



KIDS Assessment and Dual Language Learners: Strengthening Data Collection and Application

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Questions I will address today:

- ◆ 1. How can assessors improve the accuracy of their KIDS ratings for DLLs?
- ◆ How can assessors document growth in English language development (ELD) *and* promote continued development in home language?
- ◆ How assessors can apply KIDS data for targeted instruction for DLLs?
- ◆ What does kindergarten readiness look like for DLLs?

Who are Dual Language Learners?

1305.2 (Office of Head Start & ISBE)

Dual language learner

(DLL) means 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.



Accurate Assessment is an Urgent Concern for DLLs Because....

- DLLs represent almost 1/3 of all children in the U.S. under 8 years of age
- Most DLLs in U.S. are Hispanic and speak Spanish in the home (62%) followed by Chinese (3.3%): up to 140 other languages
- The majority of DLLs live in low-income families (58%)
- DLLs are less likely to be enrolled in Pre-K programs than EOs, 41% vs 48%
- Kindergarten entry scores for DLLs are 1/2 to 1 standard deviation below those of EOs in language and numeracy

Park, O-Toole & Katsiaficas, 2017

Assessment

Assessment can be powerful tool for individualizing and improving instruction for all children and especially DLLs

All child assessments must be **fair, equitable, valid and reliable** for the population being assessed

The Reliability and Validity of Assessment Instruments and Measures Depends on Purpose

“Different purposes require different types of assessment, and the evidentiary base that supports the use of an assessment for one purpose may not be suitable for another.” (NRC, 2008, p.2)

Assessment tools and procedures should be aligned with the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the child. (NASEM, 2017)

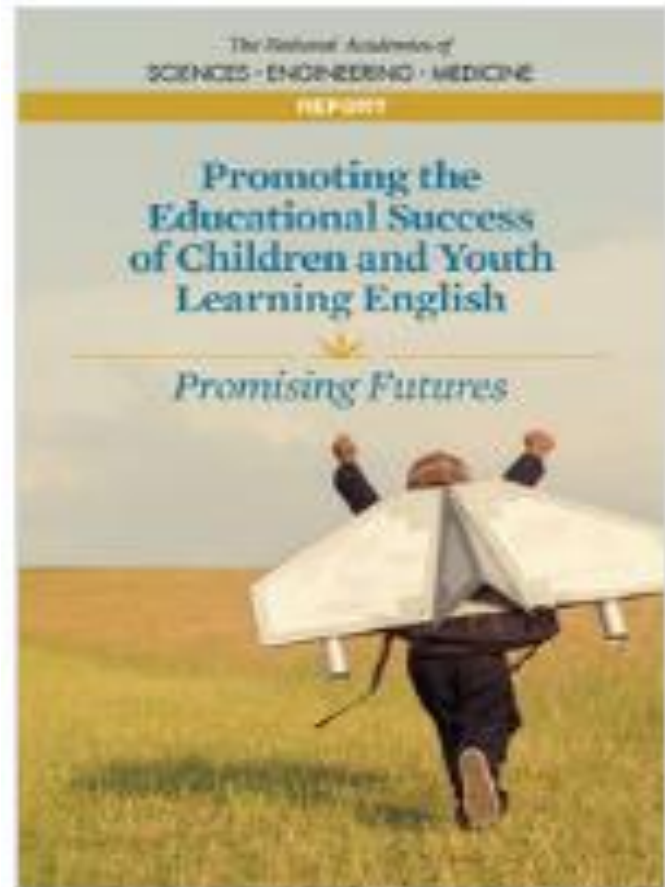
Kindergarten Entry/Readiness Assessment: Formative and Summative Purposes

1. Inform Instruction and Services in K-3 (F)
2. Statewide Profile of Developmental Status of All Children at K Entry---- --Improve ECE Systems (S)
3. NOT to Prevent K Entry (not high stakes)
4. Must be Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate!

DLLs Must be Assessed in Both Home Language and English

“During the first five years of life, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers require developmental screening, observations, and ongoing assessment in both languages to support planning for individualized interactions and activities that will support their optimal development.”

Conclusion 11-1, p. 423



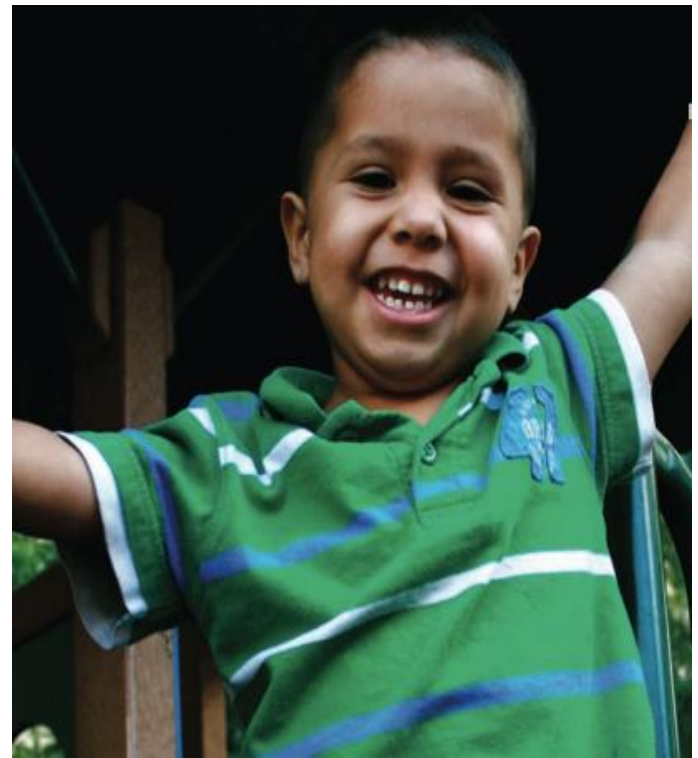
KIDS Guidelines for DLLs

“Dual language learners may demonstrate knowledge and skills in their home language, in English, or in both languages. Therefore, **communication in all languages the child uses should be considered** when collecting documentation and completing the measures in all domains.” (p.11).

The teacher who is collecting documentation should speak the child’s home language or “..... using **an adult who speaks the child’s home language to assist the teacher with observation and documentation of the child.** This may be another teacher, an assistant teacher, principal, parent, or other adult who knows the child.”(p.10)

Fair, Valid and Reliable Assessments of DLLs (Accuracy)

1. Incorporating child's total communicative competence across all domains
2. Recruiting native speakers of child's home language when assessors and child do not share a language



How to increase assessment accuracy for DLLs

- **Collect important information from families** (beyond home language survey):
 - Language background
 - When was child first exposed to English; Language usage patterns at home (who, how much for what purposes)
 - Country of origin



English Language Development Domain (ELD) 2: Expressive English

Developing English: Communicates in English, using single words and common phrases (may mix English with home language)

Observe across classroom and playground, with peers, in small groups, and in 1-1 interactions

Middle stage of learning English---Receptive English comprehension may be much greater than Expressive, but child is starting to “go public” with knowledge of English

Spanish 2: Language Production in Spanish

Building: *Uses elaborated language in Spanish to explain the needs, feelings, and intentions of people and characters*
(More advanced level 4/5)

If assessor does not speak child's language (Spanish) must have native/fluent speaker help make this judgment: staff, parent, volunteer

This person must be trained on assessment instrument (KIDS)

Good News: DLL who is at *Developing* in English and *Building* in Spanish has good levels of overall language skills for kindergarten entry

Applying this knowledge of child's stage of ELD:

1. Continue to expose child to lots of opportunities to interact with more proficient English speakers; **grouping patterns**
2. In 1-1 interactions slowly increase demands for English production with **scaffolding: picture cues, physical movements, songs, paired readings, etc.**
3. Continue to provide exposure to home language---with parents in home and in classroom through small group interactions

Considerations When Making Judgments About DLLs and K Readiness

What we know:

- DLLs who have strong skills in home language and some exposure to English prior to kindergarten do better in K-12; (earlier is better)
- Strong skills in home language are critical to developing corresponding skills in English---some transfer
- Level of ELD depends on age, amount, and quality of exposure and opportunities to use
- **High Variability that is normal!**

K Teachers and Assessors Need Guidance On Indicators of Typical Language Development of Dual Language Learners to Use KIDs Data for Instructional Decision-Making

Need to know about process of second language development:

- What it looks like**
- Rates of Progress**
- Normal Variations**



Some Features of Language Development for DLLs

- DLLs not the same as monolinguals—**language development looks different:**
 - Smaller vocab. In each language, but comparable when both languages considered
 - Longer lexical retrieval time
 - Grammatical differences depending on home language
 - Typical stages of second language acquisition

Challenge of Accurate Assessment of DLLs

“In the early stages of bilingualism, children’s language skills are in flux, so there’s a huge range of proficiency in their second-language performance, which makes it difficult to distinguish between typical second-language differences and genuine language impairment,.....the result is that children from a linguistically diverse background are often over- or under-identified with a language disorder.”

(E. Pena, 2001)

The Challenge

- ✓ Normative Data about Development of Dual language Learners is Not Plentiful
- ✓ High Degree of Variability That is Normal; DLL Children May Look Delayed in Both Languages (Vocabulary) Because of Weak Language Exposure, but Eventually Catch Up

K Readiness for DLLs

- Strong skills in home language
- Some English exposure
- Highly variable: depending many factors of child's early language experiences
- Much we still don't know

Recommendations for DLL KIDs Assessment

➤ *Proceed carefully!!*

- Interpret results of vocabulary tests with caution
- Use multiple sources of information
- Include what child knows in both languages
- Consider assessment results as “*hypotheses*”---but continue to observe and monitor language development

The Promise.....

- Accurate Assessment, Progress Monitoring, Formative Assessment that is Linguistically Appropriate and Leads To...
- High Quality Practices that Promote Development and Learning for both DLLs and... ALL children

Conclusion

Assessment can be a powerful lever for improved instruction for young Dual language learners.... If

it is balanced, fair, and based on current knowledge about dual language development

Thank you for this opportunity!!

