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# Valid and Reliable Assessment of Young Multilingual Learners

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A COMPLEX PROCESS

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Share one or more myths or misperceptions that have influenced your thinking of multilingual learning and how children are educated?



THINK

PAIR

SHARE

# Learning Objectives

- Increase knowledge of the neuroscience behind the development and use of languages.
- Understand the types, patterns, and processes of learning more than one language.
- Consider the influence of socio-cultural, and historical impacts when learning more than one language.
- Explore and document language differences vs. developmental language disorders with implications for assessment practices.



Background  
to Consider  
& Support  
Learning of  
Languages as  
STRENGTH  
Versus  
DEFICIT

Part I



The Neuroscience of Multilingual Learning



Language Acquisition- Types, Patterns, and Processes are Different for Multilingual Learners



Socio-Cultural and Historical Considerations Impact Development and Use of Multiple Languages



Understanding of Current Research- Language Differences vs Disorders & Specific Strategies Assessment



# Multilingual



Multilingualism is the use of more than one language, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers. It is believed that multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population. More than half of all Europeans claim to speak at least one language other than their mother tongue; but many read and write in one language. Always useful to traders, multilingualism is advantageous for people wanting to participate in globalization and cultural openness

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# Who is a Dual Language Learner?

The term Dual Language Learner (DLL) is used in this professional development program to refer to “children birth to age 8 in their homes, communities, or early care and education (ECE) programs, who are learning two or more languages.”

The Office of Head Start also uses the term Dual Language Learner (DLL), which they define as:

- Dual language learners are children learning two (or more) languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language.

# What can we learn from Neuroscience & Current Research on Language Learning

An infographic with a dark background and a central image of a human brain. The brain is rendered in a blue, textured style. Surrounding the brain are several text boxes in light blue with black text, each describing a cognitive benefit of bilingualism. The text boxes are arranged around the brain, with some partially overlapping.

**EXECUTIVE CONTROL:** Bilinguals have improved ability to multitask and switch between tasks, can hold attention longer, and have better working memory.

**LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:** Bilinguals are more sensitive to the sound of words and have better reading skills.

**COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY:** Bilinguals are more flexible and adaptable to change.

**CREATIVITY:** Bilingualism enhances creativity in thinking "outside the box" and problem solving skills.

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# Understanding the Neuroscience

Understanding young children's capacity for multilingual language learning is critical for having evidence-based expectations that shape and inform:

Parents' and other caregivers' decisions about whether and how to raise children bilingually or multilingual

Families, educators, education administrators, health professionals, and policy makers about the most advantageous learning environments for learners of more than one language.

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# CAPACITY for Early Learning

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017). *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24677>



# The Linguistic Genius of Babies



# How Experience Shapes Circuitry of the Developing Brain



[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=M\\_5U8-QSH6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_5U8-QSH6A)

# Differences Given Language Exposure



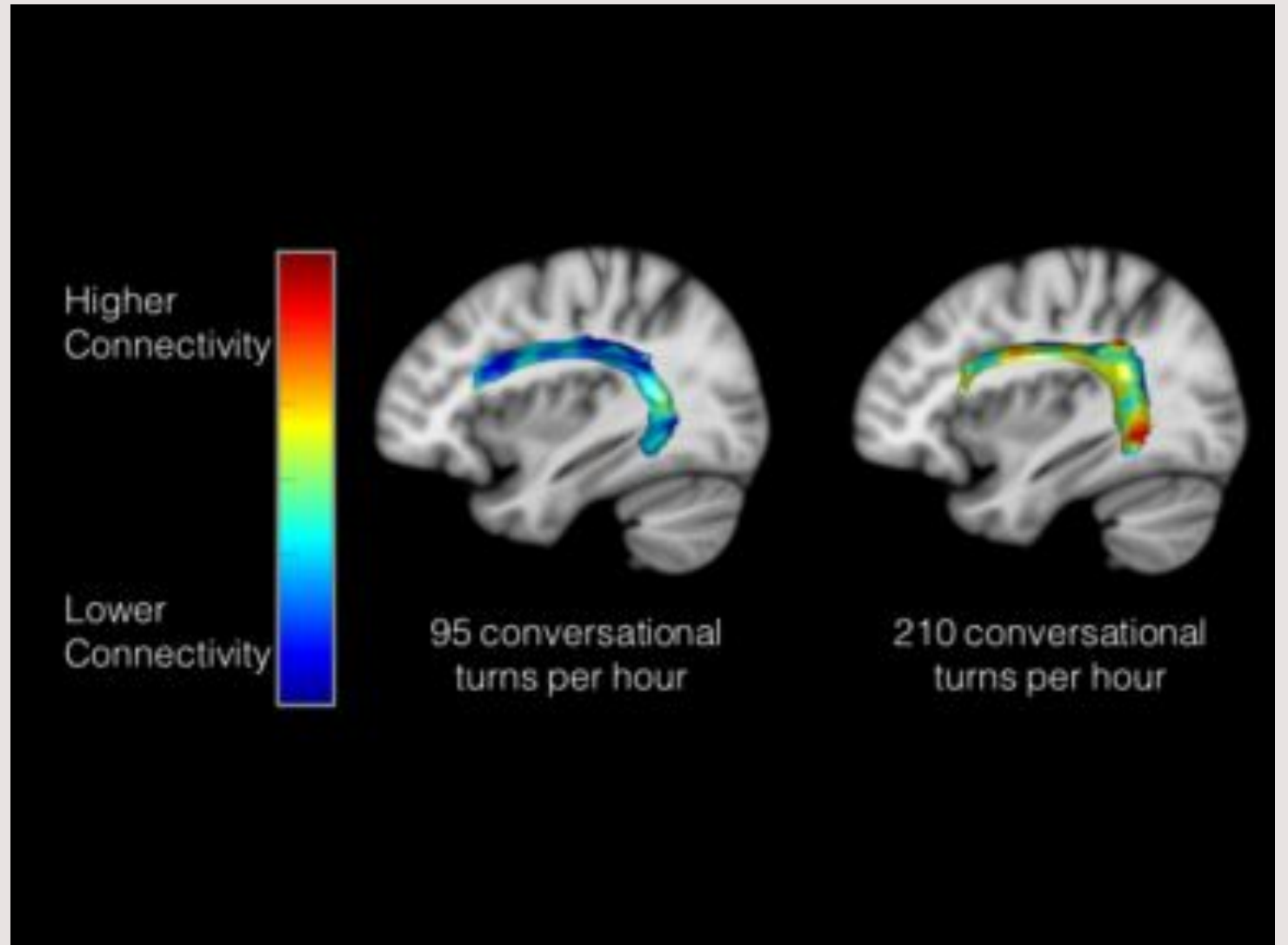


INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING & BRAIN SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON



# Results from MIT Lab

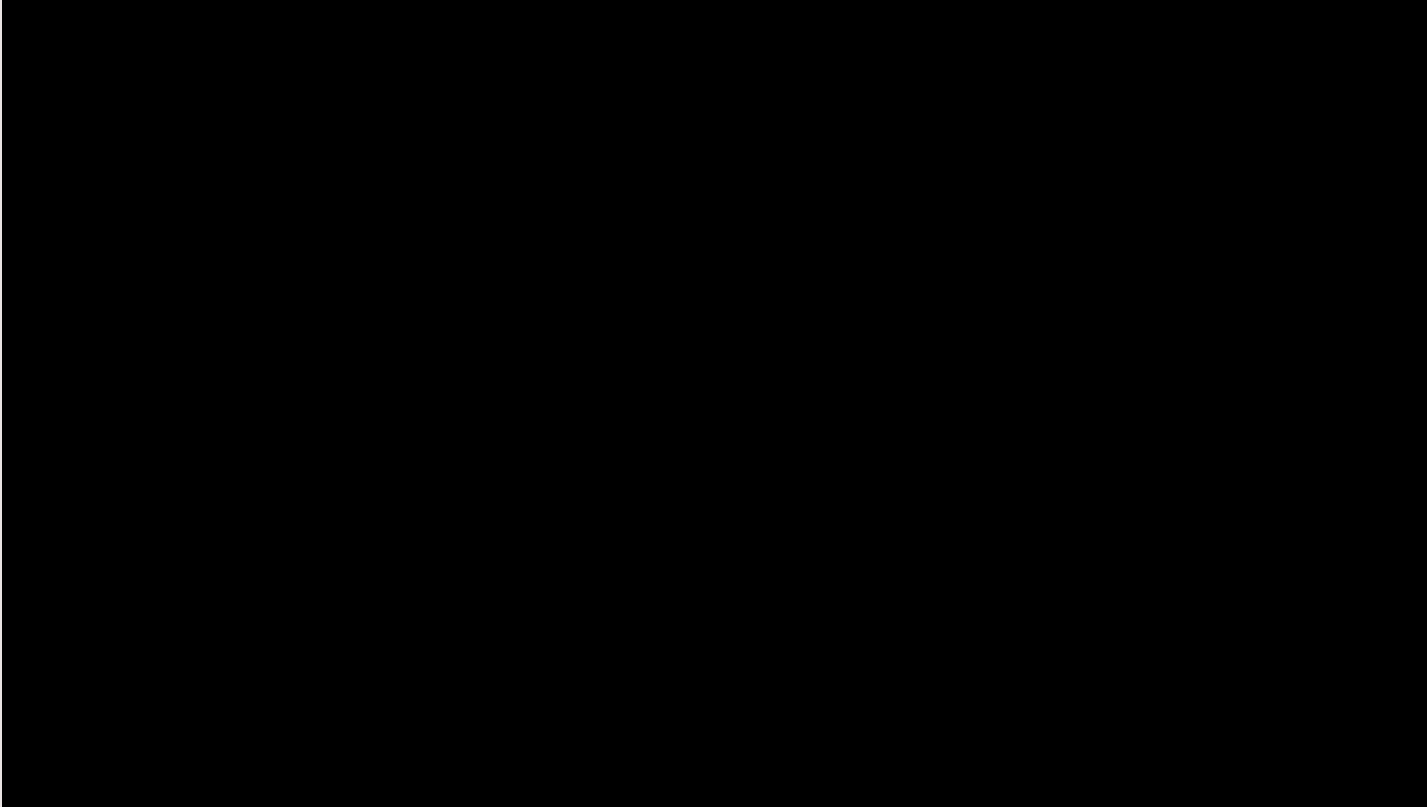
- “Increased activation in one area of the brain and increased connectivity between one region and another together suggest that when there’s more conversation.”



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# “The Conversational Turn”

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- The connection between conversational turns and the brain
- Beyond the 30 million word gap...
- Rachel Romeo at Harvard/MIT

# STUDY SHOWS CONVERSATIONAL TURNS LINKED TO BRAIN STRUCTURE

LENA BABY

Lena.org

More research from Jill Gilkerson... Longitudinal study and what do we do about it...?

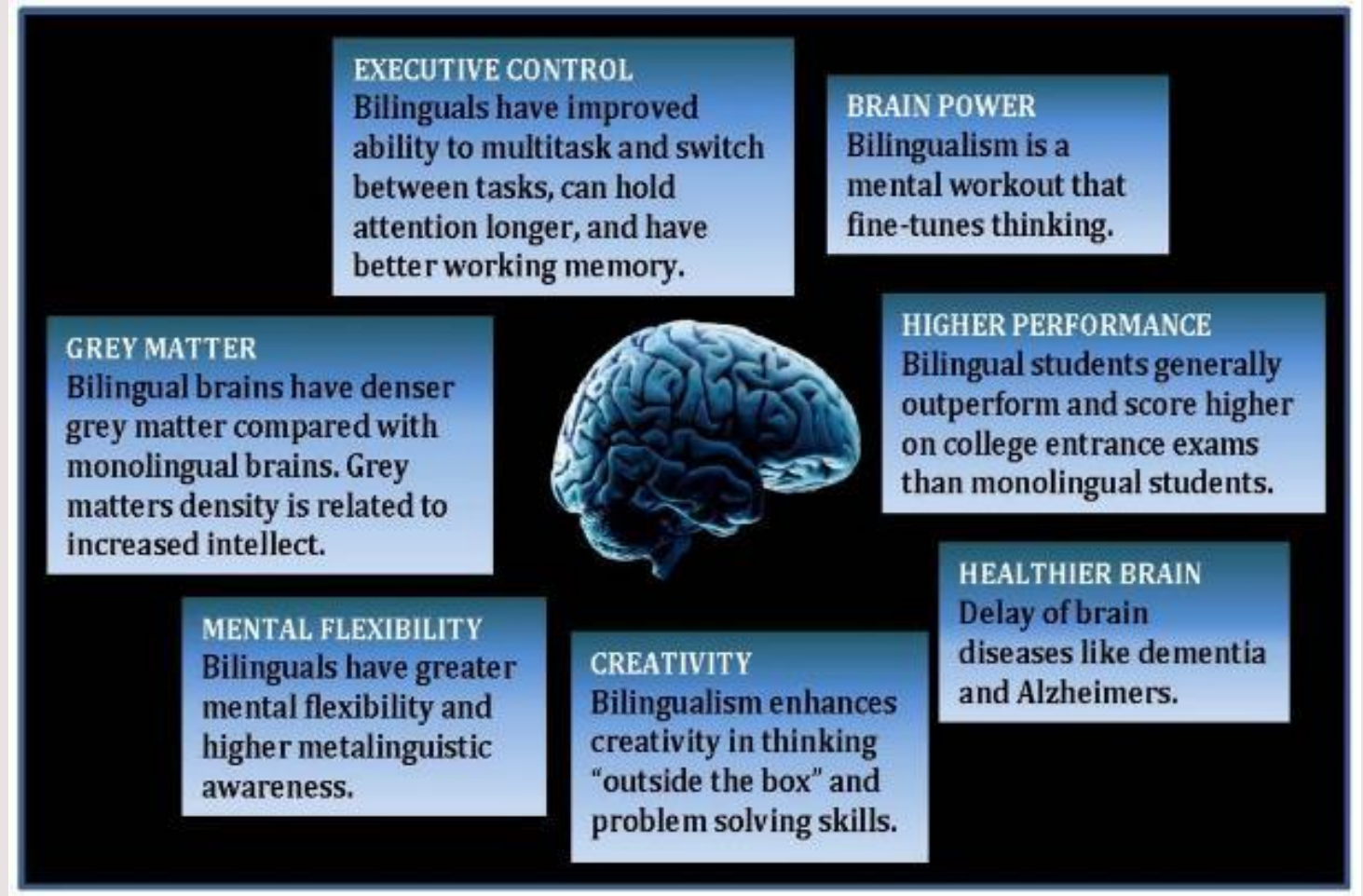
Comparison of Multilingual children and monolingual in terms of interactions in child care...Why



The first research showing a relationship between conversational turns and brain structure has just been published!

# BENEFITS of BILINGUALISM

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-speaking-multiple-languages-benefits-the-brain-mia-nacacmulli-review>



The infographic features a central image of a human brain in profile, rendered in a light blue color. Surrounding the brain are six text boxes, each with a title and a description of a benefit of bilingualism. The boxes are arranged in a circular pattern around the brain.

- EXECUTIVE CONTROL**  
Bilinguals have improved ability to multitask and switch between tasks, can hold attention longer, and have better working memory.
- BRAIN POWER**  
Bilingualism is a mental workout that fine-tunes thinking.
- HIGHER PERFORMANCE**  
Bilingual students generally outperform and score higher on college entrance exams than monolingual students.
- HEALTHIER BRAIN**  
Delay of brain diseases like dementia and Alzheimers.
- CREATIVITY**  
Bilingualism enhances creativity in thinking "outside the box" and problem solving skills.
- MENTAL FLEXIBILITY**  
Bilinguals have greater mental flexibility and higher metalinguistic awareness.
- GREY MATTER**  
Bilingual brains have denser grey matter compared with monolingual brains. Grey matters density is related to increased intellect.

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# Benefits of Multilingual Learning

“Children who are proficient in their home language are able to establish a strong cultural identity, to develop and sustain strong ties with their immediate and extended families, and to thrive in a global, multilingual world” (Espinoza 2006).

**Is this information your parents/families need?**

Espinoza, L. 2006, Challenging Common Myths About Young English Language

[fcd-us.org/resources/challenging-common-myths-about-young-english-language-learners](https://www.fcd-us.org/resources/challenging-common-myths-about-young-english-language-learners)

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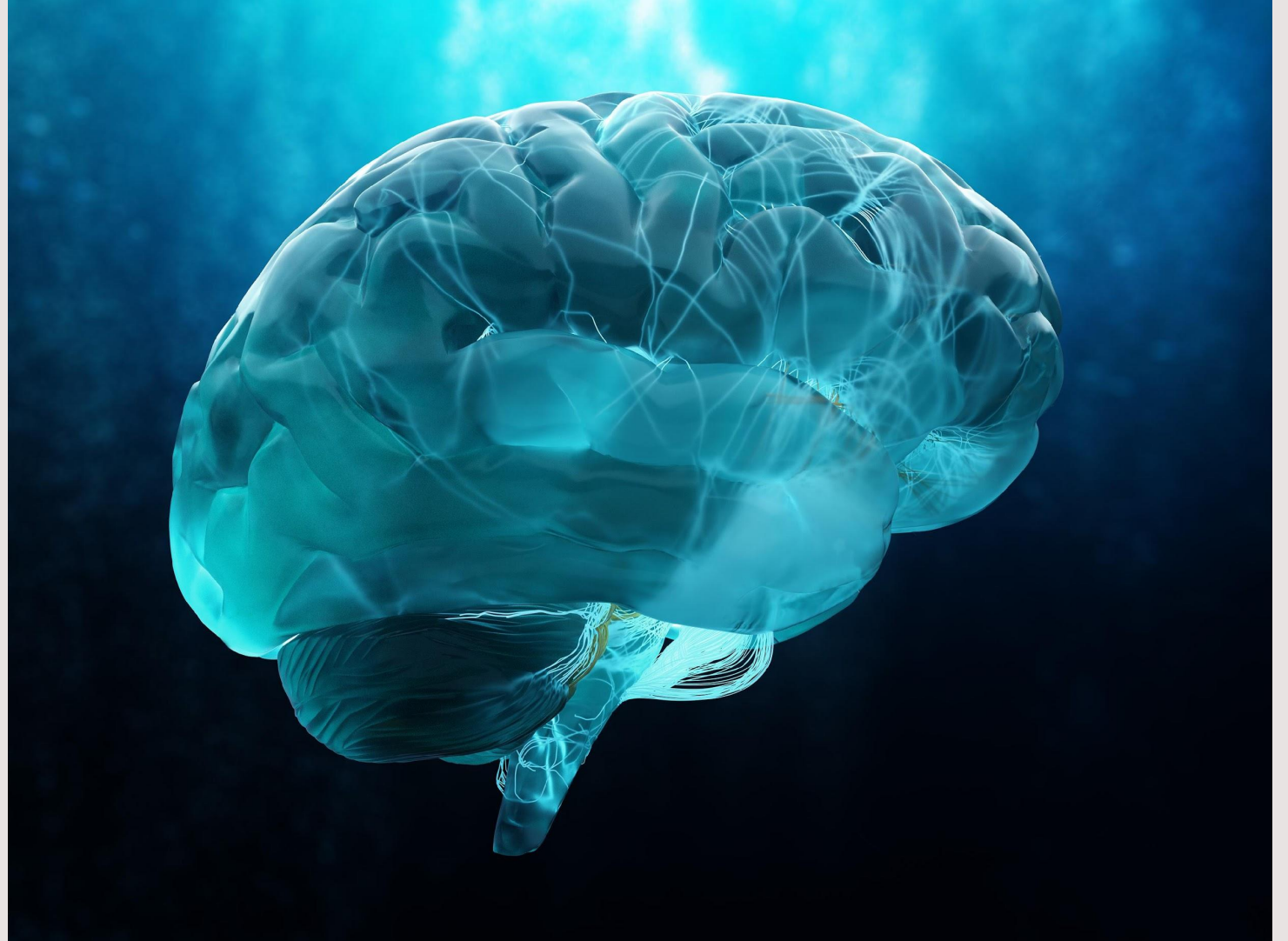
# Two Connected but Separate Systems

Consensus is that DLLs have two separate and connected language systems.

Transfer exists between the two: consistent on phonological awareness, mixed on vocabularies.

Transfer is influenced by children's dominant language and the structural overlap between the two languages.

- Hammer, C. S., Hoff, E., Uchikoshi, Y., Gillanders, C. & Castro, D. C. (2014). The Language and Literacy Development of Young Dual Language Learners: A Critical Review. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29, 715-733.



# Types, Stages, & Bilingual Processes of Learning Languages

## Part II



Think~ Pair ~Share



Think and list 5 things you know about learning a second language



Pair with your neighbor and discuss your lists



Share and review key concepts in large group

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# Types of Learners Described by Age of Exposure

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Simultaneous ~ Exposed to two or more languages from birth on...

Sequential ~ Exposed to only one language ("home language") from birth – L2<sup>nd</sup> later in early development (2-5 or later).



“ *It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.*

*Maya Angelou*

# Stages and Behaviors of Sequential Language Acquisition

Home Language Use: (Typically quite short)

Non-verbal Period: (Varies in length)

Telegraphic or Formulaic use: "What's up?",  
"I don't know"

Productive Language: Shift to novel utterances beyond a formula

- Tabors, P. O. 197, *One Child Two Languages*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing

# Learning Stages and Differences in 2nd Language Acquisition

Soyul is a sequential dual language learner (DLL) who learned her first language, Korean, from birth at home in interactions with parents and family. She is now attending a preschool with other children and her parents are excited she will learn English. They will continue to speak Korean at home so she continues to grow and develop language and literacy in her first language as well as her second.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRexjWUYyJE&t=3s>





# A Note about Vocabulary Learning in Simultaneous Learners from Birth from Sequential Learners

Many parents report that are concerned about delays in their child's learning of vocabulary in English and/or Spanish. Often, they think their child is delayed in language learning, yet it may be that they are not taking into consideration that the child is learning words in both languages not just one.

Conceptual scoring, which combines children's lexical knowledge across their two languages, may serve to equalize the demands of vocabulary tasks for monolingual and bilingual children.

However, current research supports we measure "total vocabulary" as a representative and reliable representation of vocabulary.

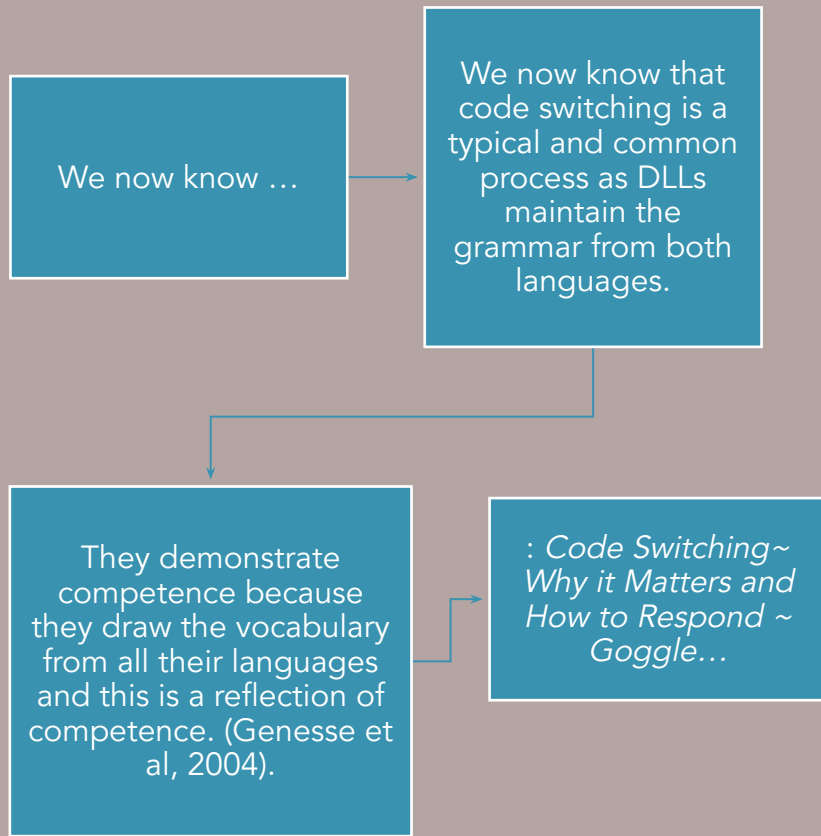
What Implications for Assessment? Count them all!

# What implications for Assessment?

Research provides examples of typical *processes* that can impact learning of second languages including:

- Silent period
- Language Loss" ... can be transitional period/inter-language wherein students may demonstrate semi-lingualism
- Reduced Exposure if English Only
- "Code switching" ... "Code mixing"
- Cross-linguistic Influence ... Transference
- Fossilization

Schiff-Meyers, 1992; Kayser, 1993; Roseberry-McKibbin, 1994; Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004



We used to think that code switching was a problem...mixing of languages showed children were confused or delayed...

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# Potential Impacts of Language Loss

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“When you loose a language, you lose a world” CM

Loss of positive effects of a first language development on second language learning

Loss of the cognitive benefits of bilingualism

Loss of family connections and social-emotional supports

Loss of cultural identity which may negatively impact self-esteem, when learning a second language means losing the first.

Reference: Wong Fillmore, L. (1991 Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 6, 323-346

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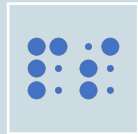
# In Summary



The development of DLLs is different from monolinguals' development. They have two separate language systems from very early in life; and the two languages influence and interact with each other.



Young children have the capacity to learn more than one language. It does not confuse them or hinder English language development.



Bilingualism has no inherent negative consequences for children's development. In fact, it may benefit young children, cognitively, linguistically, academically and socially.



Strong language skills in the first language will facilitate English language development for DLLs. And parents need this information to decide what languages their children will learn



*“To know a child, we must see that child through the lens of family, culture, relationships, language, learning environments, and experiences.”* Moore & Pérez-Méndez, 2021

- The observed characteristics ( language loss, silence, code switching, sound errors), when learning a second language were originally considered indicators of delay or disability and now are thought to be common variations of difference.
- Learning another language is marked by heterogeneity.
- Each child learn languages in the context of relationships, culture, and experiences.
- Exposure and use are key to learning languages



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# Socio-Cultural & Historic Considerations Influencing Learning of Languages

## Part III

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“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.” Maya Angelou

# FACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Language Justice  
Equity  
Inclusion

Hammond, Z., & Jackson, Y.  
(2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and Special Education*, 28(6) 351–359.

Boykin et al .,(2021)

## External Socio-Cultural Considerations

External factors that affect language learning include:

- Racism
- Stereotyping & Limited Expectations
- Discrimination
- Implicit bias
- Communication with native speakers
- Lack of identification with culture
- Limited familiarity with the educational system
- Status of student's culture in the eyes of others
- Extensive history misidentification of disability in special education

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# Internal Factors Influencing Language Learning

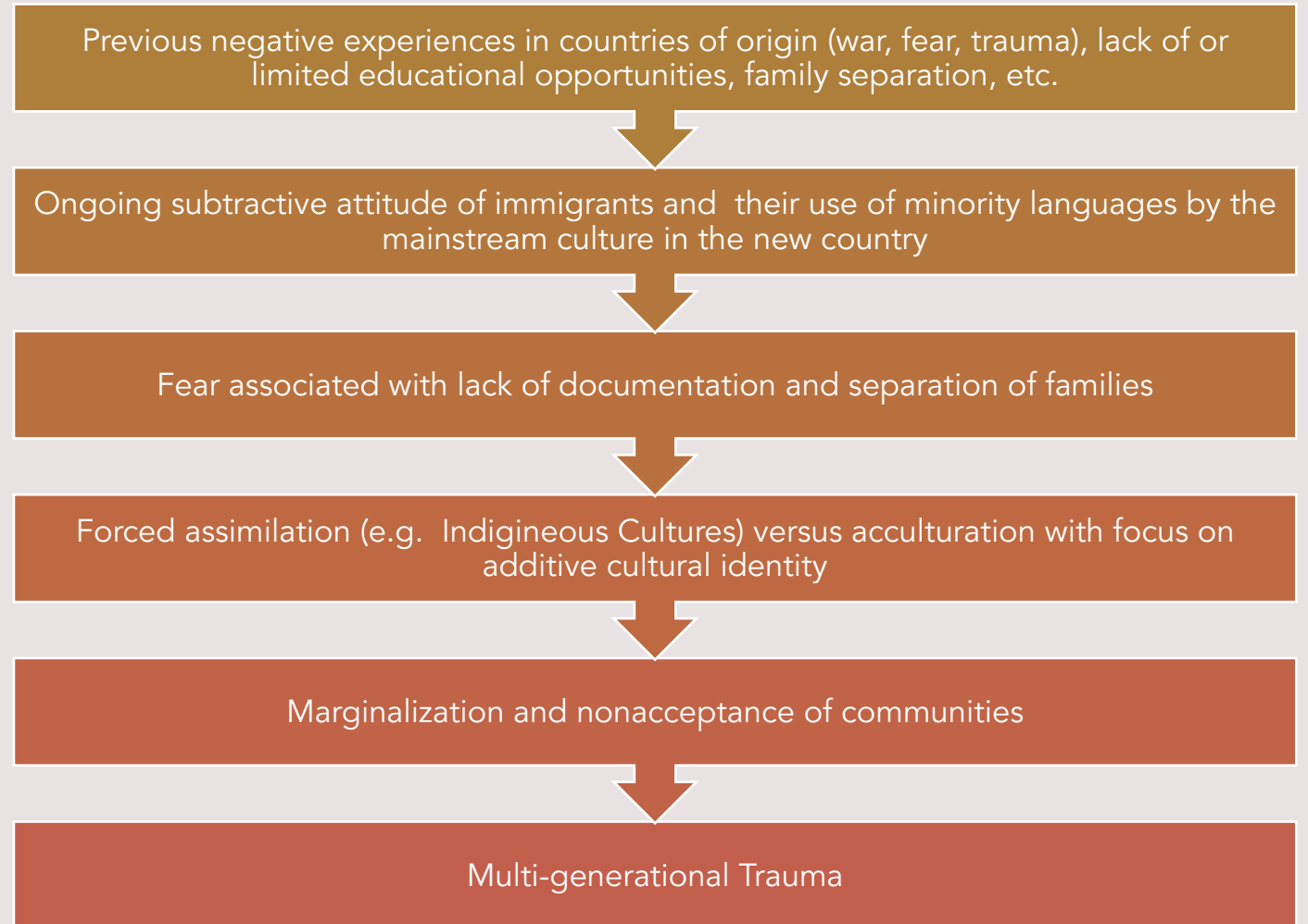
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- Motivation
  - Aptitude
  - Age of Exposure
  - Brain Development & Function
  - Ability to Process Information
-

# Additional Factors of Influence

Paradis, et al, M., (2022). *Dual language development and disorders* (Third Edition). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Sanchez, S. (1999). Learning from the stories of culturally and linguistically diverse families



# The Issue of Disparity Continues...

Disparity is also evident in seminal studies of Gillam and colleagues, (2005), revealing the significantly disproportionate rate of expulsion of African American male children in Pre-K classrooms attributed to negative teacher expectations and assumptions associated with race and behavior. More recent research (Artiles et al., 2016; Annamora et al., 2018) regarding the intersection of disability and racial/ethnic characteristics indicates the disproportionality persists. Research (Vining & Guiberson, 2021), also concluded that African American, Latinx and Indigenous children were also dramatically underrepresented in gifted education programs. This continuing history of misidentification can be attributed to the following factors:

- *Explicit or implicit bias and discrimination against any form of racial, ethnic cultural diversity or linguistic difference,*
- *Absence of foundational knowledge of socio-cultural and historical factors intersect to how children learn languages and the differences and heterogeneity of bilingual development and processes,*
- *Lack of appropriate non-English tools and the training to use the few tools that are available to assess children's language abilities or other errors in measurement*
- *Limited understanding that caregivers sometimes have developmental priorities for their children that are different, related to culture or personal perspectives.*

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# Equity

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- “All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that enable them to achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Advancing this right requires recognizing and dismantling the systems of bias that accord privilege to some and are unjust to others.”
  - A Position Statement of NAEYC, 2019. p5.
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# Assessment Practices PART IV

Assessment outcomes that value diversity, promote equity and inclusion, regardless of race, ethnicity, languages spoken, cultural, or negative assumptions are key. This presentation provides in-depth information that enable professionals to understand and adopt an evidence-based framework that supports movement away from a mindset of ‘difference as a deficit,’ to an increased understanding of historical, socio-cultural, and linguistic factors influencing development children in the context of their family.

**Reliable and Valid** assessment of each young child involves interpretation of developmental information from interviews, reports, observations, and interactions in the context of family, culture, and exposure and use of languages. Team members recognize that all children are not the same and that each child’s development is influenced by biological, neuro-maturational, environmental, sociocultural, and experiential factors in different ways. Understanding these factors of influence in relationship to socio cultural and linguistic diversity enables educators and specialists to:

- Apply a positive mindset, view of culture, and multi-lingual capacity as *foundational assets*
- Recognize and value family engagement as critical to the process, build trust, collaborate with the family, and develop awareness of their own and the family’s culture, and perspectives, prior experiences, expectations, and belief systems, and how these variables influence observations, interpretations of behaviors, and interactions with the child and family What do you bring to the interaction?
- Consider all options for optimal achievement of a child’s growth and learning by eliminating negative bias and supporting access to equitable and inclusive learning opportunities while valuing the family’s cultural, linguistic, socio-cultural background and their priorities and goals they have for their child.

Teachers and educators who use current research about brain development in young children and language learning, provide ongoing assessment and documentation of growth, and collaborate with families can make informed decisions about their children

Educators and professionals who have adopted a positive & open mindset and are familiar with all influencing factors that could be at play when assessing a child's growth and development

Educators and specialists who link authentic assessments to intervention and supports, yet also provide information about community resources, education programs and supports (example: "I have worked with other parents in your situation who say they benefited



CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND TEAMS NEED ...SPECIALISTS WHO ADOPT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, ANTI-BIASED, ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES & PROCESSES

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# Principles of Assessment

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Would you agree that every child and family needs an assessment that is:

- Family-centered
- Culturally relevant and responsive
- Individualized
- Authentic, ecological, (E.g. .across settings)
- Reliable and valid
- Effective in determining “next steps” for the child, strategies for teachers, family, and other care providers and identifying resources as needed



## Pre-Assessment: Setting the Stage

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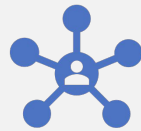
- Arrange for effective use of a Cultural Mediator, Interpreter or Family School Liaison who speaks the language of the family and understands the family's cultural perspectives
- Conversations with family begins with the parent talking and you listening. Begin with a strengths-based conversation about who their child is, something their child loves to do and learn more about the family as the story unfolds.,( Ethnographic interviewing, Strengths-based Inquiry or other models for effective listening and establishing trust).
- Clarify and discuss expectations of the family. Share information about the assessment or evaluation and procedural safeguards. Share a visual or brief booklet about the process.( What it looks like in your setting)
- Provides necessary information for families about language learning and resources Families need information so they can make informed decisions about their child.
- Intentionally choose to adopt positive assumptions that acknowledges the family as the expert about their child and they want what is best for their child. Discuss options and choices that respect the family's role as key decision-maker for their child ( Brazelton & Sparrow (2001).Touchpoints

# Language Environment

~ How will you collect information about understanding and use?



It is critical to understand the child's language learning history and the current language learning environment to better discern competency in first and second languages, and if there is simply a language difference or a true developmental language challenge.



*Do you use an interpreter, mediator or family school liaison, bilingual professional, and/or cultural to build trust and comfort with the family when linguistic diversity, or preferred language of the family is different than English?*



On many teams, these bilingual professionals gather and share information about the assessment process, clarify family expectations, answer questions, and share this information with the team. Briefing, Assessment Interaction followed by Debriefing Meetings.

# Effective Preparation and Use of Cultural Mediators, Interpreters, & Translators





## Establishing Trust

By gathering enough information to understand the full picture of a child's overall language background **or language environment**, specialists and teachers can put together the puzzle of their language knowledge and use, record this information for authentic assessment, identify next steps with individualized planning to support progress and ongoing growth in both languages.

Moore, S & Pérez Méndez.  
(2005) *Beyond Words: Effective Use of Cultural Mediators, Interpreters & Translators*, Boulder, Co: Landlocked Films. [www.landlockedfilms.com](http://www.landlockedfilms.com)



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# Language Environment

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*How can you learn about language history and current exposure to languages within varying social contexts and the child's current use of languages?*

*How do you currently obtain this information? Could your process improve, to improve trust and develop a relationship with the family?*

Many teams gather this information beforehand to better prepare for the assessment through parent report, teacher report, observations of the child across settings, use of tools such as I-TALK or an ethnographic, and an open-ended interview focused on the families' story.

It is critical to assess understanding and use of all languages the child has been exposed to fully understand their abilities and development in each.

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# Understanding the Language Environment: History & Observations

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What are language and literacy practices in the home ( reading routines, library visits, coloring and writing opportunities)?

What languages is used during activities /play ?

Family assumptions, questions and/or concerns about language learning?

When a child is exposed to more than one language, you need to know:

- How much exposure has the child had to each language?
- How old was the child when a second language was introduced?
- How much time does the child use the home language?
- How much time does the child use English (if at all)?
- Which language does the child prefer to use when talking to parents or other family members, playing with friends or siblings, at home, school or at childcare?

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Review I-TALK from BESA. For additional questions comparing use across settings

# Factors of Influence

Home Language

Age of exposure and whether it was simultaneous or sequential

Amount of exposure to languages

Patterns observed in both languages

Language History including current use

Proficiency level in each language

Presence of bilingual processes, including code switching and language loss during transition

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# Ways to Gather & Share Information

Home visits

Observations across settings, including interactions with peers

Surveys focused on language background and current status of language proficiency in both languages

Phone interviews by a cultural mediator

Video-tape parent/child or sibling/child play interactions or routines to share with team

Ethnographic interviews as found in *Pathways: A Child's Journey* (Moore, et al 2011)

Classroom teacher reports I-TALK BESA-Brookes

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# Ask the Experts...

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“My children, 5-year-old Marie and 4-year-old Marc, speak English to each other. I think this is because they speak it at school. At home we speak Italian and sometimes Spanish. My husband speaks only Spanish to the children and makes them answer him in Spanish. We don’t want to lose the connection to language and culture, or they won’t be able to talk to their grandparents or cousins.” Luna (2015)

These children are typical of the 20% or above of children in America under the age of 6 who live in a household in which no one over age 13 speaks English as their first language. USCB (2013)

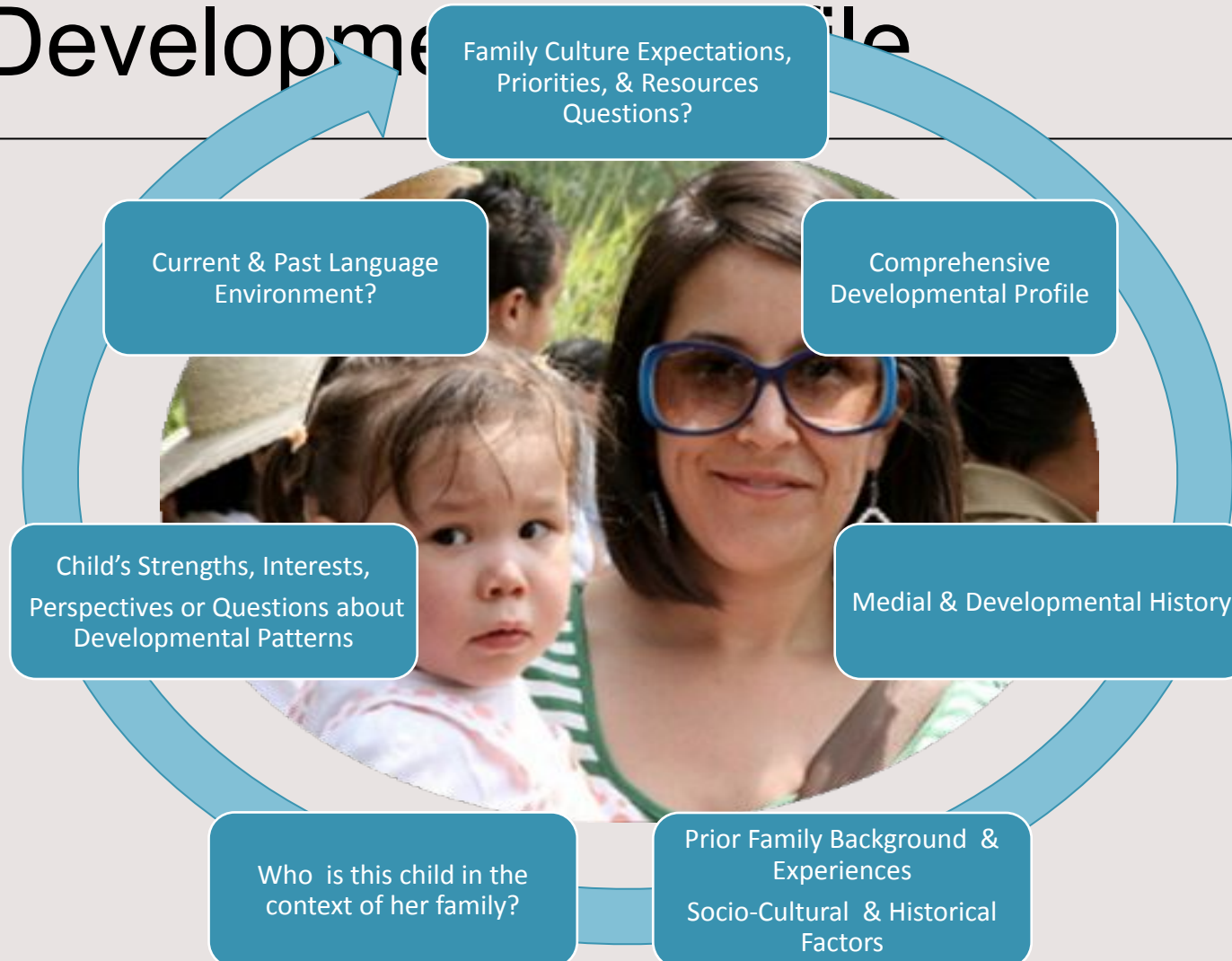
Luna, S. (2015). What parents have to teach us about their dual language children? *Young Children*, 20(15) <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2015/what-parents-have-teach-us-about-their-dual-language-children>

United States Census Bureau, 2013





# Information Inform Comprehensive Developmental Profile



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# Meta-Analysis of Diagnostic Accuracy

"First and foremost, our findings show that no single measure stands out as the optimal method for identifying in bilingual Spanish-English children. At best the accuracy metrics for these measures fall in the suggestive range, meaning that every measure would need to be supplemented by additional, and unspecified information in order to identify children as language impaired or demonstrating typical language development." (Dollaghan & Horner, 2011)

Dollaghan, C. A., & Horner, E.A. (2011). Bilingual language assessment: A meta-Analysis of Diagnostic Accuracy. *Journal of Speech Language Hearing Research, 54*(4) 1077-1088.

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# Update on Diagnostic Accuracy of Measurements in Assessment

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A current review (2019) of over 22 articles reporting on results of diagnostic accuracy since 2011, showed alignment with current thinking that multiple measures increase accuracy and the possibility of variation within an assessment protocol. There were several index tests that used a composite of direct and indirect measures. “Despite these improvements, potential bias does still appear in the diagnostic tools, as well as in the existing research.” Based on the range of sensitivity and specificity in the data and the lack of high-quality cross-sectional studies, there still appears to be insufficient evidence to support a gold standard tool for diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder in bilingual children.

Brinson, D., Cook, H., & Wellons, R. (2019, November 21-23). A systematic review of diagnostic accuracy for identifying developmental language disorder in bilingual children. [Handout] ASHA Convention, Orlando FL.

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# Assessment Information About Both Languages Is Necessary, But Not Sufficient

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Therefore, assessment in only one language is not likely to be representative of the child's abilities. Assessment information using both languages is necessary.

"When assessing bilingual children for DLD, a combination of direct (normative information in each language, language sample analysis, and dynamic assessment) and indirect (interviews, observation, and questionnaires) measures are needed to complete a [comprehensive] and valid assessment."

(Kohnert, 2013, p. 466)

Kohnert, K. (2013). *Language disorders in bilingual children and adults*. San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing.

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# Measures of Language Learning

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A recent study by Lazewnik, et al (2019), explored two identifiers of LI for Spanish-English DLLs and found the BESA, and language sample analysis (MLU in morphemes) as the most reliable identifiers of language impairment. Influencing assessment methodology reviewed by the authors included:

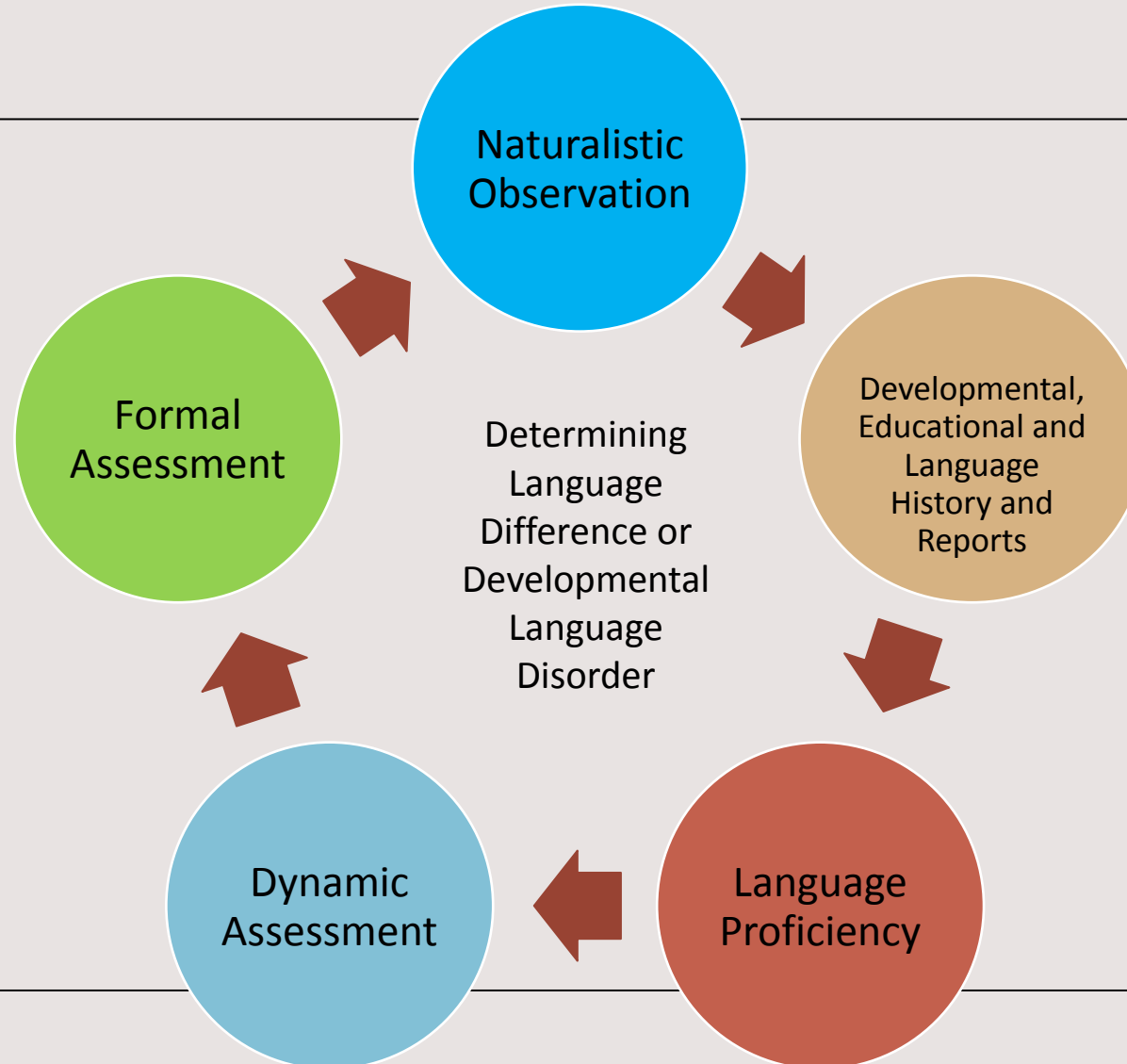
- Parent Interview
- Language sampling
- Non-word repetition
- Dynamic Assessment
- Standardized assessments (BESA)

Again, no one assessment procedure was identified as the gold standard and multi-dimensional measures are recommended.

# Multidimensional Framework for Assessment

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# Interpreting Assessment Results

## Caution!

## Measurement Error

When bilingual children's performance on standardized language tests is compared to norms for monolingual children, bilingual children tend to perform below average, even in their stronger language. This may occur because their language experience and knowledge are distributed across two languages.

Example: Vocabulary scores in each language alone does not represent the total of semantic knowledge.

Kohnert, K. (2013). *Language disorders in bilingual children and adults*. San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing.

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# Results

To gain a full picture, , and guard against measurement error, the assessment should include multiple sources of data that are taken from direct observation, reports from classroom teachers and childcare providers, assessment in the home, and other authentic measures as appropriate:

- Authentic assessment with peers
- Formal or informal language sample analysis in both languages
- Use of cultural mediator, interpreter or parent school liaisons



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# Parent Interactions

*What can you learn from the exchange?*

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*Will it help you determine level of language proficiency in home language?*

*How will it help you learn more about a child?*

Watch this interaction with Mia playing with animals with her mother.

- What does it tell you about her language and her relationship with her mother?
- What else could you learn if her mother read her a familiar story?

Part of a reliable and valid assessment will be to have a video, that reflects an actual parent child interaction.

# A TPBA Session: Parent Child Interaction

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What are you learning about Mia as you watch her play with her mother?

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Child Find Team- Adams 14 School District.

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<https://youtu.be/Bw0cCnOrG9w>

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# Scenario: Sung Bin

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Partner up for this activity.

- Pre-assessment Information I will answer question about language and discuss any other information your team wants about Sung Bin's background as you plan for this assessment.
- What are you thinking about Sung Bin's profile of development, especially about his language abilities based on parental report and descriptions of interactions with his mother? Watch him in the video interact with his father. What did you learn given his age and experience?
- Do you agree with this team's observations and results as described? Any other ideas

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# Sung Bin's Pathways (TBPA) Assessment Session

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University of Colorado at Boulder, CLC, Susan M. Moore

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDs8ZIU7pE>

Handout #4



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# Parent and Child Interaction

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*Consider: Would your team benefit from observing parent child interaction as part of your assessment?*

- Take video to capture short snippets of languages used in play so you can use the examples in follow-up discussions
- Request that parents bring in a favorite video of their child, perhaps from a birthday party or just playing with siblings or friends
- Ask parents to bring a quick video of a behavior of concern to the assessment (e.g. feeding, talking, walking or other behaviors)
- Record a language sample for analysis in both languages during play or story retelling

Note: Please seek parental consent prior to taking video.

# Dynamic Assessment

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Dynamic Assessment, an alternative approach to the standardized diagnostic assessment of young children. Dynamic Assessment helps professionals

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“distinguish between a language difference and a developmental language disorder (DLD), especially for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.”

- ❖ Children who can make significant changes in short term teaching sessions likely have a language difference.
- ❖ Modifiability is key
- ❖ Children who are unable to make these changes likely have a language impairment.
- ❖ Results can have direct implications for intervention by examining the child's response to a mediated learning experience.

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Peña, E., & Litz, C. (1996). Dynamic assessment, the model, its relevance as a non-biased approach, and its application to Latino American preschool children. *Language Speech and Hearing in the Schools*, 27(4), 367-372. .

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# Dynamic Assessment.

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This model is adaptable for use by all members of the transdisciplinary team. Specific adaptation as a diagnostic measure for team members working with multilingual preschool children has been successful in differentiating language differences from developmental language disorders.

TEST > TEACH > RETEST

The goal is not to... “teach the test”  
but to test, teach and retest!

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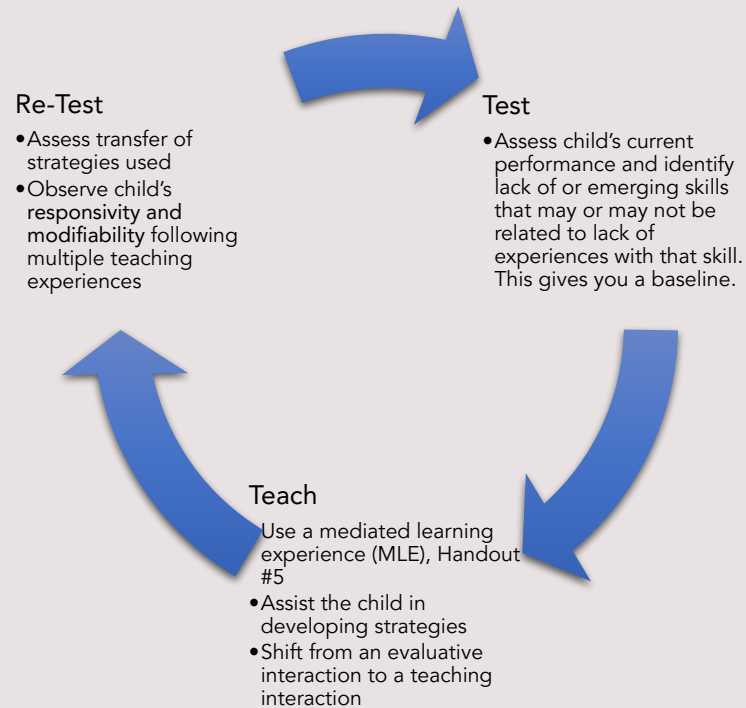
# Focus On How a Child Learns

Why focus on dynamic, mediated learning experiences?

, Dynamic Assessment:

- Explores the learning potential of a student
- Enables a deep understanding of cognitive processes and the components of executive function
- Emphasizes the learning process and is an indicator of future learning outcomes
- Is based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
- Is effective in distinguishing between language difference versus Developmental Language Disorders and is useful during tiered instruction (MTSS) to determine strategies for intervention when a child is struggling or when systematic instruction may be needed.

# Framework for Dynamic Assessment



# Hierarchy of Cues...Scaffolds

Model or provide examples of the concept or meaning of the targeted concept or word.

Use expansions of the students' statements to affirm learning.

Visual/Verbal/Phonemic cues to assist in word retrieval.

Require restatement of directions.

- ☐ Shorten directions.
- ☐ Repetition.
- ☐ Pair pictures and manipulatives with directions or explanations.
- ☐ Simplify questions posed to child.
- ☐ Encourage elaboration by asking open or choice questions.

Is New learning retained?  
What strategies support learning?  
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# Relationship to MTSS

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The child's ability to learn, often referred to as *modifiability*, can be an indicator of the level of intensity of intervention likely needed for academic success. The information about modifiability gathered through dynamic assessment, in conjunction with static, pretest, or post test information, can provide important details about the current performance and future instructional needs of individual children.

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## Relationship to MTSS, cont.

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This assessment information is both sensitive to any current needs a student might have (e.g., improving English language proficiency) and the likelihood that the child make adequate progress in universal instruction and common outcomes. Through dynamic assessment, children with language intervention needs can potentially be identified earlier and receive targeted supports when they are struggling, or systematic individualized instruction as needed.

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etersen, D. B., Chanthongthip, H., Ukrainetz, T. A., Spencer, T. D., & Steeve, R. W. (2017). Dynamic assessment of narratives: Efficient, accurate identification of language impairment in bilingual students. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 60(4), 983–998.

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# Applicability

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- Earlier models of Dynamic Assessment occurred over longer periods of time (Response to Intervention frameworks). New research is indicating that the modifiability identified in a single assessment is a valid data point to assist in determining a difference versus a disorder.
- Dynamic Assessment is a strengths-based paradigm in focusing on what supports the child can use to learn new information versus what the child does not know at any point in time.
- Many qualitative behaviors or prompts, are currently noted by assessment teams during the administration of the TBPA-2. These serve to inform results about what is helpful to the child in learning and help distinguish from possible lack of opportunity versus impairment or disability.

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# Considerations of Dynamic Assessment

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- ❑ Dynamic Assessment paradigms can be completed in any language. It's about how a child learns, not what a child knows.
- ❑ Typical language learners will demonstrate the ability to learn, retain, and transfer new information, regardless of language used.
- ❑ Those with possible language impairment will demonstrate little to no transfer and may appear to have processing delays.

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# Modifiability

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It is important when utilizing a DA framework that observations and data be collected on responsiveness and modifiability or how a child learns.

Planning- Student utilizes a strategy to engage or complete task.

Self-Regulation- Student demonstrates ability to attend and utilizes strategies to obtain help as needed.

Motivation- Student shows enthusiasm for acquiring new skill.

Interaction with Adults- Student seeks help from adult and changes response based on adult cues and interaction.

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# Considerations with ML Populations

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- ❑ If completing Dynamic Assessment in English, the child must have Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in English. If not, select target tasks that are within age level expectation and stage of second language acquisition.
- ❑ You want to engage the child in novel learning but doing so in the language that is accessible to the child (i.e., basic analogies or fast mapping of new vocabulary in context).

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# Post Assessment and Follow Up

## Continuing the Conversation

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# Body of Evidence

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- Formal assessment teams often struggle with determination of eligibility for special education services when evaluating young DLLs who do not show significant patterns of developmental delay in domains besides language.
  - A thoughtful analysis and discussion of all influencing factors, including reported and observed abilities and concerns during the pre-assessment and assessment phases of the process, does not always result in a clear identification of a disability for Part C or Part B of IDEA.
  - Depending upon the age of the child, it is important to systematically review eligibility criteria of disability categories to assure that sufficient documentation or body of evidence meets specific definitions.
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# Determination of Eligibility under IDEA

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- Part B Definition: The term “child with a disability” for children aged 3 through 9 may include a child—
  - Experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication development; social or emotional development; or adaptive development; and
  - Who needs special education and related services.
- A child shall not be determined to have a disability if the determinant factor for that determination is:
  - Lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math or limited English proficiency

Guidelines for Identifying Young Children with Special Needs

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# In Summary

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Desired outcomes for assessments include:

- Completion of a comprehensive developmental profile of the child assessed, including strengths and areas for growth with a plan for next steps, strategies and resources
- Successful parent engagement in all phases of the process resulting in family understanding and satisfaction with the process and outcomes
- Determination of eligibility as appropriate with accurate documentation and a transition to services including recommended strategies to support learning
- Appropriate referrals and sharing of resources as needed to support the child's continued learning of languages

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*What do teams do when the child is not deemed eligible for special education services?*

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Colorado UPK may be an option and availability pending criteria. Dual language preschool and multilingual programs at the preschool level and childcare centers are increasing in number given populations served. Many teams and programs and centers have collected brochures, flyers, data and written information about community resources, offerings, and programs that can support children who may not be identified with a disability for special education services yet could benefit from access to learning opportunities.

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# Alternative Supports and Services

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- Community cultural centers and/or groups
- Private church-based preschools with scholarships
- Museum or Library programs (free days)
- Community programs such as Food Banks, Health Clinics, CCAP, or other social programs or networks as needed
- Community parent education and support programs (LENA START, Parent Resource Centers, Library resources, El Grupo Vida)
- Community language learning opportunities or school-based programs for children and adults' learning of languages (e.g. Adult ESL classes; Intercambio de Comunidades)

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# Determinations of “Next Steps”

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- Strengths-based...What does child do well? What does the child like to do?
  - How do they learn? What supports will promote learning
  - What resources are needed for this family to access their choice?
  - Open discussions and collaboration with families as they discover alternatives and what fits
- recognizes and respects family as the key decision maker for next steps!

- “The end is the beginning...” Respect Diversity, Promote Equity & Value Inclusion

Thank you for your attention.

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