



POLICY BRIEF IMPROVING TEACHER PREPARATION TO SUPPORT CALIFORNIA'S DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Executive Summary

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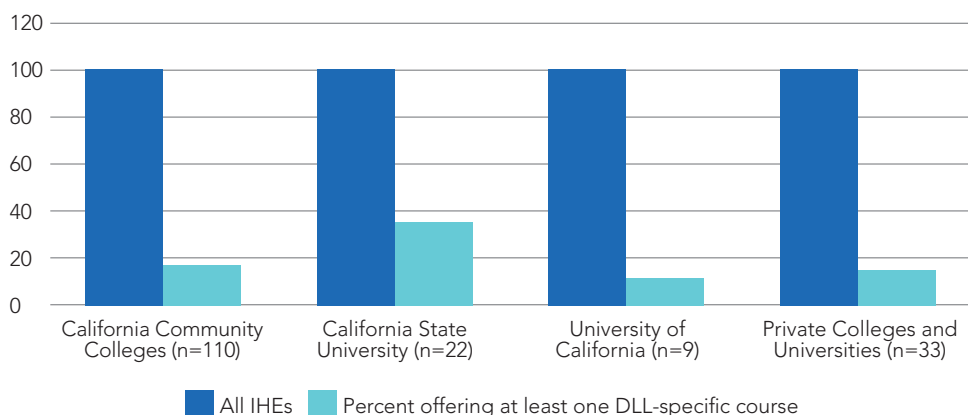
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Young children exposed to two or more languages simultaneously or young children who learn a second language while continuing to develop their first are known as Dual Language Learners (DLLs). **DLLs, who make up sixty percent of children ages birth to five in California, possess the natural advantage of being able to acquire native-level fluency in both English and another language, if they are provided with the right support.** However, California's Early Learning teachers are not currently required to receive preparation to support DLLs. As a result, these children may enter kindergarten without the skills needed to succeed and lose the opportunity to develop a strong foundation in their home language.

"If I was able to learn and have training (in how to support DLLs), my service would be more beneficial to the student population." –Faculty, Four-Year University

FEW CALIFORNIA INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION (IHEs) OFFER AT LEAST ONE DLL-SPECIFIC COURSE



RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPAND DLL-SPECIFIC TEACHER PREPARATION IN CALIFORNIA



Ensure that competency in serving DLLs is included in the Child Development Permit: To support this effort, the coursework required in Early Learning college programs should be revised to include content on DLLs. Additionally, a bilingual authorization should be developed to accompany the Child Development Permit.

"I would like to embrace dual language, but English is my native language. I'm lacking materials and resources... there's no formal class that shows me how to teach or how to implement this."

–Early Learning teacher

Increase the capacity of Institutions of Higher Education to provide training in best practices for serving DLLs: Adequately fund policy initiatives, such as demonstration projects to train and build the DLL capacity of faculty at colleges and universities, and a clearinghouse of curated resources for university and college faculty, program administrators, and practitioners.

"California is a diverse state. Many children are DLL students...I believe both embedded information in current courses as well as standalone courses are required to fully serve the needs of the community."

–Faculty, Two-Year College

Provide professional development opportunities for the current workforce to develop their skills in serving DLLs: Increase and sustain funding for professional development focused on helping Early Learning teachers serve DLLs. Consider dedicating a portion of AB 212 funds for DLL-specific professional development and fund apprenticeship initiatives to build DLL-specific teaching capacity.

Ensure that the needs of DLLs and their families are represented in the Governor's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: Include Early Learning DLL experts and provide opportunities for meaningful DLL parent engagement when developing the Master Plan. The Master Plan should provide a mechanism to adequately fund policy initiatives on higher program standards, teacher preparation, ongoing professional development, and compensation.



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