



EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM

THE OFFICE OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND WORLD LANGUAGES
BRIEF 3



Created for the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) at the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by Socorro G. Herrera, Ed.D.





Literacy Development in Early Childhood Classrooms

As the learning communities in early childhood classrooms become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, educators and researchers are exploring effective practices for literacy development. NYSED has adopted the term [Emergent Multilingual Learner \(EML\)](#) to refer to the preschool population of children whose home language is not English. EMLs bring preliteracy assets that educators can maximize toward language and literacy growth. Leveraging such assets often first requires a re-examination of what is known about learning to read, second language acquisition, educational assessment processes, and instruction that responsively meets the needs of individual children. This BRIEF takes a focused look at how EMLs inhabit and learn from their earliest formal educational environments. Its purpose is to guide administrators and educators to recognize assets not demonstrated by screeners in order to then connect these to the curriculum and practices used to teach reading.

Oral Language: The First Foundation of Literacy

Every language performs a similar alchemy: speakers combine a vast array of disparate sounds together to form words which, through interaction with others in a shared environment, become meaningful. Beginning in the earliest infancy, robust, natural interactions with caregivers allow children to learn the sounds and words of their language, forming their unique lexicon. This lexicon is already well-formed when the youngest students enter their first classroom, and it contains the vocabulary that they will connect to the objects, symbols, sounds, and words they encounter in the classroom. These anchor-points from the home are crucial to emergent literacy. Oral language also has non-verbal components such as prosody, specific patterns of stress and intonation that are crucial to the conveyance of meaning. The non-verbal parts of oral language that we gain from listening and interacting with others help us understand how to interpret and “hear” emotions and intent when reading.

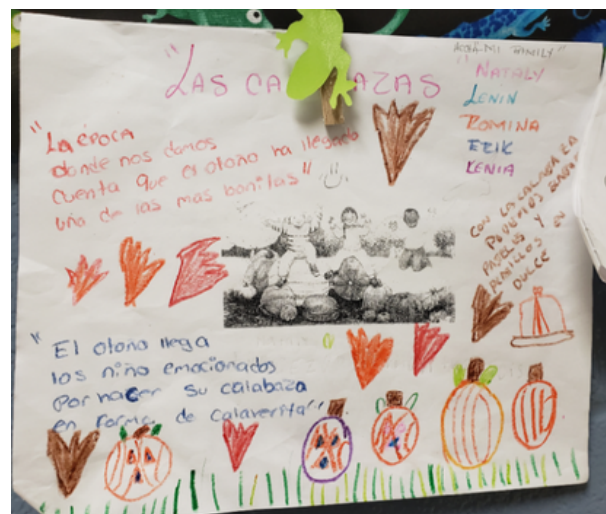


Image: Literacy development begins at home.

Drawing from and attending to the language, words, knowledge, and experience the learner brings from their caregivers has the potential for accelerating learning to read.



Oral Language: The First Foundation of Literacy

Successful development of early literacy is enhanced by making the most of the building blocks that children bring to the classroom. Too often, these assets are overshadowed by educators' assumption that students lack the resources that are most often associated with pathways to literacy, namely, books. In the United States, families whose primary home language is not English face added obstacles to accessing literacy resources. While there now are more books and materials being published in other languages, especially given changing demographics, most children's books are published in English. The limited existence of books in other languages contributes to additional obstacles including supply and demand, but also awareness of how to obtain such resources and the financial means to do so. Many translated books also lack the linguistic vividness and natural prosody of the English originals. As an example, in Spanish translations of Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham* the prosaic name of the lead character "Sam I Am" becomes the more common "Juan Ramon."

The benefits of exposure to books at an early age are numerous and undisputed, and support for programs that increase their availability is crucial. At the same time, educators must be aware of the learning opportunities provided by the rich linguistic background and cultural experience of multilingual children, even very young children. Children's worlds are rich with resources for literacy: the vocabulary and non-verbal cues in oral storytelling, the home-language phonemic awareness of songs and rhymes, and the meaning and connection in the language of community and intimacy of the family. Regardless of socio-economic level, country of origin, or language(s) spoken in the home, all families bring assets that can be leveraged to support reading instruction. These "funds of knowledge" represent the wealth of resources accumulated from life in the home that children possess when they arrive in early childhood education programs.

Children are not blank slates. Each child brings with them the accumulated and historically developed body of knowledge that is critical to their well-being and their cultural and linguistic identity. These early experiences, too, can serve as crucial pathways to literacy and language foundation.



How, then, can early childhood educators understand, acknowledge, and access the individual foundational literacy skills that the youngest students already bring with them to school?



Literacy, Language, and Culture: Parts of an Inseparable Whole

Literacy, Language, and Culture: Parts of an Inseparable Whole

A child’s first or home language (L1) is referred to as the “mother tongue” for good reason: the language of the home is fundamental to their experience of themselves and the world. For the youngest learners, the meaning contained in their ensemble of first available words and phrases constitutes their basic understanding of every new thing they encounter. In the early childhood education classroom, it is impossible to build pathways for future literacy without respecting the integrity of, and building connections with, these most fundamental frameworks of words and sounds, feelings and meanings.



Misconceptions regarding bilingualism and second language acquisition in very young children persist, including that they “pick up” their second language very quickly, that more English is better, and that bilingualism confuses children, leading to weak skills in both languages. These myths have been refuted by decades of research (e.g., Hoover et al., 2016; Lugo-Neris et al., 2015), which has demonstrated the effectiveness of developing the first language as a bridge to the new language (L2, i.e. English), as well as the ample cognitive, academic, socio-emotional, and economic benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy (e.g., Bialystok, 2018; Bibler, 2021; Collier & Thomas, 2017; Costa et al., 2008; Rumbaut, 2014; Steele et al., 2017). Neuroscientists and psycholinguists emphasize the human brain’s broad capacity to learn multiple languages, and the positive effects of learning two languages during the infant-toddler years. Young children learning two languages show more neural activity in those parts of the brain associated with language processing.

Misconceptions Regarding Bilingualism & Second Language Acquisition in Very Young Children	“Pick up” second language very quickly
	More English is better
	Bilingualism confuses children
	Leads to weak skills in both languages

“In the early childhood classroom, instruction that neglects the assets for literacy development in the child’s first language risks fostering a limited perspective on learning that increases the potential for the child to lose their native language.”



Conversely, the neglect of children’s first languages, including the cultural patterns of language use, can have significant and long-term repercussions. In the early childhood classroom, instruction that neglects the assets for literacy development in the child’s first language risks fostering a limited perspective on learning that increases the potential for the child to lose their native language. This may be further exacerbated if parents, though well intentioned, stop using their home language with their child in an effort to accelerate the child’s English acquisition. Such an outcome would risk introducing damaging disruption to the dynamics of the extended family and deprive the child of the many benefits of bilingualism for education, literacy, and beyond.



Teachers need to enlist parents as partners in their child’s education, and make clear the fact that bilingualism is a gift that is to be valued and preserved.

When literacy development becomes synonymous with a narrow framework of English literacy (based primarily on research with monolingual English speakers) the academic success of multilingual students may be subtractive in nature rather than additive. The effectiveness of early literacy instruction is heavily dependent on the degree to which the children’s existing funds of knowledge are leveraged or ignored.

“The effectiveness of early literacy instruction is heavily dependent on the degree to which the children’s existing funds of knowledge are leveraged or ignored.”





A Narrow View: The Limitations of Standard Language Screeners and Assessments

A Narrow View: The Limitations of Standard Language Screeners and Assessments

The use of screeners and assessments to determine children's need for language supports is standard practice in our education system. Early childhood is no different. The skills targeted for assessment by these instruments, and the means by which they are demonstrated, typically refer to the background experiences of the creators of standard curricula and assessments, with the presumption that these experiences are shared by the students to be assessed. Early childhood screeners may assess cognitive, social, fine and gross motor, adaptive, and communication skills, and often seek to encompass overall development. Each category typically identifies several skills and behaviors that are expected by a certain age.

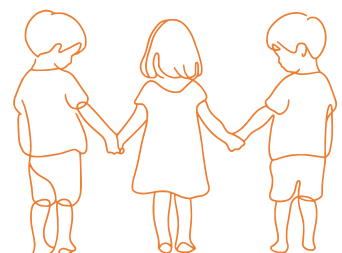


However, like all tools, these screeners and assessments can only capture those capacities that they are designed to identify. Due to the snapshot-in-time nature of most assessments and the frequent limitations in the cultural and linguistic repertoires of their designers, these instruments are often unable to accurately measure the abilities of EMLs, whose skills may be more or less apparent depending on the cultural and linguistic context in which they are being asked to perform. When used as the exclusive basis for student evaluation, assessment tools intended to facilitate student achievement may, in effect,

undermine it. Perceptions of students—especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse homes—can be skewed when understanding of their capacities is primarily or exclusively gleaned from such measures.

Often, this moment marks the onset of a deficit lens, perhaps framed through the perspective of “kindergarten readiness.” Where there is an overreliance on standard screeners and assessments in early childhood education, we see a greater number of students deemed “at risk,” more focus on remediation, and increased, often unnecessary referrals for special education—a problem that plagues culturally and linguistically diverse students and stunts their potential for literacy development and academic success.

For this reason, NYSED has published the Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten Protocol for Identification, Instructional Planning & Programming which addresses 1) identification of students who are developing linguistic capacities in languages other than English, 2) additional ways for teachers to collect relevant home information, and 3) application of insights to instructional planning and practice.





“Accounting for each student’s biography increases the potential for screeners and assessments to be used in non-discriminatory ways, yielding true insight into their capacity to learn.”

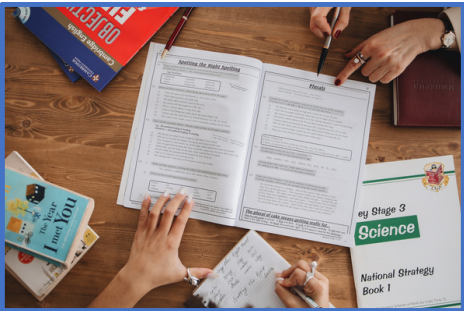
Assessment should include the evaluative judgment of the practitioner and consideration of the student’s language and culture. As reflected in the NYSED protocol, the child’s home language is crucial for understanding their skills and prior knowledge. Accounting for each student’s biography increases the potential for screeners and assessments to be used in non-discriminatory ways, yielding true insight into their capacity to learn. Fortunately, there are many strategies educators can employ to gain this information. These strategies could include, but are not limited to, using the home language when possible, watching parents interact with the child on a set task, and using non-verbal tests, like matching a block tower to a model or identifying what picture comes next in a pattern.

For example, as a component aspect of the “Communication” skill, an English language proficiency screener might assess whether the child uses appropriate word endings (e.g., -s, -ed, -ing) to indicate verb tense and subject. However, the child’s first language may not contain the same structures as the English language targets on the screener. To understand the student’s development of this capacity in the second language, educators can consider whether or not the child begins to use the targeted structures (e.g., plurals, as discussed below) that have been explicitly taught under meaningful conditions.



Further, educators can seek to learn what grammatical structures should be expected by age in the first language. If the child has the ability to produce age-appropriate structures in the first language, then the child has the foundational skill.

It is important to realize that grammar differs by language (Kester, 2014). Similarities can hasten transfer to the new language, while differences in simpler forms may be among the latest mastered. For example, if the student’s home language “marks” (changes) nouns when plural (i.e. dog/dogs, foot/feet), that student will acquire that aspect of grammar easier than for those whose language does not compel marking the noun. Spanish and German are languages which both require changing some aspects of nouns to show that the speaker/writer is referencing more than one (e.g., las casas, die house).



Conversely, English pronouns have gender (he/she) but unlike Spanish and German, nouns do not. This could make it easier to learn plural marking than gender for speakers of English who are learning Spanish or German, and vice versa.

Other languages show gender and person through more complex morphology than English. Teachers should be careful to avoid focusing on “what’s missing” or “wrong” in English rather than realizing these inaccuracies may be due to students being accustomed to the differently complex features of the first language. What would be coded as an error for a monolingual English student could be the student applying the correct pattern in their home language to the English word. Use of resources to identify shared features can aid teacher’s incorporation of materials to bridge assets and interpret errors “atypical” of native English speakers.

Language	Marks Plurals	Gendered Nouns	Gendered Pronouns
English	✓		✓
Spanish	✓	✓	✓
German	✓	✓	✓

The appendix to this BRIEF includes a table which shows examples of common skills screened/targeted on early childhood developmental screeners, cautions in interpreting performance, and additional ways to gather information related to target skill (not an exhaustive list).



Teachers should be careful to avoid focusing on “what’s missing” or “wrong” in English rather than realizing these inaccuracies may be due to students being accustomed to the differently complex features of the first language.



Bridges to Literacy: The Parent Connection

Bridges to Literacy: The Parent Connection

One way to gather data to help educators understand a child's capacity to learn and demonstrate knowledge/skills within their natural environment is through parent partnerships.

Parent/family input (and consideration thereof) is crucial to the child's success, to family-school relationships, and to educators' perspectives on and expectations of students. Recent research has shown that in the absence of certain parent behaviors, such as showing up for conferences, deferring to the educator's opinion, and affirming the educator's perceptions, teachers perceive the parents as not valuing education or caring about their children's academic progress (Reyes, 2022). These behaviors are due to a number of factors which educators need to consider, such as work or career responsibilities, gaps in school communication, impediments to technological access, and different cultural perspectives on a parent's role in education.

More fundamentally, educators who hold this perception miss the opportunity to acknowledge that *parents are the foremost experts on their children*. When educators disregard families and their knowledge of the child, they miss crucial information and opportunities for effective partnership in literacy development. Proactive attention to the NYSED CR-SE Framework and Parent Bill of Rights for English Language Learners is encouraged to optimize best practice in all aspects of education for EML students.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING VIGNETTE:

An early childhood education teacher was concerned about a student's basic communication skills, because he was not acquiring or using English as the teacher expected. The parents were interviewed by additional staff members regarding the student's communication in his home language and the father stated no concerns. Multiple examples were given of the child's ability to remember information, ask questions, engage in conversation, and comprehend the language used by the father. Rather than adjust instruction to address this new information, the teacher rejected the family's input because it did not align with his prior judgment. Rather than serving as an opportunity to learn about the child, validate his skills/abilities, or build a relationship with the parent, the wealth of information gathered was ignored at the expense of the child.

When it comes to the child, caregivers are experts and collaborators. All parties should have opportunities to meaningfully contribute to assessments of the child's potential, and to feel as if the information they bring is valued and fully taken into account. When data does not triangulate, it presents an opportunity for further conversation and problem-solving as a collaborative unit. Parent and family perspectives gained through open-minded conversations in a safe, neutral setting provide valuable insights and allow educators to gain a deeper understanding of the student's biography.

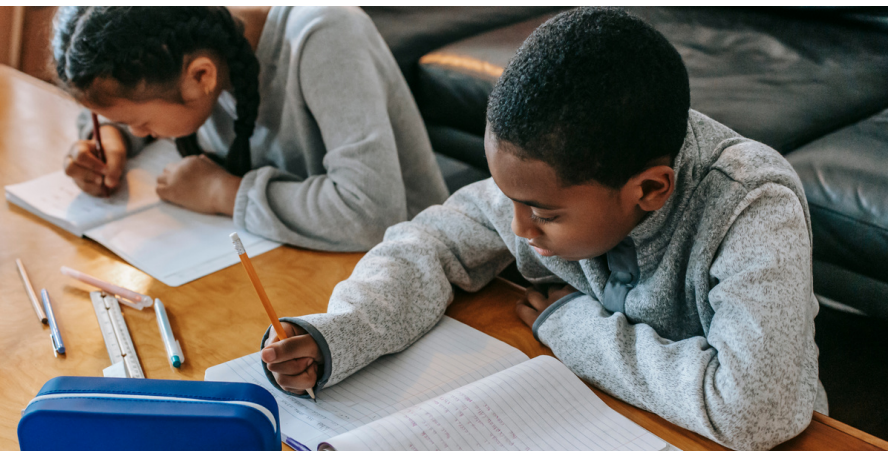
Educators then are able to better understand a student's performance on universal screeners/standardized assessments, strengthen their instruction for individual students, build relationships with parents and communities, and gain crucial information needed to support student success at this pivotal early stage of their education. The appendix provides home/school connections for each skill to illustrate ways parents and caregivers can provide additional information about their child.

Questions for Collaborative Parent Engagement:

1. "What does a typical day look like for the child?"
2. "What is your child's style of play? Do they interact with other children?"
3. "What books does your child like?"
4. "What would you like us to know about your child/family?"

For more information supporting Early Multilingual Learners please also consult:

- [EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS IN PREKINDERGARTEN: A Protocol for Identification, Instructional Planning & Programming](#)
- [Supporting Emergent Multilingual Learners: Best Practices for Prekindergarten Classrooms and Programs](#)
- [Implementing the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework in the Prekindergarten Classroom](#)



Supporting Literacy Development in Early Childhood: Research-Based Practices

Consistently, research has shown that early childhood education can be crucial for literacy development and academic success. Learning time is precious, and we want students to be excited to learn new skills. Focusing on what they already have mastered may lessen enthusiasm to learn.

Drawing from the National Committee for Effective Literacy (Herrera et al., 2022), the following are among key recommendations to help educators provide appropriate instruction, materials, and curriculum for Multilingual Learners:

Adopt a comprehensive literacy approach for dual language learners that is grounded in research and theory in second language acquisition and biliteracy.

Ensure that early childhood pre-literacy practices are developmentally appropriate and focused on the precursors to literacy, not on explicit and discrete “reading skills.”

Follow a curriculum and implement literacy instruction that is culturally and linguistically responsive and developmentally appropriate.

Utilize instructional materials that reflect the languages and cultures of the classroom community in authentic ways to develop learners’ languages, biliteracy skills, and conceptual understanding.

Ensure plentiful access to and engagement with books and print in both the home language and English.

Differentiate instruction based on children’s second language proficiency levels (entering, developing, bridging) and include specific second language learning objectives and ESL state standards.

Value families’ varied home literacy practices, including oral literacies, as culturally and linguistically bound assets to be tapped and integrated in classroom instruction.

Additional recommendations to support EML instruction:

Engage with families to learn about the literacy practices of the home.

Regard home practices (e.g., oral language, storytelling, recognition of store signs, product labels, etc.) as assets to be tapped and integrated in classroom instruction.

Ensure that classroom practices are developmentally appropriate to the students' cognitive stages and language proficiencies.

Provide ongoing opportunities for the meaningful use of language to communicate personally relevant information or exchange ideas.

Contextualize pre-reading skills to the meaningful and personalized language of the child.

Utilize curricula and methods grounded in research and theory of second language acquisition.

Differentiate instruction and language by students' individual linguistic histories.

Displaying information and announcements in multiple languages.

Displaying student work on bulletin boards in multiple languages.

Conducting outreach calls or telephone chains in multiple languages.

Prominently displaying statements of belief about multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Partnering with service agencies to provide language learning classes onsite.

Recruiting translators and interpreters from the community.

Offering presentations or discussions on the benefits of multilingualism.

Modeling solidarity with language learning by learning another's language.

(Items 8-15 above are taken from NYSED's Early Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten protocol)

APPENDIX

Examples of common skills screened/targeted on early childhood developmental screeners, cautions in interpreting performance, and additional ways to gather information related to target skill (please note that this is not an exhaustive list).

Targeted Skill Example	Cautions	Alternative Ways to Probe and/or Screen	Home/School Connection
Communication (CM): Using grammatical structures (e.g., word endings, such -s, -ed, -ing). <u>NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices</u> – Multilingual Learners, p. 5	A child's L1 may not contain the same structures as the L2 targeted on the screeners. Additionally, the influence of multiple community languages and dialects can impact students' productions of English.	Consider if the student begins to use the targeted structure (e.g., plurals) after it's been explicitly taught and reinforced under meaningful conditions.	Consider if the child is producing a variety of grammatical structures in the L1 appropriately. Determine what structures should be expected by age in the L1. If the child has the ability to produce age-appropriate structures in the L1, then the child has the foundational skill.
CM: Producing Speech Sounds <u>NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices</u> – CR-SE Considerations, p. 9	Speech sounds vary in different languages. The L1 and L2 may have some common sounds but also sounds that are unique to the specific language. Omission or substitutions of sounds/patterns in English should be compared with L1 productions.	Analyze productions of sounds in L1 using resources to understand appropriate age acquisition of sounds/patterns. Ask: Is the student intelligible to peers/staff when communicating in L1? Is the student stimutable for the sounds?	Determine if the parent understands the child in the home language. Ask if the parent is concerned with particular sounds and find out how these sounds match up to developmental norms.
Literacy (LR): Demonstrating phonemic awareness (blending/segmenting syllables, identifying initial sounds, letter-sound correspondence, etc.) <u>NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices</u> – Instructional Considerations, p. 9	Differences in the sound and syllable patterns that make up a child's home language may impact their ability to perform phonemic awareness activities in English. For example, monolingual English students barely need to finish hearing the sounds 'p--l--ae--n--t' before mentally hearing the word and conjuring a picture of a 'plant'. Each child's image likely differs but there's usually a snap connection with plant. What happens when the word presented is 'k--ee--t--ah--b', which Arabic speakers would recognize as كتاب (kitab, Arabic for "book"). Or what if the word contains features (i.e. tones) or sounds in positions (/ng/ as initial sound) that unfamiliar to the students' ear? Such insights may help us understand the disconnects EML students may exhibit with early literacy tasks.	Consider if the child demonstrates these skills with sounds/syllables/words that occur in the L1.	Consider what these skills might look like in the L1. Ask if the parent engages in and has heard any sound/word during play. Explore whether concepts like rhyming words occur in the home language. Consider partnering with the parent/family to create a book/activity that uses common structures/sounds and letters in the L1 and L2 to reinforce phonemic awareness skills. Encourage parent/family to target at home the same sound being worked on in school by labeling objects with the letter and talking about them with their child.

Targeted Skill Example	Cautions	Alternative Ways to Probe and/or Screen	Home/School Connection
Math (MA): Understanding one-to-one correspondence (precursor to Concept of Word)	Be cognizant of how you are probing the one-to-one counting skill and the meaningfulness and relevance to the child. Consider whether the child been asked to perform a task/activity in this structure before.	Explore whether the child been observed to demonstrate this skill during play or in other settings. For example, can a student match up objects one to one. In a real life scenario does each teacup have a saucer during play is a better measure than a worksheet where students are asked to draw lines to match objects on paper.	Explore whether the child can set the table at home with the proper number of utensils (e.g., one fork for each spot, one plate for each person). Consider if the child shares items (food/candy) with others that represents an understanding of this concept.
CM: Naming “common” objects <u>NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices</u> – Instructional Best Practices, p. 21	“Common” objects can vary based on an individual’s experience and exposure. It is therefore hard to gauge capacity to acquire vocabulary (receptive/expressive) during a point-in-time screener. Naming tasks are also used to probe students’ capacities with RAN (rapid automatic naming). Early difficulties with RAN are often associated with problems in learning to read.	Determine if the child can identify the object when allowed to use their home language. Use items marked as not known on a screener to form the words that will be used for dynamic assessment. Use a “test, teach, test” model to probe the capacity to acquire unknown words through meaningful, relevant interactions. Partner with parent/family to utilize the L1 and family connections to learn new vocabulary.	Partner with the parent/family to create a “bank” of words/objects that the child is familiar with and has seen/occurs in their natural environment. Use this bank of words to probe the child’s ability to name the objects as a measure of RAN. Additionally, ask parent what word is used by the family/community for each word. The vocabulary used can vary by community.
Fine Motor (FM): Cutting and/or Copying/Writing	This type of skill is heavily impacted by opportunity. Consider the child’s prior exposure to and experience with scissors, crayons, markers, etc.	Target the child’s capacity to learn when given opportunity and time. Work with occupational therapists (OTs) to understand if the target skill is the action of cutting or the ability to manipulate the muscles/fingers in a certain way. Determine if this skill can be probed or seen from different, more familiar activities.	Consider what this skill could look like in the home. Explore whether the child is able to manipulate fingers/muscles in similar ways through different activities (e.g., Does activating a toy or using playdough accessories use the same motion/muscles?).
Cognitive (CG): Naming colors NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices – Instructional Best Practices and Considerations, p. 21	Prior opportunity has a considerable influence on this skill. Consider if the child has had exposure to this concept and the opportunity to learn colors in a meaningful way.	Target the capacity to learn unknown colors in a variety of ways. This could include activities that engage the child in cooking, playing with playdough, performing science experiments, and other relevant activities (e.g., helping around the house or in the classroom).	Determine if the child has had exposure to colors in the home setting. If so, explore what that has looked like (e.g., Does the child appear to recognize color similarities during activities such as pairing socks?). Find out if the child knows color names in the L1.
CG: Categorizing NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices – NYS Next Generation Standards, p. 22	Demonstration of this skill can be affected by how it is measured. For example, consider the degree to which measurement relies on an artificial task, such as a sorting/categorizing activity that the child has never seen (e.g., marketed sorting mats, letter tiles, sorting objects by initial sound, categorization boards, work sheets).	Consider if the child demonstrates this skill outside of the particular activity. For example, observe whether the child sorts items and puts them away in appropriate places (e.g., all cars in the car bin, animals together in a bucket) during cleanup.	Determine what activities/chores occur in the home that involve the ability to sort/categorize. For example, perhaps the child sorts laundry (e.g., all socks together, towels together) or silverware appropriately.

<i>Targeted Skill Example</i>	<i>Cautions</i>	<i>Alternative Ways to Probe and/or Screen</i>	<i>Home/School Connection</i>
CG: Counting, identifying/naming body parts <u>NYSED P3 Literacy Best Practices</u> – Instructional Best Practices, p. 21	These types of skills are more accurately assessed after the child has had experience, explicit teaching, and meaningful opportunities to interact with the skill and demonstrate their understanding.	Probe the capacity to learn (test, teach, test) in meaningful, relevant ways. Understand that counting and body parts are learned concepts, not innate developmental markers.	This skill looks at the capacity to learn concepts versus measuring a learned skill that the child may not have been exposed to. Determine if the child has learned these concepts. Explore the types of concepts that are important to the family.
Social (SC): Taking turns during play/games	Consider if this type of interaction is typical of games and play engaged in by the child or family. If being screened in a group setting, consider whether the child is familiar with peers as well as the child's emotional/affective state. All of these (plus more) can impact a child's willingness to engage in this skill.	Explore what the child's play looks like and determine if it is typical of children within the family/community. Consider if the child can learn "rules" or expectations in a particular setting.	Ask parent/family about interactions and related expectations of the family and community.
SC: Initiating or responding to peer interactions	Consider the child's familiarity with peers, affective state, any cultural conflicts/mismatch (e.g., Are mixed-gender interactions common or acceptable?), and interaction patterns in the home (e.g., Does the child only interact with older children/adults in the home setting?).	Consider what information can be gathered from observation of the child's interactions in natural settings. Attend to how peers respond to interactions from the child.	Consider if the child has opportunities to interact with peers. Determine whether the parent/family has concerns. Explore what the child's interactions with siblings, family members, and peers within the community look like and whether this is typical.
SC: Participating in large and small group activities	Consider the child's typical day when determining if opportunities for such participation have occurred. If opportunities do exist, what might be keeping the student from participating? What supports could be used to engage the student? Be mindful of the child's temperament—is the child shy or going through a silent period, which would be magnified by exposure to a new language?	Provide engaging, meaningful opportunities. Use supports (e.g., first/then, visuals, schedules, work box) to create success for the child.	Consider if participation in structured activities is expected. Explore the child's familiarity with this type of structure. If unfamiliar, determine which activities the child engages in within the home setting. Ask the parent/family how they increase participation.



Reflect and Apply

Reflect and Apply

Think about what you have learned in this BRIEF and reflect on the following questions:

- How can early childhood educators understand, acknowledge, and access the individual foundational literacy skills that the youngest students already bring with them to school?
- What parent partnerships exist in your setting?
- How can these partnerships be utilized?
- What can they add to guide instruction, screening, and evaluations that cannot be gathered from traditional screenings/evaluation tools?
- How can standard language screeners and assessments be used in non-discriminatory ways?
- What can you incorporate in your teaching practice to get a fuller picture of your students' ability to learn, beyond just using traditional data like test scores or grades?



Key References & Resources

- Bialystok, E. (2018). Bilingual education for young children: Review of the effects and consequences. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 21(6), 666–679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1203859>
- Bibler, A. (2021). Dual language education and student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 16(4), 634-658. https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp_a_00320
- Collier, V.P. & Thomas, W.P. (2017). Validating the power of bilingual schooling: Thirty-two years of large-scale, longitudinal research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 37, 203-217. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190517000034>
- Costa, A., Hernández, M., & Sebastián-Gallés, N. (2008). Bilingualism aids conflict resolution: Evidence from the ANT task. *Cognition*, 106(1), 59-86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2006.12.013>
- Herrera, S.G. (2022). *Biography-driven culturally responsive teaching: Honoring race, ethnicity, and personal history* (3rd edition). Teachers College Press.
- Herrera, S.G., Martinez, M.I., Olsen, L., & Soltero, S. (2022). Early literacy development and instruction for dual language learners in early childhood education. National Committee for Effective Literacy. Retrieved from https://multilingualliteracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/NCEL_ECE_White_Paper.pdf
- Herrera, S.G., Porter, L., & Barko-Alva, K. (2020). *Equity in school-parent partnerships: Cultivating community and family trust in culturally diverse classrooms*. Teachers College Press.
- Hoover, J.J., Baca, L.M., & Klingner, J.K. (2016). *Why do English learners struggle with reading? Distinguishing language acquisition from learning disabilities* (2nd ed.). Corwin.
- Kester, E.S. (2014). *Difference or disorder? Understanding speech and language patterns in culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Bilingualistics Speech and Language Services.

- Kuhl, P.K. (2010, October). The linguistic genius of babies [Video]. TED.
http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en
- Lugo-Neris, M.J., Peña, E.D., Bedore, L.M., & Gillam, R.B. (2015). Utility of a language screening measure for predicting risk for language impairment in bilinguals. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 24(3), 426-437.
https://doi.org/10.1044/2015_AJSLP-14-0061
- New York State Education Department. (2017). Emergent multilingual learners in prekindergarten programs: A protocol for emergent multilingual learners.
<https://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/emergent-multilingual-learners-prekindergarten-programs>
- Reyes, N.M. (2022). An exploration of general education teachers' perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students during a general education intervention (GEI) process [Doctoral dissertation, Kansas State University]. K-State Research Exchange. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2097/42207>.
- Rumbaut, R. (2014). 8. English Plus: Exploring the Socioeconomic Benefits of Bilingualism in Southern California. In R. Callahan & P. Gándara (Ed.), *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market* (pp. 182-208). Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783092437-009>
- Steele, J.L., Slater, R.O., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Effects of dual-language immersion programs on student achievement: Evidence from lottery data. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 282S-306S.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216634463>

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

