

EMPOWERING FAMILIES TO MAINTAIN THEIR HOME LANGUAGE: EFFECTIVE
STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This research study examined teachers' communication practices with families of children who are dual language learners (DLL). Effective ways of communicating with families of DLL is essential to promoting participation in their child's education and supporting engagement with their dual language learning. This research benefits early childhood education programs by examining how teachers can more effectively support DLL children and families. This study adds to the existing body of literature concerning strategies that support both early childhood educators and DLL young children and families. Administrators or staff in leadership positions with early childhood programs could benefit by incorporating essential communication strategies that support DLL children and families. Early childhood education programs may benefit from the results of this study by understanding the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive partnerships with DLL families. This qualitative case study included interviews with 10 teachers and seventy-four families from a state funded preschool program. All participants completed a survey. Five teachers and 10 families participated in an in-depth, semi-structured interview. The research study's findings explore challenges encountered and effective strategies for supporting young DLLs and their families in the following areas: a) barriers using technology; b) limited translation materials available in the home language; c) importance of collaboration between teachers and families. This study includes discussion, implications, and recommendations for early childhood education program staff and administrators to consider when supporting young DLL children and their families in preschool classroom settings.

Keywords: Dual Language Learners, family engagement, collaborative partnerships, Latinx

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Chapter 1 : Maintaining Preschool Families Home Language : Effective Strategies

Introduction

Statement of problem.

Young dual language learners (DLLs) are children who are learning more than one language concurrently or are raised in a single-language home prior to additional language exposure later in their childhood (Office of Head Start, 2009). California's young DLLs comprise more than half (60%) of the early childhood population (Early Edge, 2019). This means that preschool teachers are likely to teach one or more children whose home language is not English.

Parents and teachers have to work together to promote a child's academic success, especially if they are a DLL (Cowan, Swearer Napolitano & Sheridan, 2004; Epstein, 2001). Research shows the importance of family engagement for DLLs in preschool classrooms. Families can help teachers develop strategies to be used both in school and at home to promote their child's success both in school and in life (Oliva-Olson & Gordon, 2018). However, unless DLLs receive intentional, strategic support from teachers and family members, they risk losing their fluency or ability to speak their home language (Puig, 2010; Castro, Ayankoya, & Kasprzak, 2011). They also risk losing their home language if they do not consistently practice both languages actively at their home and in school (Oliva-Olson & Gordon, 2018).

Numerous research reports such as Promising Futures (NASEM, 2017) and Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8 (National Research Council, 2015), have shown the value of home language and the importance of supporting dual language learners. DLLs need individualized instructional supports to ensure they have full access and effective participation in the daily curricular learning activities, and, in this way, reap the benefits of attending quality

preschool. These instructional supports promote an equity-based approach to help them develop strong English language skills while supporting their home language (Oliva-Olson, 2019).

Teachers support their home languages and use individualized DLL strategies they provide optimal learning experiences that allow them to continue the development of cognitive, linguistic and social-emotional skills (Oliva-Olson, et al., 2019). It is instrumental for families and teachers to work together to support their children to learn English and continue to develop their home languages. The end goal is for DLLs to be ready to fully participate and respond to the rigor in the kindergarten curriculum and beyond (school readiness).

Investing in developing strong relationships with families provides schools with more knowledge about their child, his/her strengths, linguistic background and relevant personal qualities. Collaboration between families and early childhood language educators is pivotal because it initiates an alliance of trust between them. In addition, this collaboration creates a bond that can be strengthened over the course of a school year, such as by including families in preschool activities both in the home and at the school itself. To help facilitate this engagement between families and teachers, Horenczyk and Tartar (2002) recommend that the teachers themselves can try and present themselves as more culturally diverse so they can better relate to DLL students/families.

There is value in supporting home languages both in schools and at home. In California, Proposition 58 lifted the ban on bilingual education. Changes to the educational system and its approach towards languages began to show the importance of supporting families who speak other languages than English at home. There have been studies on a teacher's beliefs and how they influence their work with DLLs in a K-12 setting: Garrity and Guerra (2015) examined how teachers can be influential with language and instruction. Their study showed that a teacher's

beliefs do influence their teaching practices. As a result, different groups of children had been exposed to different experiences based upon the teachers' different teaching methods.

The study performed in this thesis investigates potential obstacles families may face in promoting their child's development as a DLL. It is important for researchers to assess teachers' communication strategies and how they promote quality dual language learning, such that a child's home language is learned and retained alongside the language they acquire.

Definition of terms.

Collaborative partnership.

A collaborative partnership is when a group works together in a joint intellectual endeavor that pools common interests, assets, and professional skills to meet group goals (Pagel, 2012).

Dual language learners.

Refers to children who learn a second language while continuing to develop their first language (ECLKC 2017).

Family engagement.

Occurs when there is an on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children's early childhood education programs (Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark & Moodie, 2009).

Latinx.

Latinx is a gender-neutral word for people of Latin American descent and can be an alternative word for Hispanics, Latino and Latina (Merriam Webster, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

This following study examined teacher communication practices with families to increase family language practices. The driving question behind this study was: how do early childhood education teachers help families of children who are DLLs to maintain their home languages? In route to answering this question, this study investigated potential barriers, challenges, and strengths of family engagement for DLLs in preschool classroom settings. The following research study examined communication between teachers and families to promote dual language learning of young children.

Theoretical Framework

There are a variety of theories about the influence of teachers upon DLLs retaining of their first language. The theories have varied from the DLL taking charge of the retention process themselves or the DLL existing as a passive conduit for the second language. Other theories are more recent and emphasize the importance of DLLs actively engaging with peers in their environment. To learn and value the theoretical framework used in this study, one must first see the differences and similarities of the most notable theories on the subject. A detailed discussion of both theories is as the section below. Two theoretical frameworks used to support the following work come from (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and Emerson (1976). Bronfenbrenner's work has been foundational in the early childhood field. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of family engagement has been used for the theoretical framework of this current study.

Engaging with the microsystem usually involves establishing and maintaining relationships with family, peers, and teachers. As children, being engaged with quality interactions may help improve the DLLs development and primary language retention. Bronfenbrenner (2005) also discusses the Mesosystem model which refers to the interaction of

children and the important connection between home and school. If families have a positive relationship, there is an increased chance for children to experience health and well-being. If the child has negative experiences with their family, as in case where they may not like their child's peers, for example, the child can have mixed emotions which can negatively affect their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

However, Emerson (1976) also created a social exchange theory which further argues the importance of having strong relationships. The social exchange theory can further support the need creating positive relationships between teachers and DLLs to promote the children's academic success. "Exchange theory" is viewed as a movement of social values and can impact various groups (Emerson, 1976). Teachers who communicate with families using different strategies can affect how those families will interact with them in turn. For DLL families, communication is important for families and children, leading to positive impacts upon the relationships the children will have with their teachers.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it highlights how early childhood education teachers can effectively establish collaborative partnerships with families of DLL children to ensure young DLLs maintain their home language (Families & Educators Together, 2019, p.22). Additionally, this study reveals challenges and barriers early childhood education teachers may face when communicating with families of preschool DLLs. Information gathered from this study has the potential to help early childhood education teachers form more effective teaching strategies, aid in the professional development of their communities, and facilitate implementation of policies supporting first-language acquisition among young DLLs.

Early childhood teachers need support to build operative partnerships for families and teachers collaborating together. One strategy to achieve such support would be to encourage teachers to use translation services to improve communication with families; many of these family members are DLL's themselves. Through continued professional development, teachers can develop the habit of reviewing and using key words from other languages that support learning for their specific students. Espinosa's (2010) explains while children are in the classroom environment, learning materials also play an important role. Teachers can enhance these materials by including familiar elements pertaining to how their ethnicity, customs, and traditions are valued. Because parents can substantially contribute to educating the teacher in these areas, they will feel more vital to their child's learning. It would be up to the educator to reach out and establish these relationships, so training in how to foster strong connections with families would be crucial.

These effective educator practices would support maintaining the home language as well. Dual language during the early years is valuable for both children and their families. Children from multicultural backgrounds learn through exposure to various languages in addition to their home language. Though not a primary goal, there would be the additional advantage of children being exposed to the variety of cultures and languages of their classmates. It is not unlikely to imagine these children actually teaching each other about their cultures. Effective strategies permit increased family/teacher engagement, with tangible benefits for all parties, including the children themselves.

Building such successful partnerships to improve communication between teachers and families has other benefits as well. When a program supports families who are DLL and provides a system for engagement, it can result in multicultural activities being present at their children's

school, whether at open houses, performances, or fund-raising events (Families & Educators Together, 2019, p.22). They might also benefit from just informally visiting with other parents and forming those secondary relationships that could result in outside-the-classroom experiences, for example play dates or birthday parties. When teachers create opportunities to communicate in the families' home languages, they are also able to more effectively communicate Emergency Preparedness. This heightened and visible communication about safety procedures at school could also lead to better home safety. Teachers can also plan for more successful teacher-family conferences. For example, they can role model literacy strategies, such as reading aloud to children. Thus, parents would be more equipped and encouraged to apply their own knowledge through language and problem solving. To be effective, professional development programs and practices for teachers of DLL children must require training educators to mindfully and intentionally collaborate not only with the local school and the community at large, but each family as well.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

“Being exposed to two or more languages at a young age is a gift. It is a gift because children who are able to learn through two or more languages benefit cognitively, socially, and emotionally...Children who are developing bilingual abilities are developing unique strengths that will add to the cultural and linguistic resources of California.”

(California Preschool Framework, 2010, p. 224)

Introduction

Preschool programs with strong family engagement have demonstrated positive learning outcomes for young children, especially DLL children. Such outcomes include increased early literacy development (Durand, 2011; Lopez, Barrueco, & Miles, 2006), enhanced comprehension and verbal skills (Fantuzzo, Mc Wayne, Perry & Childs, 2004; Farver Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006; Raikes, Green, Atwater, & Kisker, 2006), improved social-emotional skills (Fantuzzo et al., 2004), and educational success (Jeynes 2012; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Le Fevre & Shaw, 2012; Lin, 2003, Lin, 2006; Mantzicopoulos, 2003; McWayne, Fantuzzo, & McDermott, 2004; Suizzo, Jackson, Pahlke, Marroquin, Blondeu, & Martinez, 2012). Families have also been shown to play an important role in protecting the culture and language of their DLL child (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001; Schwartz, 2010). Thus, increasing DLL family engagement in early childhood education programs may play a crucial role in shortening the academic gap.

However, family members who want to stay connected to their child’s learning often lack support from and/or communication with their child’s teacher. Dialogue and exchange between families and early childhood education teachers is critical to ensure DLLs are able to and encouraged to continue communicating in their first languages (Dobransky & Frymier, 2004). Family engagement is used to promote strong relationships. It is important for families to feel

successful at communicating in their home language (Educare of California at Silicon Valley Soft Pilot Project: Professional Development to Support Dual Language Learners, as cited in Matera, 2017). If a family feels unsuccessful at communicating in their home language for example, if they find no support from educators/school/administrators when reaching out in their home language families may feel they have a disadvantage with their child's learning. To support families of DLLs, it is important that families are actively engaged in schools and their children's education (Transforming the Workforce, 2015). Trust is important for families to feel confident in speaking their home language.

The National Academies (2017) argue that families are critical partners in helping their young children/DLLs maintain and support home language development. Furthermore, preschools stand to benefit from incorporating diverse cultures, languages, and talents of DLL families into their learning environment (NASEM, 2017). Teachers can make families feel welcomed by having strategies in place for families to communicate effectively with teachers.

Language can often be an obstacle to family engagement. For example, Latinx immigrant parents of kindergartners are more likely than native-born White parents to find language to be a barrier to participation in their child's school activities (Turney & Kao, 2009). Spanish-speaking parents/guardians feel less confident confiding with teachers than English-speaking parents (Gamoran, López Turley, Turner, & Fish, 2012). In a study of Latinx families with children enrolled in grades pre-k to 4th grade, the majority of parent meetings were facilitated in English, which discouraged participation by non-English-speaking families (Peña, 2000). Hence, the need for more language resources in the early childhood education field is clear.

Communication between Teachers and DLL Families

From the start of enrollment, families bring their cultural wealth and capital to early childhood education programs. Each family has a unique home-culture with its own traditions, celebrations, identities, preferences, beliefs, values and language. Each family has its own distinct culture which influences how family decisions are made. Research has shown teachers who encourage parents to share how they would like to be welcomed into the classroom setting help enhance the self-awareness and dual-language communication skills of their children (Clark, 1983; Jose, Ryan & Pryor, 2012; Law, Cuskelly, & Carroll, 2013; Osterman, 2000; Wickery, 2010). Relationships between families and teachers require constant maintenance, best practiced if there is a consistency of effort made between one and the other.

Strategies associated with fostering home language development include making time to connect with parents to learn how they approach language in the home, encouraging relatives and volunteers to engage in the classroom of their child, and/or employing strategies which help DLLs develop their home languages. Teachers' use of a Family Languages and Interests' Interview is a questionnaire for families to answer so teachers can have more of an understanding of the family's language background which helps educators to foster family engagement (Oliva-Olson, Espinosa, Hayslip & Magruder, 2019).

Oliva-Olson et al. (2019) demonstrates that it is critical for teachers to personally interview families at the beginning of any given school year. These interviews serve as a way to welcome families, establish a rapport, and discuss shared language and learning problems. By conducting interviews at the start of the program year, early childhood education teachers were able to learn from family members about their children's home language practices, talents, and interests. When this information was used to develop helpful teaching strategies in the

classroom, it helped connect and promote better connections between the school, home, family, teacher, and child. This helped provide a framework for families to take part in the preschool setting with their children, and for preparing the classroom environmental and teaching support structures needed to promote children's home languages (Oliva-Olson et al., 2019).

Early childhood educators can also support families of DLLs with on-going activities that encourage families to continue learning about bilingualism and ways to support their child's language development. Halgunseth, Jia and Barbarin (2018) recommend the following strategies for this purpose:

- Include a family home language(s) and family interview to pinpoint family interests and availability to engage.
- Create welcoming preschool environments that empower families to engage and collaborate.
- Display children's cultural artifacts throughout the classroom.
- Create a family wall that includes photos, stories, and tokens important to all children.
- Plan for opportunities for families to share their personal stories and childhood songs, poems and fingerplays.
- Provide opportunities to discuss the benefits of bilingualism and how to navigate the journey to biliteracy.

Early childhood educators can follow up with developing a plan of action after reviewing what strategies work best for each family. Dual language strategies can be shared reciprocally between educators as a way to help them strengthen relationships with families.

Dual Language Learning During the Early Years

Finding resources to communicate with families are valuable to support the large amount of DLLs. Almost 50% of children in the United States of America (USA), from birth to-4 years old come from ethnic minorities and 20% live in a home without anyone over the age of 13 who speaks clear, fluent English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, 2010). With an increase of families who speak dual or multiple languages, the U.S. Latinx population has increased.

Latinx families who speak Spanish are also the fastest growing population in the USA with over 4.4 million children. According to the most recent projections, “Enrollment of Latinos in K-12 schools will increase significantly in the next decade” (Hussar & Bailey, 2013 as cited in Oliva-Olson, Estrada, & Edyburn, 2017, p.87). With an increase of Spanish native speakers, teachers can find value in communicating with children in their home language.

Espinosa’s (2010) research shows that all early childhood education teachers, whether multilingual or monolingual, should communicate with DLL children to support their home languages to ensure full access to and effective participation in classroom learning experiences. Even though language development of DLL children shows similarities to that of monolingual children, differences with communication are noticed (Bialystok, 2007; De Houwer, 2009). For example, children who are DLLs need to be exposed to rich oral language and concepts about print. However, DLLs who are exposed to multiple teaching practices that support language development can also be challenging for the DLLs to acquire these new language skills.

DLL children’s language development in their home language can vary based upon their individual interest, contextual understanding, and knowledge (Pearson, Fernandez, & Oller, 1995). For example, a young child who goes with their Spanish-speaking parent to a restaurant may be able to articulate the menu in Spanish to the parent as a translator; however, when asked

by her English-speaking teacher to recall and describe in English or Spanish what she ate, the child may be unable to respond proficiently (Pearson et al., 1995). The child may understand what is asked but lack skills in producing language and/or the confidence to speak either Spanish or English. This may be particularly true when the child tries to respond and be understood in a classroom with early childhood education teachers who are English-speaking only.

Research shows “reasons to support DLL children are strong, and include outcomes that align with educational expectations and desires for all children” (Oliva-Olson, Estrada, & Edyburn, 2017, p. 89). DLL children may experience strong family and community bonds (Zelasko & Atunez, 2000). However, if young children decrease or lose the language of their home, this can negatively affect communication with their elderly family members, and they may feel less connected to their family’s traditions and heritage. This disconnect can lead to emotional and self-esteem concerns for young children (Wong Fillmore, 1991).

Children benefit by having exposure to other home languages. If adequately supported, DLL children are likely to make many contributions to California’s multicultural population and its economy. Zepeda (2017) asserts, “If their language and culture are not nurtured in these early years, the state risks not only losing any potential social and economic benefits from DLLs’ bilingualism, but is also risking that these children fall behind their monolingual peers in and out of the classroom” (Zepeda, 2017, p.11). If children can get support from their early childhood education teachers, there is hope that DLL students will learn a second language and succeed at the same rate as their monolingual peers.

Building Successful Partnerships

Parents and early childhood education teachers working together to promote their children's language development can strengthen family engagement and relationship building (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). All family members can also feel a deeper connection with their culture and share learning experiences with each other, as well. Relationship building is important because it helps early childhood education teachers and families understand the other's cultural background (Christenson, 2000; Mantzicopoulos, 2003; Mc Wayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004).

Literacy success for DLL children is critical for their academic future. Specific methods which use story books in the learner's home language can be an effective strategy. Matera, Armas and Lavandez (2016) explain that dialogic reading may help families who have their child engaged in literacy practices at home. It is important for parents/guardians to value shared-book reading to help their children improve their literacy skills (Bus, 2002; International Reading Association, & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Family engagement can include helping family members learn and apply already proven practices such as comprehension, concepts of print and alphabetic principles (Chrisler & Ling, 2011; Justice, Kaderavek, Fan, Sofka, & Hunt, 2009; Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010).

Effective Communication Practices with DLL Families

Ongoing communication between DLL families and preschool programs is important. Acknowledging the need for parent/guardian and teacher collaboration and any concerns involving DLL children's learning is especially important for success. Communication with both parties lets programs and families exchange important information about the preschool child and

thus, work together on developing strategies to support DLL children in reaching developmental goals.

However, there are some misperceptions that early childhood education teachers have about parents/guardians. These extend towards the view of parents/guardians not being interested in their children's learning, when in reality, the families themselves may have a different point of view about their children's education when compared to the teachers' beliefs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Researchers conducted interviews and focus groups with DLL families and found that parents were disappointed at not being able to communicate about their children's developmental progress, or about their feelings of being disconnected from teaching staff and the lack of the school translation services (Park & McHugh, 2014; Ramirez, 2003). These situations may also send a message to families that they do not have much to offer in terms of encouraging their children's development unless they are able to do so in English (Davis, 2010; Duenas, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard, & Freire, 2001).

When family members of DLL children are not fluent in English, they may not disclose that they are unable to comprehend information shared by teachers. This can have an adverse impact on their child's education because they are not able to receive important information for their child's learning and development. The possibility of exaggerated English fluency may not be identified since this, "...[saves] school personnel from the trouble of making arrangements for the involvement of an interpreter" (Unruh & McKellar, 2017, p.11). Furthermore, the problem can be compounded especially for DLL children who have an identified disability (Unruh & McKellar, 2017).

Families who are unable to communicate effectively with their child's teacher may not feel confident enough to participate in family engagement activities at school. Such personal and

contextual factors could limit opportunities for family engagement, along with the parent level of education and/or academic skills (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Downer & Myers, 2010; Hill, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins & Closson, 2005). Another factor that may limit a parent's ability to engage in their child's education because of time constraints is competing responsibilities (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Downer & Myers, 2010; Hill, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins & Closson, 2005).

Early childhood education teachers must consider family members who are exposed to different languages may develop specific ways of communicating with their children that sometimes may not be understood by someone outside the family. While these families understand and communicate within in their home language, they may also find it necessary to communicate with others who speak different dialects of the same language. Some families use languages in ways that may be place specific, context specific, person specific, or a combination of these (Wong Fillmore, 1989).

Diaz (2011) documented the valuable role of the family, cultural local events, cultures from the Latinx community, and community language schools in supporting Spanish speaking individuals. Portes and Hao (1998) found that strong language support in both Spanish and English is more likely among those from privileged families and those who are able to attend high quality schools. Yet, for others, Spanish tends to be stereotyped as a language that is 'less important' in comparison to English (Valenzuela, 1999).

Early childhood education teachers need to consider how DLL children are viewed within their community. How education and educators are viewed in the communities of DLL also affects their child's learning. For example, Latinx families who have attended schools outside the USA may have different experiences and expectations regarding their child's education than

families who have not had this experience (Orozco, 2008). Some families may not want to raise questions with their child's school. For example, they may refrain from asking questions out of respect for the educators based on cultural views regarding the esteemed role of teachers. Some cultures may see collaboration between families and schools as a way of showing respect while other cultures may view this type of engagement as interfering with the child's learning (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007). While some cultures may believe this can be invasive to their child's learning, engaging with families is welcomed in the USA educational system and can minimize the gap between parents/guardians and teachers.

Professional Development on Preschool Dual Language Learning

Early childhood education teachers need support to implement effective strategies for communication with DLL children and families. Instead, many curriculum focus on language, social-emotional, and cognitive development but, do not include dual-language learning acquisition (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). The California Comprehensive Early Learning Program recommends, "...the early childhood workforce should be well-educated, well-trained, reflective of the State's cultural and linguistic diversity, and supported on an ongoing basis" (CCELP, 2013, p. 11). The document stipulates that, "Early childhood teachers and providers need special training to meet the needs of dual language learners and their families" (CCELP, 2013, p. 12). However, professional development on teaching DLL children is associated with greater teacher confidence in instruction of English learners and yet, the efficacy of these professional development programs has not yet been well documented (Zepeda, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner (2005) presents insight into how family engagement has been used effectively in an educational practice. The theory he presents explains the importance of children engaging in constructive relationships with both daily peers and teachers. There is also value created when children begin to have a positive effect as an individual both in the home and in their school. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) "Ecological Theory" can benefit DLLs and help describe how schools can help build a solid foundation of family engagement that benefits all involved. Essentially, when early childhood education teachers and family collaborate, a distinct culture and community is established. Culture influences how children develop (Bronfenbrenner 2005; Durand 2011; Halgunseth et al. 2009; Xu & Filler 2008). Therefore, bearing in mind Bronfenbrenner's theory, it can be best understood how the communication environment and procedures practiced between educators and parents of DLLs can help create a beneficial culture for the benefit of the DLL beginning with facilitating communication in the home language.

Additionally, Emerson explains the social exchange theory of how teachers and families communicate with the relationship of children. Emerson's (1976) social exchange theory also explains why strong relationships can form between families and teachers, with a benefit to the young DLL. If teachers and families collaborate and share resources, and families feel they are *high utility* (rewarding) and the student can greatly benefit in their dual-language acquisition. Examples of high utility could include respecting the DLLs culture and providing resources for their children's learning. By reinforcing how all parties can provide value to the educational environment through their own contributions, unhindered by language barriers, the benefits to the DLL can be greatly enhanced compared to single language learning environments/classrooms.

Conclusion

The literature demonstrates a variety of factors that affect family engagement, particularly for families of DLL children. Research has shown when early childhood education teachers are able to communicate with families and incorporate successful strategies, they are more likely to be able to build positive relationships between educators and families (NAS Report, 2017). The literature has also shown professional development that focuses on effective DLL teaching methods can support the field of early childhood education (CDE, 2010). There is a growing body of literature on how teachers can improve classroom instruction and implement high quality practices for children (López & Zepeda, 2012; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

Children and diverse families who enroll in early childhood education programs speak multiple languages and need support with translation services. The next chapter will outline the methodology, setting, participants, data collection, procedures, and analysis, to examine the way early childhood education teachers support DLL children and families' experience of teaching services.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The primary goal of this study was to investigate teacher communication practices with families and children who are DLLs. Communication is essential to promote parent/guardian participation in the classroom/program and support the DLLs effort to maintain their home language. The study investigated potential barriers, challenges, and strengths in a current early childhood education program that either helps or hinders families from developing knowledge and skills to support early learning bilingualism with their child. This chapter will explain in detail the qualitative methodology that was employed in the study.

Alignment with Theoretical Framework

In Chapter 2, an overview of two theoretical frameworks that support the analysis: ecological theory and social exchange theory were offered. Both frameworks explained the importance of strong relationships between teachers and families in producing positive learning outcomes for DLL children. Ecological theory takes into account all areas in which children develop such as school and family to culture, neighborhoods and their mutual interactions in between (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Social exchange theory defines strong relationships as those where there is an exchange of information and an increase in benefits. Thus, relationships strengthen when families of DLL children and programs feel the benefits of their collaboration outweigh the price (Halgunseth et al., 2009).

Research Question

The following central question guided this research study:

1. How do early childhood education teachers support families of children who are DLLs to maintain their home languages?

Research Design

This study used qualitative methods to help understand ways DLL families and early childhood education teachers collaborate to support young emergent bilingual children. In addition, this qualitative research method allowed the researcher, as the principal investigator, to develop interview questions allowing the participants to reflect and respond with meaningful answers. A case study was used to help understand communication and family engagement experiences of DLL families (Yin, 2011).

A qualitative study case was conducted to help identify any strengths, barriers, and potential challenges for early childhood education teachers who have DLL children enrolled in their programs. A qualitative study helps the researcher examine in depth the topic under investigation. Color coded analysis was used to help the researcher identify important common responses from participants. Allen (2017) explains axial coding and grouping key ideas using a color coding system was the basis of the analysis. In addition, interviews were conducted and parent survey responses were analyzed as the basis of identifying key findings. Specifically, data analysis was conducted to examine how and in what ways families of DLLs are supported by teachers to help DLLs maintain their home language.

Setting

The targeted population for this study were DLL families who have children enrolled in a preschool program located in a suburban neighborhood. This early childhood education program is identified as “Magnolia Preschool” (a pseudonym name is used to ensure confidentiality). Magnolia Preschool is located in a region with a large Spanish-speaking population and serves children from three to five years of age. The Magnolia preschool is part of a non-profit agency

and has multiple contracts with the State Department of Education which provides funding for programs that serve children from birth to twelve years old.

Magnolia preschool has two programs in one classroom setting. Each of these preschool programs are three-hour programs (part-day) with twenty-four children. A third program is located in a classroom next to the same building. This second classroom currently has thirty-six children enrolled in the program. The early childhood education program at Magnolia Preschool has a model of service and instruction where children and families are exposed to multiple languages. The mission of the program is for teachers and families to collaborate and support one another to ensure effective communication and parent participation in the program.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

The participants selected for this study included seventy-four (N=74) families who speak a language different than English at home, a total of eighty (N=80) females and four (N=4) males. The study included ten (N=10) early childhood education teachers, five (50%) identifying as bilingual in English and Spanish. All of these teachers which worked in the preschool classrooms at Magnolia Preschool Program. The families' languages spoken include Spanish & English (31%), English (8%), Spanish (60%), and other languages (1%). The researcher met with the study participants and shared the purpose of the study.

The researcher informed the participants that participation in the study was voluntary and confidential. During the initial meeting with teachers, an informed consent document was distributed, reviewed, signed, and collected (Appendix A). In addition, the researcher met with parent participants and the same procedures were followed to collect informed consent documents from the parents of the children enrolled at Magnolia preschool (Appendix B). Both

teachers and families were informed that they could decide to opt out of the study at any time. No incentives were provided to participants who volunteered to participate in the study.

All preschool teaching staff at Magnolia Preschool Program participated in this study. All 10 of the teachers (100%) identified as Latinx. Seventy-two (97.29 %) of families who participated in the study identified themselves as Latinx. One parent (1.35%) identified themselves as other (Russian) and another identified as Asian American or Pacific Islander (1.35%). These demographics are important to highlight because of the high percentage of children, families and early childhood education teachers that identify themselves as Latinx (or in the survey self-reported as, “Hispanic”).

Human Subjects Considerations

This study was approved by California State University Channel Islands Institutional Review Board (IRB). Additionally, the researcher gained permission from the Magnolia preschool program to conduct the study. Participation was voluntary for all participants at every stage of the study including completion of surveys and interviews. The researcher developed an informed consent document, containing all of the information required by IRB, for each teacher and parent participant to sign (Appendix A staff, Appendix B families). A staff survey was created using a Google form as the basis for a web-based survey tool (Appendix C). An electronic survey was also created to gather information of families using a Google form (Appendix D). The Google form maintained participants’ anonymity.

Data collection ensured confidentiality of the teachers and families. The identities of the teachers were coded using pseudonyms. The documents identifying the pseudonyms were stored on a flash drive kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s office where others do not have

access. All data collected by the researcher is kept confidential and will not be disclosed. The stored data will be kept for five years and then destroyed.

The risks to participants in this study was minimal. All effort to minimize risks were conducted. Potential risks such as teachers' perceptions that their teaching skills were being judged or that information share would be disclosed to their supervisor may have caused them stress. Teachers could also potentially have experienced an increase in anxiety when they shared their perceptions about families of children who are dual-language learners. Teachers may have also felt that they may be compared against other teachers, which could have caused discomfort. All of these potential risks were addressed during the initial recruitment and meeting with participants.

Furthermore, the researcher also minimized participant discomfort through conducting teacher interviews during work hours to minimize the economic impact of needing to take time off from work. Teachers were relieved of teaching duties to participate in the interviews. The interviews took place in a private setting to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

A potential benefit for this study includes possible future opportunities for teachers to receive professional training that focus on enhancing their knowledge and skills of effective teaching practices that support DLL children and families. The study results may also help early childhood education program administrators be able to plan professional development training and coaching that supports teachers' pedagogy and communication which in turn supports young DLL children and families.

The interview questions focused on the instructional practices and processes the teachers found useful in communicating with families who speak languages other than English at home

(Appendix E). A content expert in dual language learning reviewed and consulted on the interview questions for content and validity.

Data Collection

The data gathering process relied heavily on two collection methods: surveys and semi-structured interviews. The surveys occurred first, followed by individual interviews of the teachers in the classrooms to provide additional detail and in-depth responses about teaching strategies used when working with DLL families. Following the teacher interviews, parents were interviewed individually.

A survey was created to collect demographic information about the participants. The surveys took an average of 10-15 minutes to complete. Surveys were given to all 74 families at Magnolia Preschool for DLL families. Arrangements were made for families to complete the surveys in a private room or in the teacher's office space when other children and staff were not present. The study participants were also reassured of the confidentiality of the information that they shared, as well as their right to be removed from the study at any time.

Individual parent and teacher interviews were conducted with each participant. The interviews were semi-structured and allowed the researcher to ask for additional information or clarification when needed. Interviews were scheduled for one hour although the actual time varied depending on the detail of the participants' experiences and shared responses. The interviews took place at Magnolia preschool, thus eliminating the need for teachers and families to travel to another location and minimize time and cost to the teachers and parents/guardians. Arrangements were made to hold the interviews in a room when other children and staff were not present or in the teacher's private office space.

At the beginning of the interview, each teacher and parent/guardian was briefed about the nature of the research study. They were also reassured of the confidentiality of the information that they shared as well as the option of declining the interview and being removed from the study. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask for additional information or clarification when needed. Furthermore, an audio recorder was used with written consent to audio record the interviews, verbatim. Audio recordings were used for data collection and reviewed by the researcher by playing back each parent and teacher individual interviews. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts for accuracy and representative responses. All of the interviewees agreed with the accuracy and did not request revisions or deletions to the transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Surveys and interview procedures were included to allow for data collection and analysis. The surveys were examined with the goal of finding themes in the responses given by both families and early education teachers. Creswell (2007) discusses how coding lets direction happen before the themes are found. According to the author, detailed collection of data should be defined early on in the data collection process. This will let the reader determine whether or not the information and analysis was done appropriately.

For interviews, an instrument protocol (Appendix C and D) was used to take notes during the interviews. The next step used was a coding process identifying categories/major themes in the findings through a coding system. While data analysis is ongoing, Creswell (2007) describes that continuous coding is important for identifying trends in the data. Open coding was the first step towards analyzing these themes. Open coding allows the researcher to examine the surveys

and interviews and identify common themes share between the respondents (Creswell, 2007). Coding was done by hand and sorted by developing a color coding system for each question.

When coding for limited translation materials in the home language, high quality instructional support systems were looked for in the participant's response (Magruder, Hayslip, Espinoza, & Matera 2013). "DLL strategies don't just focus on oral conversations, but environment also plays as a factor was used as criteria for importance of collaboration between teachers and families" (Oliva-Olson, Estrada, & Edyburn, 2017). The following chapter explains the identified themes from this research study as key findings in three central areas: a) barriers to using technology; b) limited translation materials in the home language; and c) importance of collaboration between teachers and families.

Limitations of Study

One of the limitations of this study is that, although the research was conducted at a local preschool, the researcher had a pre-existing professional relationship with both the teachers and families involved. However, in order not to compromise this professional relationship, the participants were all informed that their participation was both voluntary and anonymous, and furthermore could not be used as part of their scheduled performance evaluations. In either case, it is worth noting that the teachers may have given biased answers in responding to the questions regardless of this precaution.

Another limitation is, regardless of sending the surveys electronically to the early childhood education teachers, some preferred to complete a hard copy. In a future version of this study, this could be anticipated and solved for through the initial offering of a hard copy option alongside the electronic copy.

In addition, some families may have identified themselves as Hispanic, however some speak Mixteco which is an indigenous population and may have decreased the percentage of Hispanics surveyed as a result. Furthermore, this would increase the other statistic (1% of other languages) because they may self-identify as Hispanic. There are limitations for indigenous families who do not have written language. For example, during family collaboration events and having enrollment forms in their home language can be challenging for those from an indigenous culture who cannot read the information provided. This requires additional translation services to be readily available from their community who can speak and translate to/from the family's indigenous home language.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' communication practices with families of children who are DLLs. This qualitative case study examined a preschool program that provided services to DLL children and families to closely examine effective communication practices between parents of enrolled students and their teachers, potential areas of improvement for these communication practices, along with identifying resources for developing strong partnerships with families that ultimately promote quality dual language learning for young children. Specifically, this case study investigated potential barriers, challenges, and strengths at an early childhood education program that works with DLL families. The study focused on effective teaching strategies, knowledge, and skills needed to support early learning bilingualism with young DLL children. Epstein (2011) argues the importance of families' culture and the need for collaboration between families and teachers cannot be understated. While teachers use limited technology resources such as one translation service "Google Translator", limited translation materials and support from collaboration with families, early childhood teachers may need to reassess their practices in order to best support families of children who are DLLs.

Interpretation & Discussion

The research findings shows barriers to effective strategy formation supporting young DLLs and families in three areas: a) barriers using technology; b) limited translation materials in the home language and; c) importance of collaboration between teachers and families. Findings in the area use of teacher use of technology show that all teachers use Google Translation, and even though the bilingual teachers were able to communicate with families in Spanish, they were

not confident with written materials in their home language. Another finding revealed the theme of limited translation materials being available for families who speak other languages besides Spanish, including indigenous languages/dialects. Findings also show not all teachers are able to communicate effectively with the families because not all teachers are able to communicate with them in their home language. Translation materials were limited in the classroom, and this compounded the issue alongside families not having a strategy of how to communicate with the teachers and families who speak other multiple languages. Findings also show there is an importance of having a sufficient amount of strategies to increase collaboration between Early Childhood teachers and families.

Barriers using Technology

Two-way communication is important for strong relationships between families and teachers (Baker & Manfredi-Petitt, 2004). Results from the teacher surveys show that 50% of the early childhood education teachers who participated in the study do not speak the families' home language. This was interesting because 100% of the teachers identified as Latinx. However, not all of the teachers speak Spanish. As a result, one strategy that English-only speaking teachers used to communicate with DLL families included technology. Though 50% of the teachers were bilingual and speak Spanish and English, they used technology to check their written communication to families. For example, 100% of the teachers in the study (English-only speaking and bilingual teachers) used Google Translation for both written and verbal communication.

Children's documentation is displayed throughout the environment. Families need to feel they are valued by being able to read their children's work samples. While communicating with families, it is important for teachers to display samples of children's work in the preschool

environment. It is also important for teachers to have children's work samples displayed in their home language for the family and child so they can feel they are valued and an equal partner in the learning environment relative to students/families who only speak English.

As mentioned above, teachers do find Google Translation valuable for documentation composition and verification of accuracy. However, if used for communicating with families, this may limit the teacher's engagement with the family of a DLL child, especially if the translation is incorrect. Another potential challenge using Google Translation could be the time factor of parents having to wait while the teacher translates. For example, one parent shared, "It takes a long time to hear what teacher say, they are talking in phone so I understand" (Parent 3). As a result, Google Translation can be time consuming for the family and teacher, especially if the content of the conversation is confidential.

In addition, the findings show one challenge of using Google Translation is the teacher being unable to accurately pronounce the language for the family or causing the family to be unable to understand the teacher's enunciation.

I feel translation services are not enough, I have my husband but he's not always there to help me. I don't always understand what teachers are saying. Teachers use Google Translator, but I don't know what they are saying. My daughter knows Russian but speaks English at school. (Parent 3)

Communicating through a device may be an ineffective strategy for teachers to use with the family because the family may not feel an authentic connection with the teacher. Technology can often create an emotional barrier by itself by being an interface that serves as more of a screen between parent and teacher instead of a line of communication. Recognizing the capability of technology as a barrier, not just a solution, is important to recognize because early childhood education teachers may not recognize this lack of emotional connection yet still believe they are adequately supporting DLL families by using Google Translation. Yet, research findings indicate

that the use of translation software, such as Google Translate may be more of a hindrance rather than an effective resource tool. The research findings indicate using technology to communicate with families may create barriers with accuracy, time restraints, and lack of authentic family engagement. This is what one parent expressed about her experience with teachers using technology to translate, “Sometimes I don’t understand what the teacher translated to me.” (Parent 67).

While the findings show many families were able to get support in either English or Spanish, some families had a different experience with the support received due to minimal amount of information provided in their home language during enrollment. This demonstrates that even from the enrollment stages improvements could be made to creating a productive relationship through available materials instead of leaving them feeling excluded in this manner before school has even started. As one parent described their experience, “I do my best to understand, if not, I take the papers to get help.” (Parent 3).

Some families may have a better translation support with the teachers because some may use a sibling or other family member to translate.

Limited Translation Materials in Home Language

Another finding from the study includes challenges with limited translation materials for families during the enrollment process. Typically, families enroll their child at the start of the program year. Some DLL families are faced with understanding the parent handbook which is written in English. The parent handbook explains the preschool program philosophy and policies.

Specifically, parents/guardians schedule an appointment to enroll their child at Magnolia Preschool program through email or phone. Once the enrollment appointment is scheduled, the parent/guardian completes the enrollment with a staff member at a central office location (not at

the school location site). Important information is shared during the enrollment process in both English and Spanish. After the enrollment forms are complete, the family visits the preschool to meet with the Site Supervisor, and teachers. During this visit, it is not guaranteed that the Site Supervisor is bilingual. However, the Site Supervisor meets with the families to provide an orientation about the program and discuss any important information about the child that the teachers will need to know. The reason administration completes enrollment at the central office is due to lack of technology and access to WI-FI at the preschool classroom setting.

Findings from the parent surveys show, 97% of DLL families use a professional translator such as dialing 211(Community Resource phone referral service) followed by 1.5% who use county resources for translation and 1.5% who use internet for interpretation services. Families appear to have better translation communication with the community compared to the school. “I use CryaCom, interpreters, and I have seen cards asking what language what I speak at some places. It’s the county building. Why can’t we get those?” (Parent 3)

This points to a disconnect in how a parent may have access to translation services outside the classroom that is unavailable to them inside the classroom setting. The findings definitely indicate there may be a gap concerning this lack of available translation services for families in the classroom. Yet, the study also shows over 50% of early childhood education teachers feel there is an importance need for children to continue to speak their home language at school. Confidence and self-esteem is an important foundation in children’s developing sense of self.

Families shared they are comfortable accessing community resources, as they are available. However, teachers did not appear to know of the resources available compared to the

parent knowledge. “Ugh! The teachers try and use Google Translator, but it takes a long time. I just get someone from my family to help.” (Parent 67)

Survey findings found 60% of early childhood education teachers do not feel confident in their second language skills. However, 30% said they feel like they are approaching confidence, and 10% said they are confident. Acknowledging these findings is important because they show early childhood education teachers do not feel confident with the communication strategies they are currently using in the classroom and with families. On the other hand, teachers do admit that when both parents and children are included in the communication process they both benefit from an enhanced school experience:

When parents and children understand what is being said, they are able to participate and enjoy the activities. That’s the greatest takeaway of all! Children can learn multiple languages and at the same time be able to communicate in their home language with their families at school and home. (Teacher 1)

In addition to Google translator being a possible barrier instead of a solution, 60 % of families surveyed were also not confident in their second language skills. It’s important for early childhood education teachers to make families feel confident in having a conversation with their child’s teacher because this helps support a foundation of trust between the teacher and family. Early Childhood education programs are the foundation of a child’s learning. As the child learns to trust and establish a relationship with their teacher, so does the family. It’s important for the DLL family to feel their child’s needs are being met at school. Another reason all teachers use “Google Translator” may be because it’s free and convenient. If families do not feel their needs are being met and feel there is a challenge with a language barrier, they may not be able to address a concern they have about their child.

Importance of Collaboration between Teachers and Families

Findings show 77% of families felt it important that early childhood education teachers speak the preferred language of their child, while 3% said it was not important, and 20% did not answer. Since there may be times when early childhood education teachers are unable to communicate in the child's home language, collaboration with families is valuable to continue the child's learning with exposure to both languages in the classroom. Early childhood education teachers can help support the family collaboration by integrating their language into program services, such as parent conferences, monthly parent meetings, newsletters, and calendars.

Results from the study conducted suggest staff may need more support with professional translation services. Teachers were asked, "How do you identify each family's preferred language(s) and use this information for planning and providing services?" All of the early childhood teachers indicated they used Google Translation (Teachers, 1,2,3,5,8).

Providing family resources for DLL families is important because families want to feel their child is getting enough support with their home language so they feel their culture and language is being valued and their child is being supported in school.

The following chapter includes discussion, implications, and recommendations for early childhood education program staff and administrators to consider when supporting young DLL children and families in preschool classroom settings.

Chapter 5 : Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

In California, nearly half of children ages 3 to 5 years of age, are DLLs (Office of Head Start, 2009). A large body of data suggests DLL children can learn most effectively when their preschool, families and communities are actively engaging with each other towards this end. Children who are considered DLLs are children who are exposed to multiple languages (Office of Head Start, 2009).

Communication is important for families and teachers because collaboration is valuable for families and children who are DLLs. All families need to feel their voices are being heard. Maybe they need to be able to communicate their concerns with the child's teacher. This could include concerns about the program or even questions about their child's development. To families who share personal information with their child's teacher, confidentiality is essential in order to develop strong, trusting relationships. With personal information families may share with teachers, confidentiality is vital. Families and teachers are looking for ways to improve communication and engagement with each other. Having strategies in place may help the collaboration with one another.

The more detailed conversations are between teachers and families, the more engaging and beneficial they can be for the DLL student. Children need to have teachers who will help their development. Oral language is also crucial for speech development (Magruder, Hayslip, Espinoza, & Mater, 2013).

This study utilized qualitative research methods to answer the research question. These methods provided ways to help understand how families of DLL children and teaching staff collaborate and engage in supporting young bilingual children.

Discussion

The teachers overall have discussed their challenges with communicating with families who are DLL a) barriers using technology; b) limited translation materials in home language; and c) importance of collaboration between teachers and families. The study revealed the early childhood education teachers who participated in the study felt they felt they were doing their best at collaborating with families who are DLLs.

Family engagement is important for families who are DLLs because they want to communicate and engage with teachers. With effective strategies in place for families and teachers, all parties should become better able to surpass language barriers.

Magruder, Hayslip, Espinoza, and Matera (2013) invoked statistics presented in 2006 by the National Literacy Panel and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, finding that DLLs benefit by guidance. The analysis also found that families who speak their home language are likely to learn English easier. Children who are DLL can learn multiple languages and are exposed to English.

The majority of teacher and family respondents in this study stated they are not confident in a second language. Strategies to support DLLs are important so both teachers and families feel they are being respected; consistent use of these strategies are crucial to their success, thus teachers must make parents more aware of these tools.

The study's findings are not just relevant for this individual preschool program, but can be considered as a relevant source of information for other similar preschool programs who serve DLL children and families. Magnolia Preschool and its survey data may help to strengthen the bridge between DLL families at other locations, by helping them to best focus their energies on opportunities for improvement to communication processes/procedures in the classroom

environment, teaching team professional development, and enhancing community engagement. Strong partnerships are created when programs address the underlying concerns with how to communicate with DLL families in a respectful and effective way. Even if one is not able to fluently communicate with families' native language, it is still important to recognize how to meet the families' needs using effective teaching strategies.

Participating teachers in this study stated they use Google Translation to help support families who are DLLs. Further investigations may need to be considered to investigate and understand teacher's reasons, perceptions and beliefs about using translation software

Recommendations for Practice and Policy

The research findings suggest the need to examine current DLL services to families to ensure effective teaching practices for DLL families. For example, parent meetings should be offered with bilingual resources which can be valuable for both families and teachers. At any function where communication is required on site between families and teachers (such as the enrollment events mentioned prior), efforts should be made to ensure that both personnel and resources are available in multiple languages other than English.

The findings also suggest the importance of creating opportunities for shared governance. These opportunities could include forming a DLL committee that includes parents as members. Providing shared governance opportunities can be an effective strategy for families to engage in the education of young children. It is vital that program administrators create enrollment process using bilingual resources such as translated forms, offer translation services, and support providing technology training for teachers (such as with translation software, IT equipment, etc.). In collaboration with DLL families, teachers can help families understand the program services available in a more effective way.

Findings in this study show these teachers are open, eager and welcome to new ideas on how to improve collaboration with DLL families. It is essential that early childhood education programs work with teachers to develop plan of actions that incorporate effective DLL strategies. Finally, further research may be needed to determine additional teaching strategies that can best support DLL families, including opportunity for staff development that focuses on practices that support families maintaining their home language.

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This is to certify that:

Jennifer Escamilla

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group) Social & Behavioral
Research - Basic/Refresher (Course Learner Group) 1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

California State University Channel Islands

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wa928aed2-1eb5-43ed-89cd-4377682901e5-26196991

Completion Date 10-Dec-2017 Expiration Date 09-Dec-2020 Record ID 25508597

This is to certify that:

Annie White

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group) Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Course Learner Group) 1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

California State University Channel Islands

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Appendix A
Informed Consent for Staff
Empowering Families to Maintain their Home Languages

You are invited to participate in a study focused on the association of personal experiences with preschool staff and their communication towards parents who are Dual Language Learners (DLL) being conducted by Jennifer Escamilla of CSU Channel Islands. The proposed research study will explore teacher communication practices with families of children who are dual language learners (DLLs). Effective ways of communicating with families of DLLs is essential to promote participation in the classroom/program and engage in dual language learning. Specifically, the study will investigate potential barriers, challenges and strengths in a current early learning program that either ensures or limits families from developing knowledge and skills to support early learning bilingualism with their child. The results of this study will highlight the most effective communication practices, potential area of improvement, and resources to develop strong partnerships with families to promote quality dual language learning. In addition, the researcher will also look for any significant patterns in regard to demographic factors.

If you decide to participate, you will be requested to participate in the study by completing a survey and interview. The online survey will ask you to discuss your personal experiences with communicating with DLL families while working at Magnolia Preschool. You will not be requested to disclose your identity. With signed consent, an electronic survey copy will be emailed to you. If you do not have access to a computer, an electronic device will be available at the program, in a private setting, for you to complete the online survey.

Secondly, as a participant in this study, you will be interviewed about your experiences with communicating with diverse DLL families. The researcher will meet with you for an individual interview for approximately one-two hours in length. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. Two recordings using separate audio recording devices will be used at each interview to ensure redundancy and protect against technological problems.

The interview will take place in a private space, such as an office at a time convenient for you. The interview will be audio recorded then transcribed to ensure that a complete and accurate record of your input is developed. In the interview, you will be asked a variety of questions regarding your experience working with DLL families. If you give permission to allow me to audio record this interview, please check the box giving your consent for their interviews to be recorded below.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. If you give permission to participate in this study by signing this Consent form, I plan to use this information to discuss possible effective strategies that support DLL families to maintain their home language. The information regarding your personal experience and perspectives working with DLL families will remain confidential; no names will be used in reports, or shared with your

employer. No identifying information, such as your name, will be used if any results are disseminated in publications or at professional conferences. In these circumstances, each student will be assigned a numerical code or pseudonym and be referred to only by their code or pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and will be destroyed after five years.

There is minimal risk associated with this study. Although some questions may elicit an emotional response, you may choose to skip any questions you feel is overwhelming or uncomfortable to answer, with no consequence to you.

Your decision whether to participate will not prejudice your future relations with CSU Channel Islands, or Magnolia preschool. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask me or my thesis advisor, Dr. Annie White. I can be reached at 805-758-1723 jennifer.escamilla359@myci.csuci.edu or 805-988-3983 and Dr. Annie White at Annie.White@csuci.edu or at (805) 437-2053.

I AM MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. MY SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT I HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

Signature of Participant

Date

Questions or problems about your rights in this research project can be directed to Institutional Review Board at irb@csuci.edu or you may call 805-437-8495.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Questions or problems about your rights in this research project can be directed to Institutional Review Board at irb@csuci.edu or you may call 805-437-8495.

Appendix B

Informed Consent for Families

Empowering Families to Maintain their Home Languages

You are invited to participate in a study focused on the association of personal experiences of Preschool families who are Dual Language Learners (DLL) and their communication and resources available from teaching staff. This study will be conducted by Jennifer Escamilla of CSU Channel Islands. The proposed research study will explore teacher communication practices with families of children who are dual language learners (DLLs). Effective ways of communicating with families of DLLs is essential to promote participation in the classroom/program and engage in dual language learning. Specifically, the study will investigate potential barriers, challenges and strengths in a current early learning program that either ensures or limits families from developing knowledge and skills to support early learning bilingualism with their child. The results of this study will highlight the most effective communication practices, potential area of improvement, and resources to develop strong partnerships with families to promote quality dual language learning. The researcher will also examine community resources available for DLL families to maintain the home language. The researcher hopes to learn about potential strategies for communication and services to DLL families.

If you decide to participate, I will request that you participate by completing a confidential online survey and face to face individual interview. The confidential online survey will ask you to discuss your personal experiences with communication and resources provided by staff while your child has attended preschool at Magnolia Preschool. The confidential online survey will not request your identification. If you consent to participate in this study, an electronic survey copy will be emailed to you. If you do not have access to a computer, an electronic device will be available at the Magnolia preschool, in a private setting, for you to complete the online survey.

Secondly, as a participant in this study you will be interviewed about your experiences with services and communication in your home language. The researcher will meet with you for an individual interview for approximately one-two hours in length. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. Two recordings using separate audio recording devices will be used at each interview to ensure redundancy and protect against technological problems.

The interview will take place in a private space, an office that will be convenient for you. The interview will be audio recorded then transcribed to ensure that a complete and accurate record of your input is developed. In the interview, you will be asked a variety of questions regarding your experience working with staff communication and resources provided in your home language. If you give permission to allow me to audio record this interview, please check the box giving your consent for their interviews to be recorded below.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. If you give permission by signing this Consent form document, the information will be used to discuss the

potential effective teaching strategies and resources that support DLL families to maintain the home language. The information regarding personal experience and perspectives will remain confidential; no names will be used in reports or shared without your permission. No identifying information such as your name will be used if any results are disseminated in publications or at professional conferences. In these circumstances, each participant in the study will be assigned a numerical code or pseudonym and be referred to only by their code or pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and will be destroyed after five years.

There is minimal risk associated with this study. Although some questions may elicit an emotional response from discussing your experience as a DLL parent, you may choose to skip any questions you feel are overwhelming or uncomfortable to answer, take a break, or withdraw from the study, with no consequence to you. If needed, the researcher will provide contact information for community counseling resources available, upon request.

Your decision whether to participate will not prejudice your future relations with CSU Channel Islands, or Magnolia Preschool. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask me or my advisor, Dr. Annie White. I can be reached at 805-758-1723 jennifer.escamilla359@myci.csuci.edu or 805-988-3983 or Dr. Annie White at annie.white@csuci.edu or at (805) 437-2053.

I AM MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. MY SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT I HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

Signature of Participant

Date

Questions or problems about your rights in this research project can be directed to Institutional Review Board at irb@csuci.edu or you may call 805-437-8495.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Questions or problems about your rights in this research project can be directed to Institutional Review Board at irb@csuci.edu or you may call 805-437-8495.

Appendix C

Staff Survey Questions

Empowering Families to Maintain their Home Languages

Hello Staff Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey and to participate in the research study, Empowering Families to Maintain their Home Languages.

The purpose of this study is to explore what are staff support services and information provided to Dual Language Learner (DLL) families and provide demographic information (i.e. race/ethnicity, sex, and/or first generation status, etc.).

Confidentiality

This survey will be confidential and by agreeing to be a part of this survey you will be giving me permission to report your responses for my Master's thesis. Data will be kept secure and confidential on my encrypted USB drive. All data will be destroyed five years following completion of the study.

Risks and Benefits of Participation

For this study, it is expected that you may experience minimal risks. People react differently to stimuli, and it is possible that some may react negatively to the survey and/or interview questions. If you experience any discomfort, you can terminate the process at any time and you have access to the me and Dr. Annie White should any issues arise. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Jennifer Escamilla at jennifer.escamilla359@csuci.edu or at (805) 758-1723 and thesis advisor, Dr. Annie White at annie.white@csuci.edu or at (805) 437-2053. For questions or issues regarding your rights as a subject, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 805-437-8496 or via email at irb@csuci.edu

In addition, if you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question without any negative consequences. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your current or future relationship with CSU Channel Islands.

The proposed research study will explore teacher communication practices with families of children who are dual language learners (DLLs). Effective ways of communicating with families of DLLs is essential to promote participation in the classroom/program and engage in dual language learning. Specifically, the study will investigate potential barriers, challenges and strengths in a current early learning program that either ensures or limits families from developing knowledge and skills to support early learning bilingualism with their child. The results of this study will highlight the most effective communication practices, potential area of improvement,

and resources to develop strong partnerships with families to promote quality dual language learning.

To participate in this study you must be 18 years old or older. Do you affirm that you are at least 18 years or older, and do you give me your consent to include your responses in the data that I will be collecting, analyzing, and reporting for this research study?

Yes

No

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Escamilla

Survey Questions

Socio-Demographic Information

1. Do you identify as:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other (Please specify)
 - Decline to answer

2. What is your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply.
 - African American
 - Asian-American or Pacific Islander
 - Latina/o or Hispanic
 - Native American
 - White
 - Other (Please specify)
 - Decline to answer

3. What teaching permit do you hold?
 - Assistant permit
 - Associate permit
 - Teacher permit
 - Master teacher permit
 - Site Supervisor permit
 - Program Director permit
 - None

4. Please state your age

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-55 years old
- Decline

5. How long have you been an employee at Magnolia preschool?

- A. 1-3 yrs
- B. 4-6 yrs
- C. 7-9 yrs
- D. 10-12yrs
- E. 12+ yrs

6. Please rank the following Dual Language translation services in the order that you use most often to communicate with families.

5= very often 4= often 3=occasionally 2=seldom 1=never

- A. Professional Translator
- B. County resources
- C. Internet services
- D. Books which contain translations services
- E. Other (please list)

7. How many times throughout your time at Magnolia preschool have offered families to attend an information literacy session with translation services?

- A. More than four times
- B. Three times
- C. Two times
- D. Once
- E. None

8. What has been your greatest take away(s) for Dual Language Learners from the parent meetings you have facilitated or participated in?

9. One of goals of information of Dual Language is to see what support services in Dual Language services are available for families. How confident are you in speaking the families home language to communicate with others?

- A. I am extremely confident in my information second language skills.
- B. I am confident in my information second language skills.
- C. I am approaching confidence in my information second language skills.
- D. I am not confident in my information second language skills.

10.Regarding diversity amongst staff members and families, in your opinion, what do you think about DLL children speaking their home language at school?

Appendix D

Family Survey Questions

Empowering Families to Maintain their Home Languages

Hello Family participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in completing my survey, as part of my Thesis research, "Empowering Families to Maintain their Home Languages".

The purpose of this study is to explore whether patterns exist in staff support services and information provided for families to some of the demographic categories to which they belong (race/ethnicity, sex, and/or first generation status).

Confidentiality

This survey will be confidential and by agreeing to be a part of this survey you will be giving me permission to report your responses for my Master's thesis. Data will be kept secure and confidential on an encrypted USB drive. All data will be destroyed five years following completion of the study.

Risks and Benefits of Participation

For this study, it is expected that you may experience minimal risks. People react differently to stimuli, and it is possible that some may react negatively to the survey and/or interview questions. If you experience any discomfort, you can terminate the process at any time and you have access to the me and Dr. Annie White should any issues arise.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Jennifer Escamilla at jennifer.escamilla359@csuci.edu or at (805) 758-1723 and thesis advisor, Dr. Annie White at annie.white@csuci.edu or at (805) 437-2053. For questions or issues regarding your rights as a subject, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 805-437-8496 or via email at irb@csuci.edu

In addition, if you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question without any negative consequences. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your current or future relationship with CSU Channel Islands or CDI.

The proposed research study will explore teacher communication practices with families of children who are dual language learners (DLLs). Effective ways of communicating with families of DLLs is essential to promote participation in the classroom/program and engage in dual language learning. Specifically, the study will investigate potential barriers, challenges and strengths in a current early learning program that either ensures or limits families from developing knowledge and skills to support early learning bilingualism with their child. The results of this

study will highlight the most effective communication practices, potential area of improvement, and resources to develop strong partnerships with families to promote quality dual language learning. I will also examine whether demographics are associated with the families and staff.

To participate in this study you must be 18 years old or older. Do you affirm that you are at least 18 years or older, and give your consent to include your responses in the data that I will be collecting, analyzing, and reporting for this research study?

Yes

No

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Escamilla

Appendix E

Family Interview Protocol

1. Please share your name
2. How long has your child been enrolled at Magnolia Preschool?
3. What is your family's preferred language(s)?
4. Do you use translation services for information? And receiving services?
5. Please describe any translation or interpretation services you receive at the school? Can you describe when and how you receive them? For example,
At general meetings?
At parent conferences (one on one with teacher)
at trainings?
At any community events?
And who provides the translation/interpretation? Are you able to ask questions in your home language?
6. Please describe how translation occurs for written communication in your preferred language.
7. In what language do teachers explain your child's learning? Is this your preferred language? Have you been asked to identify which language you prefer to receive written information?
8. Please explain how you are provided translation for written communication sent home.
9. Are the school policies explained to you in your home language? Can you provide an example?
10. Do you feel that your home language is a benefit or a barrier to your child's early learning program? Can you please explain? How do teachers and staff welcome you if they don't speak your home language?
11. Please share the process of how you are informed about program services as a DLL family.
12. How does the program provide bilingual support for your child and your family?
13. Please describe community resources available to your family in your home language. And how do you access these resources?
14. Please describe your experience with the enrollment process as a DLL parent.
15. How are you provided Kindergarten readiness transition for your family as a DLL?
16. What type of DLL support do you have in your family to help with translation? If you do not have other family members who can offer translation, are there other people who help you with translation services at school and in the community?
17. Is there anything else you would like to share that wasn't already discussed in the interview?
18. Do you have any feedback for the preschool that would be helpful to support DLL families?

Appendix F

Staff Interview Protocol

1. Please share your name, how long you have worked as an early childhood teacher, and how long have you been employed at this preschool?
2. How do you identify each family's preferred language(s) and use this information for planning and providing services?
3. Please describe interpretation and translation services available to you to ensure high-quality services for DLL families?
4. In what ways do you provide translation for families at parent meetings/conferences, trainings, and community events in families' home languages?
5. Please describe how translation occurs for written school to home communication for families' preferred home language?
6. Please describe the process of translation services and communication for families regarding child assessments?
7. Please explain how you provide translation for print and multimedia communication for parents in the classroom setting?
8. Please describe how policies and procedures required by families' are communicated to families in their home language?
9. Please explain protocol for staff communication with DLL families, including how the program defines "considerate and respectful communication?"
10. Please share the process of how you inform the community about program services provided to DLL children and their families?
11. How does the program ensure that comprehensive services provide bilingual support for children who are DLLs and their families?
12. Please describe any community resources that are available in the family's home language? And how do you access these resources?
13. Please describe the enrollment process for DLL families
14. How do you provide Kindergarten readiness transition to families who are DLL families? Please explain in detail.
15. How do you provide DLL support for families who do not have other family members who can provide translation?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share that wasn't already discussed in the interview?
17. Do you have any feedback for the preschool and what would be helpful for DLL families?