

## Dual Language Learning Institute Webcast Part 1 - Supporting DLL - Introduction

[Music]

Pat Brown: Welcome to the Office of Head Start's national webcast on supporting dual language learners. My name is Pat Brown, and I'm the Acting Director of the Office of Head Start. I would like to welcome everyone in our viewing audience; Head Start program directors and managers, and all of your staff who may be viewing with you. As always, we appreciate that you have taken the time to be with us.

It's my pleasure to be with you today with the Head Start program directors and managers an overview of both the importance of supporting the dual language learners and their families, and some of our office efforts to support programs in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services as required by law and in regulation. Later, you will hear from Sharon Yandian, our Early Language Specialist at the Office of Head Start, who has over 15 years experience in multicultural, bilingual education.

Joining her is Carol Bellamy, one of our Head Start fellows and a former Head Start education manager with tremendous experience as a manager and teaching providing services to young dual language learners. They will be discussing school readiness, what it means for dual language learners, and how you as directors and managers can incorporate best practices into your program operations.

To begin, I'd like to define for all of you the term "dual-language learners", since I am sure you have heard many different ways to describe children whose first language may not be English. Dual language learners are children learning two or more languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first, or home, language. This term, "dual language learners", encompasses other terms frequently used, such as: limited English proficient, bilingual, English language learners, English learners, and children who speak a language other than English.

This also includes children whose native languages are being preserved or revitalized. Head Start has a long history of serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Over 140 languages are spoken by Head Start children and families. The number of cultures represented is higher still. Almost three out of ten children enter Head Start speaking a primary language at home other than English. Those numbers have been growing in recent years.

In fact, in the Head Start 2004-2005 Program, only 16 percent of programs nationwide served exclusively English-speaking children. As all of you are aware, on December the 12, 2007, President Bush signed into law the Head Start for School Readiness Act. The strong bipartisan support for the bill confirms the commitment of Congress and the nation to Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, American Indian, Alaskan Native Head Start, and the nearly one million children and families these programs serve.

The law also makes clear that programs are to support children in the acquisition of English in their home language, as well as provide the full spectrum of comprehensive Head Start services to families in culturally appropriate and respectful ways. Furthermore, it emphasizes improving outreach and increasing enrollment and quality of services to children and families, particularly in communities that have experienced a large increase of speakers of language other than English.

So our mandate is clear: "Support the progress in the acquisition of English while strengthening and supporting the home language." The Office of Head Start recognizes that dual language learners enter Head Start Programs with unique challenges and opportunities. We also know that program needs knowledge, skills, and resources to address these challenges and maximize opportunities as they support dual language learners.

In response, we have engaged in a number of activities to support dual language learners and their families. Some of the recent activities include funding two core parts of Culturally Responsive Aware Dual Language Education, or CRADLE, pilot college demonstration grant projects. CRADLE assists 44 Head Start Programs in designing and implementing program-wide philosophies, policies and practices to support children and families from diverse

languages and cultural backgrounds.

We have also funded several Head Start Innovation and Improvement projects in 2005 and 2008 that address the needs of programs in serving children who speak languages other than English, and their families. In February 2005 and 2006, we conducted the National Head Start Hispanic Institute.

In April 2007, we held the National Head Start Hispanic And Other Emerging Populations Institute to share research and innovative practices designed to promote outreach and support of children and families from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. We know we still have more to do. In the winter of 2005 and 2006, the Office of Head Start conducted a review of program needs with respect to dual language learners, ages birth to five years.

The purpose of this project was to assess needs, opportunities and barriers, gather existing resources and innovative programming, and outline recommendations and suggestions from the field. Over 200 participants shared their direct experience and offered suggestions to the Office of Head Start that could enhance our program's ability to serve children and families from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

Earlier this year, we published the findings in a report entitled, "Dual Language Learner: What Does It Take?" This report is available on the ECKLC web site, and will be distributed at the upcoming Dual Language Institute. I encourage you to download it and read it, if you have not already, as it provides recommendations our Office is already reviewing, and in some cases, already undertaking, such as this webcast.

In addition, from October the 28th to the 31st, we will be conducting the National Dual Language Institute, A Time for Action to all Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and American Indian/Alaskan Native Head Start Programs. Its purpose is to bring together leaders from Head Start programs around the country to focus on how best to support young dual language learners.

To support programs sending staff, our Office recently issued an Information Memorandum allowing programs to use 2500 dollars of grant funds to send staff to the Institute. I hope you take advantage of this, as it is going to be a wonderful opportunity to both discuss ways to serve our dual language learners and their families as well as gather information on what other programs are already doing around the country.

Our primary goal in Head Start and Early Head Start is to provide high quality programs to expectant mothers, children and their families in ways that reflect the Program Performance Standards and address the varied needs of individual families.

So, we will continue to bring you information and best practices you can readily use in your programs to achieve Head Start's legislative mandate of promoting school readiness for all children. Thank you again for being with us today. Now I'm going to turn things over to Sharon, who is going to discuss our efforts more in detail.

Sharon Yandian: Thank you, Pat, for that informative overview. My name is Sharon Yandian, and I am the Early Language Specialist at the Office of Head Start. As Pat mentioned, we are conducting a National Dual Language Institute to focus on how to best support young children who speak languages other than English.

The content of this Institute was developed by members of a planning committee that included representatives from every region, and is based on findings from the dual language learning report, which, as Pat shared, will be made available at the Institute. We know from research that supporting the home or first language of children helps them acquire a second language. We also know how crucial language revitalization is for our American Indian/Alaskan Native Tribal Programs.

This additive strategy of language learning is very important to a child's overall conceptual and social-emotional development and learning, but as we know, supporting first and second language development takes more than just hiring bilingual staff, regardless of their Early Childhood credentials.

Head Start staff need tools to help address different circumstances with dual language learners, including working with

different age groups and different temperaments, individualizing for each child, implementing culturally responsive curriculum, and adopting principles that support learning in all areas of the Child Outcomes Framework.

During the Institute, we want to convey the message that there are important links between language development, social-emotional development, and cognitive development, and school readiness; and we want to give you the tools you need to effectively support and engage children as you ready them for school and for life. We also need to remember how important parents and families are in supporting their young dual language learners.

We recognize that the parents are the first and most important teachers of their children, and their involvement is a cornerstone of Head Start. Parents are a rich resource, not only as parents to their children, but also as potential mentors, cultural guides, classroom volunteers, and employees. We know programs need strategies to reach out to parents who are in the process of learning English, as well as techniques to gain the trust and confidence of parents who may be from different cultures.

These parents may have different family decision-making patterns, or may not have cultural traditions of having children cared for in a group setting. We want to help staff gain an understanding of the culture of the families they serve.

We also want to provide them with methods for assessing a family's level of literacy in their home language and in English in a non-threatening way, for accessing translation services in the community, and for helping present information to parents in the languages they understand best.

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