

Supporting Dual Language Learners in the Classroom Guidance

Purpose

This describes effective environmental and instructional language supports in the classroom.

Guidance

Environmental Language Supports

Dual Language Learners (DLL) benefit greatly from having intentional environmental supports throughout the classroom. These supports should be used often throughout the school day and should have meaning for children. Examples of environmental supports are:

- Display a picture schedule that is used/referred to throughout the day by teachers and children.
- Create word labels with pictures and place them throughout the classroom to identify where classroom items belong. For example, label where art supplies are stored, manipulatives, blocks, etc. There is no need to label items without a purpose such as “clock” or “chair.”
- Write and display text in multiple languages. Use a different color for each language to help children differentiate between languages.
- Create a “name wall” with each child’s picture and name for children to use in a variety of activities.

Instructional Language Supports

DLL children will also benefit greatly from having intentional instructional language supports throughout the school day. When teachers are planning their instruction, they should differentiate for their DLL children by using effective strategies. Examples of instructional language supports are:

- Use pictures, preferably real photographs of objects, to make your content more understandable.
- Use gestures when appropriate to help define unknown words and concepts. Invite children to imitate the gesture while saying the word to aid in word recall.
- Bring in real objects to explain new words and concepts. The more hands on children are, the more they will comprehend.
- Sing, sing, sing! Write words to familiar tunes that use new vocabulary and concepts or use online resources that have songs that are ready to use on a variety of topics.
- Provide multiple opportunities for children to use new vocabulary. Engage children in conversations about the content during meal time, free choice, outside play, etc.
- Use a Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) to support English and home language skill development.

Related Documents

Working Effectively with a Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) Guidance