

Purpose

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

Guidance

Environmental Language Supports

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) 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 or 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, manipulatives, blocks, etc. are stored. 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.
- Create a thematic classroom environment with the topic of instruction visible throughout the classroom.

Instructional Language Supports

DLLs 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! Create your own lyrics using familiar tunes (e.g. Itsy-Bitsy Spider) that use new vocabulary and concepts related to the current unit or use online resources that have songs about 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.