



An Innovative Approach to Identifying Dual Language Learners (DLLs)

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the development and implementation of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1363](#) in California as a tool for potential replication beyond our state. AB 1363 represents a significant milestone for California by establishing it as the first state in the nation to implement a uniform, asset-based process in state preschool programs for identifying Dual Language Learners (DLLs), children who have a home language other than English.

The bill, authored by California Assemblymember Luz Rivas and signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2021, has played a crucial role in ensuring DLL children in state preschool programs receive the necessary support to embrace their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and become bilingual and biliterate in English and their home language. This report outlines the background, development process, success, implementation, and its potential as a model for other states.

Background: The Need for AB 1363

California is home to the largest population of DLLs in the nation, and DLLs represent nearly 60% of children, birth to age 5, in California. Despite this, DLLs in California face challenges in accessing quality education that supported their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, leading to negative implications for their long-term academic success, including high school and college completion rates. In addition, before the enactment of AB 1363, there was no systematic way of [identifying DLLs](#). Many DLLs were not identified, leading to a lack of reliable data about them, and as a result, a lack of necessary supports such as bilingual staff and professional development for teachers and administrators.

Background: The Need for AB 1363 (cont.)

At the end of 2020, California released a 10-year roadmap for improving California's Early Learning and Care System called the [Master Plan for Early Learning and Care](#), which includes a strong focus on DLLs. A key recommendation from the plan and first step to supporting DLLs is the identification of them. To move this recommendation forward, Early Edge California and partners, including the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, co-sponsored AB 1363, recognizing the importance of preserving home languages and supporting DLLs' linguistic development.

Development of AB 1363

AB 1363 mandated the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a standardized process for California State Preschool Program (CSPP) contractors to identify DLLs. The legislation emphasized the need for reporting key information about DLLs to inform future policies and programs. The asset-based process established by AB 1363 involves:

- **Identification by Teachers or Other Support Staff:** Teachers play a central role in identifying DLL preschoolers in collaboration with their families.
- **Culturally Responsive Support:** It is suggested for the data and information collected to be used to inform teachers to plan and provide instruction and support tailored to DLLs' linguistic and cultural needs. This includes curriculum development, bilingual materials, and professional development for educators.
- **Data Collection:** Contractors report crucial information about DLLs and various program supports, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity among children.



Success and Implementation

AB 1363 took effect on January 1, 2023. The legislation has already yielded significant benefits for DLLs, their families, and teachers:

- **Families:** The process raises awareness about the importance of home languages and bilingualism, educates families about the benefits of bilingualism, and fosters connections between families and programs.
- **Teachers:** The process equips teachers and staff with essential information about DLLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, enabling them to develop effective and culturally responsive teaching strategies.

The California Department of Education (CDE) has been instrumental in implementing AB 1363 through guidance, a webinar training series for the field, and key resources for supporting DLLs, which can all be found on its [DLL support webpage](#).

Success and Implementation (cont.)

This guidance outlines the process for identifying and assessing DLLs and encourages the use of multiple measures. The Preschool Language Information System (PLIS) was developed to facilitate data reporting for CSPP contractors.

AB 1363 contains intent language emphasizing the importance of connecting the data collected through its implementation to the Cradle to Career data system, a comprehensive education data system designed to track the educational journey of students from early childhood through K-12 education and into higher education and the workforce. The intent behind connecting AB 1363 data to the Cradle to Career system is to create a seamless continuum of educational information. This linkage will provide a comprehensive understanding of DLL students' progress and outcomes as they navigate the education system. By connecting data from early childhood education to later stages of schooling and workforce readiness, policymakers and educators could gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of programs and interventions aimed at supporting DLLs throughout their educational journey.

Next Steps: Expanding DLL Support

Efforts are underway to expand the asset-based process for DLL identification to California's entire Early Learning and Care mixed-delivery system. [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 393](#), authored by Assemblywoman Luz Rivas and co-sponsored by Early Edge California and partners, seeks to expand DLL identification to general child care (also referred to as CCTR) programs and the Migrant Child Care Program (also referred to as CMIG). This expansion helps move the state closer to meeting the goal in the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care of identifying DLLs across all Early Learning and Care programs in California.

Now that AB 393 has been enacted into law, the Department of Social Services, in consultation with the Department of Education, will develop a standardized DLL identification process for general child care and migrant child care programs, leveraging the process developed for CSPP. In addition, the two departments will coordinate to develop a seamless data inputting process for contractors who run both state preschool and general child care programs.

Replicating the Model Nationally

AB 1363 has marked a significant step forward in identifying and supporting DLLs in California's preschool programs. Its asset-based approach, supported by CDE guidance, demonstrates the importance and positive impact of involving families, providing culturally responsive instruction, and reporting essential data to inform future state and programmatic investments.

As California seeks to expand this model, it can serve as a blueprint for other states to ensure the success of their DLLs. These young learners enrich our nation's cultural tapestry and represent the future leaders of our diverse society.

**For more information or questions, visit us at www.earlyedgecalifornia.org
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