



Appendix A - Supporting Dual Language Learners

Who are Dual Language Learners?

Dual Language Learners (DLL) are children, birth to five years old, who are developing their home language(s) while also developing English. Indiana has a formal process to identify children once they enter kindergarten, which includes the use of a Home Language Survey (HLS) and an English language proficiency assessment. In order to meet the learning needs of DLLs, educators should learn about the language(s) the children speak by conducting interviews with the family and focus on providing rich language activities for children to build their skills in all languages.

How can I support Dual Language Learners' language development?

All children, birth to five years, are language learners; some children just happen to be learning more than one language. Children who are learning English as an additional language are the fastest growing population in the country, making it essential that educators know how to meet their unique language needs as well. Much of the language used in early learning environments is new for all children, both native English speakers and DLLs alike. Many of the same supports that are effective for developing skills in the first language will transfer to children acquiring multiple languages, such as visuals, modeling, manipulatives, and peer-support. However, educators of DLLs must focus on providing varied and supported opportunities for children to process and produce language across all content and developmental areas to ensure learning is meaningful while the children are developing English. DLLs may follow an altered trajectory on the developmental continuum. "Specific consideration should be given to the nature of early language and cognitive development, family and community-based sociocultural contexts for language learning, and the psycholinguistic nature of second language development in preschoolers who are still developing the foundational structures and rules of language" (WIDA, 2014).

What resources are available to help educators of Dual Language Learners?

Indiana has adopted the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards (E-ELD). These standards are to be used in conjunction with the Foundations. As a result, DLLs develop the social and academic language needed to access and be successful in early childhood environments. The WIDA E-ELD Standards require educators to focus on the language DLLs need to process and produce to meet the Foundations. As shown in the graphics below, educators must ensure children learn the language of each developmental area in order to learn the core concepts.

Using the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards

The WIDA E-ELD Standards represent the language of overarching developmental domains that Dual Language Learners need to use with peers, educators, and curricula within the preschool setting. The E-ELD Standards are designed to be used in conjunction with the Foundations to ensure Dual Language Learners are provided necessary language support to make learning meaningful while developing English. The connections document can be found here: <https://wida.wisc.edu/resources/connection-indiana-early-learning-foundations>