DLL Identification Guide

February 2024

For CSPP Providers

What this guide contains

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are children whose first language is a language other than English or children who are developing two or more languages, one of which may be English. To tailor services effectively for these students, California State Preschool Programs (CSPPs) are required to follow a two-step process for DLL identification. This guide is dedicated to ensuring DLL identification is a positive experience for providers, emphasizing the important role it plays in building strong relationships with DLL children and their families. It covers essential DLL identification principles, effective family engagement strategies, objectives of the Family Language Instrument and Family Language and Interest Interview, and valuable insights into using data for DLL services.

Guiding principles

1. *Fostering family engagement:* DLL identification provides a platform to actively engage with families and underscore the significance of their home language and cultural heritage.
2. *Valuing linguistic assets:* DLL identification is the cornerstone for recognizing and celebrating the diverse linguistic strengths of children and families.
3. *Tailoring supportive instruction:* DLL identification is the foundation for understanding the languages a child is exposed to, offering essential insights for instructional design and support.

Fostering Family Engagement

Engaging with families about the value of their home language and culture is crucial for fostering a positive and supportive learning environment. Here are key points to emphasize throughout the DLL identification process:

Key Point	Goal	Suggested Language
Affirmation	Recognize the child's home language and culture as valuable assets to their early learning.	"We're excited to learn about your child's home language and culture through our DLL identification process. It's a way to celebrate what makes them unique and support their learning journey!"
Building Trust	Ensure families feel comfortable sharing information about their child's language background.	"We want you to feel comfortable sharing information about your child's language background during this process. If you have any questions or concerns about the questions, please feel free to ask."
Optimal Development	Establish an understanding that a child's past experiences with language(s) is essential for supporting their optimal progress and development.	"Understanding your child's past experiences with language(s) is crucial for supporting their progress and development. We value and build upon the linguistic foundation that your child brings to our learning environment."

Key Point	Goal	Suggested Language
Multilingualism Benefits	Help families understand how maintaining and developing the home language contributes to their child's overall language proficiency and cognitive development.	"There are many academic and cultural benefits to multilingualism. Maintaining and developing your child's home language contributes positively to their overall language and mental development."
Sharing Resources	Empower parents in fostering ongoing language development at home.	"Your family's current language and cultural practices are respected and valued in our program. We honor and support your child's unique linguistic and cultural experiences."
Long-term Benefits	Help families recognize the long-term benefits of multilingualism.	"Participating in the DLL identification process sets the foundation for your child's success in both school and our diverse society. Nurturing their home language helps with doing well in school, and even getting good job opportunities later on."

Family Language Instrument

The Family Language Instrument, the first step in the DLL identification process, plays a key role in identifying each child's language background to support their language development. To the extent possible, providers are encouraged to conduct this survey in the language that the family speaks, and the instrument is available in multiple languages. This section offers information on the questions included in this instrument and why they are important.

Question	What's learned	Why it matters
1) Which language(s) does your child hear at home?	If the family is speaking their home language to their children. If the child has been exposed to English at home from adults or older children. If the child has been exposed to any other language(s) in the home.	Allows providers to understand the linguistic exposure a child has had, providing a foundation for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment that acknowledges and celebrates linguistic diversity. Some children hear a great deal of English at home from adults and older children. Others may not have any exposure, and many are in between.
*2) Which language(s) does your child hear in their neighborhood and community?	The linguistic diversity present in the community.	Broadens the contextual understanding of a child's language exposure. Enables providers to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. Allows teachers to foster connections between classroom learning and students' real-world experiences.

Question	What's learned	Why it matters
3) Which language(s) does your child understand?	If the child understands more than one language. If the child understands English.	Helps providers get information on a child's communication and what he or she understands. Aids in curriculum planning and teaching methods; a child may need non-verbal cues and communications or prefer one language to another.
4) Which language(s) does your child speak?	If the child speaks a language or languages other than English. If the child speaks English.	Helps providers get information on a child's oral language development, communication abilities and preferences. Aids in curriculum planning, instructional strategies, and assessment.

Question 2 does not inform DLL identification. A child is identified as a DLL if responses for questions 1, 3, or 4 indicate a language other than English.

Family Language and Interest Interview

The Family Language and Interest Interview is the second formal step in the DLL Identification process and it is conducted with the families of all DLL children, as identified through the Family Language Instrument. Its primary objective is to gather information on each child's language experiences and interests, fostering trust and facilitating effective support for their development while underscoring the advantages of multilingualism. Ideally, the classroom teacher, central to the child's education, should conduct the interview in the family's home language. If not feasible, translation services should be provided, or, if the interview is conducted by another individual, a system should be put in place to transfer information to the teacher. The gathered insights can inform curriculum planning, learning strategies, professional development, and enhance family partnerships.

Question	What's learned	Why it matters
1) What are your child's interests and favorite activities?	Staff identify activities or subjects that resonate with the child.	Staff can plan developmentally appropriate activities and learning opportunities that build on the child's interests and familiarity from home. Aids in welcoming the child into the classroom. The more comfortable a child is at school, the more he or she is able learn.
2) What are some strengths you see in your child that we can build on?	Staff gain a picture of the child's strengths.	Understanding strengths serves as a bridge for communication and connection. Teachers can create a more accessible and welcoming learning environment, which helps build a sense of belonging and confidence, contributing to a smoother transition into the classroom setting.
3) How can we help support your child's language and development at home?	A better understanding of the home environment and ways to align classroom instruction with activities at home.	Child care providers can offer support and resources that match the family's preferences and cultural context, fostering a collaborative approach between educators and parents.

Question	What's learned	Why it matters
4) Young children love to talk, read, sing and are able to learn all the languages around them. Which language(s) does your child speak the most at home?	Which languages the child is exposed to and feels comfortable using for verbal communication.	Helps providers get information on a child's oral communication abilities, and preferences. Aids in curriculum planning, instructional strategies, and assessment.
5) We want to best support your child's language development and understand what language(s) they speak with family members. What language(s) does your child speak with their siblings, grandparents, other family members?	Which languages the child is learning and from whom. If the child uses languages with different groups or in different settings. How often the child hears or speaks English.	Allows teachers to foster connections between classroom learning and students' real-world experiences. Enables providers to create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.
6) In what language would you prefer to receive written communication from us?	If the parent has preferences for one language or another in written communication.	Staff can foster accessible, respectful, and welcoming written communication with families.
7) In what language would you prefer us to communicate verbally with you?	If the parent has preferences for one language or another in verbal communication.	Staff can foster accessible, respectful, and welcoming verbal communication with families.

Data Insights

The insights gained from DLL identification hold importance for classrooms and for state agencies and school districts. CSPP providers are instrumental in leveraging data to enhance services for DLL students and their families. This section offers an overview of how data can serve both state and local contexts.

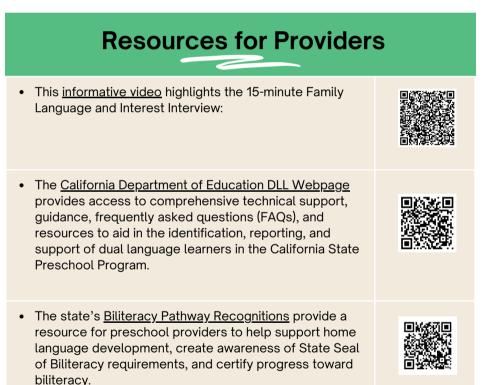| State/School District	Provider
At the state or school district level, the data collected through the Family Language Instrument serves as a valuable resource for planning and policy development. This high-level insight serves as a foundation for informed decision-making, helping allocate resources effectively, establishing language support resources, and addressing potential gaps in services.	Internally, CSPP providers can utilize the interview data to enhance the quality of their services and interactions with DLL children and their families. Program administrators and educators can draw upon the information to refine curriculum planning, ensuring it aligns with the linguistic backgrounds and preferences of enrolled children and families. Moreover, the insights guide ongoing professional development efforts, ensuring staff members are well-equipped to serve the unique needs of DLL children. Finally, the data plays a crucial role in strengthening partnerships with families, as providers use the information to communicate constructively with parents and guardians supporting their engagement and their child's language development.

Conclusion

The DLL identification process is a valuable opportunity to embrace and celebrate California's linguistic diversity in partnership with families. This guide, tailored for CSPPs, serves as a compass for navigating the two-step process of DLL identification with confidence.

By delving into the guiding principles, goals, and recommendations outlined in this guide, providers can foster an environment where DLL children and families thrive. As educators and administrators engage with the Family Language Instrument and the Family Language and Interest Interview, they embark on a journey to understand the unique linguistic and cultural assets of each child.

Resources for Providers

- This informative video highlights the 15-minute Family Language and Interest Interview:

- The California Department of Education DLL Webpage provides access to comprehensive technical support, guidance, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and resources to aid in the identification, reporting, and support of dual language learners in the California State Preschool Program.

- The state's Biliteracy Pathway Recognitions provide a resource for preschool providers to help support home language development, create awareness of State Seal of Biliteracy requirements, and certify progress toward biliteracy.

Resources for Families

- <u>Keeping Your Home Language (available in 16 languages)</u>: This resource highlights the advantages of supporting the home language and provides families with recommendations for helping their children preserve their home language.

- <u>Alas y Voz:</u> This resource promotes awareness of the advantages of early bilingual education and offers information about the State Seal of Biliteracy.

- Benefits of Multilingualism: This resource highlights the numerous advantages of being multilingual, including cognitive benefits, academic advantages such as earning college credits, and improved job opportunities.

<u>English</u>

<u>Spanish</u>

<u>Chinese</u>

<u>Arabic</u>