

FACTS and TIPS

Young Dual Language Learners (Birth through 5 years)



QUICK OVERVIEW of FACTS & TIPS Series

RATIONALE—the *WHY* of the Series

1) Rising Numbers

- The population of children who are learning English as another language is growing at a much faster rate than that of native English-speakers (Flynn & Hill, 2005; García & Kleigfen, 2010).
- In 2006, 24% of the babies born in the United States had a mother who reported a home language other than English being spoken (García & Frede, 2010).
- In 2009, 30% of the children enrolled in Head Start programs nationwide and 22.5% of the children enrolled in Wisconsin were children who are learning a home language other than English (Office of Head Start Program Information Report, 2009-10).
- The number of PreK-12 students who are learning English as another language increased by 100-200% in Wisconsin between 1997-98 and 2007-08 (NCELA, 2010).



2) Educational Disparity

- Children who are acquiring English as another language lag behind their native English-speaking peers in academic achievement beginning in preschool and extending throughout high school (Espinosa, 2010; García & Frede, 2010; García & Kleigfen, 2010).
- Contributing factors for the achievement gap include low socio-economic background, limited access to and/or under-utilization of preschool programs, and a lack of effective preschool programming for dual language learners (Castro, et al, 2010; Espinosa, 2008, 2010; García & Frede, 2010).
- Studies show that placing 3-4 year-olds who are dual language learners in English-only programs without home language support often have long term negative consequences--emotionally, socially, and academically (August & Shanahan, 2008; Espinosa, 2008; Nemeth, 2009).
- Children who are young dual language learners need *additional* support in *both* languages to remain on par academically with their native English-speaking peers (August & Shanahan, 2008).



3) Lack of Available Information, Resources, and Training

- Early childhood programs often lack the necessary information, resources, and training to effectively assess and teach our youngest dual language learners (Espinosa, 2010; García & Frede, 2010; García & Kleigfen, 2010).
- Lack of information about dual language learning results in misinformation to parents and caregivers about home language use—often to the social, emotional, academic, and linguistic detriment of the child and family.



- Both over-referrals and under-referrals of dual language learners to special education occur due to lack of information and training, preventing families from obtaining appropriate services for their children.
- Practitioners often lack training in effective strategies for supporting children’s home language development—whether they do or do not speak the children’s home language.
- Programs lack knowledge and training in using necessary language supports when instructing in English. Without such supports, young dual language learners often fall behind academically, leading to unnecessary special education referrals and to the ever-widening achievement gap.
- Programs struggle to obtain and effectively use interpreters for family visits, children’s learning activities, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings, and therapy interventions.



PURPOSE-- the *WHAT of the Series*

- To provide early childhood programs, practitioners, and professional development trainers with quick and easy access to research-based information, resources, and practical strategies for meeting the needs of young dual language learners and their families.
- To create a “common language and common understanding base” among programs and practitioners in Wisconsin so that services can be delivered to young dual language learners and their families in a linguistically and culturally responsive manner.
- To *briefly highlight* what practitioners need to know about working with young dual language learners and their families. Learning/training modules will be developed to provide more in-depth knowledge and application strategies for these deeply complex topic areas.

INTENDED AUDIENCE—the *WHO of the Series*

- Early childhood programs and practitioners serving children birth-5 years, including those who work in Family Child Care, Center-Based Child Care, Early Head Start, Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education, Preschools, and 4 Year-Old Kindergarten.
- Early childhood program managers, professional development trainers, family outreach workers, speech/language clinicians, social workers, school psychologists, physical and occupational therapists, medical professionals, and agency staff that support children and families may also find the information and practices useful.

DOCUMENT CONTENT--the *HOW of the Series*

- **FACTS & TIPS** are comprised of a series of downloadable documents based on broad topic areas related to culture, language development, culturally and linguistically responsive assessment and instructional practices, language use, and interpreters.
- Each single two-sided downloadable document contains 3 research-based informational bullets or “facts” on a given topic followed by tips for instruction and connecting with families and a hyperlink to references and resources.
- **FACTS & TIPS** will be posted on the Wisconsin Collaborating Partners website for programs, practitioners, and professional development trainers to download and use whenever needed.



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