

QSLA's DLL Initiative

PROVIDING SUPPORT AND
RESOURCES TO FAMILIES OF
DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS



2021-22 Family Brief

This Brief contains highlights of the QSLA DLL Initiative's work and impact during the 2021-22 program year, and is intended for families and caregivers of Dual Language Learners.

Dual Language Learners

In early education, Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are defined as children from birth to five years old who are learning two languages simultaneously, or who are learning a second language in addition to their first, or home, language.¹ The term "Dual Language Learner" emphasizes that these children are still in the early phases of language development and are rapidly gaining fluency in both languages. Children who speak multiple languages show cognitive advantages in both childhood and adulthood² and perform better on problem-solving tasks requiring attention and control over their decisions.³ They may also demonstrate advantages in relationships and social-emotional development.⁴ Bilingualism benefits children in many ways!

Around 60% of children from zero to 5 years old in California are DLLs.⁵ The proportion of DLLs in California is expected to rise in coming years, increasing the need for trained early educators and family resources.⁶



Historically, DLLs have not received the necessary systemic support to reach their cognitive and educational potential. Families of DLLs may encounter challenges including language barriers, bias, limited access to resources, or difficulty advocating for their children at school.⁷

Children whose families support the development of their home language are more likely to succeed in school.

When children develop better speaking skills in their home language, they are likely to develop higher reading proficiency in English.⁸

The QSLA Dual Language Learner Initiative

The Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) DLL Initiative was a collaborative project of several partner organizations: First 5 Los Angeles (F5LA), Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles (CCALA), and Child360; its goal in 2021-2022 was to provide support and resources to early childhood education (ECE) professionals and families of DLLs across Los Angeles County. The partners' commitment to this collaboration allowed for alignment of DLL content, resources, communications, and evaluation materials across learning opportunities serving multiple populations (families, directors, early educators, coaches) in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese). This comprehensive alignment of materials ensured that early learning programs and families received consistent messaging and resources in support of their DLL children.

The impact of the first year of the QSLA DLL Initiative was inspiring!

The work of the QSLA DLL Initiative reached hundreds of ECE providers, thousands of young children, and over 240,000 families, most of whom were in Los Angeles County zip codes identified as "high need" (areas of low income, containing a high percentage of families that speak two languages).

ECE professionals and families had access to over 100 hours of training content across four languages.

Family Learning Opportunities and Workshops

DLL children come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and these family contexts should be valued as sources of linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional learning. By building connections between home and early learning programs, teachers can help children to build strong foundations for success in school and beyond.⁹

In order to support families' understanding of the benefits of raising Dual Language Learners, and to clarify mixed messaging from previous education laws and biases, QSLA partners designed a series of three Family Engagement Workshops, available in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese, to be attended by families and caregivers of Dual Language Learners.



Family Workshop Topics:

Our Home Language Is Important: Myths and Facts about Bilingualism

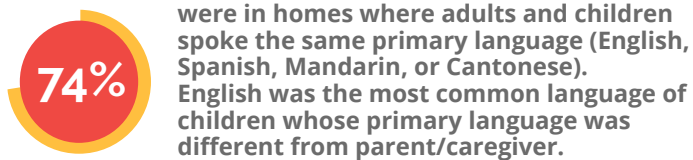
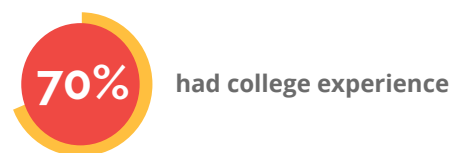
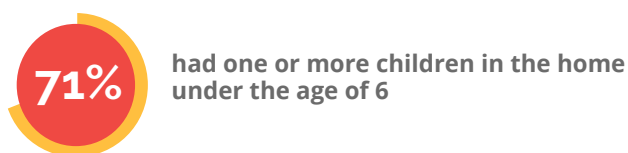
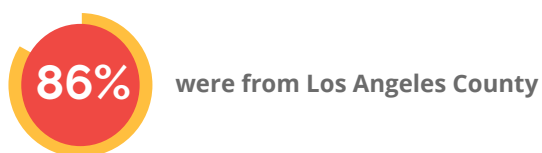
Maintaining our Home Language: Best Practices to Support Young Dual Language Learners at Home

Advocating for Our Young Dual Language Learners: Partnering with Teachers to Support Children's Dual Language Learning Development



Targeted communications efforts and partnerships were key elements in reaching local families. The organizers connected with staff at QSLA sites, First 5 LA, Best Start LA, and LA Babies Best home visiting programs to share information about the DLL Family Workshops, and to form partnerships where the program officers, leaders, and home visitors could share workshop information and encourage families in their networks to attend. The QSLA partners also shared monthly social media graphics and messaging, as well as workshop flyers with LA County's seven Resource and Referral Agencies (R&Rs), enabling them to conduct outreach to families in their service areas.

A total of 189 unduplicated participants (148 with intake forms) attended the DLL Family Workshops; many participants attended workshops in more than one language or attended multiple workshops in the series, but each participant was only counted once, regardless of how many sessions they attended, for purposes of this report.



Many participants in the family workshops may also have been early educators who had DLL children of their own, or who were interested in learning more about supporting the DLLs in their care. The strategies and information provided in the family workshops are useful to this group of participants both as they work with their own children at home, and as they support the DLL children and families in their programs. For example, one participant in the English Family Workshop wrote, "Understanding the value of a child's language, culture, and traditions will be helpful with my interactions with the children and parents."

The higher-than-expected participation rates within the Cantonese and Mandarin series were particularly exciting. In the past, local DLL offerings in Cantonese and Mandarin have been very limited, and participants demonstrated a high level of interest in these trainings. One participant in the Cantonese and Mandarin workshops wrote that they wanted to "hold a few more events to get more families to join in on the importance of bilingualism!"

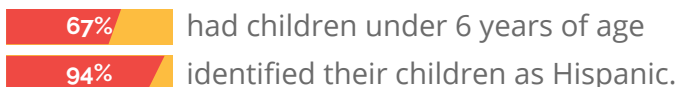


QSLA Family Workshops strengthened family engagement and parent advocacy strategies to support DLLs at school and at home. They also emphasized the importance of home language and shared tips for supporting children’s home language development.

Families’ feedback helped inform the workshop topics. For example, in the first round of workshops provided, many families indicated an interest in learning more about dual immersion programs so they would be more aware of the options available when their children entered the TK-12 system. To address this interest, the developers adapted one of the workshops for the second round of the series to include more information about dual immersion programs. Participants’ feedback demonstrated that they appreciated the topics and information covered in all workshops. All participants received up to 5 books in both English and the language of the workshop they attended to better support their young Dual Language Learners at home.

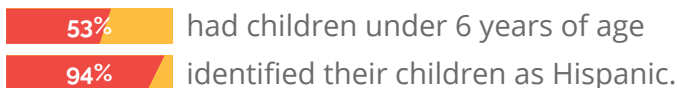
Family Workshops (English):

47 participants attended one or more workshops in the series.



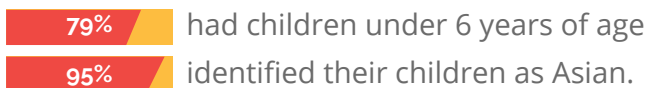
Family Workshops (Spanish):

41 participants attended one or more workshops in the series.

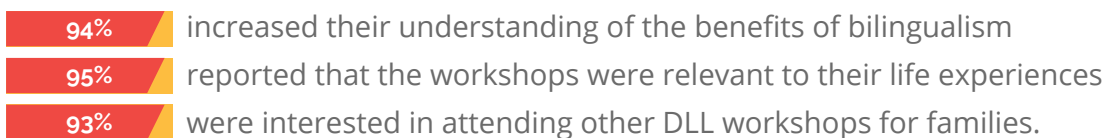


Family Workshops (Mandarin/Cantonese):

101 participants attended one or more workshops in the series.



Across all Family Workshops, participants’ feedback survey responses showed:





Takeaways:

- Many participants shared that they would use newly learned language strategies and ideas with their DLL children in the home or in child care settings.

“Teach children about traditional Chinese festivals.”

-Participant, Mandarin/Cantonese Family Workshop

“Read in Spanish and sing rhyming songs to support the child’s language.”

-Participant, Spanish Family Workshop

“I learned that it is better for children not to lose their mother tongue.”

-Participant, Spanish Family Workshop

- Participants learned the importance of bilingualism, as well as the importance of advocating for children and sharing information about bilingualism with other families.

“Have a comeback for the myths against bilingualism.”

-Participant, English Family Workshop

“Learning more than 2 languages is very beneficial in the future.”

-Participant, Spanish Family Workshop

- The importance of practicing and speaking to preserve the home language was a prominent takeaway for many participants.

“I will put more importance on the home language.”

-Participant, Spanish Family Workshop

“Stick to your own language and don’t worry too much about the silent period in your child’s learning process.”

-Participant, Mandarin/Cantonese Family Workshop

“To persevere and persevere, perseverance will pay off.”

-Participant, Mandarin/Cantonese Family Workshop

- By providing useful information on bilingualism and multilingualism, and by highlighting the importance of reading and speaking in a home language, the workshops offered by the QSLA DLL Initiative increased families’ ability to support their DLL children. Participants in the family workshops learned how to advocate for their children, and felt that the workshops were relevant to their life experiences.



Read Together, Create Together

QSLA partners also offered bilingual family “Read Together, Create Together” events in English/Spanish and English/Mandarin. Each event featured an appearance by a local bilingual author, a “read aloud” segment, a “family craft” segment, and tips to help families support their DLL children’s early literacy skills and creativity. Each adult was mailed a copy of the book presented at the event to add to their home library. Over 80% of participants said they learned new ways to support their child’s early reading skills and creativity through these events.

In addition to expanding from family workshops to the “Read Together, Create Together” events, the DLL Initiative also created family resources, including one-page tip sheets, links, instructive videos, parent perspective videos, and more.

Visit the QSLA website at <https://qualitystartla.org/resources/resources-for-families/> to view resources in English, Spanish, and Chinese or the Quality Start LA Read Together playlist on YouTube for a multilingual read-aloud series.

Takeaway:

Families who participated in the bilingual “Read Together, Create Together” events learned new ways to support their children’s early reading skills and creativity.

For more information on our DLL resources, scan the QR code:



View the QSLA Read Together playlist on YouTube:





Professional Learning for Early Childhood Education Professionals

In order to increase early educators' knowledge about the benefits of bilingualism, reinforce their support for DLL children, and build their ability to strengthen relationships with DLL families, the QSLA DLL Initiative offered several professional learning opportunities on Dual Language Learning to ECE professionals throughout 2021-2022. These opportunities included virtual training series and communities of practice in which groups of ECE professionals could share and learn from one another. Professional learning opportunities were targeted to center-based providers, family child care providers, coaches, trainers, ECE administrators, and support professionals. Over 300 participants attended one or more of the DLL PD Modules. Of the 274 participants who completed demographic forms, 87% worked directly with DLL children, and 17% worked in Family Child Care (FCC) programs.

Participants in the DLL Preschool Modules learned research-based DLL strategies, practices, and information for immediate use in working with DLL children and to promote family engagement. Almost half (44%) of participants said they planned to share, encourage, and connect with families, including providing opportunities for families to share cultural items such as books, stories, or songs.

Participants in the DLL Infant/Toddler Modules learned social-emotional and language acquisition strategies that they could use with DLL children and their families. All attendees increased both their understanding of how to support culture and diversity, and their confidence that they could use the content or strategies in their programs.

NEW: Dual Language Learner Initiative Trainings

DON'T MISS OUR MAY VIRTUAL TRAININGS!

- May 3rd: DLL Module 6: Family Literacy (Zoom)
- May 5th: Dual Language Learner Director's Institute Part 2 (Zoom)
- May 12th: Teacher Strategies to Align the DLL Developmental Continuum from Prekindergarten to TK to Kindergarten (Zoom)
- May 12th: Dual Language Learner Director's Institute Part 3 (Zoom)
- May 17th: Read Together, Create Together: English/Spanish Family Event (Zoom)
- May 18th: DLL Module 7: Math Meaning Making and Problem Solving (Zoom)
- May 26th: DLL Module 10: Engaging DLLs in Project Based Learning (Zoom)

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NUEVO: Aprendizaje de dos idiomas Capacitaciones:

¡NO SE PIERDA NUESTRAS PRÓXIMAS CAPACITACIONES VIRTUALES DE JUNIO!

- **Junio 15:** Módulo 9: Celebrar la cultura y la diversidad a través de las artes visuales y de interpretación (Zoom)
- **Junio 17:** Módulo 10: Cómo involucrar a los alumnos DLL en el aprendizaje basado en proyectos (Zoom)

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Communication and Outreach

The QSLA Communications workgroup created a central hub for all DLL Initiative communications. Between August 2021 and June 2022, QSLA reached out to the community as part of its work to support DLLs throughout Los Angeles County. This outreach had three components:

Aligned social media and email communications. In order to make sure that families, early educators, and community partners would be aware of upcoming family workshop events and new resources, QSLA Communications developed and shared DLL events and information through existing and trusted social media networks (including QSLA, LACOE, First 5 LA, and LA County R&Rs); through a centralized website (QSLA); through monthly email newsletters; and through email distribution lists.

Providing bilingual and multilingual books to support families. Because reading to young children is one of the most effective ways to support their language development and early literacy, the QSLA DLL Initiative provided families with children's books in their home languages. Partner organizations who supported the DLL Initiative with book distribution included Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Crystal Stairs, and LA Care. Events were held at community centers or ECE sites with fun, festive atmospheres for the giveaways, and books were also given to participants at family workshop events. In all, 5,126 books were distributed to 4,731 families, including at least 4,817 children between birth and 6 years old.



Watch
the
video

A televised advertising spot designed to promote awareness of the benefits of bilingualism as a superpower. The 30-second video aired in English and Spanish, on Spectrum television channels, in Los Angeles-area zip codes that contained a higher proportion of subscribers who speak a second language and of subscribers with young children. In total, 240,420 families were reached by the advertising spot; 44% of impressions were viewed in Spanish, and 97% of all viewers watched the spot to completion.

The QSLA DLL Initiative Moving Forward

The collaborative partners of the QSLA DLL Initiative share an ongoing commitment to ensure the success of Los Angeles County's Dual Language Learners. In the coming years, work on the QSLA DLL Initiative will include the following priorities:

- Emphasizing the importance of bilingualism and multilingualism in messaging to families and educators, and including DLL services and accessibility as priorities in the ongoing work of QSLA.
- Improving communications strategies in order to reach a broader group of families, including designating funding for translation, widespread sharing of informational materials, and more family workshops.
- Expanding our commitment and support to providers and families in Family Child Care and home-based settings.



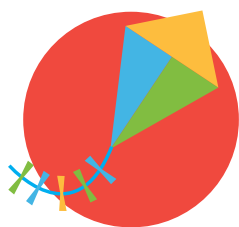
Endnotes

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For more information on our DLL resources, scan the QR code:



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