



Emergent Bilingual Children: Working with Dual Language Learners

Families

In order for families to be engaged and informed throughout the application and placement period, and the entire time their children participate in Meck Pre-K, Meck Pre-K classrooms will:

- Provide written material in both English and Spanish (application, placement letter, Meck Pre-K Family Handbook, classroom newsletter, field trip forms, TS Gold Parent Reports, etc.).
- Schedule interpreters for parent orientation, application and screening sessions, and parent conferences (interpreters are available in every language represented by Meck Pre-K students)
- Provide information regarding resources available in the community
- Collaborate with other parents to translate or communicate with parents who have limited English
- Invite parents to visit their child's classroom

Children

In order for English Language Learners (ELLs) to feel welcomed, experience nurture and encouragement, and to be valued as a member of the class:

- Teachers build relationships with the child through non-verbal language at the first home visit and throughout the school year
- Adults promote and value each student's culture by representing all children in the classroom and instructional materials (diverse photographs, books, materials, posters)
- Classroom items are labeled in languages spoken by the children (one color per language to validate that speakers use multiple languages)
- Children are encouraged to speak in their native language, and teach their classmates simple terms
- Teachers support children through repetition, providing sentence starters, and including visual aids (pictures and objects) to help children make connections to English vocabulary
- Technology is used to help ELLs learn more quickly and with less fatigue (especially helpful for those children who do not read social cues as easily and therefore cannot pick up routines simply by watching)
- Arte y Más videos feature native pronunciation of Spanish vocabulary and provide an opportunity for all children to learn some Spanish. Native Spanish speakers have the opportunity to engage and learn content words in their own language and Native English speakers are exposed to a second language at an early age. This language exposure helps to build and strengthen synapses in the brain and triggers academic language gains and promotes respect for people who speak languages different from the child.
- Literacy Coaches provide recommendations for exposing all children to a second language
- Parents are often invited into the classroom to share their own experiences, culture, clothing or household items and food with the class

Community Resources

In addition to Meck Pre-K/NC Pre-K Social Workers being engaged with Meck Pre-K classrooms, community resources are shared with families, directors, and classroom teachers, to support children and families with limited English proficiency.

Supporting teachers to better serve dual language learning children:

- All professional development includes strategies and additional recommendations for working with dual language learning children.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) plan for individual students and differentiate based on the student's needs.
- Coaches provide recommendations and best practices to individual teachers, as well as all teachers.
- Meck Pre-K will coordinate with CMS' English Language Services department to provide professional development and related strategies for working with dual language learning children to teachers in Meck Pre-K
- Teachers learn about the stages of language acquisition i.e. Some new learners of English will go through a "silent period" which is an interval of time during which they are unable or unwilling to communicate orally in the new language. The silent period may last for a few days or a longer period of time depending on a variety of factors. It is important to be patient during this period. Students are developing receptive language skills at this time and will benefit from repetition, sentence starters, and the inclusion of visual aids (pictures and objects) to help them make connections to English vocabulary.
- Arte y Más is part of the weekly schedule
- Recommendations for exposing all children to a second language are provided.