

## Literacy Development for Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Head Start and Early Head Start Webinar

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Sharon Yandian: Good afternoon. I'm Sharon Yandian, Early Language Specialist for the Office of Head Start. Great to be back again with you. Today's webinar focuses on literacy on children birth to 5 who are dual language learners. It's part of the yearlong series Ready for Success: Supporting Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Head Start and Early Head Start.

This series supports Head Start's roadmap to excellence which lays out actions that we're taking to improve school readiness outcomes in Head Start children and to promote their long-term success. I'm sure you're all well aware in the 2007 Head Start Act, there were numerous places that refer to the need to support the home language and to promote English acquisition for children who are dual language learners.

Again, just to recap, we know the Office of Head Start defines children who are dual language learners as those who acquire two or more languages simultaneously and those who may be learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language. There are many, many terms that are used in the field for children who are dual language learners and we've listed some of them there on the screen. So really, what does it mean for a Head Start program to serve children who are learning in two languages?

Head Start programs serve a very diverse population in a variety of different settings, even classrooms or centers within the same program have different compositions of children, families and staff. There may be a mix of languages in the classroom or primarily one home language. And as Head Start programs know, this composition can change from year to year depending on your community, your community assessment.

We also know that the availability of resources to support language and literacy development intentionally in two languages is different depending on the makeup of the community a program serves, whether they're trained bilingual staff or volunteers or libraries with multilingual children's books, there are a lot of things that influence how we support our children who are dual language learners.

Today's webinar will give you ideas to think about, suggestions and resources you can use to address the development of children who are dual language learners with a focus on their literacy development. Throughout this webinar you'll notice that we'll refer to the literacy domains from the Child Outcomes Framework which should be very familiar to our Head Start programs. This Child Outcomes Framework focuses on children three to five. In general early literacy refers to the development of early reading and writing skills.

We also will address the early literacy development of infants and toddlers and children who are in home-based programs. Before we get into today's webinar I would like to introduce our panelists. First our facilitator for today is Graciela Italiano-Thomas who many of you have hopefully seen on others of our series that we've done. She's a national and international expert in education and early learning and has worked extensively with children who are dual language learners. It's great to have Graciela here today.

Second you see José Paz. He comes to us from Colorado and was a former teacher and he is the Regional Coordinator for the National Head Start Family Literacy Center. Great to have you, José. Next we also have Carola Matera who comes to us from California. She's recently written a research article focused on children who are dual language learners in literacy and she currently works as a Technical Assistance Provider for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs.

We also have a great resource in Eileen Torres who comes to us from New York and she's the Senior Director for

Agri- Business Child Development. She has many many years experience with Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant Seasonal Head Start, not too many, but many many years of experience. It's great to have Eileen. And last but certainly not least is Ruth Shagourey who comes to us from Portland, Oregon where she teaches and works with teachers at Lewis and Clark College and she's written numerous books on literacy and it's great to have Ruth with us today.

Today's webinar will be broken into three segments, the first you can see is -- the first segment is Connections, Addressing the Intersections and Connections Among Language Development, Literacy Development, Culture, Family and Programs. The second segment, What Does It Look Like? We hope to explain literacy elements and what their development looks like in young children who are learning in two or more languages. The last segment is called The Big Picture.

What we hope to do there is highlight the systemic program-wide processes to consider in order to support literacy development in children who are learning in two or more languages. We encourage you to take notes and try some ideas and please know you can also download the PowerPoint in English and Spanish to take notes on. As always for additional information on children who are dual language learners you can check out the ECLKC which is the Office of Head Start's online resource.

This webinar and other media and written materials are available there. At this point, I'd like to turn to Graciela as she will kick off Segment One for us. Graciela?

Graciela Italiano-Thomas: Thank you, Sharon. Welcome, everyone online. We are starting our first segment which addresses all of those connections and intersections among language development and literacy which is reading and writing and all the precursors to it, culture, family and programs. This is a pretty busy intersection here.

So where do we start? We start with the children. Always with the children and their joy in using spoken, written, and gestural language to communicate. With gestures of an infant who raises his arms meaning pick me up - the rich oral language of the toddler, truck or "carro." And the beginning of efforts for a 4 or 5-year-old in writing their names and letters. So let's look at our first clip. We're going to see how teacher Melissa Kolb in a Head Start program in Portland, Oregon, welcomes all the children and the languages that they bring into the classroom.

[Video begins] Melissa Kolb: Solve the problem, Annie. There you go. Set it up. Thank you. Shayla, are you coming? Shayla: She will play with me. Teacher: Daniela's gonna play with you? Shayla: She's my friend.

Melissa: Aw. She is your friend. You bet. Everyone... Daneila: She can stack with me. Hola, shayla. Teacher: Hola. Hola. You are speaking each other's language, Spanish. Can you tell her how to say hi in Vietnamese? How do you say hi in Vietnamese?

Shayla: Vietnamese? Teacher: Yes. Good morning, Gabe. We're learning how to Say hi in Vietnamese. Shayla: Yeah. Teacher: Do you know how to say it? Should we get Teacher Ngoc for some help?

Shayla: Chao. Teacher: Chao? Okay. Can you tell her? Chao. Daniela: Chao. Teacher: Chao. Hola. You learned how to say hello in each other's languages.

In our classroom right now, we have 3 different languages, actually 4 different languages represented. We have Spanish speakers, we have Vietnamese speakers, we have English speakers, and we have one Russian speaker, so at home, the children are speaking all of those languages. The language of instruction in the classroom is English, but we're fortunate to have support in Spanish and support also in Vietnamese once a week. So we have folks that come in one day a week and help support those children in their home language.

Teacher Ngoc: [Speaking Vietnamese] Child: [Speaks Vietnamese] Teacher Ngoc: Yes. Child: [Speaks Vietnamese] Teacher Ngoc: Yes. Good job! [Speaking Vietnamese]

Melissa: Teacher Ngoc is our Vietnamese support person. She comes in once a week, and for our classroom this year, she comes in on Thursdays, so what that means is the way that I use her support is to have her read the books that the

children have been listening to all week and talk about the projects we've been talking about all week.

If there are any social things that need to be worked on, someone's having a hard time being friends with someone else, then that's a time when she can also work on that. She stays the entire period of time. So she's here from the beginning of the children's day to the end of their day and supports their language throughout. To borrow a term from a friend, she provides a language oasis for the children in Vietnamese. [Video ends]

José C. Paz: Language oasis, I love that phrase. What a wonderful way for the teacher to express this green, fertile ground where language thrives and learning is happening everywhere. Yes Graciela, you're right. It's important to start with the family. It's important to recognize how unique we are in Head Start and Early Head Start because a very important component of Head Start and Early Head Start is the family, la familia, la cultura, everything that enriches us, and the language.

From Native American languages to Asian languages, African, European and Latin American and all the dialects that come along with the fascinating area that we work with, wouldn't you agree, Graciela?

Graciela: Absolutely. And what a joy to see a teacher just welcoming all the languages and helping the children welcome each other in their languages and engage in reciprocal interactions and conversations among themselves. This not only gives a Language Oasis but also deepens their conceptual understanding of the use of several languages.

So let's move onto the second question we have in this segment, how do language and literacy develop in young children in any language? It's important to have a sense of the language and literacy continuum from birth and on through life for all children, and Ruth is going to help us explain this.

Ruth Shagourey: Well, language and literacy development occur along that continuum that starts at birth and extends throughout life and it really helps to look at the continuum in stages but recognizing that children progress at very different rates. So on the slide that looks at the spoken and written language, it really just briefly describes those stages, but we're not going to look at it closely right now. You have time to digest it later.

But what we want to look at is the stages of spoken language development in young children which starts with listening and beginning to produce the sounds of the language and then moves on to understanding the language around their environment. And I know that teachers can really understand children's capabilities by looking at what they can do today and looking forward to tomorrow. Wouldn't you agree, Graciela?

Graciela: Absolutely. That is part of what we mean when we talk about intentionality is understanding this continuum and then observing children as you engage with them in the classroom and you observe them engaging with activities and others and know what would be coming next. Will you help us with the written language development chart, Ruth?

Ruth: Again, I want to stress that it's a little complicated to digest right now. But what's important to recognize is that the same stages that children go through with oral language development, written language development also follows very recognizable developmental paths.

But again, the boundaries around these stages are really wide and it really is important for educators to expect it to be a little bit messy but teachers who can respect children's astounding capabilities will have that opportunity to see the patterns that are emerging and see what might be coming next.

So to briefly mention about the scribbling stage it really helps that children are starting to make marks on a page that looks like written language right from the beginning and then they're going to move on to the other stages all the way up to having symbols in their own written language that other readers can be part of the audience for.

Graciela: Great. Thank you, Ruth. And what happens when children's language is not written in a western alphabet?

Ruth: Well, let me share a couple of examples. On this first slide, it's actually done by a toddler named Benton and it

looks like just a messy scribble to us but if you get at a child's intentionality, you'll see it's already the beginning of literacy. In this particular case he was only 3, he was drawing with a green crayon and he looked up and said, "Mommy, come here and see this! Let me read it to you! It says, 'Mommy, Mommy don't want me to go upstairs but Benton wants to.'"

So already he knows making marks on a page means something to someone else. Now, the next slide is actually from a 4-year-old whose name is Fuad and his home language is Arabic and that's the script that he sees. The scribbles that you see there look like Arabic but they're not.

They're kind of invented Arabic and in the Head Start classroom, he sort of -- he would read this Arabic to his friends who spoke Arabic but he wouldn't read it to me. He said, "I can't read it to you, Ruth, because it has dots in it and English doesn't." But he would share it with those who understand his particular language.

Graciela: That's great. Those are great examples, Ruth. Thank you. And I think the main concept there is that from a very early age, children begin to understand if they are exposed to that -- the sounds that we make with our languages can be represented on the written page. And what happens with babies? Where do babies start this? And we have Eileen Torres here who will help us with this.

Eileen Torres: Well, I think the important thing to learn is that children really learn the rules of communication before they even begin to speak. And part of the precursor of reading is that young children are not limited to the text. They read gestures and facial expressions, scribbles, drawings, and all of those things are very well illustrated on the continuum that Ruth just talked about. And we can see that the reading and writing emerge as the children play and interact with others.

The important thing to keep in mind when you're working with infants and toddlers is that the daily routines in the classroom are their learning environment and it's very important to be focused all the time and intentional. So the self talk, the parallel talk, the building vocabulary, and introducing all of that in the context of significant relationships with the adults are key to supporting the emergence of reading.

Graciela: Thank you, Eileen. That's great. And we all know that as children discover the connections between spoken and written language a whole new world opens up to them. They can draw their stories now.

And they can dramatize them for us, and they can read pictures in books and -- you know, all of this is the beginning of what reading is going to bring in their lives. So let's move on now to our next clip which shows us an infant in a Native American program in Fort Washakie with a cloth book because this is a very early activity and we need to remember that for babies all language experiences are literacy experiences. So let's watch the video.

[Video begins] Teacher: Oh, there's Ashlin. There's Ashlin crying because she's hungry. And you do that, you always cry when you're hungry. That must be her other sister. Is it? Is it? Ok. Is this Ashlin crying? And there's Ashlin again. Hi Ashlin. Kiss Ashlin. Kiss the baby. Kiss the baby. Kiss the baby. [Kissing noises] Say peek-a-boo Ashlin. Kiss Ashlin. Nice, baby. Kiss it. All right Ashlin. Nice. [Video ends]

Eileen: The clip that we just saw is a perfect example of an intentional, one-on-one interaction with a baby. And I think it's important to keep in mind with dual language learners and with all infants and toddlers that all experiences are cultural for infants and toddlers.

So you notice it's a one-on-one interaction, there's joint attention there, both the teacher and the infant are focused on the cloth book which is age appropriate, developmentally appropriate and it's important with infants and toddlers to make sure there's plenty of books that the children can use and handle both safely and things that are of interest to them.

There's also a socioemotional element to this particular clip. You'll notice that the teacher uses the child's name and identifies a sibling and of course at the end the child get to look at itself in the mirror and give a big kiss. So again, underscoring the importance of early language learning in the context of significant, important relationships. We know

that learning in two languages does not confuse young children and Carola is going to speak to that point right now.

Carola Matera: So we know from research that children who learn early literacy in their home language are likely to transfer those skills into English. But we also know that children usually learn concepts and words in different languages. So, for example, a child may know how to take turns but doesn't know how to say "it's my turn" in English. So teachers need to provide vocabulary support as well as rich and plenty of experiences that support vocabulary development.

And it's important for teachers to extend conversations, introduce new vocabulary and model and teach strategies such as phrases on how to ask questions and how to say this in English.

José: That's a very good point, Carola. I'd like to share a brief personal experience that exemplifies this connection and the point we're trying to make here. When I was of preschool age I was born and raised in a very challenging, underprivileged part of our country and I was your typical preschool child learning English.

Spanish was my first language and I remember going to my preschool teacher and asking her to please tie my zapato. Teacher please tie my zapato. I said it several times and she understood because I was pointing and my gestures helped convey the message and she realized I had the sentence but I did not have the word and I had the concept of zapato which by the way means shoe in Spanish.

She gave me a book and she read it to me a couple times and she asked me to take it home and read it to my mother. It was the book entitled "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe." With that along with the home support and the teacher support who realized my need for that word, I learned that zapato was the same as shoe in English. Of course, later on I went around asking my teacher to please buckle my shoe, teacher, buckle my shoe.

Graciela: Thank you, José. That's a great story. The important point here is that children, as they understand this connection between language and meaning and two or more languages, they unleash their own creativity and imagination if we support and give them opportunities as it happens in this next video where Hannah, a little girl, tells a story of her drawing.

[Video begins] Hannah: This is you. You were walking this way and he was walking this way to meet each other.  
Teacher: So this is me walking this way and this is Jim walking this way and we're walking to meet each other?  
Hannah: Right.

Teacher: Ok, what happens next? Hannah: I forgot to draw it. Ok Jim is going that way and you're going that way and then you get home. Teacher: And then we're going to go home? Ok. What happens --? Hannah: This. Like, like, there's water and then you have this - like that. Then the fish glows.

Teacher: The fish glows? Oh, my gosh. Teacher: What's different about doing the book instead of just one sheet of paper?

Teacher: I've had a lot of conferences with Hannah and sometimes she tells me a lot of stories and will even put letters down. But this book was different for her, and the reason the book was different is she made it into a connected story. It started out she was talking about me and my friend Jim and that we were walking places. But because it was a book and there were more pages to fill in, she ended up turning it into more of a story.

And you can tell she developed the story as she was reading it back to me. So she ended up adding more about this fish that glowed and about the bread that I bought and what else I bought. And when I asked her at the end how she decided what she was going to add, she was able to tell me that it was as she was doing the reading of the book back to me that she added those extra parts.

So even though she didn't want to add any letters today to her story, I felt that it was a very successful time for her because she had this whole sense of story, and a sense of a book and she was so delighted with the book that she'd written for us. [Video ends]

Ruth: I just love seeing Hannah every time I get to watch this clip. When Hannah entered Head Start she was only 3 years old. Her home language is Tigrinya which is a dialect in Ethiopia and at that time she was quiet, observing, communicating with gestures and smiles but not oral language, what some researchers refer to as the silent period.

But now you can see at 4 years old with the help of a really thoughtful language program and work with her teachers, she's clearly involved in literacy activities in English and she really has a world that connects that past with the present and offers just wonderful, rich imagination. And it's a great example of how children who are learning in two languages have the potential to learn how to read and write in both languages.

Graciela: Thank you, Ruth. That was a wonderful video clip. And today we're going to discuss some of the key principles and strategies that make the home language a vehicle for developing literacy in children. So what is the role of the home language in the development of literacy for children who are learning in two or more languages?

Carola: Well, home language is a vital resource that is central to the development of a child's identity and that is tightly linked to family and culture. Also, we know that research shows that supporting a child's home language while introducing English is critical to build a strong foundation for future success in school and in life.

And we also know that learning in their home language and English at the same time does not confuse or cause delays in learning and obviously we're saying this as long as we provide meaningful and age appropriate experiences. So we need to celebrate, we need to nurture and support the child's home language and culture in the classroom and we need to build them providing meaningful experiences that are tied to the family's cultural identity.

José: Very well said, Carola. Many times parents don't realize what an important component they are of language acquisition for children in any language they may speak. We have many parents across the country that say, "Well I can't teach, I don't have the educational background." And what the family literacy component is saying is, yes, you can.

Yes, you do. You're your child's first and primary teacher and you always will be. And just like the research says, if we lose that home language, we lose a connection with our parents, with the adults in our families. And once we lose that, we lose our home culture, our home values and our home principles which are so important to the development of a child.

Graciela: Great. Thank you, José. So how do teachers work with families to support the home language?

José: There are many, many ways, Graciela. That's an excellent question. And many forms - many creative forms of working with families to support what the home language is. First of all, obviously, getting to know the families and getting to know their home language whether or not we may speak that home language. For example, many of our American Indian/Alaska Native programs and communities have languages that are rich and wonderful and it's a learning process for those communities and environments.

The elders tell stories from long ago that continue traditions and understanding and learning within their environment and these are factors, these are components, that we must take advantage of to help our children increase their knowledge and vocabulary in any language. Graciela: Great, thank you.

Ruth: And it's really important, I think, to invite the written language into the classroom. You can use classroom materials around the room, including books that reflect really different cultural and linguistic systems and represent the children and families in the program.

In one of the programs I work in, parents were invited to send in Dichos or other sayings from other cultures that are important in their family and they're posted on the walls of the classroom so that when families come in, they see them, they read them with their children and it makes them feel part of the class.

Graciela: Great, thank you, Ruth. We are at the end of our first segment. We hope that you have enjoyed our stories

and the richness we have tried to put in it and I'm going to ask Sharon to now review it and give us the take aways.

Sharon: Sure Graciela, I'd be happy to do that. We've heard a lot of rich conversation, and I think we tried to highlight three points. One is that spoken and written language develops in stages over time though individual children progress at different rates. And we heard Ruth talk quite a bit about this. The second, indeed, children who are learning in two languages can and do develop literacy in two languages when appropriately supported at home and in Head Start and Early Head Start.

In here I think it bears reminding that this really applies to all of our programs and much of what we'll be hearing today applies to home-based programs that can be adapted by home visitors in working with families and children. The last point is there are essential links between language and culture that needs to be considered in the selection of experiences, activities and written materials. We heard a lot from José as well as others on this point.

Graciela: Stay tuned for Segment Two which will continue our great conversation.

Break - ends 28:38

Graciela: Hello. Welcome to Segment Two: What Does It Look Like? What we're going to do in this segment is explain the elements of literacy development and we're going to give examples of young children who are acquiring literacy in two or more languages. To introduce this segment, we're going to start by watching a clip. It's teacher Melissa Kolb's classroom and it's in the same Head Start program in Portland, Oregon and how she intentionally integrates social skills while children are learning to recognize the letters in their names.

[Video begins] Melissa Kolb: Come on over, buddy. We've missed you. You've been gone for a few days. Come on in here. Hi, sweetie. We've missed you, too. Glad you made it today. 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 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've really needed to work hard to practice their social skills. We have several 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 names, 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. Who can you get? Do you know one of these people?

Child: Leo isn't here. Teacher: Who is that do you suppose? Who can you get? Who is that? Daniella. That's correct. [Video ends]

Ruth: This is such a wonderful, welcoming classroom environment. And you can see that one of the things that teacher Melissa Kolb stresses is that literacy is just part of the whole child, it's part of their social development and identity and the way that she's supporting all the languages and creating that wonderful language oasis.

Carola: In terms of what teachers can do to support children who are dual language learners in developing early literacy skills in the classroom regardless of the language is to take advantage and capitalize on what they're curious about. So for example, children are naturally interested in recognizing and learning to write their own names and of others.

So using children's names is also important because it ties all the social-emotional development that is crucial at this age. And also by using children's names, teachers can introduce many literacy concepts and make connections between letters and sounds, understanding the functions of print, recognizing letters and words and also incorporate math

concepts such as having classification of names, long and short names, etc.

Graciela: Thank you Carola. So let's start with the main elements of literacy development. What are the main elements of literacy development? Sharon, will you help us with that?

Sharon: Sure, Graciela. There's a fair amount of consensus in the learning field about the main ideas or domains that predict children's success in reading and writing in elementary school and in Head Start we refer the Child Outcomes Framework as a guide in their curriculum planning and ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of 3 to 5-year-olds in literacy.

And again, I want to remind, as we said in the beginning, although the Child Outcomes Framework does not apply to infants and toddlers, those early literacy experiences in Early Head Start and Migrant Head Start that you've heard Eileen talk about already provides a foundation for literacy development, literacy outcomes for preschoolers and we will discuss those in context in the segment as well.

There are five elements in literacy development highlighted in the framework that we're going to look at in depth. You'll see examples of how they're addressed in Head Start programs with intentional planning on the part of staff and with respect for individual differences.

Again, we're going to be looking at those special considerations for children who are dual language learners. so the slide you see the elements of literacy development, you have a phonological awareness, book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness and concepts, early writing and alphabet knowledge. Those are the ones we're going to clue in today.

Graciela: Thank you, Sharon. Let's start looking at them more closely. So what is phonological awareness and what does it look like for children who are learning in two languages?

Carola: Well, phonological awareness is the understanding that spoken language is composed of smaller units of sound. For a young child this involves the understanding that some languages are organized into words, words into syllables, and syllables into sounds. This is the case for Spanish and English but there are other languages that children bring into the classroom that do not have an alphabet based language, and in that sense, teachers need to know the basics of the languages that children bring into the classroom.

Let me share with you an example that I love from a child in -- a 4-year-old child in a Head Start classroom who gave me a piece of paper and he had written the letter p, b, n, and a. And what he said was that that read banana. And he said that that was in English. And that was very interesting to me.

And I thought, well, how would that look -- how would you write that in Spanish? What he said was that Spanish was different because it was banana, it was banana. You barely pronounce the "b" sound but this was in English and that's why banana had almost like a "p" sound and he included the "p" before the rest of the letters. And this shows the level of -- the high level thinking that this child was bringing into that experience - phonological awareness, letters, sounds, concepts of print, everything in it, not just the phonological awareness skill.

A nice strategy for those programs that are offering daily support in Spanish and English is to teach cognates. Cognates are words from different languages that share and have similar pronunciation in spelling and meaning and these are excellent strategies for children to use as a tool for understanding English. So, for example, tren and train, carro and car, with a difference with other words that don't have cognates and that's -- for example Manzana and apple.

Graciela: And there are some that are tricky, too, because libreria is bookstore, not library. So as it gets more complex but it is important also there are endings that can be recognized. All of the C-Y, like emergency or Cia in Spanish, emergencia. The teachers that can recognize those patterns can support their children in understanding how you go from one language to the other and how you transfer that knowledge. Eileen, would you want to add something to that?



Eileen: Well, it's important with infants and toddlers that you include a lot of things in the learning environment that emphasize the kind of the melody of language. Many rhymes, finger plays, songs that make all of it a really language rich communication environment for the children. And preferably done in the child's first language, especially on that birth to 3 continuum. Those -- the awareness of the phonology develops gradually over time but it's really important that children learn that phonology in their first language.

Ruth: That reminds me of an interesting story that happened in a Head Start classroom that I was working in around Russian. Because the phonological awareness, of course, comes into the written language as well. And a young girl, Veda her name was, was writing in Cyrillic and using the English alphabet and she had written a story about Christmas and she had written c, what looked like a p to the teacher and me, m-s...

...and what we discovered when we looked into the Cyrillic language was that the symbol that looks like a p actually makes what is in English an "r" sound so what was wonderful is she was using her phonological awareness in her writing and it's important for teachers to understand a little bit about the written language that their children are bringing to the classroom.

Graciela: That's such an important concept, Ruth. Thank you for bringing it up. We have a lot of resources that if teachers are aware of basically the orthography of the home language, the spelling, how the sounds are represented in written form - they can not only support and guide children along their learning but they can understand what children are doing in their writing a lot better like in Carola's example. So let's look at the following clip where we see Daniella spell the name of her brother, Kevin.

Watch how the teacher respects this child's learning process. This is a beautiful example of how a teacher can promote a child's confidence and positive approach to learning without interfering with too much correction.

[Video begins] Teacher: Look in this area and see if you see a k. What about on top of something here. Child: You find it!

Teacher: Oh, my goodness, you found it! Ok. Now you're going to need an e. There are times when I really need to just sit down and stay at a center or work with kids at a particular area and I was working at the letter center because I wanted to see what one of the children was going to do with the letters. She's been someone that hasn't been interested at all in letters and has really grown to have more interest.

So I wanted to sit down with her and spend some time talking about what she was doing and what she wanted to do. You're going to need a V. Yeah. A v. New Speaker: V.

Teacher: You found a v? Terrific. There's a v. And the next letter you're gonna need is going to be an i. And you know, I think the i's in these letters are just straight. That one has a little tail on it that curves so we know that's a j. Let's see if we can find one that doesn't curve. Keep looking. You see an i anywhere? It's not going to have a tail on it. There's one with a tail. Hmm. What do you think? Does that look a little bit like this one?

Child: Yes. Teacher: Yeah. Ok. Now the last one in Kevin is an n. Kevin. Can I play here too? Why don't you finish your card so you can take it home today? Child: n.n. an n. N-n-n-n-n.

Teacher: You found it already. I didn't even see you. Ok. K-e-v-m-i-n. Is there something extra? Sure. Come and join us. You want to write names or something else? Child: Write the name. Teacher: Ok, well, you can find it in there and then see if you can find all your letters. Child: Kevin.

Teacher: Kevin. Ok -- k-e-v- and then you have and i and an n. And then you have an m. Do you need this one? Yes. Ok, you need that one. What Daniela wanted to do when she was writing her brother's name was to keep the m inside. And in looking at it, I decided that it would be good for her to do that because she was so definite about it needing to be there.

I tried to prompt her, I tried to push to see if she really needed it there and she told me that she did. So what was

important in that context was that she felt good about what she had written with the letters and that she was able to feel successful during that activity. [Video ends]

Eileen: What a wonderful video and many of those same practices and techniques we see in the video can be broken down for the birth to 3 continuum. With infants and toddlers, it's using shapes and sequences and if you'll notice in that particular video clip, there's a very interesting feature that I think could be duplicated in other programs and that is the fact that there are straight lines all the way around the table so the children have the opportunity to line up the letters which helps support the idea of writing and spelling...

...and you can do the same thing with infants and toddlers with shapes for the idea of sequences. So a very good clip all in all with something to be learned for all.

José: That a very good point, Eileen and very well made. I love how the teacher is incorporating not only mentioning the letters, the names of the letters but the sounds as well. There are many reports on how important this is for children developing any language in the early stages.

The NELP Report, the National Early Literacy Panel Report, for example, says that as Head Start programs we excel in alphabet knowledge and identifying the letters but we need a little boost, a little help with phonological awareness and incorporating that into every daily routine and activity so that that can be incorporated as well.

Eileen: I couldn't have said it better myself José, a very important point.. Graciela: Thank you very much, both of you. Let's move on to the next element. What is book knowledge and appreciation, and why is it important to young children? And what are the special considerations for children who are learning in two languages?

José: I think as we discussed, book appreciation, we do need to keep in mind those non-roman alphabetic languages because those children, perhaps we just have one of those in our classrooms, one German family, one Asian family, one of the languages that are not roman alphabet languages but aren't they just as important as any other child in our classroom? If I were the parent I would expect an absolute yes.

Every child is important in our classroom, no matter what the age or what their background may be. We live in a very scriptural society, reading is so important in our society and it's everywhere. Because it is so important we have to focus on this from a positive perspective, a positive beginning.

There are many dialogic reading strategies that are presented, one that is known by Head Start programs across the country and are used by many programs is entitled "Follow the car." It's a mnemonic device, it's an acronym that helps us remember how important it is to have dialogue when enjoying books and appreciating books. Car, follow the car.

We start with follow because the first step to the strategy is follow the child's lead. Whatever that child's interest, whether it's dinosaurs or foods or dogs, whatever it is at that age, we follow their lead. The c in car stands for comment and wait. Two important points about this is we tend to start off with a question. We want to come up to a child and ask, what are you doing, what is that? That's great. However, this strategy is saying start off with a comment.

Just make a comment about what the child is doing and then another important component, wait. Wait is so difficult for adults in our society because we want to move on and get things done. We have so much to do but it is crucial in the strategy to just wait, allow yourself to be silent and allow that child to express him or herself in any way the child feels appropriate. And then the a in car stand for ask a question.

Now we can ask something because we have the child's attention, we have their interest and we know they have our attention so let's ask them something to provoke more thinking and critical thinking. And then the r is respond by adding a little more information. Introduce that new juicy word the child may not be familiar with.

Here's a great opportunity to increase the child's vocabulary. So follow the car. In Spanish, when we present this -- [speaking in Spanish] and the last row is repeat again so the child really understands the importance of this process.

Ruth: And the car strategy that José is describing can be used with children all along the birth to 5 continuum. And it can be used also to build on children's vocabulary, introduce new vocabulary and even revisit some subjects that you've already talked about.

Carola: And if you want to learn more about dialogic reading, this wonderful strategy that focuses on reading interactively with children, you can visit the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, the ECLKC, where you will find activities that focus -- that are specifically for teachers and these are available in English and Spanish to work with teachers and parents.

Graciela: Great. Thank you very much. All of you. For those wonderful examples and stories. Let's look at the next video clip where we see the teacher Kolb intentionally create opportunities for children to hear stories read to them and interact with print many times each day and this is an important concept because it doesn't happen just once and it shouldn't happen just once.

It's many times during the day children should have opportunities to tell and listen to stories in different languages, their home language and English which is often the language of the classroom. Let's watch.

[Video begins] [Speaking in different languages]

Teacher: During the time when the children's routine involves tooth brushing, which is after our morning meal, they are on the rug looking at books and we call it book time. What we're doing at that time is having every available adult in the room reading books to children.

That is a time when we can get things set up in the room so things are ready for their centers which come after that. But it's a really important time when they can be read to and read books in pairs, alone or in small groups, when teacher Gnoc is here she's supporting them by reading to them in Vietnamese. She may be reading books that we've read all week and she may read the book that we're going to read that day so that she can front load whatever it is we're going to talk about.

When we have visitors or guests, they're pulled into that reading as well so that the children have the opportunity to hear four or five or even six stories a day rather than just one at large group time being read to them. [Video ends]

Graciela: Great. You saw how she just explained beautifully what her intention was in doing what she was doing. And I think it's a good example for all of us to follow and it works from birth to 5. So let's move on to what is print awareness and concepts and what are, again, the special considerations for children who are learning in two or more languages.

Carola: Well, print awareness includes several skills like how children conceptualize print, directionality, letters are different than numbers, print has different functions, and print carries meaning as well as books have different rules in how we read them and go about them. So for children who are dual language learners these concepts might be transferable such as in Spanish and English, but this might not be true in languages that are not alphabetic.

So it's very important for teachers to know about the uniqueness of those languages represented in the classroom and include and engage parents early on and throughout the whole year in the activities that are happening in the classroom and at home.

Graciela: Great. Thank you very much Carola. Let's watch the next video which is a little girl, Ivy, using all of these skills that Carola just mentioned to read a story about whales. To Ruth, actually.

[Video begins] Teacher: Ok, so Ivy, can you read this book to me? Ivy: [Ivy reads book]

Narrator: During the book browsing time, Ivy brought over a book over to me and she wanted to read it to me and I was really so pleased that she wanted to do that because it's such an important step in young children's reading development. It's just really part of them becoming readers is to use the book almost like a conversation starter.

She looked at the print and she used her finger and underlined each word and pointed to it as she made up a different story that was on the same topic. It was still about whales but it wasn't the story in the book.

Ivy: The whales. Baby beluga. They can't smell flowers. But they can smell humans. So they always have different kinds of energy. Narrator: This is a close-up of the page that Ivy just read showing the actual words rather than the story that Ivy chose to relate.

Ivy: There are always people watching the ocean. See there are one person and his house. Once there was one born and he was so cute they always [Inaudible] Ivy: Whales take very good care of their babies. Teacher: Yeah. Ivy: And this is all the rest of the pictures.

Narrator: And this is the last page that Ivy read where she used her knowledge of the book to talk about the labels on another page in the book that said what she knew about whales, and if you remember, she pointed to each line as she finished reading the end of the book.

Ivy: Whales take very good care of their babies. Narrator: Someone might say oh, well, that's not really reading. Well it's a very, very important stage of reading because she's developing her story sense along with the book and she felt very proud of what she had read.

Ivy: The pictures. Teacher: Very nice reading. Have you read it before, Ivy? [Video ends]

José: That's a great example, Ruth. I love how you're demonstrating to the child that it's ok to be creative and make up that language and develop their own story sense. Research says - if we associate this with the family, research says that whatever is being done in the classroom, if done at home as well increases learning and it's optimized.

Learning is so important and you can get a parent that may think well, she's not reading the story. Gosh, she's not really doing a good job. But if the parent understands this concept behind reading and making up the story or creating their own story from the child's perspective, it's ok and it's wonderful and it increases their vocabulary and has so many benefits, doesn't it Graciela?

Graciela: Great, great examples, José. You just reminded me, it's about as adults letting go of our concepts of reading and writing. We have such contrived and narrow concepts. They will get there but all of these are very, very important stages and steps that they need to take in understanding which is pretty abstract as Ruth is going to demonstrate with us as she describes the next slides. Will you, Ruth, for us please?

Ruth: Oh sure, I would be delighted to. I love talking about children's examples, they get me very excited. I already mentioned to you about Fuad's writing which shows how he was using his understanding of Arabic written language to put spoken words on the page, but in the next slide, you can see Bujin is also doing inventive spelling in her language which is Chinese and some of those characters are actually Chinese but others aren't.

She's still inventing in that very inventive stage of making her own meaning on the page. And then in the next slide, this is a wonderful example I think of a child who is truly a dual language learner both as an oral speaker and as a written language user. At the top of the page she's written in some Chinese and at the bottom of the page she's drawn a river and she's using her phonological awareness and her sound-symbol correspondence to actually write those sounds down, river, r-v-r.

And the last slide, we have a wonderful example from Ming who is a Chinese speaker and Chinese writer. And his writing is actually Chinese. He's been learning it at home and some days he writes in Chinese and some days he writes in English and he always has drawings with his work.

Graciela: Great. Thank you very much. Those are excellent examples of what children do as all of this emerges in their understanding. Let's move on to our next element in the literacy development continuum. What is alphabet knowledge and how do children who are learning in two languages develop this alphabet knowledge?

José: Thank you, Graciela. I think in order to understand how children develop the two languages, it's important to define what alphabet knowledge is. One definition that is widely known by many programs and many early childhood education institutions is as follows. Alphabet knowledge is when a child not only recognizes but really identifies the letters of the alphabet.

This can include making a connection between units of print and units of sound. And really an understanding of the definition is integral as we talk about the languages developed by children.

Carola: It's also important to demonstrate the connection between the two languages and drawing attention to those differences and those similarities between the languages. And it's critical that we do the work. We need to find authentic materials and seek reliable sources to assist us in finding those authentic materials, for example, the alphabet in Spanish.

We want to find -- make sure we use an alphabet or expose children to the alphabet in that language that we find one that is correct, that it doesn't have the double r, for example, which does not exist but we usually find in those commercially sold alphabets.

And the same with other languages like Mixteco. Mixteco is not a written language and our first inclination might be to write it down as we hear it however we have to be very careful because we are not aware of that phonetic expression and what -- the way we might pronounce it might actually be a completely different word in the Mixteco language.

Ruth: And alphabet knowledge in infants and toddlers should be developed gradually and over time in a very age appropriate way. It can be as simple as having letter blocks in your classroom. Any time you're going to introduce anything, it shouldn't be too many letters at one time and again a very integral part of what you're doing. Remember, the learning environment for infants and toddlers is a daily routine.

Graciela: Thank you all. It's a very, very interesting how we're getting to this important concept of what is reading and writing from the perspective of an infant, a toddler, and a preschooler. In this next video, we'll see exemplified how children are hearing letter names and sounds in Spanish.

[Video begins] [Speaking in Spanish]

Narrator: We do have bilingual assistants who come into our classroom and Tanya is our Spanish speaking bilingual assistant and she comes in one day a week and so she reads to the children in Spanish and she's a really good translator so she actually translates on the spot whatever book they want her to read to them even if it's not written in Spanish, so that's really nice and then she can have conversations with the Spanish Speaking children about the books that they're reading and learning about. [Video ends]

Graciela: Excellent example of a teacher that uses the versatility with the languages and you know, I was thinking if a family doesn't have a great translator, they can just interpret the pictures and have conversations about the pictures.

I wanted to go back to a comment Carola made that when she said that the double r as a letter does not exist in Spanish, so the alphabet only recognizes the r as a letter. However, we do have the sound of a double r in the middle of a word we put two r's to make the rolling r. So this also happens in English with a little bit older children who are now using letters in different alphabets to actually do some writing. Let's watch these two little girls in the writing center.

[Video begins] Narrator: The writing center in the room changes from time to time. Sometimes it will be more theme related, so for instance when we went to the fire station there were a lot of different fire station props in there, there was a fire hat and some badges, there were some papers to write on with fire trucks, so it was more theme related and the children were interested in writing about fire trucks and things like that.

Lately they've been interested in letters and letter writing so that's what the center reflects right now. They're using stickers for stamps and have different types of materials in there. For instance, I just put some index cards in the baskets and they were very interested in that new medium.

Child 1: Our alphabet. Child 2: Yeah. Right Tina. I want some stickers. Child 1: For my mom. I need to get some ladybugs, me too. Teacher: You want another color? Child 1: Same... And I gonna write something for my mom.

[Inaudible] Just think about it Tina. Child 2: We can look at the alphabet. Child 1: We can't do that. Child 2: We don't know what letter is it. [Video ends]

Ruth: What stands out for me in this clip is just the joy of writing and how important it is for children to feel successful at every level of writing development along the continuum as they're just playing and practicing and learning to write.

Children are going to develop slowly that understanding that writing does convey a message and records experiences and helps somebody to recall and retell, but it's so important that it's in a very happy and joyful atmosphere and it can be a great strategy to help them develop their oral and print skills.

Carola: That's exactly what we want to foster. And I wanted to also say that writing development may look different based on the child's first language. It's crucial, it's so important for teachers to celebrate what they have accomplished every single time but also to scaffold so that the child is motivated to continue learning and to foster new and more advanced understanding.

Graciela: Great. Thank you very much, all. I think the clips and our panelists have really shown us the importance of following the child, of allowing the child's interests to lead us and provide a variety of joyful experiences for them and for us as they progress through their continuum.

If you remember back to our clip of Hannah, the little girl who was drawing the story and making it up as she went along to Ruth, there was joy in her retelling of her story and in her inventing it as she went along and then being able to draw it right then and there. We have come to the end of our Segment Number Two: What Does It Look Like. We hope we have given you a variety and richness of examples and I'm going to ask Sharon Yandian to review and give us the takeaways for this segment.

Sharon: Sure, thanks, Graciela. Really, there was quite a lot packed in Segment Two. Let's see if we can just highlight a few of those. I think the first thing we need to remember is children who are learning in two languages develop early literacy skills in the context of their everyday experiences with adults, peers, and materials.

You heard Graciela and others talking about that and they do it in a joyful way. It has to be fun for them. The second is literacy learning has many elements that can be integrated and should be integrated in learning experiences in the classroom and at home. You heard José talk a lot about how we support the family in their understanding of what we're doing in the classroom and in our home-based settings.

The third is communication, relationships, and that print rich environments foster an integrated approach to language and literacy development that are optimal for all children especially those who are learning in two languages. So it's that integration that's really key. Last is that all families weave literacy into their everyday days and programs can support that connection with the children's home experiences and we heard several of the panelists talk about that.

As we close this segment, I just want to remind those participants that we did provide the link to the leader's guide that really supports the Child Outcomes Framework in what we've been discussing today and there's particular attention in that resource page of children who are dual language learners as well. Graciela?

Graciela: Thank you very much, Sharon and concludes our Segment Two. Please stay tuned and come back for our Segment Three where we will do the big picture and how you systemically can support all of this for teachers and children and families.

Graciela: Welcome back to our third segment of supporting literacy in children who are learning in two languages. And this segment is called The Big Picture and we're going to highlight the systemic program wide processes to consider in order to support literacy development in children who are learning in two or more languages. What is the big picture, Sharon?

Sharon: Well, Graciela, the big picture really refers to considering your entire program, the services and systems to see how they incorporate support for literacy development for children who are learning in two languages. One way to do this is to utilize the Head Start Program Preparedness Checklist which we have referred to in previous webcasts or webinars in the series and some may be very familiar with it hopefully. But let's take a look.

The Program Preparedness Checklist is one resource material and as you know it can be downloaded from the bottom of your viewing screen. Here the intent of the checklist as we've talked about is to assist a program in assessing its preparedness to implement systems and to deliver quality services and it also allows you to take stock of where you are, how you're doing.

I think the one I just wanted to highlight today very briefly was the focus on planning. And there are just three areas. There's so much more to planning but the ones we've highlighted. One talks about implementing an organizational language policy that explains how language is used.

We'll talk a little bit more about that later. You know, the other is the extent to which languages other than English are really taken into account, when you look at how you're developing your workplans and your service areas as it relates to those. And the last is really ensuring that families who speak languages other than English are involved in developing policies and procedures that relate to dual language learners.

I think the thing to keep in mind is that the checklist really emphasizes a continuum. Some programs are really doing well in a lot of these areas. Some, you see it's definitely in progress or not yet.

Many programs are not yet and that's ok. That's the point is to really get a gauge on where you are and to move along the continuum in terms of improving your services for children who are dual language learners. I think this is really the right time, the Head Start Reauthorization of 2007, really brings increased attention to children and families who speak languages other than English so this is a good time for reflection including this in your self-assessment process.

Also programs may want to consider developing a language policy that would really take a look and put in writing, a system-wide approach to serving children who are dual language learners and allow programs to think about and articulate a clear and consistent internal and external message regarding spoken and written languages that the children bring into the program as well as English acquisition.

How are they to be used? When and by whom? All of these things need to be explored and written down. You need to describe your approach to how they support infants, toddlers, preschoolers in their learning of English for classroom teachers we refer to this as a planned language approach and we'll learn a little bit that later. Graciela?

Graciela: Yes, well, let's just jump into it. A planned language approach is a blueprint that describes how teachers can use language in a consistent and intentional matter with children who are learning in two languages.

Carola: So that's right. So we discussed how a language policy is a written document that explains how the language implements systems and delivers quality services to children who are dual language learners and families. The planned language approach goes deeper by focusing on the classroom and clarifies how learning experiences are fostered through the use of language or languages in a consistent manner for teaching. And this is crucial so that teachers are not -- so teachers are supported and this is based on a coordinated and program-wide effort.

Sharon: And I would just add to that that it really is the importance of leadership here. It is connected to the language policy. It's not only for individual teachers, but it's for the program as well. What is the vision for how language is used? In this case as you're discussing in the classroom or in the home setting.

Graciela: So what are the features and the advantages of a planned language approach? Carola: The first thing to do in order to determine your planned language approach is to identify what language or languages are represented in your classrooms, meaning what languages children bring and what languages teachers bring into the classroom. And the next step is to determine how those languages or English will be used for teaching.

Sharon: Great. And I think as we look at -- you mentioned classroom profiles Carola, just some examples to give our participants an idea. You know, we have -- here's just four on the screen, you have Spanish speaking teachers and Spanish speaking children. You have bilingual teachers and Spanish speaking children. You have teachers who speak English and children who speak Spanish. You may have teachers who speak Spanish and/or English and children who speak languages other than Spanish or English.

And this list could go on and on but as Carola was saying, you really need to have an understanding around what languages the children bring and what language or languages the teachers, the assistants and any other staff or volunteers you bring into your program in an intentional way to support the planned language approach. Graciela?

Graciela: Yeah. So our next question would be what are some of the key elements of a planned language approach, and what would you look for?

Carola: I'd like to share an example just to contextualize this a little more. I worked with one Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee and this program has developed a language policy and has included an addendum which focuses on describing that planned language approach, the resources that they will use to support teachers, and also parents.

José: And on the parent point, Carola, very well made. Because the acquisition of languages depends so much on home support, family support, and extended family support, we need to place an urgency for families to help at home as much as they can and any way they can because those of us that have children know and those of us that have grandchildren, I don't have grandchildren yet but hope to one day a long long time from now...

... but we know those years are crucial and they go by so fast and we want to do what's best for our children and take advantage. So a sense of urgency really must be placed during these early childhood years.

Sharon: That's very important, José. And we're not going to read all the points on the slide but I think one of the most important things here is that one size does not fit all. You know, their programs are on a continuum in terms of the settings they find themselves in, the programs, and the languages that are available. It is that the program has a plan for how they're going to use languages in the classrooms and in their other settings.

Graciela: So the next question would be how does curriculum fit into a planned language approach?

José: One thing to answer that question, I think a planned language approach can be integrated into any curriculum and I have to put emphasize on the word "any" curriculum, whether commercially acquired or developed by a program it must be incorporated and integrated in any curriculum. And another point I'd like to make, some of these curricula already have materials developed for children who are learning in two languages. Why reinvent the wheel when material may already be out there, it's just a matter of asking for that material.

Graciela: So with all of this thinking and articulating how to use languages and how to incorporate the languages children and teachers bring to the programs and classrooms, what kinds of direct support can programs offer classroom staff?

Sharon: Well, you know, I would say one of the most important things is to identify the who, who, if it's a staff person, is going to come with the expertise in how children learn in two languages and provide those opportunities for staff to expand their knowledge and expertise. One of the first supports can be to identify someone in the program who has this expertise. They may not be fluent in the child's home language but they understand the processes of language and literacy development and those strategies.



I know some programs have used their recovery funds to identify -- they didn't have the expertise in their program but they have identified someone to come in and work with them in an intentional way to increase the capacity of the program so that person, where the funds are not available, their program will have that increased capacity. Obviously this person has a solid foundation in child development because we're talking about the whole child. You've heard that throughout this webinar today.

And the most important thing is this planfulness, the planning for and the identifying of who it is that brings this and who will also help the program continue to think about the children who are dual language learners in very meaningful and intentional ways.

Graciela: Thank you very much. Very well said. Here it is, the big picture is when you pull back from the classroom and from the individual child and look at, you know, your whole program and how does that connect to your planned language approach and curriculum and family and language and culture, all of that needs to be addressed by the leadership of the program together with the families and parents in the policy council, at the board level with policies that support personnel, the hiring and support of personnel who is bilingual.

And obviously all of this so that we can focus on the children. And they can have the most joyful and meaningful experiences to understand this journey that they begin into hopefully future writing and reading for a lifetime of enjoyment and imagination. So this is the big picture. Sharon, will you review for us and give us the takeaways from this segment?

Sharon: Sure, Graciela. The first thing again we talked about is you really need to take stock, using the Program Preparedness Checklist will tell you where your program is currently and where it needs to go, whether you are doing quite a bit in working with children who are dual language learners or you have a long way to go. The most important thing is to begin.

The second, we talked about the planned language approach in the classroom and other settings and how that offers intentional and consistent support for children who are learning in two languages. Lastly and as Graciela eloquently said is the children. Remembering the children bring a wealth of language and literacy experiences to our learning environment and it really is up to us to promote and foster their learning and development. Graciela?

Graciela: Thank you very much, Sharon and thank you all of our panelists, Ruth, Carola, José, Eileen for this wonderful conversation. We've had a very rich conversation today. Obviously it's only a beginning.

We hope that all of you in your programs will continue this conversation and share with us your progress and to close this segment, we want to go back to our first video so that in our intention in doing this work in assessing our program in planning and implementing our language approach, we need to provide always optimal experiences for all of our children who are learning in two languages.

Remember our video; the teacher said the classroom is a language oasis. Our intention in doing this and having this conversation with you is to inspire you to make your classrooms a language oasis for all the children in it. Thank you very much for having listened to us and stay tuned for our next programs which you will see on the screen right now.  
-- End of Video --