environments in classrooms and other settings that take advantage of what children know and can do. We must also create systems that build on the diversity of our populations, including our program design and management systems. That's what this series is all about. To begin our discussion today, I think it's important to start with some definitions. Who exactly are dual language learners? What does this term mean?

According to the Office of Head Start's definition, children who are dual language learners are those who acquire two or more languages simultaneously, as well as those who learn a second language while continuing to develop their first language. The term "dual language learners" encompasses other frequently-used terms, such as Limited English Proficient, bilingual, English language learners, English learners, and children who speak a language other than English. What do we know about how many dual language learners are in Head Start?

Head Start programs report that nearly 3 out of 10 children enter programs speaking a primary language at home other than English, and these numbers have been growing. This is nearly one-third of Head Start and Early Head Start children! Eighty-six percent of Head Start programs serve one or more children who speak a language other than English. That means that only 14 percent of Head Start programs serve only children who speak English.

In all, over 140 languages are spoken by Head Start children and families. The number of cultures these children and families represent is even higher. In addition, we have American Indian and Alaska Native communities in which language revitalization is a priority. In many cases, Tribal Head Start programs are leading these efforts in their communities. I invite you to pause for a moment to think about what's happening in your program.

Does your program serve children who speak a language other than English? Do you have some classrooms in which as many as 8 to10 different languages are spoken? Does your program need interpreters, but find they live too far away and are very expensive? Are you hearing about changing demographics in your community? Are you concerned about how to accurately assess children's progress when they speak a language other than English?

If you answered "yes," to any of these questions, you are not alone. We have heard about these issues from many Head Start programs, and we have launched this professional development series to help address them. One of the key impetuses for this series is the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 which makes it clear that Head Start programs are to provide linguistically and culturally responsive services.

The Act states that Head Start programs are required to facilitate children's English acquisition, while at the same time making meaningful progress in all domains of the child outcomes framework. The Act also emphasizes improving services and outreach for families who speak languages other than English. We recognize that children who are dual

language learners present unique oppurtunities and challenges.

We also know that Head Start children are heading to and making up schools that are now more diverse than ever. Nationwide, approximately one quarter of all school children come from homes where English is not the primary language. Nearly one quarter of all children in the U.S. between the ages of birth to five come from families who have immigrated to the United States.

In New York City alone, approximately 50 percent of the students heading to school will originate in immigrant-headed homes, representing over 190 different countries. Imagine, in one city, they are educating children from literally every corner of the earth! But, it's not just big cities. In Dodge City, Kansas, approximately 40 percent of the children in school now speak a language other than English at home. We in Head Start have always taken great pride in our ability to be responsive to the unique needs of our children and families.

In fact, there are about 40 Program Performance Standards that mandate that programs respond to the unique cultural and linguistic capacities that families bring to the program. The Standards cover all of the comprehensive systems and services from nutrition to health to program governance and staffing. We know that Head Start, like our nation as a whole, takes its strength from its rich diversity.

For this reason, we must carefully—each day—kindle the talents of ALL of the children in our care, and the families that love them and serve as their first teachers. It is critical, therefore, that each one of us become knowledgeable about the service needs and the linguistic and cultural diversity of the families we serve. I know we can count on your leadership in this area. Head Start would not be the nation's model early childhood program were it not for the hard work and dedication of you and your colleagues across the country.

For that, we cannot thank you enough. Now, it is my great pleasure to introduce Sharon Yandian, our Early Language Specialist at the Office of Head Start. Sharon has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of services offered in Head Start to dual language learners, ages birth to five. Sharon will tell us about the exciting professional development activities we have planned for this program year. Sharon...

Sharon Yandian: Thank you, Amanda, and hello to all of you who work with Head Start and Early Head Start children and families. Welcome to the launch of our year-long professional development series to support success for dual language learners and their families. As many of you know, the Office of Head Start held a four-day National Dual Language Institute in 2008. The Institute's purpose was to disseminate resources that support you in your work with children and families who speak languages other than English.

We were thrilled that your response to the Institute was so overwhelmingly positive. We at the Office of Head Start heard your voices asserting the need for more professional development opportunities. The Dual Language Institute gathered a diverse group of presenters including researchers, program staff, and parents. Over 100 sessions were offered that spanned topics you told us you needed to know more about.

It was attended by over 1,500 professionals in Head Start and other early childhood programs, staff from other Federal agencies, and technical assistance providers. Let's take a moment to watch a clip from one of the Institute's plenary sessions with Dr. Fred Genessee. He frames his talk with us around the myths and realities about dual language learning.

[Video begins] Dr. Fred Genessee: How many of you've heard this myth? That code-mixing is bad and we should discourge children from code-mixing. Yes, how many of you believe this? You're not going to admit it probably. [laughter] Well, I bet deep down a lot of you do believe this and I certainly know that lots of parents and lots of speech and language specialists believe in this.

And the myth here is that children code-mix, that is they use English and Spanish words or French and English words or Korean and English words in the same sentence. Because in fact the two languages are represented neuro-cognitively as an undifferentiated system, bilingual code-mixing is not a sign of confusion at all. In fact it's a linguistic and a communicative resource that bilingual children have and the same with bilingual adults have it. Young dual

language learners can use their two languages appropriately.

They know what language to use with whom and if they don't do it right away they just need a little time with people they're not familiar with to figure out which language they should be using. And there's also evidence that they use code-mixing as a linguistic resource to fill in lexical gaps. [Video ends]

Sharon: Dr. Genessee is just one of the people whose work we hope to bring to you during this professional development series. Today, we've only seen a brief portion of his talk at the Institute.

If you are interested in viewing more of this session, be sure to visit the E-C-L-K-C, where it is posted. Over the last few months we have been talking with many of you to find out what you took away from the Institute. It has been wonderful to hear about how you have been able to adapt and using the knowledge and tools you gathered there. During the Institute, one tool we introduced was the Program Preparedness Checklist for Serving Dual Language Learners and Their Families.

This tool was developed to support continuous program improvement. It is available on the E-C-L-K-C and we have included it with the documents that go along with this Webcast. If you haven't had a chance to do so already, you may download it now and follow along as we discuss it. Simply click on the tab to the right of your viewing screen marked, "Program Preparedness Checklist."

The Program Preparedness Checklist is intended to do several things: First, it is intended to assist your program in assessing its preparedness to implement systems and to deliver quality services to dual language learners and their families. Second, it is intended to observe and document how the systems and services are articulated and implemented throughout your program.

It is written in the form of a checklist and is organized into broad indicators or areas such as program governance, teacher-child interactions, and family partnerships. Then, there are items under each of these categories. Programs are at different places. Your program may be fully implementing many of the items on the checklist already. Other items on the checklist may be very much a work in progress. And still other items on the checklist may be ones that your program hasn't addressed yet.

The point of the tool is to allow you to assess your program and to help you understand where you are and where you need to go. Now, it is my pleasure to introduce Terry Kohlmeier, the Director of Education for Parents in Community Action, Incorporated, or "PICA," in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Terry has used the Program Preparedness Checklist as part of PICA's continuous program improvement efforts.

First, some background. PICA serves a diverse community, including many Hmong and Somali families, as well a large number of Spanish-speaking families. Along with most programs throughout the country, Terry's program has seen changing demographics and has developed many strategies to respond to the shifts in population. PICA serves over 2,000 children in Head Start and Early Head Start in over 80 classrooms.

I was thrilled to work with Terry on the planning committee for the Dual Language Institute. She really brought a lot of ideas from her work in Region 5 and in her program. In particular, she made sure that we addressed programs that work with multiple languages. Thanks so much for agreeing to be with us today, Terry.

Terry Kohlmeier: Thanks, Sharon, it's a pleasure to be here. It feels really good to be here today and to share the work that our program is doing. Like other Head Start programs, we are very proud of all that we do at PICA. We received a tremendous amount of information on policies and practices from the Institute that were very helpful. Sharon: That's great! You mentioned some particular steps you took after the Institute with the Program Preparedness Checklist. Can you describe some of them to us?

Terry: Sure, I'd be glad to. Well, over the years, our agency has continued to evaluate how we are providing services to our diverse families. We have a Dual Language Committee that came about when we were part of a pilot program called CRADLE—the Culturally Relevant and Dual Language Education project funded by the Office of Head Start.

This committee has representation from all program areas. Its members filled out the Program Preparedness Checklist that I brought back from the Dual language Institute last year.

The checklist allowed us to make sure we were covering all the service areas. It's broad and it just doesn't focus on education. So once everyone on the committee completed the checklist, I tallied the results by the categories that are listed on it. These categories are: Definitely, In progress, and Not yet. There is also a column to write in comments or examples of what your program is doing in each area. Sharon: What did the results tell you Terry?

Terry: Well, it was interesting. When we took a closer look at our program, we recognized our strengths. These included our program policies, especially in the area of ongoing communication. Our other strengths included our promotion of positive social and emotional development, our family partnerships, and our classroom environments. The checklist also helped us to think about those areas we had to work on. I really liked the fact that it highlighted what we were already doing and what was in progress.

When I did the tally, the checklist drew our attention to the assessment of children's language. Our program was doing well assessing children's language development in English. We are gathering information in an ongoing manner in ways that are appropriate. We now see a stronger need to assess children in their home language. In fact, support for children's home language is an area that we want to continue to strengthen across many of our program areas. The checklist really helped us think more about the whole child.

It pushed us to figure out how we could find out what our children knew and what they could do overall, regardless of their English language ability. Sharon: Terry, that is a very important need you identify across your program areas. Is there anything else that you learned?

Terry: Yes, we actually we found something that we didn't expect. A lot of committee members responded "I don't know" to a few of the questions on the checklist. Suddenly, we were all aware that not everyone on our committee knew about all of the existing comprehensive efforts we had in place to serve diverse children and families. Sharon: Did other staff members also use the tool?

Terry: Yes, one of the teachers on the committee used it with her staff back in her center. Two-thirds of the 30 staff members completed it. It was a real eye-opener for them. Again, some of them reported "I don't know," or said they were unsure about several items on the checklist. And, they also identified areas needing more work—especially supporting children's home language in the classroom.

I think the checklist has been a very useful tool for our program. Even though we are already doing a lot to serve our diverse population, we honed in on more areas we needed to improve. Sharon: How have you begun to address the program areas that needed improvement?

Terry: Well, The checklist helped us to develop a 3-year plan as we continue to serve children who are dual language learners and their families. From there, we are in the process of developing a series of learning opportunities for staff and parents to help them gain a better understanding of how children learn English and how important the use of the home language is in the process.

We are also using a developmental screening tool that was created by our local school district. This tool will help us capture what children know and can do in both English and their home language and we just completed training our teachers on how to use it.

Sharon: What a great example! That is exactly the point of the tool— to assist programs with continuous program improvement! Thank you, Terry, for sharing your experiences with us. Just as Terry said, working with children in the classroom is just one important part of being culturally and linguistically responsive. Other parts include program governance, health and disabilities, and parent involvement. The Program Preparedness Checklist allows programs to look across all service and system areas.

It is not the "end all" as it just highlights a few items in each system and service. Rather, it is a springboard to see if

you are already going in the right direction or to see where you need to focus more work. Terry's use of the checklist is just one example of some of the work going on in programs that you'll learn about during this professional development series. So, you can look forward to more conversations with program leaders like Terry. Let's take a moment to talk about what else you can expect from this series.

First, it's important to note that we know just how busy Head Start and Early Head Start program staff really are! So we're going to be using technology to our advantage by bringing you both Webcasts and Webinars that will be made available at scheduled times. They will also be available on-demand so that you can watch them at a time that works for you. An announcement will go out with the date when a Webcast or Webinar will first take place and then the event will be posted on the Dual Language Learners landing page on the E-C-L-K-C.

You'll be able to access it at your convenience and refer others to it. When the sessions are posted on the E-C-L-K-C, they'll be available with both Spanish and English captioning. The Webcasts and Webinars will be segmented into small increments to make it easy for you to use them in in-service trainings. Some topics will be covered in two consecutive sessions, a month apart. It will be beneficial, but not necessary, for you to participate in both sessions.

During the series, we'll address some important questions that we know many Head Start and Early Head Start programs have. These are questions such as: How do you communicate with children and families who speak a language other than English when no one on your staff speaks that language? How do you create a language-rich environment for babies in Early Head Start when parents speak one language and staff speak another?

What do you do when parents say they only want their children to learn English and not speak their home language in Head Start or Early Head Start? What more can you do in your classroom besides labeling materials in different languages and having a few books? To answer these questions, we'll showcase interviews with parents, classroom teachers, and program leaders who will share their successes and challenges as they strive to improve the services provided to dual language learners and their families.

We'll also have some lively conversations with researchers, authors, and experts who have spent many years working with the different populations of dual language learners around the country. Throughout the series, we'll focus on practical approaches to working with dual language learners. Whether you work in a monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual setting and program, we want you to come away with ideas and strategies that you can take back and use in your work.

It's important for you to know that all the strategies and activities in the series are responsive to the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Act of 2007, and the Child Outcomes Framework. These requirements set the context for the development of sound educational practices to support children of all ages in making progress in all areas of development, as well as in learning English. They also set the stage for the program systems that need to be in place to be culturally and linguistically responsive.

Now, I'd like to give you a brief overview of the topics this series will address. This may help you decide what you want to take advantage of this year. Recent research has shown what many of you working with children already know —that very young children are capable of learning complex language, concepts, and skills, provided it all happens within a nurturing relationship with the adults who care for them.

With this said, it is very important that we focus on the strengths that families bring and—in our work with children— on being intentional about capitalizing on what children know and can do. Our series title is, Ready for Success: Supporting Dual Language Learners and Their Families, because we know that the years prior to kindergarten are among the most significant in shaping a child's foundation for learning in school and experiencing success.

We also know that programs across the country struggle with how to best address the needs of children who speak languages other than English. We want to share with you what we DO know and show you some exemplary practices. We have planned our series topics with that in mind. In November, we will be offering a Webinar entitled, Head Start 101: How to Support Dual Language Learners Birth to Five Years of Age.

During this Webinar, we'll have staff from the Office of Head Start talking with us as we introduce new grantees, both Head Start and Early Head Start, to the essentials of supporting dual language learners. We'll be summarizing exemplary practices in program design and management and providing examples of each. We'll also be highlighting practical tips for getting started in supporting children who are learning two languages.

Video [Spanish]

Our focus will be on reviewing the basics required in the Head Start Program Performance Standards to support dual language learners. Our intention is to guide new grantees to be responsive to diverse cultures and languages. We'll also make them aware of the array of resources that are available to ensure their success. Existing grantees will also be welcome to review and refresh their knowledge and understanding of these essential practices.

The next two professional development opportunities in January and February will be dedicated to language and literacy. They will review the continuum of language development for children birth to five, emphasizing similarities and differences in the acquisition of first and second languages. These two events will highlight the interdependence of dual language acquisition and culture and will feature exemplary practices that support English and home language learning.

They will help staff to fully understand how home language support is a pathway to learning English. They'll also provide strategies to foster strong language competence in both English and the child's home language. We'll address working in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual settings. Special focus will be on the interconnectedness of language development—which includes listening and understanding, speaking, and communicating—and all aspects of literacy. You may recognize these domains and domain elements from the Child Outcomes Framework.

We'll see examples of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers engaged with each other and adults in using one or more languages. Let's take a look at three short clips that will give you an idea of what we will be focusing on in this portion of the series. First you will see an example of how we will explore language and literacy opportunities not just in the classroom but here at a parent meeting, on a home visit and third in a writing activity in a classroom.

[Video begins] Teacher and children singing: Brille, brille, estrellita quiero verte cintilar. En el cielo sobre el mar un diamante de verdad. Brilla, brilla estrellita quiero verte cintilar.

Twinkle, twinkle little star how I wonder where you are. Up above the world so high,like a diamond in the sky. Twinkle, twinkle little star how I wonder where you are.

Teacher: Let me see - oh, a caterpillar! Mother: Oh I had an outbreak of them this summer, you should have seen them. They ate up all my flowers... Teacher: I don't see [inaudable] Mother: See, he has wings, he has two eyes, two antennas and he got one, two, three, six legs. Child: He's going to bite me.

Mother: No, he doesn't bite he doesn't eat anything but plants. Teacher: You think he know where to go? [child's laughter] See, this is a little bit of science. We've got a living grasshopper. Pick him up there you go. They put him on their hooks to fish with. Did you know that?

Teacher: Come on over buddy. We've missed you. You've been gone for a few days. Gabriel is Kummoni [sp] here? Hi sweetie, we missed you too! I'm glad yo made it today! What time did you leave today? Child: I left... Teacher: Oh the kids are going to be happy to play with you today. Would you like to go ahead and sign in? Right over there.

Morning sign-in works different with different groups of kids. So what I'm doing this year is having when the children come in, and they will find their name on the sign-in sheets and then they write their name to the best of their ability. For some of the children their whole name is written there, for some of them it's just their first name, so that they can practice different types of writing. With this particular group of learners they really needed to work hard to practice their social skills.

We have several different different languages in the classroom so that's another piece that I want to bring in and help

them talk to one another. What I have them do is come find their name, sign in and then they're responsible for looking to see if another child on that list is there. They're practicing their literacy skills by identifying names of other children, even if they're just doing that by the first letter, but they're also practicing their social skills because they're then responsible for going and finding that other child, asking them politely to come and sign in and then taking care of that. Nice work. [Video ends]

Sharon: In March and April, we'll focus on how we can make the most of assessing children in all of the domains of the child outcomes framework as well as documenting their progress towards English. We'll look at these assessment pieces in the context of making decisions about curriculum and individualization. We know sound assessment is a system of formal and informal indicators that help us know that learning is taking place and children are indeed progressing.

During these events, you'll hear from researchers who have developed tools and from teachers who are using them to gather information about the progress of dual language learners—what they know and can do—both in English and in their home language. As we know, all areas of child development are important, so we'll also address assessing the overall development of children who are dual language learners. We hope to answer some of your questions.

For example, how can a classroom teacher assess the social and emotional development of a dual language learner? Or, how does a teacher know what concepts a child understands—especially a child who doesn't speak the same language that the teacher does? What are some of the successful strategies that teachers have used for the ongoing assessment of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers? How have they shared that information with other staff and gathered information from them as well? These are just some of the questions we'll be addressing in these broadcasts.

Let's take a look at another video clip from one of the plenary sessions at the Dual Language Institute. This is a keynote address from Dr. Linda Espinosa on assessing young dual language learners. Listen for some of the questions that Dr. Espinosa poses. We plan on exploring some of the answers to these questions during the assessment portion of the series.

[Video begins] Dr. Espinosa: A question I always like to pose to people is, you know, assessement drives curriculum. What does this mean and do you think that it's in the benefit that it serves our children well? In my opinion, good assessment may even be more important when children are dual language learners because we so frequently misunderstand and underestimate the strengths that dual language learners are exhibiting.

Because of the language and cultural discrepancies. So I believe it's critical and everyone sitting in this room, I'm going to ah to some extent you're kind of pioneers. You're the people that are out there on the front lines being informed learning new skills to be able to do this and stand up for those children who may never have had someone who advocated, based upon good and current knowledge.

Whether or not they're in a simultaneous or sucessive or sequential process of second language acquistion, you need to know this. When I go out to programs and I ask them that, frequently they don't know, "When was the child first exposed to English and what was the language background at home?" You need to know that.

Uneven development, depend upon child environment characteristics. Again, you need to know or have a good estimate about what stage of English acquisition the child is in and what were those early environmental infuences. You need to know about aspects of both languages in order to have a comprehensive idea of where they are developmentally, linguistically, conceptually, et cetera. You just need to know these things. [Video ends]

Sharon: The final events in our series will be held in May and June and will focus on diversity and multiculturalism. This Webcast and Webinar will present resources and program practices.

Central to the work of Head Start and Early Head Start is understanding the development and ensuring the progress of every child in the context of family and community. In 1991, the then-Head Start Bureau published the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs. This document was instrumental in focusing our attention on how important language and culture are in the work we do. The ten original principles from that 1991 document have remained in

effect all these years and are integrated into the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

However, a revised and updated version of the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five, will be featured in the May Webcast. This handbook is currently undergoing final review and will be made available on the E-C-L-K-C. It is our hope that it will also be printed and sent to programs as well. A User's Guide for the handbook will also be in development this year. To get an understanding about what we hope to accomplish in this part of the series, Let's listen to an elder in Alaska talk about Head Start in his community.

[Video begins] Gentleman: I thought it was very important because it prepares little children who are taught at home how to accept going to elementary school. That prepares you to meet the challenges they don't have in a regular classroom. They get to meet a teacher from outside of the house instead of you know their brothers and sisters, their mothers, dads, grandparents, their grandmothers.

They see another person coming in to talk to them and I think this in my opinion prepares them to a for a better education and to be prepared to go to school when they are go into a regular classroom. [Video ends]

Sharon: In the June Webinar, we'll explore essential connections between program staff and families. The Webinar will feature some of the practices of exemplary programs that facilitate staff-parent communication and encourage parental involvement in their children's learning and in program governance. We'll have conversations with resource experts, parents, and program leaders, who will describe some of their successful strategies and how and why they came to be developed. There will be useful lessons for all programs to take away.

Well this is a great part of the program. I love to get the questions from the field, and I wanted to say at the out-take we probably won't be able to answer all of the questions today, so if you don't hear yourself we are trying to incorporate all of the questions that people have asked us into our future sessions. So the questions have been very helpful.

But the first question we have is from Joseph in New York and he asks, "Will materials be made available before a broadcast so that we can prepare for it?" Terry: This is a great question. Will you answer it? Sharon: And sure, I'll answer that question, okay. Yes, the answer is yes, and whenever feasible. I think for this broadcast in particular we shared with you the checklist.

You can download it as you're watching but in the future if we are able to organize some homework for programs or some prior reading we definately will do that, and they way that we'll communicate that is when the Save The Date Announcement comes out we'll actually put where they should go to get the materials prior to the broadcast. Does that make sense? Terry: It does make sense.

Sharon: Ok let's take a second question. Here's a question for you Terry. Lydia from Florida -- she says, "Our program has filled out the Program Preparedness Checklist. We found that we don't have any policies or procedures in place. Where do we start?" Do you have some guidance for her?

Terry: Well I do. I was thinking that the first thing that she might want to do is to begin by by reviewing the checklist categories and taking a look at those so that her program can develop some policies and procedures. Actually the checklist gives great guidance in terms, you know of where to begin and what to look for because the categories are so complete. Sharon: Mmm hmm..

Terry: In addition to that I think that just setting some goals based on that checklist too. Looking at areas that where there might not be in progress or may be even not yet and taking those,'not yets' and maybe making those some goals for the program. Another great way to use the checklist in terms of developing your policies and procedures.

Also I think the next step, after you have drafted some policies and procedures and gotten those approved, would be to take it to your administrators and do some training with administrators including staff after the administrators are trained, and then even sharing it with your Parent Policy council is a great idea. Sharon: Uh huh, great. So just you know, depending upon where your program is you start small and you build from there.

Terry:Absolutely. You certainly want to start small. And I think you can begin by using the Program Preparedness Checklist again because it covers all of forty Head Start Standards that address dual language learners. Sharon: Right. Terry:And so it can give you a good grasp. It's also important to look at your Agency's Mission.

Sharon: Exactly. Terry: And talk you know with your agency staff and determine what your your policy is. Sharon: Right. Terry: and then base your procedures on that.

Sharon: You know as I said prior in our Webcast you know we talked a little about how they would use the checklist. And one of the things to remember is there are just a few items under each items under each of those areas. So programs may also maybe they're using a classroom, looking at their classroom, they may want to add other items under there. I don't know if you've done that yet, to indivualize it for their programs. It really was a tickler to get people thinking.

And there are also in addition to Performance Standards there are also other best practices identified under the checklist. Terry: So, one of the other things we do is a parent survey each year. And so that parent survey with the questions, helps us to take a broader look at what parents want and for their children and for their own families.

Sharon:That's great. Yeah, I image that some programs also and you may do this is integrate it into you know eventually you know when Lydia has really used this with her program a lot. To look at how it is incorporated into their on going self assessment. Terry: Correct. Sharon: Yeh that - absolutely.

Sharon:There's a number of things you can do. All right, well, this third question is from Eileen in Virginia. I'll take this one: "Will there be another Dual Language Institute?" Thank you, Eileen, for asking that [laughter]. Well, not in the immediate future, is the short answer, but it is a reason why we are doing this Professional Development Series.

We know that programs, there's so many reasons why umm you know we'd love to do one every year but there are competing priorities, programs time and money and we're really excited about getting a lot of mileage out of this series because we not only are doing webcasts and webinars, we really since we're re-launching the dual language page on the ECLKC... Terry:Right.

Sharon:...we're being very purposeful about the way we develop the materials so that they're going to be very easily used afterwards. So I think that that is a great advantage. So there's your answer Eileen. Here's another one for you Terry. This is Judy from Texas she says. "I'm a teacher who has children who speak 4 different languages in my class in addition to English. Since I don't speak any of their languages, how can I go about supporting their home language? "

Terry:Oh my goodness, there are so many ways that you can support children's home languages in the classroom. I think that you certainly want to begin, Sharon, by actually developing a relationship with each child and their family and getting to know each child well and also exploring what the families culture is all about.

Taking into consideration and you know, home visit and really learning about that families culture and bringing those ideas that you've learned those values in terms of that specialness about that child's family back into the classroom. So it might mean an artifact that you might want to bring in and place in a classroom or certain music. Or maybe there's even a family member that would come into the classroom. I think that that certainly helps make learning and teaching equitable.

I think also that within our own agency, if I can give this as an example, we have -- about 10 years ago, our agency really pulled together what they called a cross cultural resource team... Sharon: Uh huh. Terry: ...and this cross cultural team of individuals actually recognizes the various cultures that we serve within our program.

Sharon:comprised of Terry: It is comprised of, so there're representatives that speak the language of the families that we serve., and so the wonderful thing about this group is that they've been able to do not just translations and interpertations but actually consult us as we do translate materials and provide interpertation for parent trainings. This

cross cultural team also provides Spanish, Somoli, Mali, Hmong classes for our staff...

...so that our staff can enhance their skills and can go back into the classroom or go back to the front of the building you know where they're greeting families, working with families, greeting them seeing them on the busses and so forth. So that's been a wonderful opportunity for our program staff to have that resource, the cross-cultural team.

I also wanted to share one of the resources that our agency developed was a phrase book -- a cross-cultural phrase book. And with that, that was a great tool, it is a great tool and one that we continually, continually refresh. But it's a great tool that the teachers, the drivers and records clerks and administration can use to develop their child's their language skills in their child's home language.

So that's available to the teacher you know that she can use or he can use right in the classroom and have at hand. Or when they go out on home visits. It might just be a word or two but very important. Sharon:You build that as the year goes on, so obviously it's really really important in the begining of the year.

Terry: Oh, absolutely, we have classroom terminology, we have greetings ... Sharon: And the cross-cultural team handles that... the phrase book. I mean? Terry: They do, they're the ones that have pulled that together.

Sharon: That's great. One of the things that you and I talked about before, and I am sure that this is what your program is doing, is especially when we're thinking about, you know, phrases for teachers which is very important to convey that not only is there an interest in learning the language of the family even though we may not necessarily be ever be able to be fluent.

Umm but that we're also learning words of what do we say in Spanish, we say [Spanish] endearing, not just commands, 'cause we often are very concerned about the safety of children and things like that, so we learn "Stop" and we learn you know... Terry: Right.

Sharon:... and these other words, but we really want to also... I'm sure your phrase book really talks about... Terry: Actually it, it is.. It's important that we certainly, we kind of have a tendancy especially at the beginning of the year to learn the words like "Stop" and "bathroom", where the bathroom is, but we encourage the staff to learn those words that create that relationship...

Sharon: Uh humm. Terry: ...and so it's more than just learning words to direct children but words that are extemely endearing and loving and welcoming as well.

Sharon: That's great, well that's a wonderful example of just ... that's a great question that Judy posed, and I do think that we'll be addressing that on a deeper level as we get farther along in the series. Let's take this question from Maria here, Maria from California. She says, "What is the best assessment tool available for documenting progress towards English acquisition? Is an assessment tool being developed by the Office of Head Start?"

I know everyone wants me to mention you know here is the one tool we have, it is ready, it's perfect.. well, that tool, as we know, does not exist. But the field is working on... I'm trying to keep the pulse on what's happening in the field and... and this is trouble with this youngest age in terms of developing, accurate, appropriate tool that will document the progress towards English for very young dual language learners.

Currently curriculum developers, local education agencies, many states you know have gotten out in front and are working on such tools, so, the answer, unfortunately, Maria, is, "No, we don't." And OHS actually never develops any tools so we wouldn't be actually developing a tool for example documenting progress towards English or documenting on-going progress and assessment.

So we won't be doing that. But we're watching and one of the things that I would tell the audience is that on the Dual Language Learning Landing Page on the ECLKC, we're trying to continually build the information we have there around assessment in particular. So I would encourage people to go back, pose your questions. Don't ask me for one tool because we probably won't be able to provide that...

Terry: No, not and serve all needs with it. Sharon: Yeah, and there's a lot of variability there, but... but we will continue to try to direct programs to other resources that are available in the community. So... that would be my answer for Maria.

Here's a question from Mark in Philadelphia, he says "Are there specific strategies to introduce English to children if staff speak limited English?" Well, let me start with this question; you may have some things to add. Terry:Sure

Sharon: You know the things that comes to mind, this is a question that a lot of programs have and of course there are specific strategies. It would be great to have the larger context of Mark's program and all of that but I think the one thing that the two words that come to mind are intentionality and planning, you know, regardless of the language which we want to help our programs and our teachers and all stay focused on communication, both the verbal and nonverbal communication overall.

But programs have to be intentional particulary If they're employing staff who have limited English abilities. We need to be very intentional about what type of English native language native English language models we're able to have in the classrooms, or whether it's a family childcare provider.

I've heard of programs that have roaming English models, or volunteers. I think sometimes what we do in programs, is that we have volunteers who are native English speakers, but we don't really train them, we don't give them an idea we just kinda plant them in the classroom and hope that they'll just start talking and everything will be you know... Terry: Mmm hmm.

Sharon: We need to help them, we need to help our volunteers. You know, if you have the luxury of being able to hire a roaming English model who would be, obviously they would be starting with what is appropriate for children who are just learning any language. You know they would be doing songs and rhymes and fun activities and they would be doing things in different modalities.

So that's the question I would have and reading as well. You know I mean we obviously have classrooms that have two and three languages, it's very appropriate to group two or three children have them be reading in English.

Terry:Exactly, small groups. Sharon: You may also be reading, the staff obviously I'm assuming the staff speaks one of the languages of the children in the classroom. They would read that in their language, whether it's Spanish or Somoli or whatever that is and then later in the week there may be that same book and we read it in English. So there's ways to connect also the language. But let's just not -- we need to be intentional, and we need to plan.

Terry: I think that planning piece is important and let me say especially you know we live in an urban area so we have numerous resources in terms of individuals who speak native English, you know speak English, so, but I think we need to think about our rural families or programs in rural areas.

And again, that planning piece is important you know if if if it's important for it to get out into the community, let children hear the English language in within the community and context of where they might be going that day, be it a field trip, be it to the local market. In addition to that, all communities have community leaders and and community leaders can come into the classrooms and support those English language learners by actually modeling their native languages.

Sharon: Exactly, yeah, I would say the flip side to this question, if you had teachers we often hear that do not speak the language of the children, you would want the intentionality and planning to happen in just the same way. Terry: Yes.

Sharon: And you'd be looking towards families, volunteers, church groups, whether you're able to hire a roaming Spanish speaker, or roaming Somoli speaker would be the same. So that's just just to get Mark started. We will also be talking much more about that when we get to the language and literacy portion of the series. Here's a question from Michelle in Maryland and she says, "Should we interpret what we say in English into the baby's home language as a way to help them learn their home language as well as English?"

Terry: Well,let me just respond to that. Sharon: Okay. Terry: So it seems that Michelle is talking about simultaneous intereperation, and really we discourage this for children because the child will tune out the language that they're not familiar with...

Sharon: Mm hmmm. Terry: ...and focus and either wait or, you know, will focus in on the language that they're used to... Sharon: ...knowing that their language will come. Sharon: Right, will come.

Terry:So we don't encourage simultaneous intereperation. For example, I might say to you, "Vamos afuera. Vamos afuera." So rather than just use the language of, say, English in isolation, what I would probably want to do and would most likely do would be to have visual cues and props with me that would help that child hear that word "vamos afuera". I would have my, you know, my coat on, I would have hat on, I would have the buggy ready for the children, and give the children a sense of hearing the language within the context of going outside...

...so they're associating the language with the concept of going outside, when they see the clothing that I have on, when they see that I've got the buggy ready what you would certainly want to not translate.

Sharon: Absolutely, so you're saying you know we're creating a context for children in the meaning and it doesn't mean that you can't use, I'm hearing what you're saying, you don't want to say, "Vamos afuera, let's go outside," but, but there's nothing wrong with using more than one language in the classroom.

We're just, I think what we're saying to Michelle is that we don't want you to be saying in a row, "Vamos afuera, let's go outside." You know, there's a natural rhythm to you know the languages again the program needs to be intentional and they need to plan.

Terry: Right. Sharon: It doesn't mean that more than one language can't be happening, but it needs to be intentional and not for the purpose of thinking that child is going to be listening to the language English when they can just hear, in this case, Spanish, ... Terry: Correct.

Sharon: ...know what it means. So, I think the last question we have time for... You're on a roll, [laughter] why don't you take this one, Terry? Terry: This is Rita from Idaho. Sure. Sharon: What me to read it? Terry: Sure.

Sharon: "Parents in our program say they want their children to learn English so they can be successful, and they don't want them to speak their home language in Head Start. How can we can we talk with parents to explain why we use the home language?"

Terry: So, how can we talk to parents about this? Well, I think first of all, it's really important for us to be sensitive to families and to parents. Of course they want their children to learn English. They want their children to be successful, and I think that English is key to that, educationally and globally. But it is our responsibility to help parents understand the importance of the home language, and that the home language really lays the foundation for second language acquisition. It's very important.

It's important that children are acquiring concepts that they can apply to any language, so it's the concept development piece that's so important at that young age. So what we want families to do, and what we encourage our families to do, is to speak the home language in the home, and take their children where they go and talk about, you know, the environment and relationships in their home language. In the classroom, we want to respect children, we want to respect families, and we want children to maintain that home language as well as learn English language.

So we use children's home language in the classroom as part of learning, and as part of developing social and emotional relationships, as part of developing cognitive relationships, cognitive thinking. That is because children are learning concepts so quickly at this young age, and so learning those concepts in their home language, they're able better to transfer that knowledge and learn that second language. I mean just take something as simple as the word "cat".

I mean, this is... maybe there's one in the home where the child's growing up, and they hear the word "gato", so they know that is this is a cat, they know the cat is furry, they know the cat meows, they know the cat, you know, goes outside and comes back inside, sleeps where the cat sleeps. And interestingly enough, then when they go into the a preschool setting, and they're learning the second language and they hear the word "cat", and they see a picture of the cat, their concept of the cat is very broad, because they've had lots of experiences...

Sharon: And then they can start to work... Terry: ...that concept... Sharon: ...and they'll be able to learn words like "furry" in English and other... That's a great example. Terry: Exactly.

Sharon: That's a great example. Let's end on the because those are all the questions we have time for today. Terry: Okay.

Sharon: I want to thank you for joining us and hope this Webcast has been useful to you as you begin another year of providing quality services to all children in your program, and in particular for children and families who speak languages other than English.

I hope you are as excited as we are about what the upcoming series offers. I want to again thank Amanda and of course Terry... Terry: Thank you! Sharon: ... for joining us and I look forward to introducing other programs and their exemplary efforts throughout the year. I hope you'll join us! Until next time, take care.
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