

## Ready for Success Head Start 101: Getting Started with DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start

Sharon Yandian: Welcome! I'm Sharon Yandian, the Early Language Specialist in the Office of Head Start. And, as we begin, I want to thank my colleagues: Angie Godfrey, our Infant/Toddler Specialist at the Office; as well as Rachel Roberts, our Head Start Fellow for this year, who's joining us for this webinar and for other work we're doing this year.

Today, we're going to be talking about Head Start 101. This is part of a year-long series of professional development opportunities. Our focus in this series is on children, birth to five, who are dual language learners. Just to remind everybody -- again, the -- the term "dual language learner" refers to children who are learning two or more languages at the same time, or continuing to learn their first language as they add their second language.

The series kicked off in October with a webcast that described upcoming events, and give some examples. We are gearing this webinar towards new programs and existing programs, we have several -- many, many new programs due to our ARRA funding, that are -- have been -- have been funded and will be funded in the near future. And we know they have many questions they hope that we will address. There are very exciting and some challenging times.

So, as we begin, I just want to put a little caveat in here, that this is just an introduction to a very complex topic. How to best serve children who are dual language learners and their families is something that programs work on over time. We are able to just touch on some of the most important aspects in this webinar, but the topic is complex, so we certainly hope you'll join us for other future webinars and webcasts in our series that are coming up.

What we're doing today -- [tone] -- by the Head Start Act in 2007, many of you know there was quite a bit of language in there on supporting children and families who speak languages other than English. Our Program Performance Standards have -- there are many that refer to all children and families, and in particular, there are over 40 that refer to culturally and linguistically responsive practices that exist.

We want to remind you, also, that for over 44 years, Head Start has embraced the philosophy that is: children, families, and staff have amazing strengths that they bring to programs. Families and children who speak a language other than English bring a richness of culture and language that your programs can build on, and I know that that's why you're here today, so your work is critical.

So as we begin, we have -- just to give you an overview, we have four 15-minute segments broken up under Program Design and Management, Responsive Environments and Curriculum, and Supporting Families, with some Q and A at the end. And our talk today will be framed around questions in each of those categories. We also want to make you aware -- draw your attention to a useful planning tool, the Program Planning and Preparedness Checklist, that some of you may be familiar with.

You can download it by clicking on the link in the top box on the right of the screen, and refer to it during the webinar if you want, or afterwards. This checklist can help your program identify its strengths and areas that need more work as you look at comprehensively serving children who speak languages other than English. So let's get started. Our first question in the Program Design and Management [Inaudible] looks at the big picture.

It addresses the policies and procedures that guide your program and run the systems and service delivery. So, in terms of overall policies and practices, what are the most important things to consider? I think, you know, as we look at this -- the PDM area, we really need to take stock of our existing systems and services. Most of you will need to modify your current policies and procedures if you're seeing a new population coming in.

No one policy or procedure exists in isolation -- we know that, they're interrelated. Does your program have a language policy, how your program uses English and the home language so everybody is clear, from the bus driver to the teacher to the family service worker to the policy council? I would suggest you take a look at the Program Preparedness Checklist after this webinar, or have a planning session to take stock of where your program is.

Are you just beginning to address some of the issues, are you in progress, or do you definitely need more work to do? Obviously, we need to be strategic and plan how we communicate with families. We need to be very aware of the languages and the cultures that our families bring to us, and how we're actually going to communicate with them. We need to be strategic: what we translate, why, what is our process, who will do it?

Maybe we don't translate everything -- it's not possible to translate everything -- but we need to proceed with meaningful access in mind. I think the other important point is to develop a written plan for interpretation and translation, including identifying those resources. A lot of programs are doing an

okay job with this, but they don't have anything written down, and so it -- it can unravel. It's important to document the plan so that people know what the actual policy and practices and the plans are.

If -- we're going to take a moment to take a look at a video and hear a parent talking about her home visitor. She highlights how important it is to have someone who is responsive to her family -- in this case, speaks the same language. I think you'll find that she has a comfort level, and there's a good rapport with the family. I think it may be a family -- a home visitor in the -- in the segment. After this video, we'll hear from Angie, with a focus on infant/toddler programs. Now, let's take a look at the video.

[Video begins] [Singing in Spanish] Buenos das y cmo ests? Translator: [Mother speaking in Spanish] When Maria started visiting us, my daughter was very little. Today, she's four, and she's become very outgoing. She would come and teach my daughter how to do things: how to paint, she would read books with her. Oh, Maria's a strong support. [Video ends]

Angie Godfrey: Thank you, Sharon. That is a wonderful video. And in that short clip, you can see the impact that the home visitor has had, and what a positive effect that she's had with -- with the whole family. She really has supported the learning and growth of the young children in that family. And I think for all children, of birth to five, it's so important that staff can support learning and -- and -- for both the young children and the family.

And for programs that are serving infants and toddlers who are dual language learners, it's important to focus on building a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce, that -- that hiring practices take into consideration recruitment of bilingual staff and ensure that staff reflect families that are served, both culturally and linguistically. Hiring practices should allow us to bring families from the community in as staff members and then support their professional development.

Policies and practices should involve families in their development and implementation, and policy councils must fully represent the diversity of families in the program. Sharon? Sharon: Thanks, Angie. That's great. All right, our second question, still under Program Design and Management, are -- what are effective approaches to professional development? Angie, I'm going to ask you to take this question.

Angie: Thank you, Sharon. And, again, I think that the first step is that staff must reflect first on their own culture, ethnic, racial, linguistic heritage, and family experiences. It's very important as we begin to work with families that we understand what it is that we bring, and what it is they bring to the process

of working together, and to the learning experience that they are -- the children who are -- who are in the program.

Secondly, is to be -- as these consumers to local and online resources, as I mentioned earlier, it's so important when hiring staff that we hire staff that reflect the population, and that we hire staff and help them develop strong professional development plans. There are coursework and degrees offered at institutions of higher ed, both locally and online, and we need to ensure that every staff member has access to those opportunities.

I would just like to briefly mention that the Office of Head Start funds a -- a program through the University of Cincinnati, and currently they offer an online degree in both Spanish and English for preschool children, and they're in the process of developing infant/toddler online degrees in both English and Spanish for those working with the younger children.

That's just one example of many for folks to take advantage of. And Sharon, I know that you -- you are going to give us the name of an organization that can help programs to support their staff to have their transcripts analyzed.

Sharon: Yeah, thanks, Angie. I just wanted to mention, you know, there are staff who come to our programs who have degrees from foreign institutions, and I know that that's very challenging for some programs. How do they work with that? What are the requirements? You know, I think the first thing that we can start is by talking to your local -- you know, most programs have a partnership with a local community college or university. Start to explore in that way.

There is an -- an organization, and I'm just going to say the acronym right now, and then I'll say it. It's AACRAO.org, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers -- again, AACRAO.org. And they are a degree evaluation organization. So, basically, they will -- first of all, you can call them up to get more information just to learn about it, but they -- what they do is they look at degrees from foreign countries, the -- the -- the big picture of the degree, or course-by-course evaluation, and then make a judgement as to whether or not -- how it compares to degrees in the United States. So that's a place to begin, Angie.

Angie: Okay, thank you, Sharon. And as we discuss this, I think that it's important that we really understand the -- the whole picture. We're looking for staff who have both the education requirements

that Head Start and Early Head Start require, and that also these requirements encompass working in culturally and linguistically diverse environments. It's not either/or. We can support staff to have all competencies for working with -- with children.

And then the -- the next point that I wanted to make is staff must be trained to become knowledgeable about first- and second-language acquisition. And, again, this should be part of every professional development plan. They also need to develop effective teaching strategies for working with children whose language they do not speak. And an important thing for us to remember is all of the recent brain research about children and children's learning shows us that children learn language -- or languages -- in the context of interactions with their environment, and with the people in their environment.

The people they work with are so important, and those ongoing interactions, supporting dual language learning or monolingual language learning, really will help children. The final thing is that as -- as staff are working, that they understand that children learn language in a language-rich environment, and that environment is primarily supported through caregiver interactions; not through labels, not through just having books on a shelf, but through the sole integration of a language within the environment.

Sharon: Thank you, Angie. Rachel, what can you share with us related to professional development opportunities in your experience?

Rachel Roberts: Well, Sharon and Angie, as you both know, I am a classroom teacher, and over my experience over the years, I found it very helpful when my education coordinator and program managers offered specific training opportunities related to language development, if specific to the needs of the children that were in my classroom or within our program. One way they developed these trainings was through the use of the Program Preparedness Checklist, and also through staff surveys.

And the trainings that we had were then followed up with ongoing conversations with our education coordinators, looking at what was happening within our classroom, and the implementation of successful strategies for teaching. Teachers want professional development opportunities.

Sharon: That's great, Rachel. That's a great message, thank you. All right, our second question under Responsive Environments and Curriculum is -- you know, when you walk into a Head Start or an Early Head Start program, your attention is caught by the physical environment. And in the case of a center-

based program, what does the room look like? And by the activity of the children and the adults -- what are they doing? What kinds of conversations are taking place?

What is the classroom climate? All of this is about curriculum. You've probably asked yourself, "Is this a setting where I would be comfortable as a staff person, or as a parent leaving my child there?" How do we ensure that we can answer "Yes" to these questions? So, here's our lead-off question for this segment: what do culturally and linguistically responsive environments and curriculum look and feel like?

Well, as Angie already shared, people are the most important resource, the -- the most effective part of the learning environment. Yes, the materials are important, but space -- it's well organized -- but really, the -- the people are the most important resource. And who you bring into the environment if you are trying to support, you know -- if you don't speak the language and you're trying to support the other languages, who you bring in,...

...the volunteers, what they do, how you work with them, is all extremely important. The other piece is learning about each family and their home language environment to help make that connection. What are the child's likes and dislikes? What brings them joy? What are they scared of? Those are very important questions for all children, in particular for children who are going to have -- who you're not going to be able to communicate verbally with, perhaps, through the beginning of your year.

You'll want to know all of the things that will allow that transition -- to make the children, and your work with them, as successful as possible. Leading into that, because this is a question that a lot of programs have: "But I -- I don't speak all of the languages of the children, you know -- what can I do?" Well, you certainly can learn meaningful words and phrases in each child's language. I think that's very important, and we want to be careful to not just learn words like "stop" and "bathroom" and... We want to find those words of -- what is it in English -- you know, of endearment.

Those things that are things that will make the child comfortable, and -- and also let them perk up. "Wow, how do they know that word?" That it matters. That's very, very important. Next, we have a video that highlights the diversity of our children and families. Let's take a look at the video.

[Video begins] Teacher and Children: [Singing] Everybody comes from a different place, everybody has a different face. Child 1: I'm from Mexico. Child 2: Santo Domingo. Child 3: Guatamala. [Video ends]

Sharon: You know, what I love about this clip is that the children speak with a sense of pride about themselves, and this is exactly what we want to support in our Head Start programs. You know, what we saw was three children who speak the same language. Sometimes people mistakenly say, "Oh, they're all Spanish." They all speak Spanish but their families come from different countries. They're all Latino or Hispanic, but they have different cultures, customs, and experiences, and this diversity we must incorporate into responsive environments and curriculum the way that this teacher did in that very short clip.

So, yes, we need to provide materials, books, music that reflect the cultures and language. People know this, but what we need to remember is that we need to use them -- use them in a meaningful way. We need to meet -- also, we need to meet each child where they are, and create -- create those opportunities for them to be involved, so that we have them joining group activities, be sources of information.

We need to find ways for every child to experience success every day. So, Angie, can you share a little bit about environments for infants and toddlers?

Angie: Thank you, Sharon. Again, I think the most important thing is that environments must be developed and must reflect the relationship of the caregiver, the child, and the family. To really build on -- to really build towards success, it's important that all -- the caregiver, child, and family have strong relationships where they can share and learn from each other.

Caregivers that develop relationships with children and families that are based on an understanding of culture, language, and experiences, really can support what it is that each family brings into the program. They're also able to support everyday experience of children in the context of the home language. It's really true what you said earlier, Sharon, children do connect. And even if it's one meaningful word or phrase, or -- or an experience that they have at home, it brings such a sense of -- of -- of nurturing and support to the youngest children in the programs, when they are seeing that integrated in the program, as well as at home.

So it's so important that staff work with children and families in an environment that understands language development, understands dual language development, and understands it in the context of listening and conversations and gestures as a foundation for learning languages or multiple languages.

Again, receptive language is so important. Children are open at the youngest ages to hearing what it is that you -- that we're saying to them, and we have to be very aware and supportive of receptive language in young children.

And they can do it in as many languages as they hear. That's also key for working with young children. And then it's so important that environment really encompass the entire day. We don't just have language experiences for young children. Language should be a part of eating, diaper changing. Any time that staff is interacting with children there should also be language going on, and it -- and it can happen throughout the day, whether it's a planned activity or whether it's times like eating and diaper changing.

So that's important to understand, throughout the day, how it promotes development and learning. Sharon? Sharon: Great, thanks, Angie. Rachel, I know you -- you and I have talked about many things about your work in the classroom. Can you share some of your experiences that address the responsive learning environments?

Rachel: Sure. Just as lesson plans don't look the same from year to year and we have used an emergent curriculum within the classroom, in my many years of teaching Head Start and other preschool programs, my classroom looked different year to year. And it's always a reflection and a representation of the children and the families that are being served. My teaching staff help to create a warm and welcoming environment, and one way that we did this was in the creation of a family board within our classroom.

Now, our family board included family photos, words of welcome in home languages, and other representations of our group. We incorporated familiar words in children's home languages, and then, throughout the day, we'd play music during routines, and tried to have many different ways to represent the families' home cultures. It created sort of a quilt in our classroom of families. Sharon: That's wonderful. Thank you for sharing that, Rachel. All right. Well, at the heart of a program for young children is individualizing -- that is, recognizing them as individuals,...

...each with his or her own strengths and competencies, needs, interests, and developing at his or her own rate. So, we know that -- how do we individualize for children who are dual language learners? Well, there's a lot to say here as well, so we'll try to, again, keep it brief, and I know we're going to address this on future webinars and webcasts, but one -- one of the most important things that we need to do is focus on the whole child, their competencies and skills in their home language and English.



You know, we're looking at all of the social -- all of the domains: social-emotional, physical, cognitive. They're all the pieces that come together in a child's development, and we need to make sure that we don't limit what we gather about a child or what we think about a child based on their -- what they can demonstrate to us in English only. And that's extremely important, and there are ways to gather information from many different sources to -- to get at those competencies that you may not be able to gather if you -- you do not speak the child's home language.

So, there's a whole field out there that's focused just on that. We need to look at nonverbal behaviors and rely on behavioral cues to see what a child knows and can do. Remember that the goal is teaching, and in turn, learning, as well as helping them learn English. And those are not mutually exclusive; we need to remember that. The other piece is, interaction is key. Interaction -- we've heard already from our colleagues here, but we need to be mindful here that -- that some children who are dual language learners are seen and not heard -- they're very quiet,...

...especially given -- whether it's the beginning of the year or -- or how long it takes them to be able to begin to have expressive language, you know, as Angie was talking about, receptive language. And what often happens, I -- I see, is that those children are -- are in -- in the classroom, but they're not being interacted with much because they're so compliant and they're quiet, and easy to work with. Those are the children that we need to care a lot about and be very mindful of in our work. Angie, can you share a little bit about things -- some other aspects?

Angie: Thank you, Sharon, and I'd just like to build on what you said. It's so important that children don't become invisible, and that the -- the individualization for each child -- infant, toddler, preschooler -- really involves how the staff member individualizes, also. To be aware of each child in the classroom and how to draw them in. It -- it can't be an accepted program -- I'm sorry -- practice, that because a child doesn't -- doesn't speak the language that I speak, if I'm in a classroom or working with the family, that I don't have as much of a responsibility.

And that's so key to it. And again, connect with families around setting goals for language learning for each child. It's so important to know what the family's expectations are for language learning. What is it they expect the child to learn at home? What is it they expect the child to learn in the program, working with staff in the program? And take that into consideration. Also, it's important to know who the child communicates with.

There are goals for learning -- English-language learning, but there should also be goals around the child's daily communications. An example would be, if a child spends a lot of time with the family member who speaks only a language other than English, then that should be part of how we individualize and -- and keep the child involved in the classroom. Another thing that's so important is that children need to be able to play with language.

They need to experience language in play. They need to experience language as they hear it and as they being to understand it, to speak it. And playing, being read to, singing, storytelling are all activities that should happen during the day that would -- children should be able to experience in the context of the languages they speak.

Sharon: Great, Angie, that was a wonderful example. Thank you. Rachel, as a classroom teacher, you must individualize each and every day for each and every child. What have you learned about doing this with children who are dual language learners?

Rachel: Well, Sharon, I really liked your point about the children who are going through a sort of quiet period, through their dual language learning in -- in your classroom, and it reminds me of my past experiences, and how easy those children may seem within the classroom. They follow the rules, they -- they play with their toys, but they're not necessarily doing a lot of verbal engagement. And really, for myself, I've found that it was necessary to intentionally plan for interactions with those children.

I knew it was my responsibility, and so I would sit with those children, and play and -- and engage with them, and then engage them also in our classroom routines. Another strategy that I've used in the past has been using a list of children's names along with my planning sheet to make sure that every day I've had the same interactions with the children on the list. So as you review at the end of your day and look over what worked and what didn't work from -- from your day on your lesson plan,...

...you can check off those children that you've had interactions with, and also see, "Who do I need to make sure I really interact with the next day?"

Sharon: That's great, Rachel. I can see that that would also be good to use as -- in terms of the types of interactions, because sometimes, also, with our children who are dual language learners, we -- we want to make sure that our interactions with them are very positive, and they're not always corrective, so it would be good to use it in that way, too. That's great. All right. Well, you know, a burning question for

many Head Start and Early Head Start programs is how we help children make progress in English and in their home language.

And again, I don't want to keep referring to future webinars and webcasts, but we really have just -- just a snippet of time today, but -- and that's why I wanted to make sure that people are aware of future opportunities, because we'll be spending an entire webcast and webinar on that. But we want to keep in mind that when we're talking about promoting language and literacy development, we're talking about all kinds of language development: listening and understanding, speaking and communicating.

So as we look at the question how do we promote language development, some of the most important points you'll see on the screen there -- I mean, the first is to be purposeful and intentional in language use. Encourage conversation. This may seem very basic, but what we do know is, we need to see a lot more conversation happening in our classrooms. We need to see what some people call the -- the looping, the back-and-forth, the one-on-one, that sustained conversation that Rachel was talking about. And I think that her advice is a good one:...

...to track that. You may think that that's happening in your classroom, so... Narrate throughout the day; describe what you're doing in talking. You know, even those children learning the language, they're listening to you describe, you know, "I'm going to pick up the bottle now," and "We're going to go outside." You know, you also want to make sure that you are exposing children to both their home language and English. And in that same context, you have a plan or an approach for the use of the home language and English. It may look different -- and it probably should look different...

...at the beginning and the end of the year, especially when kids -- kids are going from pre-K to K. There are goals that you have for children in home language and English at different ages, and your program needs to write that down and develop that. I think the other point is that we need to validate and make children feel good about their attempts to talk. We need to -- in order to help them continue to talk more and -- we need to kind of repeat what they've said, expand it indirectly, correct by modeling. I think most of us know now that we don't correct directly a child when they're making their attempt to talk.

But we can do the modeling in a very respectful way that helps children learn. Angie, can you share a little bit with us in terms of infants and toddlers and language and literacy?

Angie: Thanks, Sharon. And again, just to build on what you said, I think it's so important to support everyday experiences for the other children in the context of the home language. And -- and what exactly does it mean? I think it -- it means that as you're working with children, that you're really drawing in their -- the experiences that they have. A wonderful example that I've seen work many times is, as children nap in an, you know -- in an Early Head Start environment, that many times if a parent can share a song they sing with the child, even in the language, it so can comfort and support a young child.

And that's a perfect way of -- of supporting them in the context of home language. And it could be books, it could be other things. It can, you know -- I think as programs plan, food is such an important part, and what young children eat -- babies eat -- it's possible to bring all that in. The second thing is, and we all know how important conversations are, that the conversations should be interaction. It's not just directive language, but it's really interacting with children, and it's supporting them in terms of gestures and body language.

We know how important non-verbal and body language is with young children and how much more they understand through that interaction -- interaction. So, build on language experiences and scaffolding. As we've talked about before, start with what children are interested in. It requires great observation skills, but that's something we should be doing. And as we observe, we can then scaffold language experiences based on the interests of the -- even the youngest children, and support expanding language in the context of those experiences. Sharon?

Sharon: Thank you, Angie. Those are great -- great suggestions. Rachel, as a Head Start teacher, I know you've found many ways to promote language and literacy development of young children. What has worked for you that you can share with our audience?

Rachel: Well, that's a great question, Sharon. I'd love to share. As a Head Start teacher, I really view language and literacy as an integral part of the entire curriculum, and not just a separate component. Language and literacy, I felt, should be imbedded amongst everything that we were doing in the classroom. And one strategy that I use, especially in terms of oral language development, was this concept of "Strive for Five," making sure that I had five back-and-forth interactions during conversations with children.

I also found it very important just to play with children. Oral language happens so naturally when adults play, and so I've really planned on making myself available to children, to sit down in the block area, to build, to -- sort of what you were saying before, that parallel talk or self-talk while playing, you know,

"I'm stacking four blocks on top of each other." And then one last thing that I thought was really important, and a great strategy that I've used, I wanted to mention, was making sure that books in home languages and in English were -- were around the classroom and not just in the literacy center.

So concept books could be in the block area, or science books could be by the science stuff. Sharon: That's great, Rachel. That's a great, great -- several tips there. All right. Our next question in Responsive Environments and Curriculum segment, still -- this question comes up frequently, so I wanted to address it, and that is: is there one best model that programs should implement? What do you think? Colleagues?

No, there's no one-size-fits-all model, and, you know, not trying to be funny, but -- but I guess I am. Programs really want to know exactly what they should -- should do. But basically, when you think about our Head Start programs, and again, remember that 86 percent of our Head Start programs have children who speak languages other than English, that -- or many different languages -- look at the geography of our country -- programs must tailor their program to address the goals and to serve the children and families that are there.

No one program model fits all, even within programs -- [Inaudible] -- that's why it's so important to have the -- your -- your language policy, and how do you plan on using home language and English. I think about programs that are very large, and even though they have maybe 10 languages in their program, the geography is such that families who are Spanish-speaking live near families who are Spanish-speaking, and they could have a whole center where they're just Spanish-speakers and English-speakers, whereas, 15 miles away, they could have a program -- a -- a center that has many languages.

Now, is their approach going to be the same even in the same -- in that one program? No, it's not. So I think that no one program model fits all, even within programs, and I think it's important to remember that. I think the other piece is that, you know, we really need to be grounded in child development and effective practices in -- in early childhood. I know that some people have said good Early -- good quality is good quality, and I think that is true when you're looking at what -- what Angie and Rachel have said about teacher-child interactions, how children learn, what is appropriate.

I think good quality is good quality, and then we've got more work to do for our children who are dual language learners. But good quality is good quality. So really, I think that it's such an interesting topic, but I'm going to stop, and I'm going to have Angie share a little bit about infant and toddler program models.

Angie: Thank you, Sharon. I really love something that Rachel said earlier, and it really resonated with me, that her classroom looked different each year. And I think that those of us who worked with children know that that's so true, that -- that it's -- there's not, as you said, Sharon, a program model, but that there are strong components within a program that support children's learning, and certainly within Head Start Performance Standards that support our ability. And I've said all these things before, so I'm just going to say, in that context:...

...1) relationships are key, and those relationships are with the caregiver, the child, and the family -- all three are important parts of the relationship; and then, 2) interaction -- children -- you said it earlier, Sharon, people are the best resources in a program, and interaction between the caregiver and the child is key, and that should be a part of every program. And in individualizing -- in individualizing in the context of home language, language learning, and family goals, all of those things are what I would say you need to look at first when you're look -- when you're thinking about program models.

Sharon: Thank you. Thank you, Angie. Yeah, I mean -- I think you need to know what your goals are, and then from there your approaches will flow. So that's -- programs have different goals, they should have different goals, there are many, many reasons for that. So, great. All right, well, we're moving into our third segment now on Supporting Families. And I know that you know -- participants know that from its inception over 40 years ago, Head Start has been committed to working with families to support them in their own goals, whether it be employment, literacy-related, to support them as they promote their child's development,...

...and we know that they are the primary educators of their children. And to do that successfully, we have to get to know each family. And we want to focus on family strengths, interests, the history they bring, and respond to each family individually just as we individualize for children. So, how do we find out from families about their language and culture? And, in addition, how do we use that information to provide quality services?

Well, the first thing we need to do is ask. We need to figure out ways to -- and Angie has spoken a little bit about this, and so has Rachel earlier -- all household members are sources of language input, and all household members have something to share about the children in your care, so we need to talk with them, and not just the one shot, one visit -- home visit at the beginning of the year, we're done, you know. In fact, the more they get warmed up to you and they realize their child is having a good experience -- or not -- they're going to want to talk to you.

And you're going to want to talk to them and be ready for the types of information you need to do the best by their child. The other thing that Rachel shared with us already is how important it is that the education and family service staff work together to support programs. I think the family service staff, many of them hired particularly because they are of the culture -- at least one of the cultures of the -- of the families that they work with,...

...those are our lead-ins, especially if we are not of the culture or we speak the language. They are very important liaisons -- a bridge, if you will -- and many of them are willing to share with you about their experience with the culture, and their own experience even if they're of the same culture. That's a very important resource that we don't want to overlook. We need to become familiar with cultural customs and practices, and again, you can do that through staff if they're willing to share in respectful ways, as we also individualize for our children.

Good. I'd like to -- the last one I really want to talk about before we go to the small video segment is that when we do have families -- we need to orient families to all aspects of our program. We can't make assumptions that we're going to send home a flyer, and they're going to read everything, even if it's in their home language. But, when we ask them to come into our program as we often do, and I mentioned this earlier, to participate as part of our in-kind, ways you want them to be involved,...

...we need to give them specific suggestions for their own participation. Give them examples of how they're needed, and what they can do to offer, and to -- to make the program better. So that's something I want to say there. You know, in our next video clip, we'll hear an Alaskan Native elder explain what children gain from being in a program that incorporates their culture.

[Video begins] Alaskan Elder: I think it is important because then they would understand their ancestors' subsistence -- way of life. Then they would understand that moose makes them survive. It gives them soup, meat, whatever -- however it is prepared by a family. So if they see it taught in class then, then as they grow -- then they would realize that they have an identity. [Video ends]

Angie: Again, another wonderful video, Sharon, and just such an -- an important message in terms of how we work with children. One other thing that seems -- that resonates with me is when he talks about understanding their ancestry as a way of developing identity, and I think for all of us as, you know, we

reflect on who we are and where we come from and what we bring, we're more able then to welcome families and help them understand what we all bring to the program.

Just how we integrate is so important. It is true that the moose is -- plays a critical role in the culture that he's talking about. It provides food, maybe for a whole winter. It provides clothing. And it really supports a child's identity, both in the context of their family and in the community. And it -- it -- his video does answer the question, what's important to your family and how we integrate it.

And I would just like to say that programs must welcome families, and -- and not -- and it's going to look differently in every program, and they must be open to possibilities that each family brings to the program. Families share where they feel welcome. You said that also, Sharon, and I think that's key. It's developing a relationship so that they can share, and asking questions, and asking about stories. Family stories are what bring richness and strength to each of the programs, so it's so important to understand that in the context of working with the families in each of the programs across the country.

Sharon: Thank you. Thank you, Angie, for sharing that. Now Rachel, how have you brought language and culture into your classroom? Rachel: Well Sharon, I'd like to share one strategy that I use, usually on the first home visit prior to when the program year began, and I really found that that first initial home visit was a great opportunity to start developing that relationship with family. You're being invited into their home, and you get to meet them, perhaps for the first time.

So, what I would do is I'd bring along a digital camera from my classroom, and I'd work with the families to take photos of important family members, pets, favorite toys, things that were important to the children that were going to be coming into my classroom. These photos would then be easily printed out and then hung on our family board, and they were great tools to welcome in families, to start conversations, to connect children with each other and children to staff, and to help sort of build our classroom culture.

I think using the technology that we have available to us right now is a real asset. And towards the end of the program year, you're able to share those pictures with the family, to send them home and sort of build their library of their history in photos using, you know, the tools we have available.

Sharon: That's great, Rachel, that's a great example. Thank you so much for sharing that. All right, our next question for -- in Supporting Families is how do we work with families on their goals for language



development for their children? This is a big one. And I think -- you know, many families come into Head Start with the strong belief that their children should learn English quickly, even if it is at the expense of the home language. They're very eager, as we all are, to have their children succeed. And learning English is a part of that success, and that's not something we would -- we would ever negate.

I think what we need to do is -- we talked about this earlier, but we need to listen to what families say about their goals, and we -- we need to acknowledge where families and programs both agree or disagree. And we need to work towards a mutual understanding about what we all can agree on, and maybe there are things that we're not ever going to fully agree on. I think the other thing is, we do need to share research with parents as to why support for home language at home and in Head Start is important.

I mean, can you, as a staff, explain why the use of home language helps children's overall learning and a child's learning English? Can you explain how strategic use of the home language in the program is also aligned with that goal? Those are very important things that you really need to take stock of yourself, because the -- the parents who rely on you to share what you know. Even if they have their own feelings about it, it is our responsibility. So those are two things that I would say are very important. Angie, can you add to that?

Angie: Well, a little, Sharon. I'd say you covered it. It's -- I mean, it's -- that is the key. It's really what is our responsibility in terms of setting goals, and it is, first of all, to listen, and it is to support parents as they struggle with issues. Many parents do feel it's key that their children learn English, and learn English quickly if they're going to be successful in school. And staff can play such an important role, and all staff -- I loved it when Rachel talked about working so closely with the family worker in her program.

All staff should be able to support both the home language and parents' comfort with dual language with both the home language and with learning English, and not feel that it has to be either/or for their child to be successful. So I would just say that it's -- it's very similar for infants and toddlers. Listen to families, and then help them to work through the challenges, so that together you can support realistic goals for children's language learning.

Sharon: That's great. Those are great suggestions, Angie. Rachel, how have you addressed family language goals in your program -- in your classroom? Rachel: Well, you know, as a teacher I think goals and objectives are very important because they help us have a framework for what we're going to do across the year. And with that being said, I think it's key to respect the family's goals for their children...

...and also work with them on -- like what -- what both you and Angie were saying -- on understanding the importance of learning in both home languages and in English. And one of the key ways to do that, I've found, was, like we've said before, using the family service worker, and having a team approach with the family, so the families goals are understood by the teaching staff, are understood by the family service worker, and are individualized so that they can be carried out at home as well as school. And -- and those goals may also look different.

I think that that's something important to state, too, is that the classroom goals may look different than the home goals for those children. And we want to take into consideration -- I have often taken into consideration the -- the family.

Sharon: Great. Thanks so much. You know, as we leave the Supporting Families Around Language Development, I just wanted to -- as I was listening to Rachel -- one of the things that sometimes happens in -- in programs is that everyone places all the responsibility on the teacher around what's happening with what -- with home language and with English. Imagine how important it is for the family service worker, who may or may not be from the culture of that family, to be able to articulate what the goals are for the classroom and what are the goals for home language and English.

What is the plan? Why are we using so much home language at the beginning of the year? There is a method to the madness, you know. At the end of the year we'll be using more English, if that is, you know, the goal. So it's very important that all of the staff really have a handle on it; it does not lay on the teacher's shoulders only, so I just wanted to make that point. All right. So, the -- we're now turning to Communities.

What role -- what role can community organizations play? It's very important to look beyond your classroom, and I think -- the only points I would make here, quickly, is that we do need to acknowledge the wealth of knowledge and resources in the community. They are the natural connections in the community, whether you live in a -- in a community where your -- refugee-receiving community where there are refugee organizations, as an example, that will serve as a source of -- a resource.

You know, we need to reach out. We need to partner with organizations to support the family goals, so we have to be clear about what those goals are, whether it's adult literacy, learning English -- you know, we don't often -- we don't want to just say, "Here, take this slip, go -- go here at seven at night," you

know. What is that program like? What type of -- is it ESL? Can you learn a little more about that program? Is it welcoming -- is it Head Start, Early Head Start, you know? Or is it a foreign culture there?

Is that really going to be successful for the family? We also need to tap into organizations to provide those language models for Head Start. They do exist -- places of worship, senior centers. We need to create a big quilt, as Rachel was saying -- friends of Head Start group. And with that, I would make sure to remember, there's so many ways to pull in the community and make them also feel a part of your program. You need to thank them. You need to have a thank-you ceremony, you need to have a -- a dinner, something, you know, that honors those that are working with your program. But Angie, can you add to that?

Angie: Just a couple of things, Sharon. I just -- one of the things that we -- that we know in general from research is that children succeed best when in the context of strong families and strong communities. We also know the history of Head Start and -- and delivering comprehensive services to children, that for years Head Start has built on community partnerships, knowing that sometimes there are other entities in a community that know families and that works with them. And that's a question to ask families, you know, "Where else do you go, what else do you do?"

And then draw those partners in so that they can -- the program then is in a stronger place to support families and to support services for children who are learning. And families are not having to -- it's not such a disconnect for families to go from one agency to the other, but that everyone works together to support the child's experience and the family's experience.

Sharon: Great, those are great suggestions, Angie. Rachel, I'd like to turn to you. What are the ways you have involved your community in your Head Start program?

Rachel: Well, you know, as a Head Start teacher, I saw my job as much bigger than just in the classroom. And, you know, I'm -- I'm a community member, and I'm active as a part of the community. So my -- my being involved and knowing the resources around the community, it was easy for me to access and ask community members to come into my classroom and share their knowledge and skills with the children in my care. A good example is, we had some sixth grade students within our elementary school that had gone to a national level with their hoop dancing.

And we were able to invite them in, have them demonstrate their hoop dances for our classroom, which was great for our native population; also great for all of the children in the classroom to really experience and share that with -- with those girls. It was wonderful.

Sharon: Great. I really love that notion of you are a member of the community. It's very logical. That's wonderful. Thank you, Rachel. Great, well this brings us to the last segment, the Questions and Answers from you all that have sent us that questions. I want to thank Angie and Rachel for their insight on these important topics. So from the questions -- and there'll be more, we'll be answering some questions with Rachel and Angie, as well.

So our first question comes from Joan, a researcher in Florida, and it's the first question on the screen: "Are dual language learners the children who are enrolled in a program that is teaching them in two languages?" And I'm really glad that Joan asked this question, because we've been very purposeful in looking at the terminology, and obviously -- again, to remind you, children learning two or more languages at once, or a child learning a second language while continuing the first language, is a dual language learner.

And why do we use that instead of English-language learner, I think her question was. you know, we're thinking about our birth to five population with children learning language, period. And we're also thinking about our history of being strength-based. And we talk about languages as an asset, as a strength, and so when we think about -- in our mind -- about dual language learners, to me, what comes to mind is a child who's bringing more than one language.

Whether or not that program is able to support fully home language in the classroom is a different matter. The child is still going to a home where they're speaking another language, They're coming to your environment, and there's going to be English in that environment, I can be sure, which there should be. And there may be different levels of home language depending on the goals and the abilities of the program. So that is the reason we're using "dual language learners."

And the field is moving in the direction, I believe, in terms of using that term for our children who speak languages other than English. The second question comes to us from Nina in Washington, D.C. Is that right? How are these... Okay, I'm sorry, just to go back to that first question, there's a second part to it, I didn't realize. "How are these children different from English language learners?" And I don't think they are different from English language learners, it's the terminology is different -- there are many different terms people use.

"Bilingual," "limited English proficient," "English learners." So as not to be confusing, I'll cut it off there. All right. So, let's see. The next question -- this one comes to us from Nina, correct? "How can we support American Indian/Alaska Native children who speak English at home and are being exposed to learning environments for acquiring their tribal language?" Angie, you have such a long history of working with tribal programs, could you answer this question?

Angie: Well, sure, Sharon, I'd be glad to give an answer to it. I'm sure that there are -- there are many, but just from my own experiences -- but first I think it's important to note that all AI/AN programs fund individual tribes all across the country, and each tribe has different policies, traditions, and processes about both -- both language and language preservation. And I -- I think for most tribal Early Head Start and Head Start programs, they understand that the best environment is -- the wonderful environment, I should say, I'm sure there're more -- that supports speaking and preserving native languages.

And within each community, Head Starts are aware, and certainly can be an environment where language is spoken and language can be spoken. One very quick example is, I was in a program that had a language preservation grant, and elders from the tribe came into both Head Start and Early Head Start to talk to children in the native language. So, just as diverse as each of the AI/AN tribal programs is, so are the many ways that language can be supported through the structure of Head Start and Early Head Start.

Sharon: Great. Thank you so much. Again, we could just talk for a long, long time about these questions, but we're getting to the end here. So the next question comes to us from Linda, a family support manager in Washington state. "When using interpreters, how can we build effective partnerships with families when our relationships depend on a third party?" And this is a wonderful question, and there is so much to unpack about this question, so I'll just mention a few pieces.

As everyone knows, also, interpreters are those that orally restate from one language to another, and translators are doing the written material. We often find that people confuse the translator and interpreter, so I just wanted to clarify that. I think what's important is, and what -- what she's talking about here is how do we help programs communicate, build relationships, and work together with families? The first thing we need to do is be clear about the roles and responsibilities of -- of the interpreter, what the program believes the role is, whether that interpreter is supplied by the program as a paid person, as a volunteer, as a community resource.

You know, there are stages of preparing staff to work with interpreters. We should have training for staff on how to work with interpreters. Speaking another language, people often think, "Oh, you speak the language," you know. "Fine. Can you interpret?" You know -- I know that happens a lot if you have teacher who speaks another language, and a family happens to come in to you -- yanked out of the classroom, "Can you help me talking to...?" That...

On the one hand, we are so -- we feel very compelled to want to communicate, but on the other hand, we have to be very cognizant that we're not compromising the different roles of staff, who may be hired for different roles, not necessarily to be the interpreter. We need to be very mindful of confidentiality around -- when we have interpretation, and how we use family members. Again, I know we often, you know, want to use a sibling or a family member because we're desperate to communicate, but we have to really be mindful about how that changes the dynamic in the family,...

...you know, and the nature of what we're interpreting. And also -- again, I go back to the fact that you do need a plan. It's not a catch-as-catch-can, someone's walking by, "Can you help me?" You know, there has to be a plan. And there's always going to be times where it seems the plan is not going to work, and that's okay. We need to make sure that the families can meet interpreters before, you know - - don't just throw them in the room together and think everything will just start. The rapport is very important.

And my last point is that during that interaction, we need to address our remarks directly to the family. Look and listen to the family members, not at the interpreter, because that is the -- I think that could get at Linda's -- wait. And our last question comes from Linda, in Washington state also, and I'm going to just summarize it. What is the best -- the best way to utilize staff who speak the same language in our program? Are they in positions where they do not have regular contact with families? What -- what have other programs done? So how do we maximize the languages regardless of where they're employed.

You know, I think one of the things that comes to mind -- again, this is not a requirement at all, but we need to see language competence as a skill, an extra skill. You know, there are some fields where when you speak another language and you're able to use it, you're compensated, and some programs are able to do that, to value that language. So if you do have somebody who is being hired in a different role, maybe they're a manager or maybe they're the secretary, or whatever -- if they're going to use their language and it's not in their job description, first we need to be clear about that.

And then programs should consider this type of -- of -- [Inaudible] -- about that. We need to make sure that there is training, again, and we need to make sure we have a way to make sure that the language that they're offering -- you know, for those who are not natives, you know, that -- that -- that their language competency is -- is strong. So, I don't know, does anyone have anything else to add to this question, or...?

Angie: Well, I -- I would agree with you. I think that all of those are key to supporting language in the program and supporting staff that should not be pulled in a lot of different directions because they know a language, but there should be a strategic plan on how to use staff. Sharon: Great. Thanks. All right. Well, before we go, we would be remiss if we didn't talk about our Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. I have the address on the screen if you're not aware.

You can also just type ECLKC into Google and this will come up. There's a rich source of information there, you can check for announcements about upcoming... And this is the -- the Office of Head Start's official web site. I wanted to just give you a screenshot of the landing page. On the left side, you can click on "Dual Language Learners and their Families" and get more information. Or, there's the Early Childhood Development site, things that we've referenced today, as well as the Early Head Start site.

I wanted to also reference the upcoming events in January and February. Now that you have -- now that you have registered with us, you will be getting a "Save the Date."

-- End of Video --