

**Resource:**  
**A Professional Learning Community –  
Understanding, Validating, and Building on the Language Practices  
of Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs)<sup>1</sup> in Prekindergarten**

## **Introduction: A Professional Learning Community on Emergent Multilingual Learners**

This resource guide is meant for administrators and teachers who would like to create a Professional Learning Community (PLC) around dynamic bilingual language development in early childhood classrooms.

A PLC is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. PLCs can take many forms – they can be sponsored by the school officially or groups of teachers may decide to form a study group to learn collaboratively about a given topic. Parents and families should also be encouraged to be a part of a school's PLC.

Dynamic bilingualism refers to the way bilinguals use all of their linguistic resources fluidly to make meaning and communicate in multiple contexts (García, 2009). Teachers of EMLLs must understand the dynamic ways their students learn through their uses of language as well as their social interactions and play.

This guide builds on teachers' understandings of how young children learn and offers practical ways to observe, gain knowledge about, and build upon young children's multilingualism. The ideas in this resource are directed towards prekindergarten educators. Regardless of the program model, early childhood teachers can and must validate and build upon young children's bilingualism.

### **What will I find in this resource?**

This resource is organized into five "Actions" that can guide educators toward creating a classroom where EMLLs thrive. The Actions include:

1. Challenging Misconceptions About EMLLs and Their Families
2. Observing EMLLs
3. Interactions that Enhance Learning for EMLLs

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<sup>1</sup> Emergent Multilingual Learner means a prekindergarten student identified by the "Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile" as a student whose home or primary language is other than English. These students are entitled to a combination of supports and instruction in their home language(s) while learning English. Students identified as Emergent Multilingual Learners may or may not be later identified as English Language Learners in Kindergarten in accordance with CR Part 154.

4. Planning for Emergent Literacy and Play to Sustain Multilingualism
5. Developing Strong Partnerships with Families of EMLs

Each of the Actions addresses a concept that can be covered in one PLC session *or* span a number of sessions. The Actions also include recommended articles, discussion questions, and resources that can assist teachers in implementing each Action. You can think of each “Action” as its own session or meeting of the PLC, with ways for teachers to work individually and collaboratively on setting up their classrooms for the play, learning, and language interactions with the EMLs in their class.

## Collaboration: A Guiding Principle

The Actions described in this resource will help educators examine their beliefs and practices and gain an understanding of how and why they should embrace a dynamic bilingual framework in early childhood classrooms. *Collaboration* is essential to this work. Teachers should be given time to reflect, think, and create together. The PLC is one way for educators to challenge misconceptions and observe and interact with EMLs, which leads the way to planning for emergent literacy and play that validates and builds on their emergent multilingualism. This document offers suggestions for addressing these concepts, but all Actions can be adjusted or expanded for different contexts, settings, and time frames.

## How can I use this resource guide?

This resource guide can be used by educators to guide them in implementing and organizing a PLC around play, bilingualism and early childhood classroom practices. The PLC should meet once a week during a designated professional development time. Each PLC session builds on the previous one, helping scaffold teachers’ learning and enabling them to implement new approaches and understandings in their classrooms.

Weekly PLC meetings can be organized as follows:

1. **Before** each session...
  - Provide participants with the article(s) accompanying the Action. Be sure to provide sufficient time for participants to read before the next session, as well as a guiding question or focus.
2. **During** each session...
  - Discuss the scholarly articles and/or videos. The questions listed in each session can be used to guide in-depth discussions about new understandings and plan out ways of translating that learning into practice.
  - , Beginning in the second session, encourage participants to share their experiences with implementing the Action from the previous week. This could entail sharing their anecdotes, student work, and video/audio recordings and questions that have emerged.
3. **After** each session...

- Teachers will take the Action laid out in a task at the end of each session plan with their students or their families in the week between the PLC sessions. Teachers should be prepared to discuss their enactment of the Action during the following session.

## **Action 1:**

### **Challenging Misconceptions About EMLLs and Their Families**

#### **Introduction**

All children have language and find ways to express their interests and wants. However, when EMLLs begin school, their language practices, cultural knowledge and experiences, or funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992), are often undervalued in the classroom. This undervaluing can range from teaching wholly in English to lacking a multilingual, multicultural classroom ecology to simply failing to include explicit connections to students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds in instruction. This can lead to disparaging outcomes: first, when teachers hold a narrow view of what parental partnership entails and make assumptions about what families can and cannot do, the important role of parents who speak languages other than English is reduced. Second, the families of EMLLs are often led to believe that they don't have the language, knowledge, or skills that are valued in school settings.

Due to cultural and linguistic differences, the distance between school and home is usually wider for EMLLs. Families may not know or feel equipped to navigate the complexities of the U.S. school system, finding it too different from that of their home country to participate. Often, parents feel that they simply do not have a strong enough command of English to talk about their children and learn about their education. These linguistic and cultural differences between home and school can breed deficit thinking about the families of EMLLs. For this reason, teachers must partner with families to help each other understand the cultural and linguistic values of the home and the school. By engaging in this first Action, educators will challenge these kinds of deficit views of culturally and linguistically diverse EMLLs and their families. The following articles and discussion questions can help members of the PLC further understand the dynamic and multimodal language practices of young multilingual children and remind them to take a value-oriented approach towards their families and communities.

Please note that because this Action is broken into two parts, it could span two sessions (i.e. two separate meetings of the PLC).

## A) Misconceptions About Families of EMLLs: Who are the Educators?

### Setting up this session

Taking a value-oriented perspective towards EMLLs means viewing families' linguistic practices as an educational asset in the classroom (Velasco & Fialais, 2016). This means that teachers should spend time talking to parents, learning about their social histories, their interactions, and their language/literacy use. This collaboration must be regular and ongoing throughout the year. Through this extended learning on the part of the teacher, a plan can be devised as to how parents can support their children's learning, based on the parents' strengths and funds of knowledge. In the first article, *An Indian Father's Plea*, Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear) illuminates the Eurocentric ideals that lead his son's teacher to interpret his rich funds of knowledge as deficient. In the second article, Mariana Souto-Manning (2016) reminds us to approach work with bilingual students from a perspective of strength and an acknowledgement of the language resources that EMLLs already possess. These articles are must-reads for any teacher who wants to approach the teaching of young EMLLs from a perspective of strength.

#### **Articles to read before this session:**

- Link: [An Indian Father's Plea](#) by Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear)
- Link: [Honoring and building on the rich literacy practices of young multilingual learners](#) by Mariana Souto-Manning

### During this session

- Members of the PLC should share some of the key points in the articles, questions they have, and ideas for adapting classroom practices accordingly. The following questions could also help organize the discussion:
  1. What are some of the underlying assumptions of our schooling system that can lead us to believe that a child is deficient or a "slow-learner"?
  2. What linguistic and social repertoires have you observed in your students (in school and/or with their friends and family), that are overlooked in the school setting?
  3. In what ways can you honor and build on your students' language practices?

### After this session: Take action!

Make time to learn more about the funds of knowledge of the family members of some students in your class. You may visit their home or set up a meeting or phone call. Remind families that everyone has valuable funds of knowledge and ask them what interests and skills they can share with your classroom community (i.e., cooking, drawing, singing, planting, knitting). The list of **Questions About Families' Funds of Knowledge** (below and listed in Appendix A) can guide your conversations with families. It is important to note that you must build a mutually trusting relationship with families before you ask them direct questions about their Funds of Knowledge.

### Questions About Families' Funds of Knowledge

- What does your family enjoy doing on the weekends?
- What are your occupations?
- Does your family engage in any religious activities?
- What are some of your family's favorite television shows?
- What print do you have in your home? (i.e., books, newspapers, etc.)
- Does your child use the internet or any digital/online games?
- (repetitive)
- What are some things your family is interested in?
- Would you feel comfortable sharing your hobbies/skills/talents/interests with our class community?

Teachers should come prepared to share their experience implementing this Action during the next session. One teacher could be asked to collect student work, anecdotes, and video or audio recordings to share during the next session.

## B) Misconceptions About EMLs

### Setting up this session

EMLs bring with them a diverse and rich pool of language practices to school that is essential to their development. Nevertheless, minoritized students' emergent dynamic bilingualism is often seen as deficient in school settings. CUNY-NYSIEB/BERSSI's 2018 Topic Brief, *Building on Emergent Multilingual Learners' Language Practices in Pre-School and Kindergarten Programs*, provides a clear explanation of how young multilingual children use language. Maintaining strong links between bilingual learning in school and bilingual learning at home requires a clear understanding of each child's home language practices (Morell & Aponte, 2016). Zoila Morell's article provides an approach to developing a linguistic profile of individual EMLs, by collecting valuable information for planning instruction that builds on their emergent bilingualism.

#### **Articles to read before this session:**

- Link: CUNY-NYSIEB/BERSSI's Topic Brief, *Building on Emergent Multilingual Learners' Language Practices in Pre-School and Kindergarten Programs*
- Link: [Right From the Start: A Protocol For Identifying and Planning Instruction for Emergent Bilinguals](#) by Zoila Morell

### During this session

Members of the PLC should share some of the key points from the articles, questions they have, and ideas for adapting classroom practices accordingly. The following discussion questions could also be used to begin the conversation:

1. Describe one new idea that you encountered in the text. Why is it important to you and your practice? List ways that this idea could impact your practice in the short term and in the long term.
2. Based on the funds of knowledge of the child you observed last week, what are some questions you have about the child's language practices? What linguistic features may not be evident in the classroom? You may refer to Zoila Morell's approach to developing a linguistic profile of an EMLL to guide you.

### **After this session: Take action!**

Make time to speak to the family members of at least one student that you would like to know more about. You might set up a meeting or phone call or even visit their home to learn more about the child's language practices. This list of **Questions to Ask Families of EMLs** (below and listed in Appendix B) can guide your conversations with families.

#### **Questions to Ask Families of EMLs**

- What languages do your family members speak at home?
- In what languages do you speak to your child most of the time?  
What languages does your child understand?
- In what languages does your child speak to you... to others?
- What are some ways your child uses gestures or objects to communicate?
- In what languages does your child attempt to read/write?
- In what languages do you sing, read, or tell stories to your child?
- How has your child learned English so far (television shows, siblings, childcare, etc.)?

Inspired by the intake questions in *Right from the Start: A Protocol for Identifying and Planning Instruction for Emergent Bilinguals in Universal Prekindergarten* (Morell & Aponte, 2016). You can also visit <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/emergent-multilingual-learners-prekindergarten-programs> for more information.

Teachers should come prepared to share their experience implementing this Action during the next session. One teacher could be asked to collect student work, anecdotes, and video or audio recordings to share during the next session.

## Action 2: Observing EMLs

### Introduction

Teachers can better understand and appreciate students' dynamic emergent bilingualism by observing their holistic language practices during play. To do so, teachers must make an effort to focus on the message and the way children use language, not the specific features of the language they use. It is from this *position of strength*, rather than what is missing, that teachers can design ways of validating and extending EMLs' linguistic repertoires. This section will guide teachers in observing students as they language so that their emergent linguistic abilities can be built upon. In this Action, members of the PLC will read an article, use a protocol to guide them in observing a focal child in their classrooms, and brainstorm ways in which they can support their students' dynamic multilingualism.

### Setting up this session

Patricia Carini was one of the founders of the Prospect Center for Education and Research in Bennington, Vermont, a school grounded on the belief that teachers can use sustained and careful observation to develop knowledge that would help them address the learning needs of students. As teachers observe students through a variety of lenses, they gain a broader perspective of their students' abilities and develop authentic approaches to engage and extend student learning. Although Patricia Carini did not work with EMLs, the following text, which she wrote as a letter to parents and teachers, provides teachers of EMLs with a holistic approach to observing these students.

#### ***Article to read before this session:***

- Link: [A Letter to Parents and Teachers on Some Ways of Looking at and Reflecting on Children: An Addendum to the Descriptive Review of a Child](#) by Patricia Carini

### During this session

- Allow time for teachers to share their experiences implementing the Action from the previous week. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on the families' funds of knowledge they learned about and share ideas, anecdotes, student work, video or audio recordings, and/or questions that have emerged.
- Members of the PLC should share some of the key points in the article, questions they have, and ideas for adapting classroom practices accordingly. The following discussion questions could also be used to guide the conversation:
  1. Carini poses five different categories for observing students (1. physical presence and gesture; 2. disposition; 3. relationships with children and adults; 4. activities and interests; and 5. formal learning). Which of these do you already use when observing

- students? Which of these would you like to develop more of an eye for? How would you approach this?
2. Do you think that Carini's list of observation categories is complete? Would you observe anything else for EMLLs? Why and how?

### **After this session: Take Action!**

1. Choose a focal student: Think of a student in your class who interests you, presents a challenge for you as a teacher, or you want to know more about. Based on Carini's observation categories, what do you know about this child thus far? What are some questions you have about this child?
2. Observe the focal student: Use the **Child Language Observation Protocol** (below and listed in Appendix C) to observe the child during your center activities or while writing, for example. You can also select times to observe the child with other adults and in other contexts and times of the school day such as art, gym, or recess.
3. Share and discuss: Based on your observations of the student, discuss the following with a colleague (this can be done at the following PLC session or during another designated time):
  - a. What have you learned about this student as a person and as a learner through your observations? What are the child's strengths?
  - b. Based on these observations, what are some things you can do to support the child as a learner?
  - c. Based on these observations, how could you support and sustain this child's bilingualism?
  - d. Specifically, how can you build on family/community resources that you observed?

This **Child Language Observation Protocol** (below and listed in Appendix C) can guide educators in observing the language of EMLLs. Please remember that the goal is for teachers to learn about the child's language practices, *not* the absence of language. Therefore, all of the linguistic features observed should be recorded including the non-verbal resources students use to communicate and make meaning. These observations will eventually help teachers plan instruction that validates and builds upon the emergent language practices that are already part of the students' repertoire.



<b><u>Actions/Content of the conversation</u></b> What are the children doing? Who are they talking to?	<b><u>Child's Talk</u></b> Document everything the child says.	<b><u>Non-verbal Language</u></b> How do the child use their bodies/facial expressions/gestures to communicate? Do they use objects?
		<i>Describe how students use any of the following to communicate:</i> Gestures Facial expressions Whole body movements Objects
<b><u>Reflect on Children's Language Practices:</u></b>  <b>How is the child's disposition as she/he engages in play?</b> <b>How is the child's disposition as she/he communicates with others?</b> <b>What is the reason they use language or interact with others? Do they want to...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ask for things?</li> <li>• To make friends?</li> <li>• To build something together?</li> <li>• Pretend play scenarios?</li> </ul> <b>Describe how the child communicates (with children, adults) through <i>words</i>.</b> <b>Describe how the child communicates (with children, adults) through <i>non-verbal language</i>.</b> <b>How does the student use LOTE and English? Does the choice of language vary depending on the audience or context?</b> <b>What mentions of community/family are evident?</b> <b>How can you build on students' mentions of community/family?</b> <b>Thoughts / insights / wonderings:</b>		

Teachers should come prepared to share their experience implementing this Action during the next session. One teacher should be asked to collect student work, anecdotes, and video or audio recordings to share during the next session.

### Action 3: Interactions that Enhance Learning for EMLLs

## Introduction

In this action, we ask teachers to consider how their interactions with students are intentionally focused on honoring and supporting their multilingual language development. It's important that educators take an inquiry-based approach when interacting with students individually and in groups. An inquiry-based approach is one in which the teacher responds to the child and his/her interests rather than approaching the child primarily with predetermined goals. For example, note the difference between:

1. Tell me what you are making with your playdough.
2. Can you make the playdough into logs?

In the first interaction, the teacher is inquiring and gathering information about what the student is motivated to do and the language the student uses to express him/herself. With the second question, although taken out of context, the teacher is asking the student to meet a measurable goal. The student could respond yes or no, and it may or may not be central to his/her play. In this scenario, the teacher gathers minimal information about what the students' interests are, what he or she knows how to do in general, and how he or she can talk about

his/her play. In the first question, taking an inquiry stance, the teacher positions him/herself as an observer in relation to the student. Through gathering information about what the student does and how the student communicates, the teacher can support their language development through modeling and questioning based on their multimodal linguistic resources.

### **Setting up this session**

In their article, Jane D. Hill and Kathleen Flynn remind us that purposeful and intentional questioning can support the language development of EMLLS. As described, asking purposeful questions is a key element of taking an inquiry-based approach for learning. Hill and Flynn include sample questions aligned to stages of language acquisition and higher-order thinking in the form of a practical table of Bloom's taxonomy across the stages of language acquisition. While this article is targeted toward older elementary grades, it can be easily adapted to early childhood environments.

#### ***Article to read before this session:***

- Asking the Right Questions: Teachers' Questions Can Build Students' English Language Skills by Jane D. Hill and Kathleen Flynn.

### **During this session**

- Allow time for teachers to share their experience implementing the Action from the previous week. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on the student observations they conducted, and share ideas, anecdotes, student work, video or audio recordings, and/or questions that have emerged.
- **Watch the Video:** Maury Elementary preschool teacher interacts with students through lens of inquiry

In this video members of the PLC will see a preschool teacher interacting with students through the lens of inquiry. Although the video is not explicitly about EMLLS, the tools that the teacher uses are useful to these students. Watch how the teacher provides students with a variety of materials and engages them in multimodal experiences, to fully engage students in play. This full engagement in play provides fertile ground for the teacher to ask open-ended, inquiry-based questions of his students.

- Members of the PLC should share some of the key points in the article, questions they have, and ideas for adapting classroom practices accordingly. The following discussion questions could also be used to guide the conversation:
  1. In what ways did the teacher take an inquiry-based stance towards interacting with students?
  2. In what ways did the teacher support the students' language development?
  3. What are some approaches that you saw in this video that you can take up in your work with the EMLLS in your class?
  4. Think of three different play centers in your classroom. What open-ended, inquiry-based questions could you ask at each of those play centers?

## After this session: Take action!

Over the next few days, focus on the questions you ask your students: how you ask them, what type of questions they are. Jot down 5-6 questions. Then, consider how your EMLs respond (you should also note the content and language of their responses). You might even consider audio recording yourself and your students' responses. Reflect on the way students at different stages of language development respond to your different questions. Do they use the target language? Are they more capable of answering higher order questions in one language, or using multiple languages (translanguaging)? You may want to focus on just 2-3 students. Use this table to guide you in **Asking Questions That Build on Students' Linguistic Repertoire** (below and listed in Appendix D).

<b>Interacting with Emergent Multilingual Learners: Asking Questions That Build on Students' Linguistic Repertoire</b>		
<p>Over the next few days, focus on the questions you ask your students: how do you ask them, what type of questions are they. Consider how your Emergent Multilingual Learners respond (you should also note the content and language of their responses). You might even consider audio recording yourself and your students' responses. Reflect on the way students at different stages of language development respond to your different questions. Do they use the target language? Are they more capable of answering higher order questions in one language, or using multiple languages (translanguaging)?</p>		
<p><b>Week:</b> ____ / ____ / ____ through ____ / ____ / ____</p>		
<p><b>Student:</b> _____</p>		
Questions Asked	Type of Question (Open-ended; Inquiry-based; Bloom's Taxonomy)	Student's Response

Teachers should come prepared to share their experience implementing this Action during the next session. One teacher could be asked to collect student work, anecdotes, and video or audio recordings to share during the next session.

## **Action 4:**

### **Planning for Emergent Literacy and Play That Sustains Multilingualism**

#### **Introduction**

Like all young children, EMLLs learn about the world through play. Their play presents rich opportunities for learning about concepts, relationships between things in the world, and relationships between people. EMLLs process and express their learning through expressions, gestures, and both home and new language. Therefore, play is an opportunity to observe, welcome, and build on students' emergent multilingualism. Teachers of EMLLs should provide plenty of opportunities within play and emergent literacy for your students to express their knowledge bilingually and extend their dynamic language practices through play. In this action, members of the PLC will learn about different modes of play that they can plan to extend students' bilingualism as well as emergent literacy skills.

#### **Setting up this Session**

When most people think about play, they think of sending children off to entertain themselves without much adult guidance. The early childhood teacher, however, knows that play is a complex activity that requires intentionality and planning. Still, the way a teacher engages in these activities must be defined. This set of articles provides teachers with a foundation for how to conceptualize and plan for play to maximize student engagement, conceptual learning, and dynamic language development.

#### ***Articles to read before this session:***

- Playing Within and Beyond the Story: Encouraging Book-Related Pretend Play by Jodi G. Welsch
- Is play a privilege or a right? On the role of play for equity in early childhood education by Mariana Souto-Manning
- Play-based Learning and Intentional Teaching: Forever Different? by Susan Edwards

#### **During this session**

- Allow time for teachers to share their experience implementing the Action over the previous week. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their interactions with students during the previous week, and share ideas, anecdotes, student work, video or audio recordings, and/or questions that have emerged.

- Members of the PLC should share some of the key points in the articles, questions they have, and ideas for adapting classroom practices accordingly. The following discussion questions could also be used to guide the conversation:
  1. What are some ways teachers can build and support students' bilingualism within modeled play and purposefully-framed play?
  2. Think of a storybook your students enjoy. What are some props (i.e., pretend foods or dress-up clothes) that can encourage their cultural and linguistic diversity to shine as they apply their bilingual imaginations to reenact the story and extend it?

### **After this session: Take action!**

Use the **Thematic Unit Planning template** (below and listed in Appendix E) to plan for a thematic unit that will be taught in the near future. Work with a colleague to think about how you can plan for play throughout the unit in ways that build on students' bilingual identities.

## Thematic Unit Planning for Emergent Literacy and Play that Sustains Bilingualism

**Look at a thematic unit that will be taught in the near future. Work with a colleague to think about how you can plan for play in ways that build on students' bilingual identities.**

Thematic Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Concept or Languages to be Modeled through Play</b>	<b>Props that extend the unit &amp; may elicit culturally &amp; linguistically-specific creativity</b>	<b>How can Families contribute? What connection are there to students' Communities?</b>
Block Area			
Dramatic Play Center			
Kitchen Area			
<i>(Art Center)</i>			
<i>(Table Manipulative Center)</i>			
<i>(Puppet Show Center)</i>			

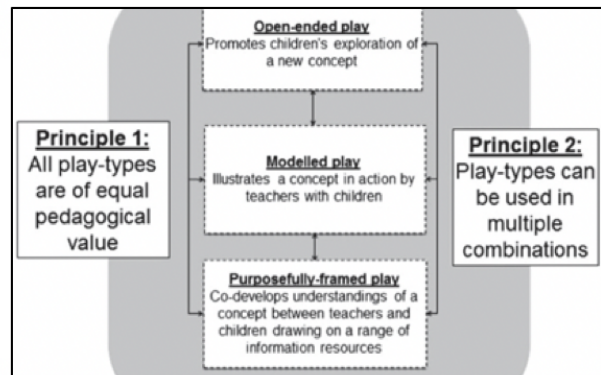


Figure 1. from Edwards, S. (June 2017). Play-based Learning and Intentional Teaching:

Teachers should come prepared to share their experience implementing this Action during the next session. One teacher should be asked to collect student work, anecdotes, and video or audio recordings to share during the next session.

## **Action 5:**

### **Developing Partnerships with Families of EMLs**

#### **Introduction**

This Action calls for early childhood teachers to partner with families of EMLs and regard them as co-educators in and out of the classroom. Families of EMLs are often led to believe that they don't have the language, knowledge, or skills that are valued in school settings. Therefore, families must be frequently reminded that they are their child's primary educators and that their funds of knowledge are valuable beyond the home. Moreover, as educators continue to learn about families' cultural and linguistic practices, they should begin to invite them to share their languages, oral stories, songs, talents and hobbies with the class. Phone conversations, audio and video recordings, and mobile applications are some creative and convenient ways to collaborate with families from afar. Through this extended learning on the part of the teacher, a plan can be devised for how parents can support their children's learning, based on the parents' strengths and funds of knowledge.

#### **Setting up this Session**

In the very first Action, members of the PLC were asked to recognize some of the common misconceptions about families of EMLs and to learn about their backgrounds and funds of knowledge. This Action asks educators to partner with parents in order to validate and *build on* those funds of knowledge. The following articles emphasize a strength-based perspective of families, by recognizing that all families are involved in their children's learning and well-being in some way. The issue, however, is whether early childhood programs encourage family participation in decision-making related to their children's education. In other words, it is important that parents move beyond a mere "involvement" paradigm to instead consider meaningful family engagement or even family leadership in schools (Menken, 2017). These collaborations need to be regular and ongoing throughout the year, not just seen as special enhancements to instruction.

#### ***Articles to read before this session:***

- Family engagement, diverse families, and early childhood education programs: An integrated review of the literature by Linda Halgunseth
- Leadership in Dual Language Bilingual Education: A National Dual Language Forum White Paper by Kate Menken

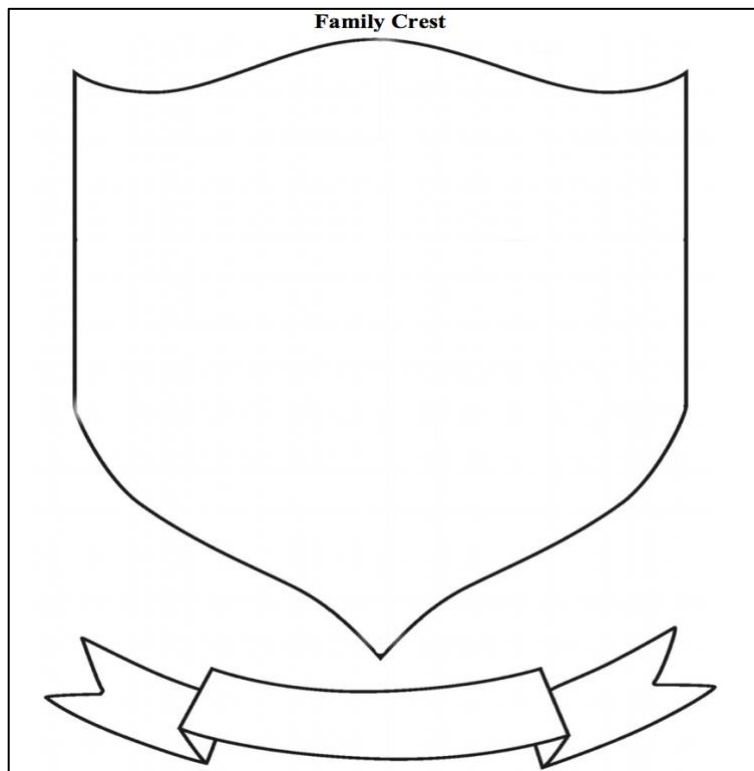
#### **During this session**



- Allow time for teachers to share their experience implementing the Action over the previous week. Teachers should be encouraged to share and reflect on their plan for emergent literacy and play, and share ideas, anecdotes, student work, video or audio recordings, and/or questions that have emerged.
- Members of the PLC should share some of the key points in the articles, questions they have, and ideas for adapting classroom practices accordingly. The following discussion questions could also be used to guide the conversation:
  1. What is the difference between parent engagement and parent partnerships? Do you think your students' parents would consider themselves as engaged or partnered?
  2. What are some ways you can partner with parents who cannot be physically present in the classroom?

### After this session: Take action!

Ask families to work with their child to create a **Family Crest** (below and listed in Appendix F), choosing images that represent all that is important to them about their heritage, language, culture, and history. They may also use words or sentences in their home languages. Invite family members to share their crest with the class and talk about what they included, then collaboratively merge the crests to form a class family quilt. Decorating your classroom with this family quilt will enhance its multilingual ecology and can serve as a reminder of the many ways families can lead your students' learning experiences.





Teachers should come prepared to share their experience implementing this Action during the next session. One teacher should be asked to collect student work, anecdotes, and video or audio recordings to share during the next session.

## **Culminating Session: Reflecting on the Professional Learning Community**

### **Introduction**

This last session is an opportunity for participants in the PLC to examine their change in beliefs and overall growth throughout the Professional Learning Community. This Action asks teachers to reflect on their learning and the changes in their classrooms, and then encourages them to think about ways they plan to for school-wide changes.

### **Setting up this Session**

In setting up this session, rather than offering articles, participants are asked to reflect on their experience throughout the PLC. Members should come to this session ready to share their reflections with the PLC community. Educators can use the **Professional Learning Community Reflection Questions** (Appendix G) to record their experience before this session.

### **During this session**

- Allow time for teachers to share their experience implementing the Action over the previous week. Teachers should be encouraged to share their experiences with the family quilts, along with any ideas, anecdotes, student work, video or audio recordings, and/or questions that have emerged.
- Members of the PLC should use their responses to the **Professional Learning Community Reflection Questions** to create a visual representation of their journey in the PLC. Educators can use a range of visual representations (a drawing, a timeline, a reflective cycle, a collage, etc.) to illustrate where they were before starting the PLC and where they are now.
- Allow time for teachers to share their visual reflections with members of the PLC. Depending on the number of participants and the time allotted, sharing can take place in small groups first, then main takeaways can be shared with the whole group.
- Engage teachers in thinking about steps they can take to keep this work moving forward. How can the knowledge developed through this PLC impact other teachers or lead to school-wide policies?

### **Ongoing Actions**

The Actions emphasized in this resource should be revisited and implemented continuously. As teachers continue to ensure that EMLLs' language practices are validated and built upon, they must constantly challenge misconceptions about families and maintain strong partnerships with

them year-round. Moreover, educators must regularly observe and celebrate EMLLs' entire linguistic repertoire while creating opportunities to extend their language practices through play and thoughtful interactions. An ongoing system of collaboration amongst educators at your school can help everyone continue to feel supported in the ongoing effort of recognizing, cultivating, and celebrating multilingualism.

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## APPENDIX A

### **Questions About Families' Funds of Knowledge**

- What does your family enjoy doing on the weekends?
- What are your occupations?
- Does your family engage in any religious activities?
- What are some of your family's favorite television shows?
- What print do you have in your home? (i.e., books, newspapers, etc.)
- Does your child use the internet or any digital/online games?
- What do your family members do for a living?
- What are some things your family is interested in?
- Would you feel comfortable sharing your hobbies/skills/talents/interests with our class community?

## APPENDIX B

### **Questions to Ask Families of EMLs:**

- What languages do your family members speak at home?
- In what language do you speak to your child most of the time?  
What languages does your child understand?
- In what language does your child speak to you... to others?
- What are some ways your child uses gestures or objects to communicate?
- In what language does your child attempt to read/write?
- In what languages do you sing, read, or tell stories to your child?
- How has your child learned English so far (television shows, siblings, childcare, etc.)?

Inspired by the intake questions in *Right from the Start: A Protocol for Identifying and Planning Instruction for Emergent Bilinguals in Universal Prekindergarten* (Morell & Aponte, 2016).

## APPENDIX C

### Child Language Observation Protocol

Observer		Date	
Students		Setting	
Time Begun		Time End	

Please remember that the goal is for educators to learn about the child's language practices, *not* the absence of language. Therefore, *all* of the linguistic features observed should be recorded, including the non-verbal resources students use to communicate and make meaning. These low inference observations will eventually help educators plan instruction that values and builds on the emergent language practices that are already part of this students' repertoire.

<u><b>Actions/Content of the conversation</b></u> What are the children doing? Who are they talking to?	<u><b>Child's Talk</b></u> Document everything the child says.	<u><b>Non-verbal Language</b></u> How does the child use their bodies/facial expressions/gestures to communicate? Do they use objects?
		<p><i><b>Describe how students use any of the following to communicate:</b></i></p> <p><b>Gestures</b></p> <p><b>Facial expressions</b></p> <p><b>Whole body movements</b></p> <p><b>Objects</b></p>

## APPENDIX D

### Interacting with EMLs: Asking Questions That Build on Students' Linguistic Repertoires

Over the next few days, focus on the questions you ask your students: how do you ask them, what type of questions are they? Consider how your EMLs respond (you should also note the content and language of their responses). You might even consider audio recording yourself and your students' responses. Reflect on the way students at different stages of language development respond to your different questions. Do they use the target language? Are they more capable of answering higher order questions in one language, or using multiple languages (translanguaging)?

Week: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions Asked	Type of Question (Open-ended; Inquiry-based; Bloom's Taxonomy)	Student's Response

## APPENDIX E

### Thematic Unit Planning for Emergent Literacy and Play that Sustains Bilingualism

Look at a thematic unit that will be taught in the near future. Work with a colleague to think about how you can plan for play in ways that build on students' bilingual identities.

Thematic Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Setting</b>	Concept or languages to be <b>modeled</b> through <b>play</b>	<b>Props</b> that extend the unit & may elicit culturally & linguistically-specific creativity	How can <b>families</b> contribute? What connections are there to students' <b>communities</b> ?
Block Area			
Dramatic Play Center			
Kitchen Area			
<i>(Art Center)</i>			
<i>(Manipulative Center)</i>			
<i>(Puppet Show Center)</i>			



## APPENDIX F

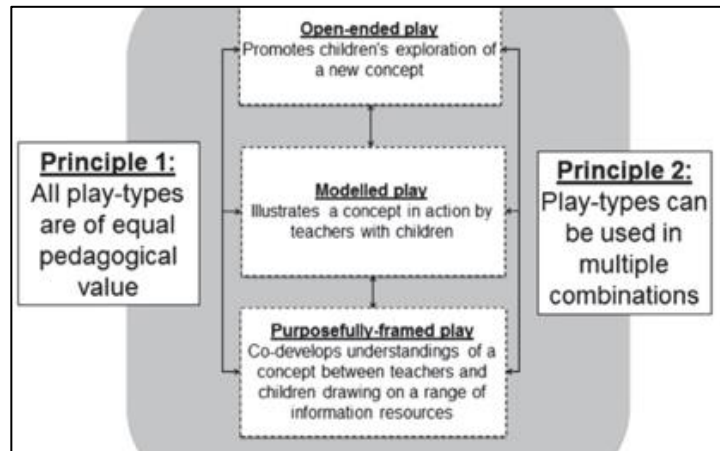
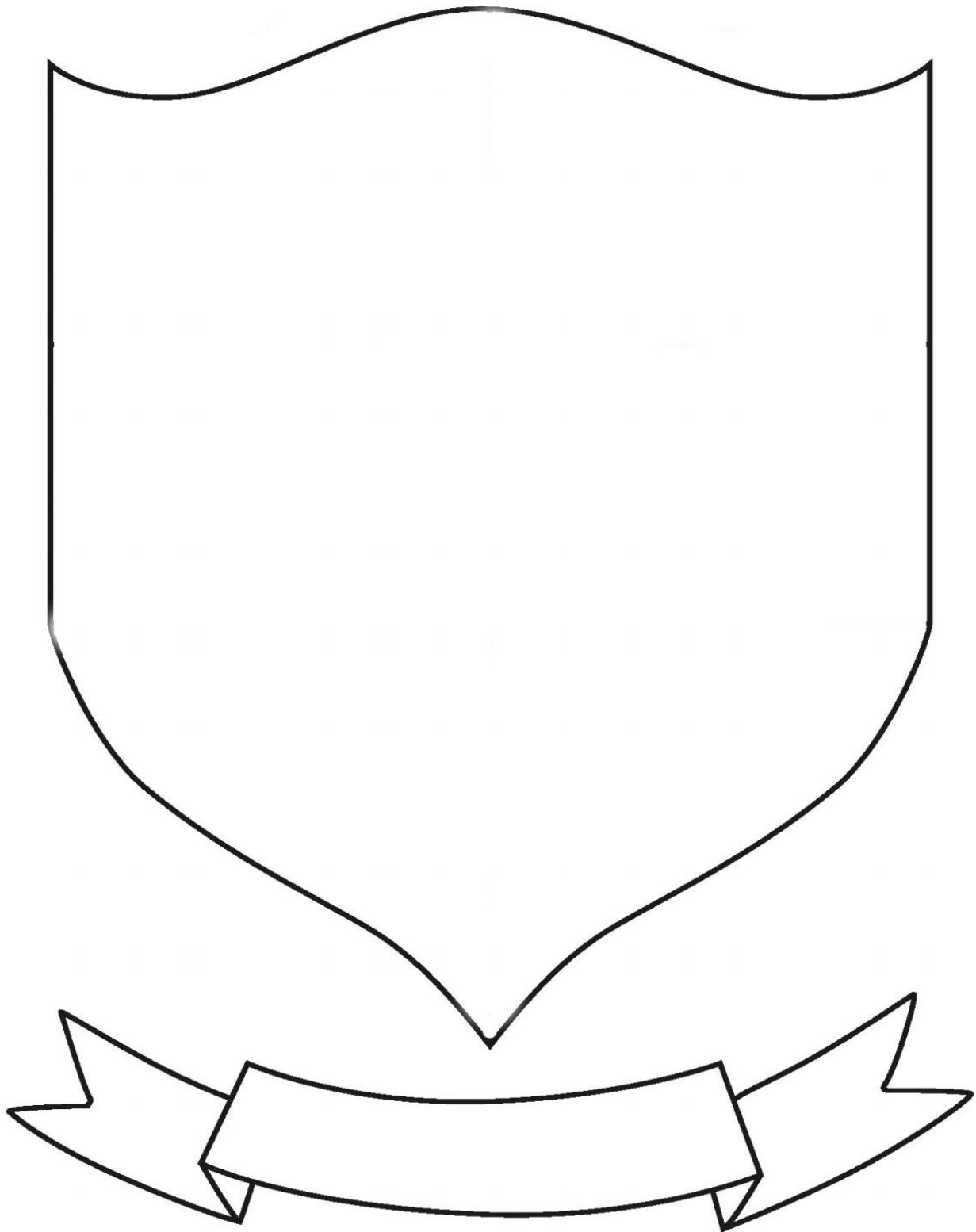


Figure 1. from Edwards, S. (June 2017). Play-based Learning and Intentional Teaching: Forever Different? *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 42(2).

## Family Crest



## APPENDIX G

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Professional Learning Community Reflection Questions**

**In preparation for our culminating PLC meeting, please take time to answer the following questions about your experience throughout the Professional Learning Community:**

1. In what ways, if any, has your participation in the PLC impacted your beliefs about bilingualism?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What have you noticed about the way your EMLs use language during play? Have you noticed any changes in students' language practices?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How has the PLC influenced your views on the families and communities of EMLs?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What advice would you give to teachers of EMLs who are interested in welcoming and building on their students' bilingual language practices in their classrooms?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you think are some of the next steps? How can we keep this work moving forward?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you have any questions/concerns relevant to the PLC initiative?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_