

Understanding Language Development to Inform High Quality Instructional Interactions

Judi Stevenson-Garcia: Hi, everyone. Welcome to the front porch series, and thank you so much for joining us today. I'm Judi Stevenson-Garcia, and I'm from the National Center on Early Childhood Teaching and Learning, and I'm here with Karen Nemeth. Hi, Karen. Can you tell us a little bit ...

Karen Nemeth: Hello.

Judi: Hi. Can you tell us about what this series is going to cover this year?

Karen: Well, we're really excited about the luxury of having a three-part webinar series that's all about supporting language development, effective practices for supporting language development and supporting development in two or more languages as well. So, the whole series is a connected package, and this is just the beginning when we talk today about research.

Judi: Awesome. I am excited to be a part of this, and I'm excited to be able to do a webinar series with you, Karen. So, this is going to be great. So, our goals for today, what we're hoping we'll be able to accomplish in the 57 minutes that we have with you this hour, we're going to be focusing on providing you with a better understanding of the research on first and second language development.

And we're hoping that you'll be able to identify connections between the research and the strategies that support high-quality instructional interactions, and then finally we're really hoping ... This is actually our greatest hope: that you'll be able to take this research information and think about how this knowledge will improve your support of children who are dual language learners.

So, let's get started. First, it's always important to start with a definition of dual language learners from the Head Start Program Performance Standards, so let's take a minute to read this definition together. A dual language learner is a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time, or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.

The term dual language learner may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms frequently used such as bilingual, English language learner, limited English proficient, English learner, and children who speak a language other than English. So, just to get a feel for the languages supported by those of you on this webinar, I'm going to ask you to answer a poll. We're interested in finding out, for those of you who are here with us today, how many languages are spoken by the children and families in your program, so go ahead and take a minute. If you aren't sure, you can make an estimate, or you can say that you aren't sure. You have those options if you scroll down.

Do you have one language represented, two, three to four, five to six, more than six? Or, you can let us know if you aren't exactly sure. So, this looks like we have a real diversity here, but quite a few of our programs are right there — or participants are right there in the two, three,

and four languages represented. A good 10% of you have more than six, which is a real challenge; so, I'm hoping that what we share with you today, and throughout this Front Porch series, will be really helpful for you in understanding first and second language development and how to support it in your programs.

So, before we talk about second language development, and even before we start talking about first language development, it's important to have a little bit of a background on brain development. So, that's where we're going to start. We're going to start with the brain connections that are really important to children who are learning language. So, we know that when children are born, they already have the majority of the neurons or the brain cells that they'll ever have.

What is missing are the connections between the neurons; so, our experiences help to determine which connections form between the neurons and how strong those connections are. When we learn something new, we are shaping how the neurons in our brains connect and communicate. Some connections form in our brains as a result of common experiences that all typically developing children are exposed to such as light, sound, touch, and taste, those sensory experiences.

Other connections form as a result of our unique experiences such as the languages we learn or the foods that we enjoy eating. Scientists are still investigating exactly how these connections form, but they do know that the more exposure we have to a particular experience or set of experiences, the stronger those connections are going to be between neurons. This is true of both positive and negative experiences in our lives.

Because the connections between neurons in our brains depend on the experiences we have in our lives, newborns don't yet have all of the connections in place, and this is a really good thing because we each have to become an expert at living our own lives based on our specific environments. So, this flexibility in how our brains become wired allows us to do that. Children's brains are particularly sensitive to experiences in part because during the first few years of life, connections between neurons are forming rapidly.

Here's a fun fact: By the age of 5, a child's brain has about three times the amount of connections than an adult brain has, and that's more connections than it will ever need. But what happens is that over time, the brain systematically reduces the number of connections it has, keeping the frequently used connections and then getting rid of those infrequently used ones. This process of refining the number of connections between neurons is called pruning, and this is an incredibly important process for healthy brain develop.

Let's take a look at how that happens. Scientists often refer to this pruning process as something like the process of caring for a rose bush. So, if you're a gardener or someone who takes care of plants, this analogy might be super familiar to you. The result of this pruning process is a brain or, in this example a rose bush, that is healthy and thriving. The branches, or the connections that are left, are stronger, and the brain is more efficient. So, like a rose bush, at first there is this period of rapid growth when the brain is blooming — that's those early years for young children. During this time, the brain makes extra connections, and these extra connections actually make the brain less efficient.

There's a lot going on. So, just like after this period of rapid growth in the spring, a rose bush can become kind of gangly with too many branches going in all different directions. After the period of blooming in the brain, connections are refined or pruned based on the experiences we have in our lives.

Connections that we need, we keep. Connections that we don't need, the ones that are making it more difficult for the brain to function, those are removed. The results of this process, this pruning process, is a brain, or in this example a rose bush, that is healthy and thriving, and the branches, or the connections, that are left are stronger, and our brains are much more efficient. We have all the connections we need, and we've gotten rid of the ones that we don't. Throughout this process of brain development, there are lots of different periods of blooming and pruning, and these bursts occur at different times and in different parts of the brain.

Scientists think that these bursts of blooming and pruning align with the sensitive periods in the brain, and these sensitive periods are times when our brains are particularly open to new experiences and to learning. So, this was a quick, four-minute lesson on brain development, and there's so much more that we could say, but I wonder, Karen, could you help us with a concrete example of maybe what this pruning process would look like with a child?

Karen: You know, yeah. I think all this talk about roses is helpful, but what about children, right? And everybody can identify with the idea of when a toddler first starts learning words. Like, they have a pet dog at home, and they start saying, "Doggie," and for a while, the only time they say, "Doggie," is when they see their own pet. And then they begin to generalize, right? To build connections.

They go to the park, and they see a neighbor's dog, and they say, "Doggie," and everybody gets real excited. And then they see a doggie in a book, and they say, "Doggie." And they're finding additional examples to fit that concept of doggie in their brain, but one thing the family might bring that child to the farm, and the child would see a four-legged animal that has long ears and a long tail, and he might say, "Doggie," and that animal might say, "Moo," and we realize the child is going to start generalizing to additional examples that are not really doggies, and when he does that, he will get a different response from the other people in his environment than he does when he uses doggie correctly.

And so, over time, he will start to learn that he's generalized too far, and there are some things that do fit the concept of "doggie," and some things that he can prune out of his understanding of doggie, that he can leave them out, cut them out and fine tune his understanding of doggie so that he's using it correctly. And then the connections his brain makes to that word become that much stronger, and once he has that strong connection and that strong collection of examples that are correct for doggie, it's easier and more successful if he learns that word in a new language, too, because he already has that strong collection of connections that helped him.

Judi: I love that example, Karen. I think that's so helpful, and when you think of a young toddler who's just beginning to use words, right? They point at every four-legged animal and say, "Doggie, doggie," and it's like they're testing out what fits and what doesn't, right? I think that's a really helpful example of pruning, so thank you for that. So, let's think a little bit now about

what kind of supports we know, and the research shows us, are helpful in supporting first language development.

The research about first language development helps us understand what children need to support the development of a new language, as well as what they need to support their development as a bilingual or biliterate or multilingual language learner. There are some of the supports that we use to help all children build their language skills, and we're going to take most of our time here together to think about what the research shows us about how these features help in one, two, or even more languages. We're going to explore these approaches to supporting language development as we move through the webinar.

So, we're going to take you through the use of appropriate language modeling, vocabulary bridging, language mapping, nonverbal supports, oral language prompts, and peer-to-peer conversation supports, and don't worry if any of these terms are not familiar to you, they will be familiar to you by the end of this webinar. So, the strategies that we use to support language development are always to build these connections between neurons that Karen was just talking about: the connections among the brain cells and the connections between familiar words and new words.

The interesting thing is that all of those strategies that I just mentioned are focused on helping the child build their own connections between what they know currently and the new words and concepts that they're encountering. So, think about the example that Karen just gave us. They understand something about dog, but they're learning new concepts, and they're connecting those concepts to what they already know.

So, when we talk about those approaches that I just mentioned, we're talking about strategies that have been shown by research to help children construct their own language. Now, one thing we know if we know young children: They need to talk. They need to use language in order to learn it, and they need to use new words in different ways and different times and different contexts so that they learn the many meanings of a word. Simply telling things to a child is not enough to support their learning.

So, let's look at some of the other key factors in first language development. We know that humans use language expressively to make connections with others by talking and writing. They use language receptively to make connections with others by listening and reading, and they also use language internally to make connections between thoughts and feelings. That might be one language use that you haven't thought of, but when you keep in mind the purposes of language, to communicate and organize, you can use this knowledge to guide interactions with children.

Now, sometimes we may feel that telling children things feels like teaching. You can tell them lots of information, give them lots of new ideas and concepts, but research is pretty clear that children will learn more and more effectively when we teach through a two-way communication that gives them plenty of practice using words responsively and internally as well. What this means in practice is usually much less teacher talk and lots more child talk, and the teacher talk that is happening is meant to, or intended to, elicit the language from the children to encourage them to think and to respond. Additionally, research shows that children

benefit from having books read to them, but they benefit more when they have opportunities to talk with adults, and each, other about the stories.

Think about experiences of children during a whole group story time. Some children may have a chance to talk about what you are reading, but many children do not. For many children, listening to stories is a passive experience, but when you're in small groups or with an individual child, you can engage in a conversation about the story so that they all have the opportunity to engage in an active learning experience. You can make connections with prior learning and children's lived experiences and ask questions like, "Why?" or "How?" that are related to the characters and events in the book.

So, for example, if a child does not speak the teacher's language, the teacher could choose stories that could be acted out together, use some open-ended questions in the child's home language and record their answers. You could ask, "What will happen next?" or, "What are the characters doing?" We'll fill in, in the next two webinars in this series, with many more detailed examples of teaching practices in action.

OK. So, we want to hear from you. This is your opportunity to talk with each other and share your great ideas with your colleagues. So, go ahead and open up that ideas widget, that yellow light bulb widget, and take a minute to share with each other how you know when a great conversation is happening between you and a child or between another adult and a child. What I love about the ideas widget is that you can give thumbs-up to responses you appreciate, and you can also respond directly to a comment with your own thoughts.

So, this is a great opportunity for you to share with each other, take advantage of the knowledge and experience you and your colleagues have brought to this webinar. When I think about great conversations between adults and children, some of the things that I think are really important or that define a great conversation is one where you stay on topic for five or more turns, this idea of having a back-and-forth conversation, where the topic stays the same and you're engaging in deeper and deeper thinking or asking children to expand on what they're thinking. It's also important to have mutual interests, right?

So, whatever this child is telling you or explaining to you, being interested in what they're saying and what they're exploring with their ideas, definitely a part of a great conversation. Lots of opportunities to respond to each other, taking turns in the conversation, using critical thinking, hypothesizing. One of my favorite things to ask my two kids is, "I don't know. What do you think about that?" or, "How do you think that happened?" or, "What would happen if we ..." and then just listening to their great ideas. So, we're going to keep moving through our content, but the ideas widget is going to be there for the rest of the webinar, so, feel free to check in on it as we continue.

So, the research shows us that conversation is critical to early learning, and high-quality instructional interactions require these frequent conversations. There are studies that make the point that young children learn language best when they are involved in sustained, meaningful conversations, so for example, one study showed that the preschool teacher behavior that was most predictive of children's growth was the frequency of sophisticated vocabulary use during informal conversations.

The sophisticated vocabulary use actually predicted children's kindergarten vocabulary, which also correlated with fourth grade word reading. So, don't shy away from those big words. If you know a preschooler, you know that they love them, and they can turn around and use them. So, use those sophisticated vocabulary words and concepts in frequent conversations with children.

Another study showed that teachers' interactions that best encouraged language learning include having conversations that stay on a single topic, giving children the opportunities to talk, to think critically, teachers who are encouraging that analytical thinking, and providing expanded details or information on the meanings of words and concepts. So, we're not just looking for kind of informal back-and-forth, but really intentional interactions that support children's thinking and learning by providing complex syntax, sophisticated vocabulary and the opportunity to expand on ideas and concepts that are involved in the conversation.

Related to this idea, for those of you who are familiar with the CLASS® – the Classroom Assessment Scoring System – the high-quality interactions that are indicated in that tool are related to instructional supports, which include concept development, quality of feedback and language modeling. So, think for a minute about your program's CLASS® scores or your CLASS® scores and what those scores say about the instructional supports and the quality of instructional supports.

The types of interactions identified in those indicators, they support analysis and reasoning through discussions and activities, and there's also an expectation that concepts relate to children's previous learning and their lived experiences. It's about making that connection to what they already know so that they can build on new ideas and new concepts. These dimensions are important for all early childhood programs, including Head Start programs, to work on to improve outcomes for all children, and for children who are dual language learners, these dimensions should receive special attention.

So, for example, using materials that are familiar to children who are dual language learners helps them approach a learning activity with connections to their prior knowledge so that they can build additional learning and skills with confidence. OK. So, that was a lot of research. I'm going to turn it over to Karen, who I know is dying to talk with you. She's going to share with you some information on second language development. Karen?

Karen: Well, thank you very much, Judi, and you've certainly laid excellent groundwork for us to build our own connections to the knowledge that you were just talking about and making connections to how can we use those research understandings and those strategies when children speak different languages. So, we have a list of terms here that represent some of the things that you hear in the field such as ...

We use the term dual language learner, and we talked about the definition in the beginning, to mean any child that's growing up with two or more languages. They may be stronger in one language than the other. They may only experience one language in small amounts, but that child that has learned something in another language or an additional language is a dual language learner even if they speak English really well.

Some of their knowledge that's stored in their brains, it's stored in that other language, and now our doggie example and our rose pruning example really help us understand why it's so important that we support all of the languages that a child has been using to construct knowledge in their brains. So, some children who are dual language learners will grow up to be bilingual. Many of them will, and the more we support second languages, the stronger chances that they will grow up to be bilingual, but not everybody who knows two languages is completely bilingual, and that's OK too.

All of these things help us to understand what intentional planning we need to make. We know that children who know more than one language do code switching or trans-linguaging, where they blend words from their two languages or three languages into one phrase or sentence to help them get their point across, and that's a very natural strength of children's ability to use whatever language they have to get their point across. But as adults, we want to try to always stick to one language at a time to give them a full model of, "Here's how I would say this in one language, and here's how I would say it in the other language."

You've heard that some children are simultaneously bilingual, where they're growing up with two languages from the beginning. Maybe, they have one parent that speaks each of the languages. Other children are sequential bilinguals where they're starting out in one language, and then they move to a new area or a new school, and they learn an additional language. But all of those children fall in the category of dual language learners. And so, we talk about children's home language or native language as one of their languages, and then they have a new language. For children tribal populations, their home language may be English, and they start learning their tribal language when they come to preschool.

So, these are a lot of terms that we have to keep in mind and try to juggle as we talk through the content of our presentation. So, one of the first points that we want to really highlight for you is that Head Start Program Performance Standards, we select a strong component of the research saying that children need support for their home language. But what that means, like, how does that work? That's something that we really want to get a little deeper into. And so we have these three categories that we want to focus on, right?

But children need us to recognize their home language and culture as part of who they are, as the wonderful richness of their background, but they also need us to support their home language because we know that there are benefits to growing up being bilingual in childhood, in school and on onto career, right? And thirdly, we need to support the home language simply because that's what kids need so they can understand content. They need to make sure we do everything we can to help them understand content.

So, early childhood education is not about teaching children English; it's about teaching children concepts and content, right? And whatever we do to intentionally make that possible is really important, and that's what we're going to be talking about in the next few slides. OK? So, one of the things we know from research is that bilingual children have brains that do things that monolingual brains don't have to do.

Not only do bilingual children have two language systems ... It's not all, like, one bunch of language all mashed together. They have two language systems for their two languages, and

then they also have an additional activity in their brains that help them connect one language to the other. And they have this additional activity of having to search in two language systems for the words and meanings that they need to understand what's happening and to recognize which language is being used, you know, when their teacher's speaking to them in English, and then their friend speaks to them in Korean, and then their grandmother picks them up and talks to them in Spanish. Children who are multilingual have to be able to tell the difference between those languages and start and stop the way they use them.

So, the materials we use are not just about taking English materials and translating the words into another language. We need to think about supporting how bilingual and multilingual children think, and so even as far as choosing assessments and screening tools, takes that into account. When we realize that an English language assessment that's just translated into an additional language, it's still a monolingual assessment in a new language, and the ideal is to get screening tools and assessments that are designed for the way bilingual children think, and that's a whole other topic that we do have resources for that on ECLKC, and we will be talking a little bit more about that in our upcoming webinar, but for now we want to also talk about how we can connect the research with the actual day-to-day teaching practices, and that's where we're going next. OK.

So, on this slide, you can see the emphasis on the actual intentionality of the choices that you make in the classroom, and when you have children that speak two or more languages, you have to really think specifically about what kinds of home language support you will provide to support learning, and you have to also think for the times when you are not supporting the home language, what are you doing in your teaching using English language that's designed to intentionally help children who speak languages other than English and put those things together so that children can express what they know and can do so that they can comprehend content across all learning domains and so they can build learning connections, right?

So, we need to make sure that all children have high-quality early childhood learning experiences which include high-quality interactions, and we also know from the research that this is not enough for children who are dual language learners because they need additional adaptations, specifically planned to help them understand and to learn in English and in their home language.

So, teachers need to plan to provide supports in the home language and separate supports in English, separate opportunities for children to express themselves in each language and to build learning connections in each language. And so, for those reasons, a lot of research is starting to show how important small groups are to accomplish all of those things, to be able to support children's home languages, to be able to support them in learning English and understanding English content. It's better to have more direct contact and to be able to respond to when children show that they maybe don't understand or they misunderstand what is being talked about.

You need a small group to be able to respond to each child and make sure that they are not going through a learning experience with a misunderstanding of what's being said or a lack of understanding. So, small groups are very important, and they're also important for allowing children to express their learning and to do that active learning that Judi emphasized in her

suggestions. We want children, especially children who are learning in two languages, to have at least as much opportunity as their monolingual peers to be able to express what they know and can do, and we need capture that.

We need to record that. We need to know how to respond to that, and so we need to think, also, about giving children opportunities to use language in order to learn it, and that's something that Judi also talked about earlier, and here we see this is important for all children, but when we have children that are learning in two or more languages, we have to find additional ways to support how those children will use the language.

So, for example, choose songs and stories that include words that children will actually use in play. So, if you notice that children are really interested in playing in the block area, choose stories that have words that would be useful in interacting and describing what they're doing in that play, and choose classroom materials that support the use of new words. So, if you read a story and children are really interested in that story, and they're learning new words because of the story, they need multiple opportunities to practice those words, right?

So, if you read a story about ducks, it doesn't help them to switch to an activity about magnets, so if you know you're going to read the story about ducks, bring in some duck materials, like puzzles or games or toys. If you know you want to study magnets, then think ahead about finding books with words about magnets, but look for ways to extend those opportunities to practice new words. That's important for all children and important especially for children who are dual language learners.

Also, model whole sentences rather than using individual nouns or objects or labels. Really try to use language as a communication tool in both English and the home languages of the children, when possible, and create those connections that allow the children to use the new words in different activities and different learning domains, right? So, here is an example, a picture, and it's really emphasizing ...

We want high-quality language input that is interactive and meaningful, that it's not just a question of translating what you said in English into words in another language. So, if you have staff that speak the languages of the children, they should not be translating what the teacher said. They should be translating ...

Not translating, they should be interacting directly, having conversations with the children, authentic conversations just, you know, the two of them. They don't have to say the same thing that the teacher said in English, what they have to do is interact with the child about that content, whether it's, you know, a counting activity or an activity anticipating what will happen if we put bread in a plastic bag in the closet and it turns colors, we want to be able to have conversations about that that are authentic between an adult and a child in whatever language they're using.

And we want to find those ways to have those conversations in each language; so, it's a good idea to explain the actual meanings of new words to children. That's true for monolingual children as well, for children learning in one language. We find that, from the research, that teachers who take the time to actually explain what words mean have better results in children

actually understanding and using new and sophisticated words, and that helps children build their own connection to what the word means.

And so, that's even more helpful if you can do that in the child's home language or if you can help them connect between English and the home language. Planned interactions in one language helps children build vocabulary in that language, so teachers can support vocabulary development by language-mapping, right? Where why describe what the children are doing as they're playing together or describing what you're doing as you're getting things set up for an activity or getting ready to go outside.

And so it's important that teachers narrate what they're doing. That's helpful as they narrate what the children are doing, but we don't want the classroom to be a sea flooded with teacher talk over what children are doing. That should be a small part that you do to help children understand the vocabulary that relates to their activities, and then pulling back so they can use the words you said when they interact with each other. Like, you want to get them started and then pull back to let them build those connections in that constructive learning that helps them be such great thinkers in early childhood.

Also, vocabulary bridging is another strategy that has been found, through research, to be effective, and that means when you explain the meanings of a word to a child in their home language and then tell them how it's connected to a word in English, so once they understand the word in their home language, they can make a stronger connection to the same word in English, and by explicitly building that bridge for them and helping them see the connection, you can really make a difference in how far children can go in connecting prior knowledge to new knowledge through the vocabulary of their familiar language and the connection to their new language, right?

So, you might say, "This is a story about three bear, and in French, we say, 'trois ours,' " and I would show three fingers, then I would point to the bear on the book cover, and I would have everybody say it with me, so the children that speak French would realize, "Oh, 'trois,' that means 'three,' and 'ours,' that means 'bear,' and so I know what bears are, and so now I'm aware of what this story is going to be about."

That's how their brain pulls together their prior knowledge about bears and about the number three, so even though the English words of the story may be unfamiliar to them, they're a lot better prepared to make those connections because I've helped orient them to the book, I've helped make those vocabulary bridges for them so that they can then listen intently to the story all in English with that stage you've already set for them, so connections are ready to be made because you've helped them see in their home language what they're about to learn in English. OK.

Additional strategies, such as encouraging analysis and reasoning through discussions and activities, well, isn't that something we want to do with all children, right? Relating concepts to children's previous learning and their experiences, that's what we've been talking about, but teachers sometimes wonder, "How am I supposed to do that if the child doesn't understand what I'm saying or if I don't understand what the child is saying?" Right?

So, you might actually invite volunteers who speak the languages of the children, but do you know what makes a difference? When you provide them with professional development so they actually understand what it is you want them to accomplish in supporting the child's home language that you want them to encourage the child to engage in two-way conversations with them, and that you want them to ask questions that will, you know, really get those children thinking about, well, why is this happening, or why did you choose that, or what do you think will happen?

And volunteers and family members can be wonderful partners in teaching practice to support the home language, and, but intentionality means we have to be ready to help them do that. Also, you might learn some key open-ended questions, like Judi said, in the languages of the children so that you can make sure that you have given the children ample opportunities to communicate, even if you don't understand what they say, you can give them those opportunities to answer those really thought-provoking questions that everyone else gets to answer, and that they may answer in their home language, and you should be ready to record those answers so you have them for, on their portfolio assessments, so you can have them translated later, so you can get back to the child and say, "Oh, I realized earlier that you told me that you have a new pet iguana at home, and I really want to learn about iguanas.

Let's look at this video about iguanas," or something like that, so the children get that opportunity to show you what they're interested in, what they know and that you have an opportunity to respond, and it's sometimes unnerving, right, when children are talking to you in language you don't understand, but that doesn't change the fact that they need that opportunity to express themselves.

So, recording it and getting help with the understanding answers is what we need, and now here is a video about how this can happen when children interact in their home language.

[Video begins]

Children: ♪ Black sheep, black sheep ♪ ♪ What do you see? ♪ ♪ I see a goldfish looking at me ♪ ♪
Goldfish, goldfish, what do you see? ♪ ♪ I see a brother looking at me ♪ ♪ Brother, brother,
what do you see? ♪ ♪ I see beautiful children looking at me ♪ ♪

Child No. 1: I found my farmer, farmer. Found my farmer, farmer, farmer.

Child No. 2: Farmers, farmer.

Child No.1: What do you see? I see a boy.

Child No. 2: No, pink pig.

Child No. 1: Pig, pig, what do you see? I see a pig, another pig. Pigs, pigs, what did you see? I see a horse. What did you see? I see a ...

Child No. 2: Cow. Cow.

Child No. 1: Pig, pig.

Child No. 2: Cow. Cow, cow. What do you see?

Child No. 1: Horse.

Child No. 2: No.

Child No. 1: Cow.

Child No. 2: What is that?

Child No. 1: Pig, huh?

Child No. 2: What is that?

[Video ends]

Karen: OK, the great thing about that video is it reminds you that when a classroom is filled with high-quality materials and experiences, children don't need grown-ups to keep the valuable conversations going, that the classroom environment and the foundation set by the adults in the room and the materials that are used actually make it possible for children to have wonderful, interesting, valuable conversations with each other. In that conversation, the children were talking a lot in English, but it shows you that if they were talking in another language and you didn't understand them, that valuable interactions would still be happening, and the teacher doesn't always have to be the one in control, do they?

So, we also are going to have in one of the upcoming webinars a focus on the specific uses of cultural influences in teaching of young children, but here is a quote from research about this topic, that researchers found that culture influences not only children's personal preference and behavior, but also how they think and how they feel and how they learn. So, we want to also let you know that we're getting to the end of this webinar.

It's almost time for our questions and answers, but in the future webinars, we're going to take a lot of time to really get into, what does the cultural aspect of diversity and equity in our classrooms look like and how we can support it, and we put a picture there of the Head Start multicultural principles guide, which is available in English and Spanish on the ECLKC as a resource that you can use as you're exploring that, but we certainly hope you'll join us for that next webinar, and this is coming back to remind us that when we look at the things that are covered in the CLASS®, that are addressed in the CLASS®, that are needed to have high CLASS® scores, such as systematic collection and integration of culture and language and engaging with families, that all of these factors come together to remind us of the things that children who are dual language learners really need us to address, and when we do address them, the CLASS® is an indicator of the success that children are going to have with their learning, right?

In other words, the CLASS® itself is not a goal, right? The CLASS® is the assessment that we use because research has shown if we do these things, children will be more successful learners and will progress better. So, this slide reminds us of how these things come together, they're important for every child, and it's important that we pay attention to how we're supporting them for children who are dual language learners.

One last point is that children can become fluent in a new language if they just learn that new language between 40 and 60% of the day. Children do not need to spend all day in a new language to become fluent; about half a day is fine, like there's half a day in preschool they're learning in English, then they go home, and maybe their families read them a story or two in English. That is enough for children to become fully fluent in English. They don't need full

immersion in English, so that research frees up our time to realize, if I do spend time helping children learn in their in home language, learn new concepts, explain things, express themselves in their home language, that does not hurt their English, and in fact, it strengthens it, according to the research.

So, we're back to Judi summarizing our list, seeing how we did. What do you think, Judi?

Judi: Well, I think you managed to cover quite a few things in just a very short amount of time, and I want to let you know that for those of you who are in our Q&A box, we are answering questions as we can. We're also ... We'll take your questions and use those to support our upcoming webinars. But, Karen, before I get to this summary, we do have a question from someone who is asking what you mean when you say, "systematic collection." Can you just expand on that a little bit?

Karen: Well, that is an aspect of the interactions that we work with, so maybe I'll take that slide back again. And the kinds of interactions that help at school and at home, and part of it is, we need to really understand what children are learning, so we need to gather examples of how they're expressing themselves and we need to be able to identify, what is a child's existing knowledge and how we're going to build on that. So, that is just that component in that slide.

Judi: Yeah, and I think, you know, that makes me think of, you know, I do a lot of work around ongoing child assessment, and I think one of the things that we talk about frequently is having a system in place for collecting information about what children know and are able to do in both of their languages and not just what they know and are able to do, but also what their home life is like and what languages they're exposed to and what kind of opportunities they have to learn their home language and English, not just in the classroom, but throughout their lived experiences.

And again, speaking of lived experiences, right, that's another piece that's really important when you think of connecting children's concepts — connecting concepts to what children already know in order to help them build on that language understanding what they are experiencing at home is a really important piece of that, so I think it's really important to kind of, rather than have this haphazard collection of, like, oh, we randomly found out, you know, that this child has a grandparent at home who only speaks to them in this language, that you have a system in place for making sure that you are aware of children's backgrounds and experiences.

So, let's just quickly review here, and going back to our list, when we talked about this list of supports for language development, Karen gave us some examples related to appropriate language modeling. We talked about the importance of using high-quality language in any language and that adults should avoid mixing two languages whenever possible, so having interactions that are focused in using only one language.

The vocabulary bridging, I love those bridge images. It makes it stick it out in my mind. We talked about the study showing that children benefit when adults specifically explain meanings of words and connect the words from familiar language to a new language, which I think that's a fantastic image and a great way to think about how we can build on children's language development. The language mapping, we talked about engaging in intentional interactions in

both languages whenever possible, and then mapping children's and teachers' actions through language and description.

The nonverbal supports, we talked about the importance of using visuals and props that support children's comprehension, and we saw a great video of how that works in practice. Through oral language prompts, we suggested learning open-ended questions in the home languages of the children, and in just minute, I'm going to share with you a resource that could help you do that. And then finally, again, what we saw in that video was the peer-to-peer conversation supports.

Remember, that supporting same-language, peer-to-peer conversations is an important way to build opportunities for home language support. Build it right into your day. So, one of the resources we wanted to share with you that will help you understand how to support children learning two more language is this document here. Some of you may be familiar with it. In 2017, the National Academies of the Sciences, Engineering, and Math published a thorough review of this research, it's called, "Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English."

This is a comprehensive, well-organized resource, and it provides guidance around teaching children who are learning two or more languages. The link to this study is in your resources tab; so, your resources widget, the green one at the bottom. You can get a link to that. In addition to this report, we have access to more recent research articles that help us to fine-tune our understanding of how children who are dual language learners, how they learn and what are the best ways to teach them because there's a lot of information out there. Just last spring, in May, the National Center On Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning hosted a dual language learner expert work group meeting.

We had the privilege of meeting with the top researchers in the field, and they shared information about their newest research. This information is being compiled, and it's going to be summarized in several professional learning guides that are currently being prepared by our partners at the University of Washington, and they will soon be available on the ECLKC. So, as we get ready to close, I know this was a lot of information. I want you to just think for minute about one idea or maybe more than one idea that you're going to share with your colleagues. Not everyone can be on a webinar.

You can share the information with your colleagues. I know I'm always that person who says, "Hey, guess what I read yesterday?" Actually, Karen is like that, too. We're – we get in trouble when we talk to each other because we're always sharing new information that we've learned about from research that we've read.

So, please take this research. You can download the slides and the resources that we presented here and take a minute to share them with your colleagues. OK, so just a couple of resources. I mentioned that we have a resource to help you use some words in other languages with the children that you work with.

The first is the Ready-DLL app. This is a free app. It's designed to help teachers learn strategies, see video examples and try new words in Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, and Haitian Creole, and it has a game-like approach. So, this app is available on Apple and Android, and please download

it, share it. It's going to support you in building a culturally diverse classroom and provide you with lots of resources that you need to support the children that you work with. Next, we're super excited to share with you that in just a few weeks, we'll be hosting our second dual language learner's celebration week, and so if you haven't already, you can go to the iPD, which is our online professional development system.

You can get there through the ECLKC, and you can sign up for this fun event that's going to start on Tuesday, Feb. 18. There's an information flier in the resources widget that'll walk you through how to register, and you don't have to worry about being available for every opportunity. It's asynchronous, so you can access the different pieces of — the different modules at any time that you're able to. I want to make sure you have the dates for our upcoming Front Porch series.

We have our April — our April webinar will be about intentional language support in the preschool classroom. Karen is going to come with some really practical strategies for supporting dual language learners, and then in September, we'll be talking about elevating the role of cultural responsiveness and effective teaching practices. Those little images on the right-hand side are more resources, again, that you can download to use to get access to really helpful resources.

There's Text4Teachers, which is a texting service that'll send you twice a month links to helpful resources, and then the ELOF2GO and MiELOF apps are supportive apps that help teaching staff understand and access the information in the ELOF, both in English and Spanish. And then the last thing I want to let you know, in case you haven't already joined, MyPeers is another great resource for supporting — for gathering information and sharing with colleagues about how you support dual language learners. This is a virtual community, and it's there to support the exchange of ideas, sharing of resources and generally to support the early childhood community.

We have a few communities that are specifically related to our topic here today. One is the CLRP community. I will make sure to go on the CLRP community. I'll post the citations for the research that we talk about today, and that community ...

Karen: Judi?

Judi: Oh, yes.

Karen: I just wanted to say, we're used to saying that, but that means Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices Community. That people can look for.

Judi: Thank you.

Karen: People are asking for, like, the research citations and the resources, so whatever you don't see in the resource widget on this webinar, we will also post the direct links to the articles in the CLRP MyPeers community, and that will get everybody started to using that to ask more questions and help each other out.

Judi: I love it. Thank you for clarifying that, Karen. Yeah, so go ahead and join MyPeers. We will extend the conversation there, and we'll keep talking about provided supports for dual language learners, and we're just so thankful that you joined us today. Again, join MyPeers and

join that community if you would like additional information, resources and the citations that we mentioned today. We'll make sure that we put all of that information up there for you, and we hope this resource has been helpful and informative, and we will look forward to seeing you at our next Front Porch webinar, which will be in April. So, thank you, and we'll touch base next time.