

Planned Language Approach

An Introduction

Region X Head Start Conference
March 4-5, 2014



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON

**Cultural and Linguistic
Responsiveness**

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Session outcome

Participants will:

- Become aware of the *Planned Language Approach (PLA)* – a comprehensive approach for EHS/HS programs for ALL children – those who are Dual Language Learners and those who speak English only

Planned Language Approach

- What it is?
- Why it matters?
- What it looks like?
- Where to begin?
- Why do it?

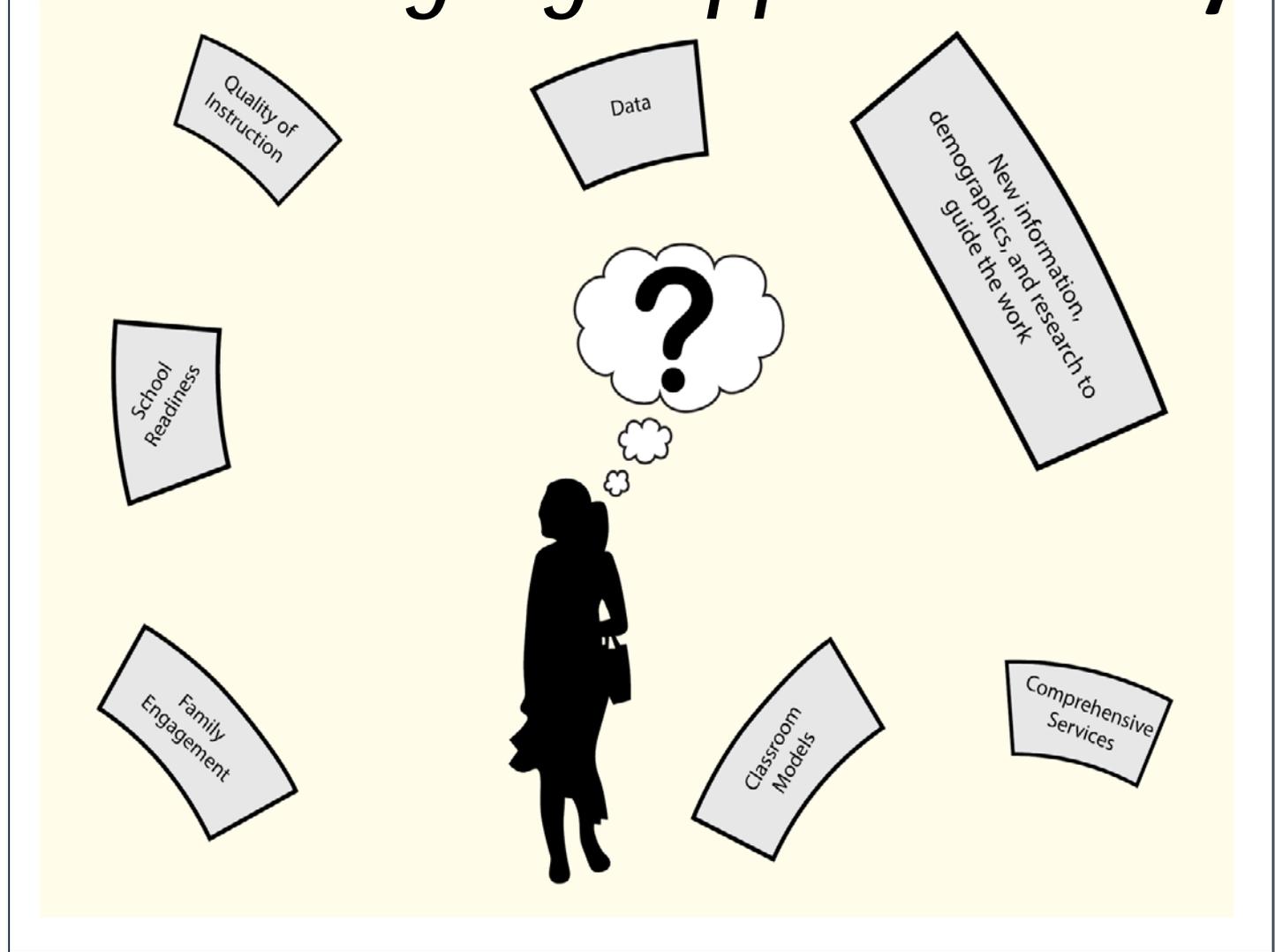


Share with your elbow partner

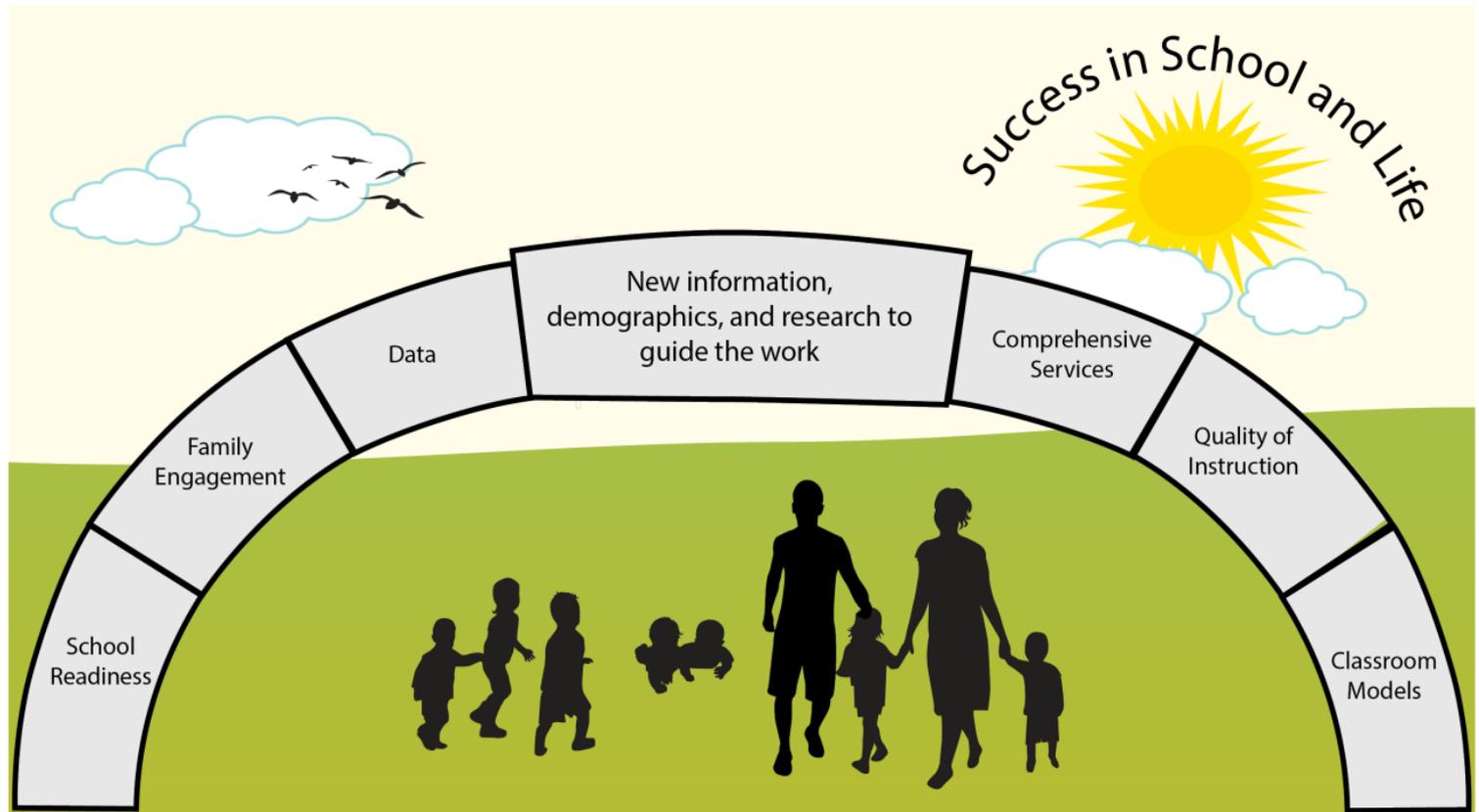


What are the 5 most important areas of learning are there for EHS/HS children?

Planned Language Approach: Why?



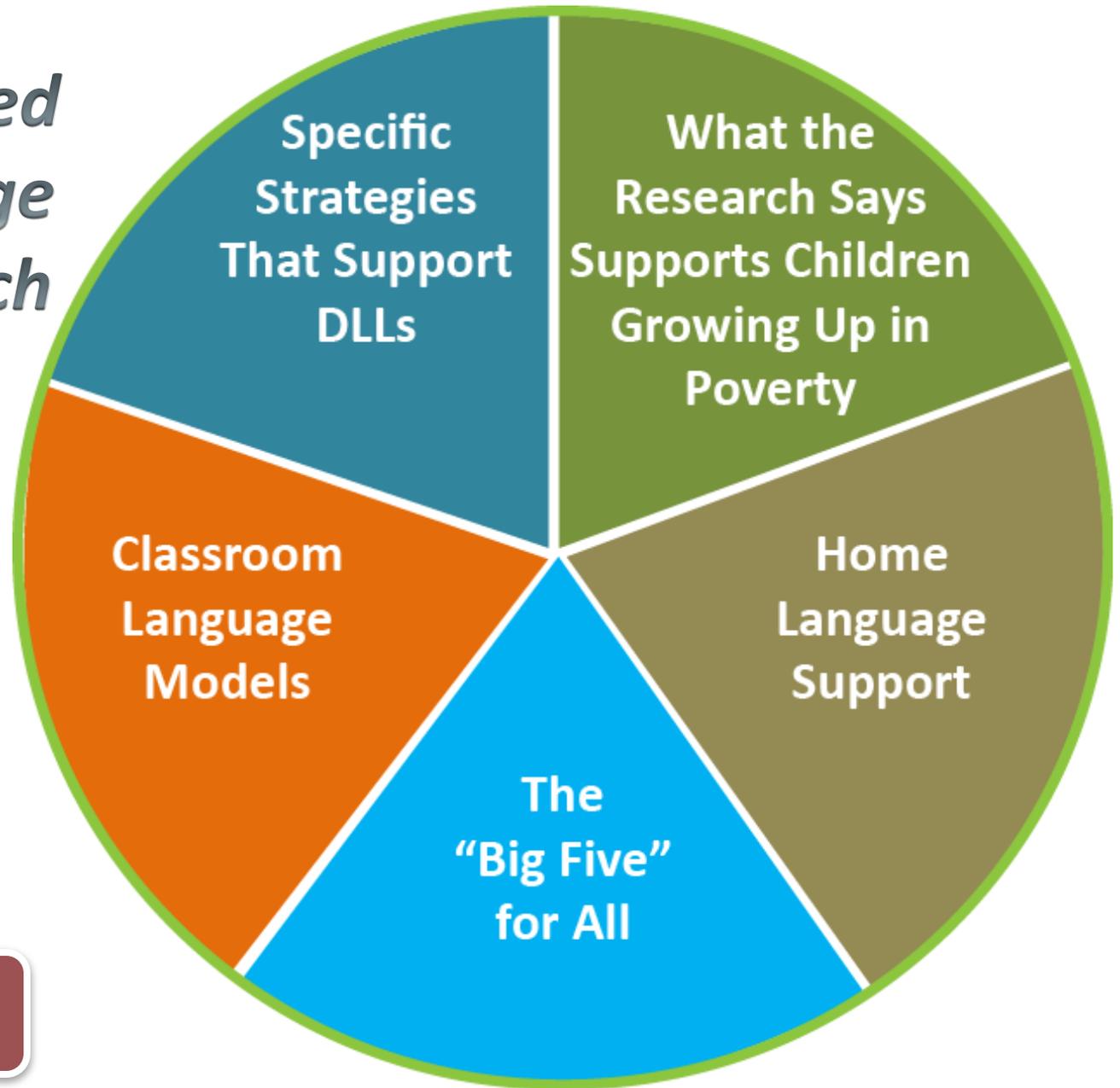
A Planned Language Approach = An Integrated and Intentional Structure



PLA: What is it?

- Systematic, program-wide approach to language and literacy development for children whose first language is not English and those for whom English is their first language
- Comprehensive, intentional, research-based approach for children birth to age 5
- Targeted focus on key areas of learning that research shows support school success among children living in poverty

A Planned Language Approach (PLA)



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PLA

IS

- A way to organize and support quality teaching
- Comprehensive and research-based
- For children learning English and for those also learning other languages
- A holistic approach for teachers

IS NOT

- A curriculum
- Quick and easy to implement
- Just for Dual Language Learners

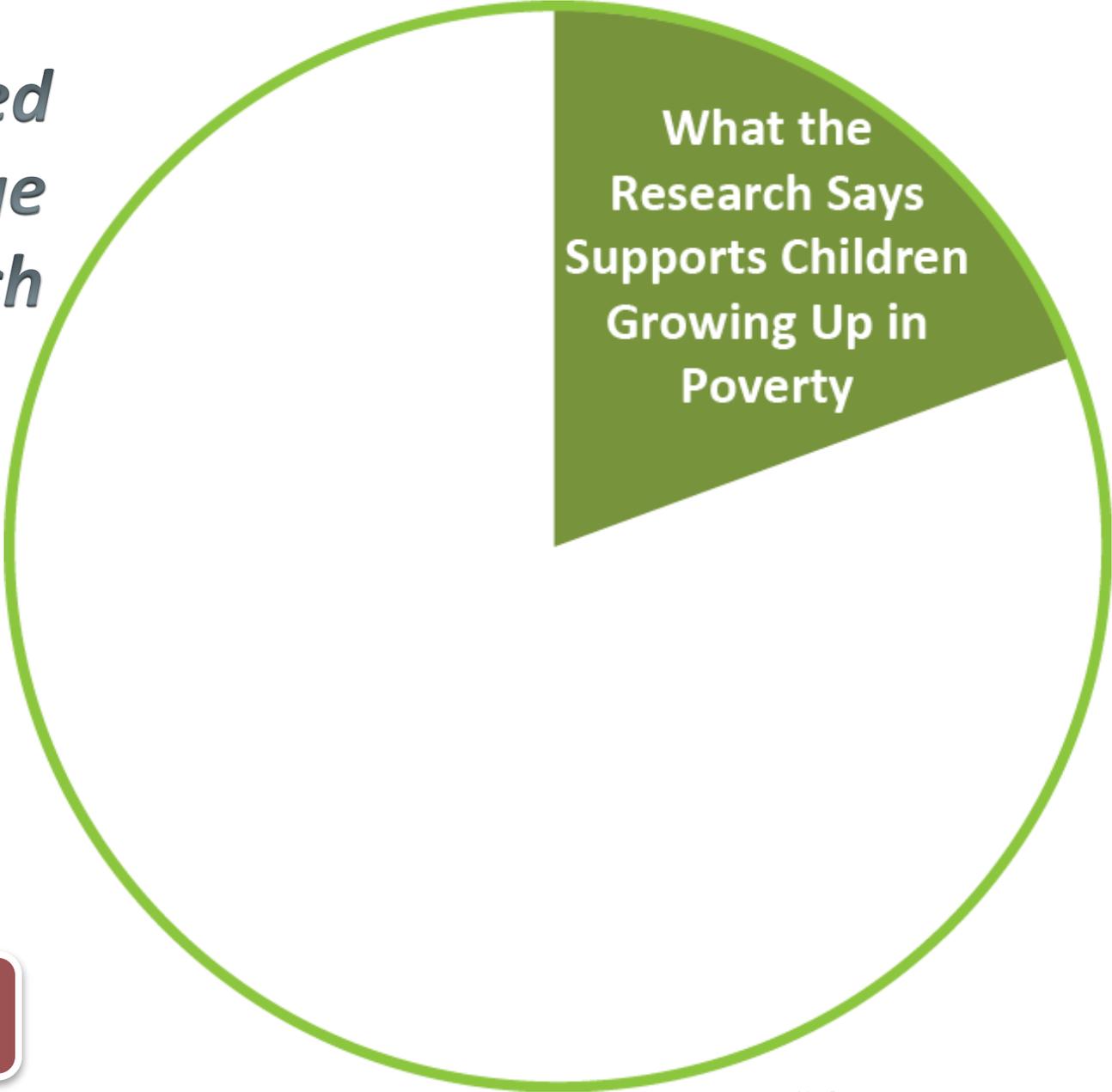
A Planned Language Approach

It is a cohesive, program-wide approach that **connects** content knowledge, decision making, and practices across

- Program level
- Classroom level



***A Planned
Language
Approach
(PLA)***



What the
Research Says
Supports Children
Growing Up in
Poverty

Category	Percentage
What the Research Says Supports Children Growing Up in Poverty	15%
Other Research	85%

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What's Poverty Got to Do With It?

- Impacts begin during pre-natal period
- Visible impacts for infants, e.g., cognition, language
- Extended impacts for preschool-age, especially language
- Long-term/cross-generational impacts



Why it matters to HS

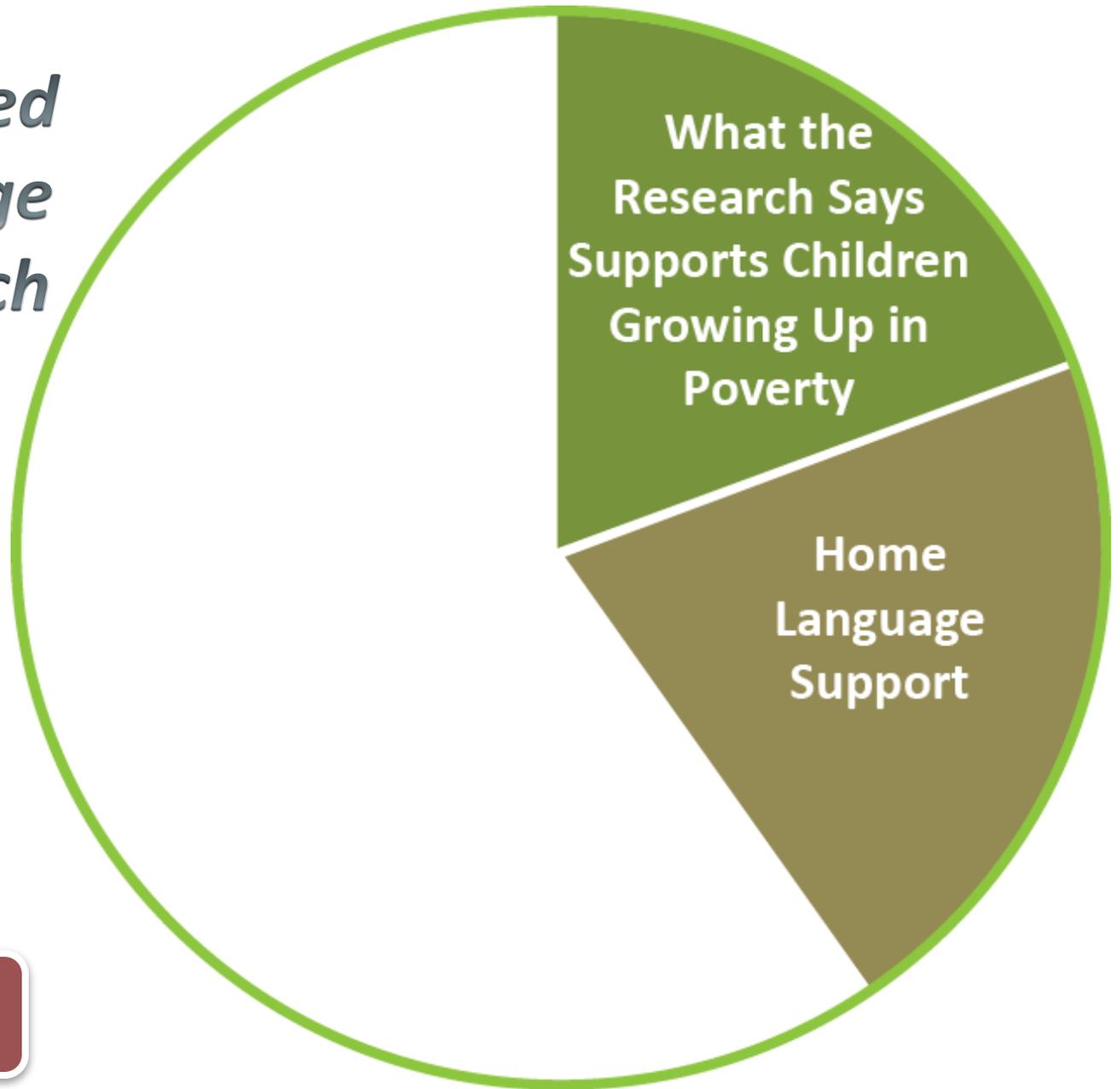
- Poverty and school success are strongly connected; therefore, a *PLA* directly focuses on the skills the research shows children living in poverty specifically need
- National Research Council, emphasized the alarmingly high incidence of reading failure in the United States
 - ...Approximately **seven in ten** low-income children do not become successful readers by the end of fourth grade (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998)

Read assigned handout



At your table share the top 3 ideas from each handout that you will use in your work when you leave here

A Planned Language Approach (PLA)



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Dual Language Learners

OHS Definition of Dual Language Learners:

- Children –
 - Acquire two or more languages *simultaneously* (i.e., from birth)
 - OR
 - Learn a second language *while continuing to develop* their first language
- See the ECLKC – DLL Home Page for more information
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners>

Home Language: A key part of instructional design

Children's Home Language is the foundation of their school readiness, including their acquisition of English



Children **use** their Home Language

- To develop their identify and social skills
- To understand themselves, their families and others
- To internalize the language they hear when parents and family members talk
- To think and reflect on information about themselves, their families, and their communities

Children **use** their Home Language

- To develop their knowledge and cognitive (thinking) skills such as:
 - Classification
 - Categorization
 - Logical/cause-and-effect reasoning
 - Narrative abilities (length and complexity)
 - Concepts related to spatial relations/math

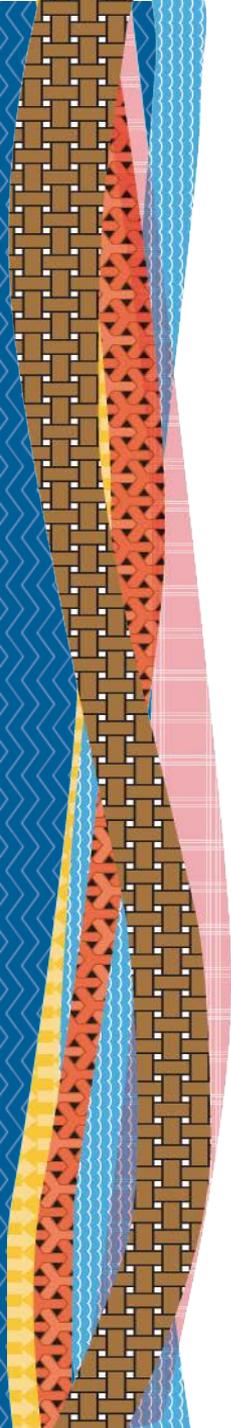
Home Language summary

Children need all of these skills and abilities for school success



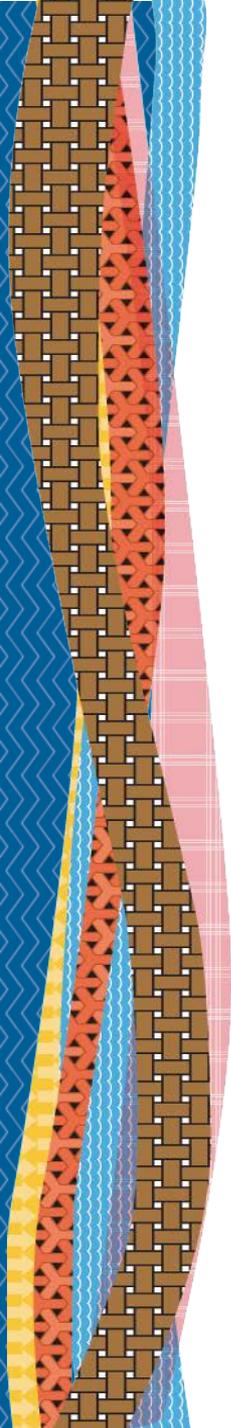
Importance of Home Language

- Many studies show that young DLLs *transfer their knowledge and skills across languages*
- In other words, skills that are developed in a child's Home Language support reading in English and school success



Now see this

Home Language Animation



Reactions to the animation?

Home Language

- Children's developmental domains **are connected**.
 - E.g., language **is** development connected to identity, social/emotional, and/or cognitive development...per the HSCDEL
- Therefore, **the continued development of a child's Home Language** is important and necessary for their school readiness!

Importance of Home Language

- *Uninterrupted development of the Home Language* during the birth to age five period enables children to continue to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they already have
- In addition, we want to maximize* the knowledge and skills that children have as they enter school

Importance of Home Language to School Success

- Phonological awareness in Spanish predicted English reading scores (Gottardo et al., 2002)
- Oral language proficiency in Spanish predicted English reading scores (Miller et al., 2006)
- See the OHS *Multicultural Principles*, pages 47-52, for a more complete discussion of the research

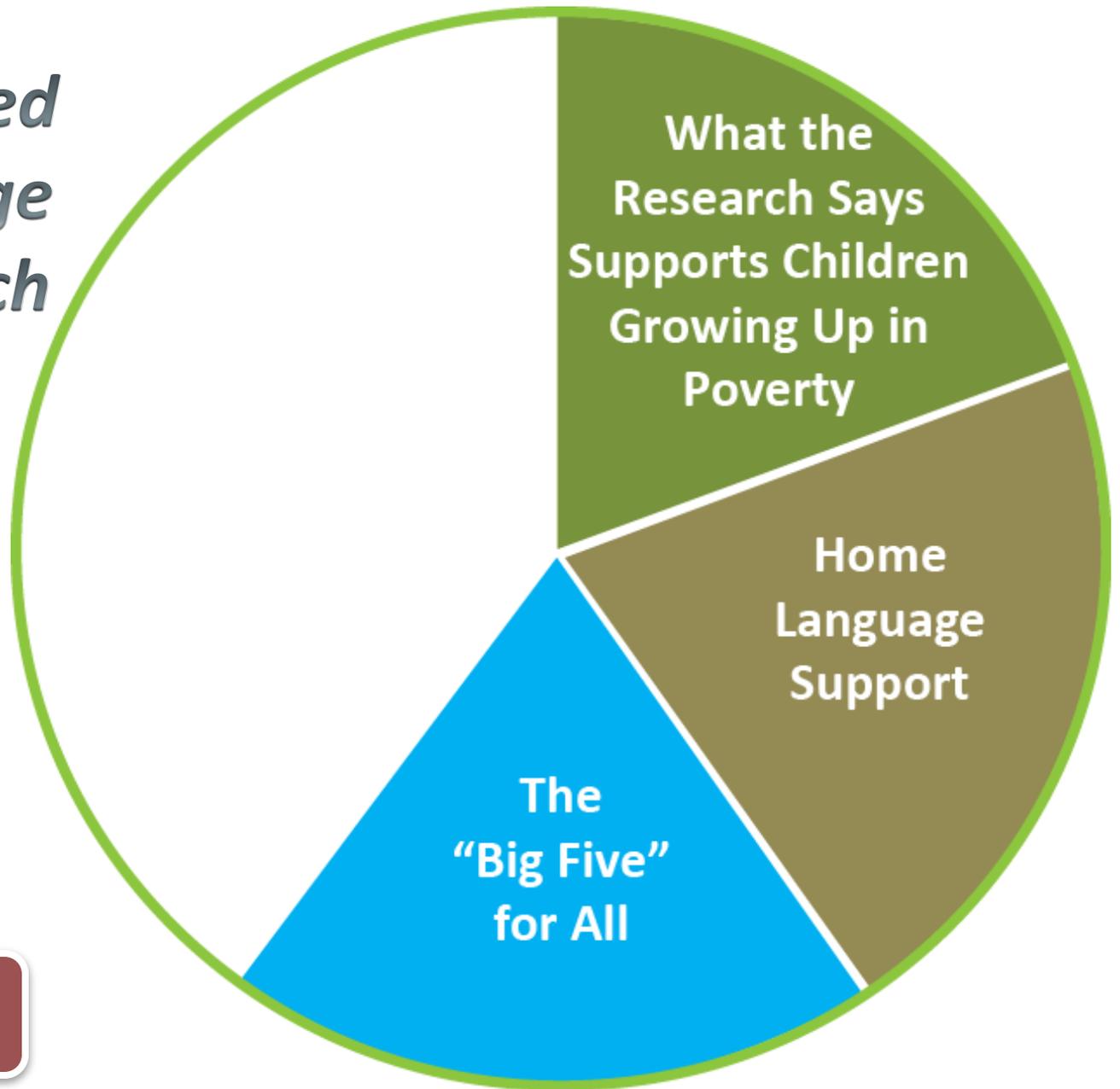
Solidify your thinking



Take a minute
and jot down

- Ah-ha's!
and
- Things I
want to
remember
and use!

A Planned Language Approach (PLA)



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The “Big 5” of Language and Literacy Development



1. Background knowledge
2. Oral language and vocabulary
3. Phonological awareness
4. Book knowledge and print concepts
5. Alphabet knowledge and early writing

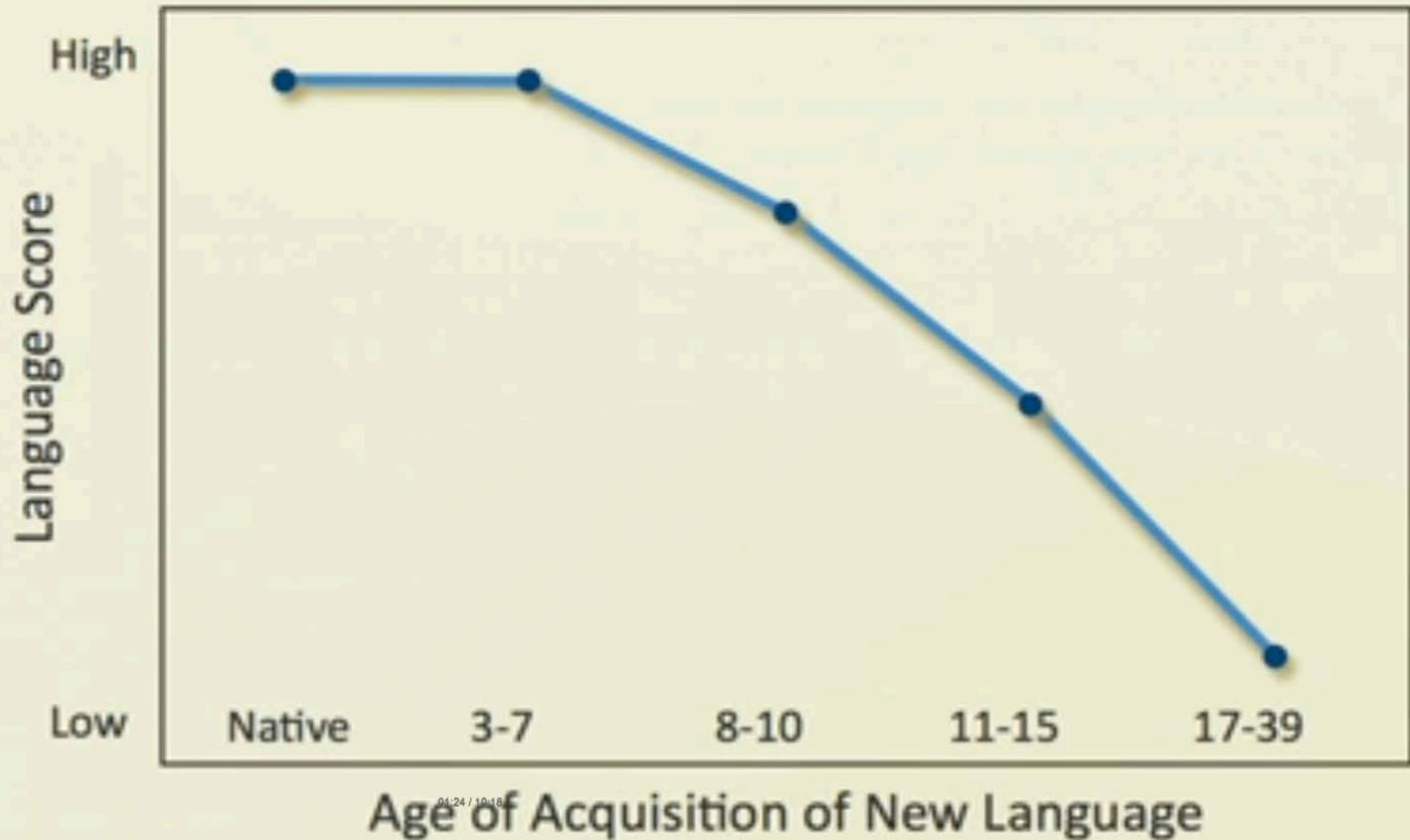
Background Knowledge



Oral Language and Vocabulary

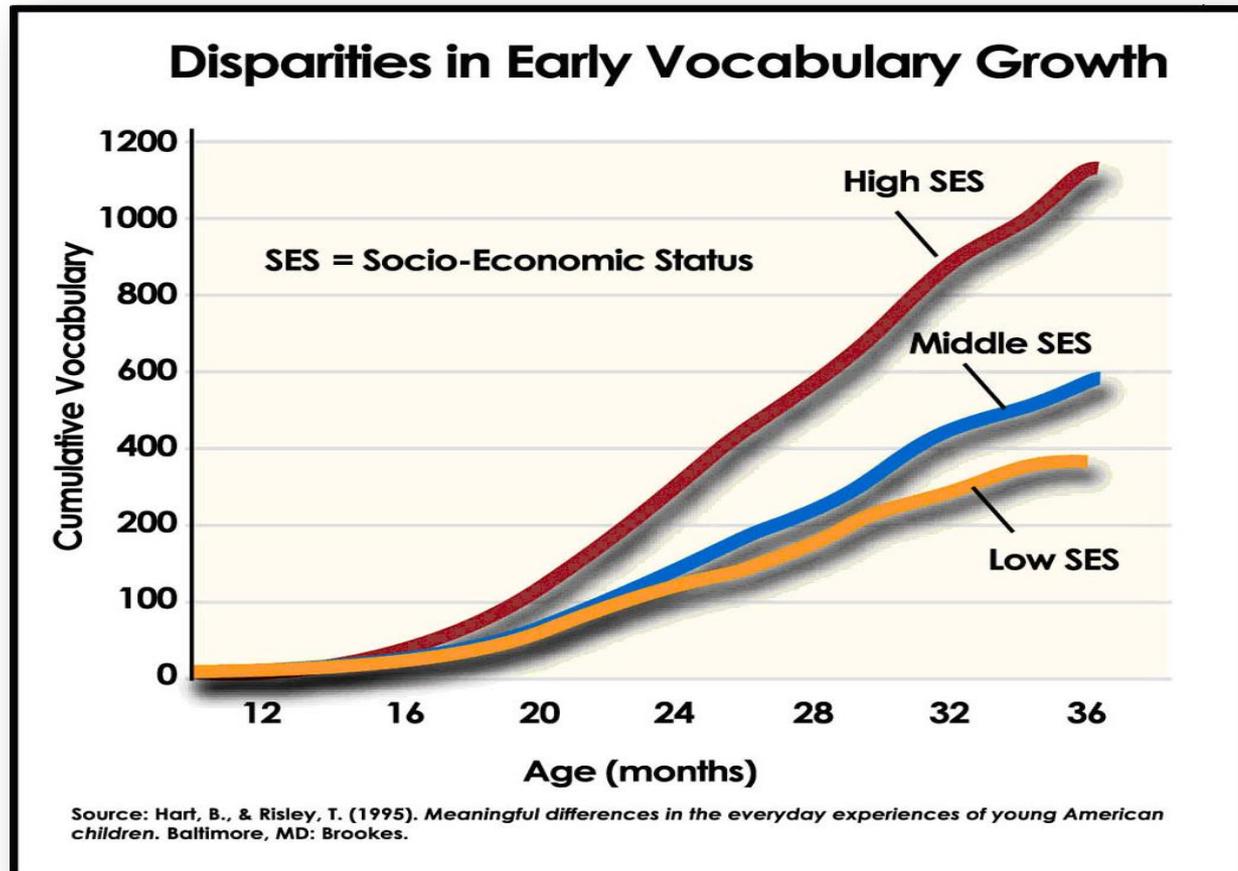


Language Exhibits a 'Critical Period'



04/24/10/18

Oral language experiences



Phonological Awareness



Book Knowledge and Print Concepts



Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing



Things to consider

- What do you need to know to get a complete picture of how well each:
 - Preschool classroom
 - Home visit
 - Family child care center and
 - Infant/toddler roomis providing high-quality experiences each day for every child?
- How do you know if what staff is doing is working; i.e., how much are the children learning?

“Big 5” Planner

THE “BIG 5”

Where Are We...
Where Do We Want
to Be...



1. Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing

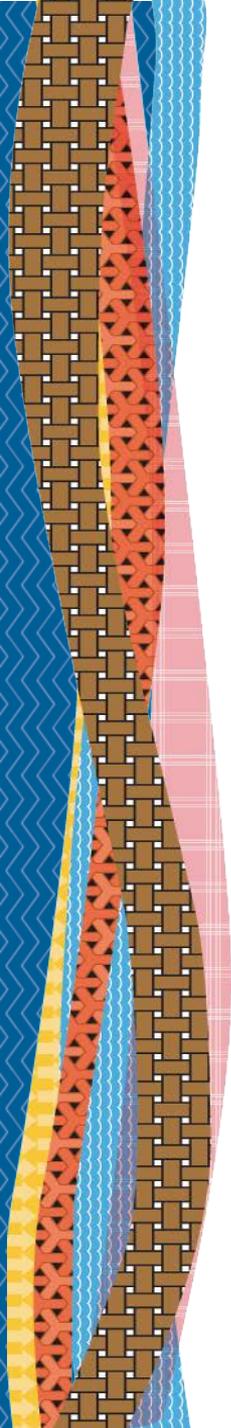
- a. What data sources currently track our effectiveness in this area of language and literacy development? What information do we have in this area specifically regarding our Dual Language Learners?
- b. Who needs to be involved in the analysis of this data and how will we use this information to plan our next steps?
- c. Are we missing any information, in this area; if so, what corrective measures will we take?
- d. How will the information obtained inform us about:
 - i. T/TA needs
 - ii. Mentor/coaching implications
 - iii. Hiring practices
 - iv. Individualizing for classroom, staff, and children



Classroom Language Models



- Review written matrices
- Work sheets
- Activity: Taking it Home Worksheet
- Discussion & reflections



What research tells us supports children living in poverty to succeed in school

Strategies and supports for DLLs to master English AND their home language/s

Classroom Language Models (CLM) that are based on what the children bring and what the teachers bring

"Big 5"



New information, demographics, and research to guide the work

HS program systems explicitly support DLLs to succeed



A *PLA* instructional design

Ensures that all children receive daily language and early literacy experiences (the “Big Five”) that:

- Acknowledge the importance of their Home Language(s) and
- Are individualized to promote their school readiness and long-term success

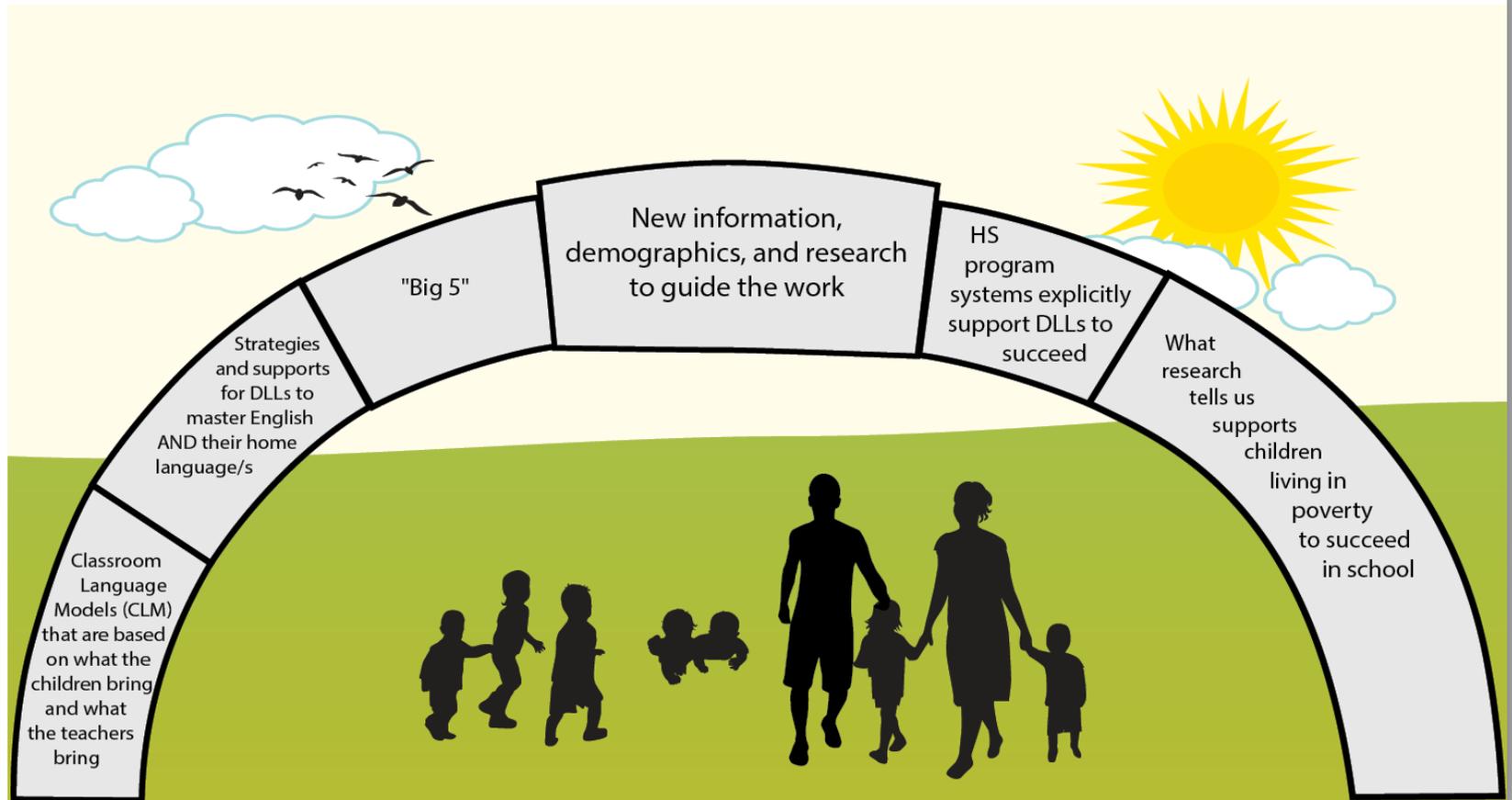
Planned Language Approach

- A *PLA* is built upon data
 - The language(s) and skills of the teachers in the classroom
 - The language(s) and skills of the children and
 - Research-based strategies that can be implemented in classrooms, community settings and homes (family home or family child care)

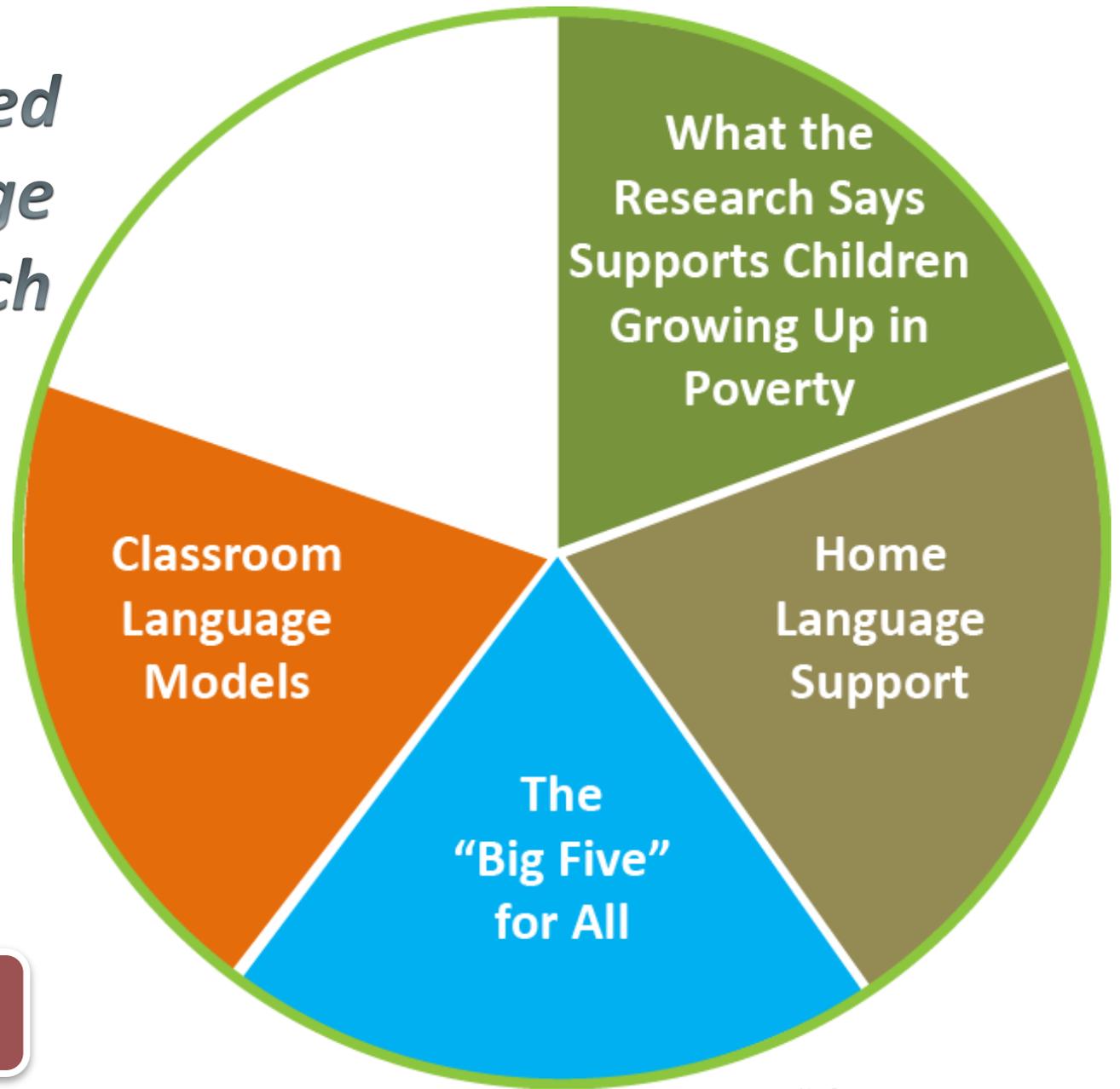
Unique aspects of a *PLA*

- Replaces individual, classroom-level decision making about
 - How to support DLLs and
 - How to implement language and literacy curriculum
- Includes the intentional, systematic, program-wide selection of **Classroom Language Models** based on
 - Languages of the teachers and
 - Languages of the children

A Planned Language Approach = An Integrated and Intentional Structure



A Planned Language Approach (PLA)



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Classroom Language Models



- Review written matrices
- Work sheets
- Activity: Taking it Home Worksheet
- Discussion & reflections

Promising Practices: Supporting DLLs' progress

Planned Language Approach (PLA):

- An intentional plan for classroom practices built on
 - the language(s) and skills of the teachers
 - the language(s) of the children
 - conscientious selection and implementation of a research-based approach for each combination of children and adults

84% of EHS/HS programs include Dual Language Learners



- Programs with Dual Language Learners
- Programs with Monolingual Learners

Unique aspects of CLMs

- Replaces individual, classroom-level decision making about
 - How to support DLLs and
 - How to implement language and literacy curriculum
- Includes the intentional, systematic, program-wide selection of **Classroom Language Models** based on
 - Languages of the teachers and
 - Languages of the children

Classroom Language Models within each program

CLMs within each program are based on:

- ALL classrooms deliver the same curriculum
- ALL classrooms work towards school readiness goals
- ALL classrooms provide experiences in the same “Big 5” all day, every day!



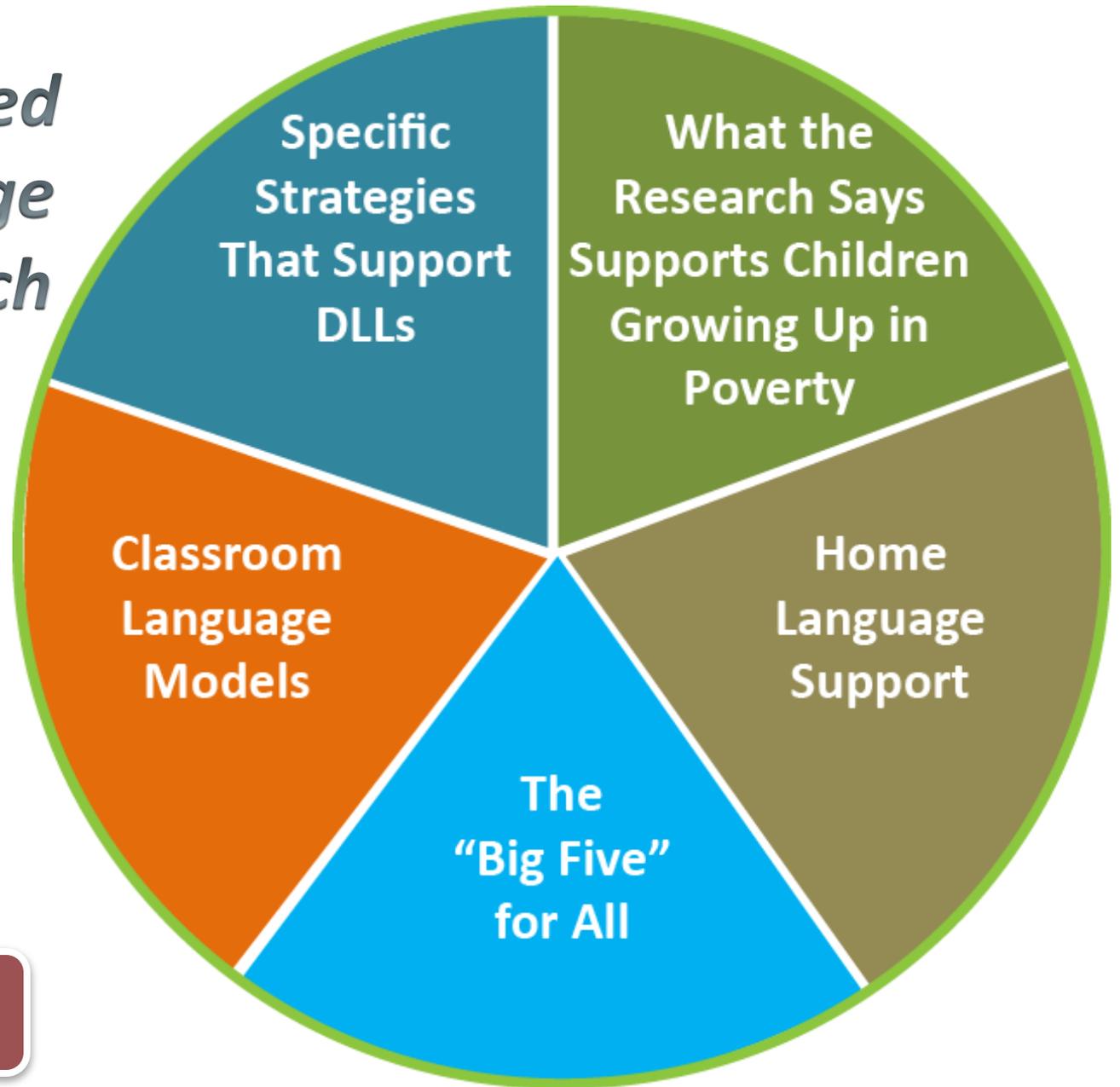
So what's different?

HOW they get there based on:

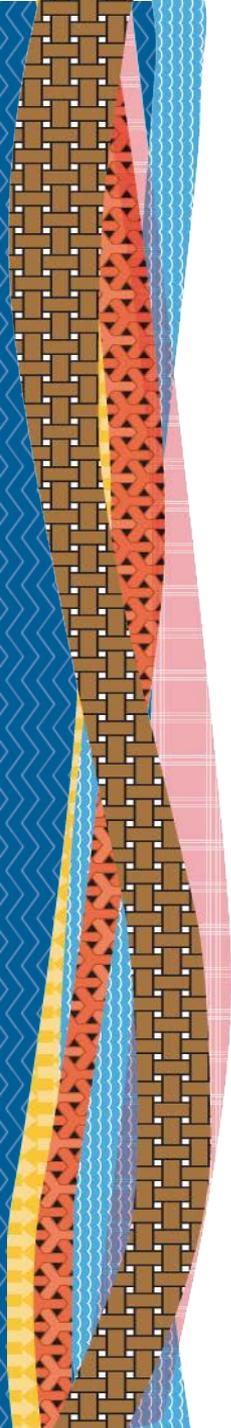
- the languages of the children and
- the languages of the teachers



A Planned Language Approach (PLA)



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PLA: What you will see when teachers speak the Home Language

Activities that promote

- Children's enriched vocabulary
- Levels of executive function and
- Specific approaches to
 - Learning
 - Letter knowledge
 - Print concepts and
 - Phonological awareness

In the Home Language

PLA: What you will see when teachers speak English only

- When teachers do not share the same language as the children they sometimes are “thrown off”
- Teachers **have the ability**—not only to communicate—but to have a significant impact upon children’s development and to effectively model English
- We want everyone to understand and implement effective models of English for ALL children

PLA: When teachers speak English only

Language acquisition... does not occur in isolation, it involves multiple, simultaneous levels of activity

- Children get (and stay) involved in activities (*physical level*) and...
- ... They process information mentally as the activity continues (*cognitive level*)...
- ... Over time, children acquire language as part of their involvement in the activity (*language level*)



Promising Practices: When teachers speak English only

Modeling English

1. Get the child involved in an activity that they enjoy; offer the child choices of activities as needed...
2. As the activity continues, observe the child's actions...
3. Provide language models related to the child's ongoing activity (for example, the "self-talk" and "parallel talk" strategies within the CLASS instrument)

What you will see when teachers speak the Home Language

- High-quality adult child interactions
 - extended conversations that build vocabulary and elaborate upon ideas and information
- Daily book-reading combined with multiple oral language strategies e.g.
 - talking about the book before and after the story,
 - explaining new words during reading, etc.

There are many proven ways to promote Language and Literacy Development for DLLs

- Scaffolding
- Self-talk
- Parallel talk
- Pair-Think/Buddies
- Dialogic Reading
- Project Approaches
- Books in Home Language and English
- Personalized Oral Language Learning
- Writing Strategies
- And Many More

Other strategies that work

- Tapes with family members telling/reading favorite stories
- Cultural artifacts suggested by families to make the environment feel more comfortable
- A quiet space for timeout
- Regular, Planned, Intentional Repetition and Practice

More strategies that work



- Self-Talk
- Parallel Talk
- Open-ended questions and props
- Using the L1

PLA: Leading the Way

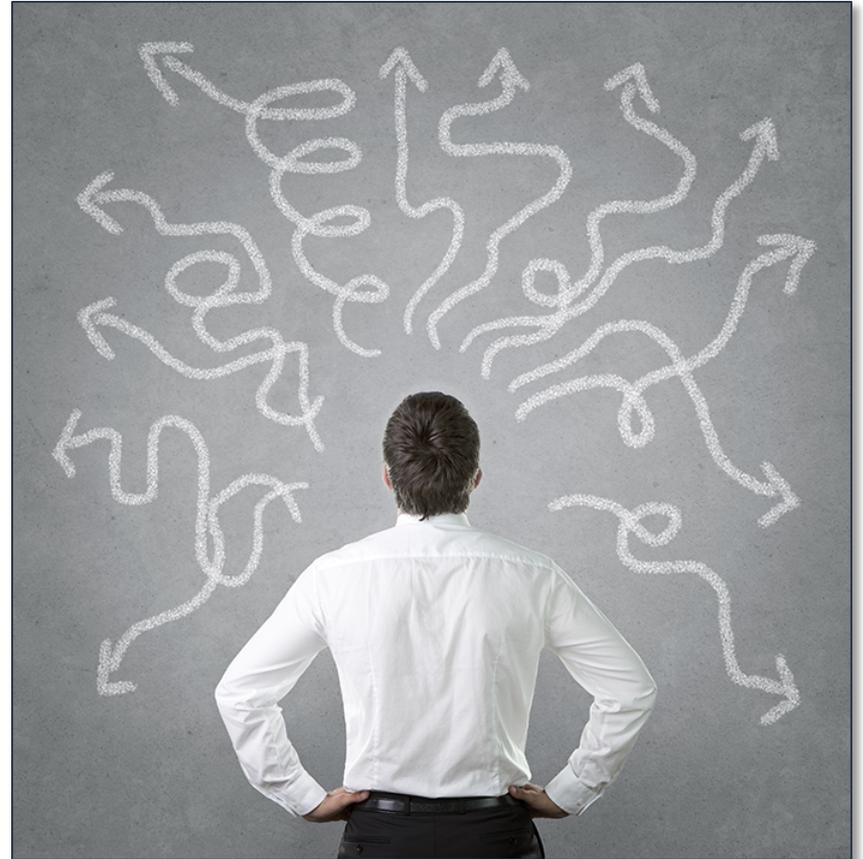
- The PLA is intended to connect all levels of the organization

with

- An intentional approach toward knowledge and information, decision making, as well as daily practices

Sometimes the
questions are
COMPLICATED
and the
answers are
SIMPLE!

--Dr. Seuss



So how does PLA work?

Like all significant improvements:



- PLA is a multi-year implementation process
- PLA requires a sustained agency-wide commitment

What does *PLA* entail?

- Leaders, Families, Teaching Staff, Family Engagement Staff, and all others doing their work a bit differently and much more intentionally.
- It's perfect for the 5-year planning cycle.
- It will raise the bar for all the teaching that occurs in every classroom.
- It is hard work and fun!
- The efforts really pay off!!!

Why adopt a *PLA*?



PLA addresses specific areas of need

- How to support all children to develop strong early language and literacy skills
- Guides teachers in how to teach based on
 - The research
 - The teachers' unique skills and
 - The unique skills of the children in their room
- Is comprehensive and holistic

PLA addresses specific areas of need

- Addresses specific areas where many programs and teachers have struggled
- Will improve the levels of quality interactions in ALL classrooms



We serve all children



The "Big 5"

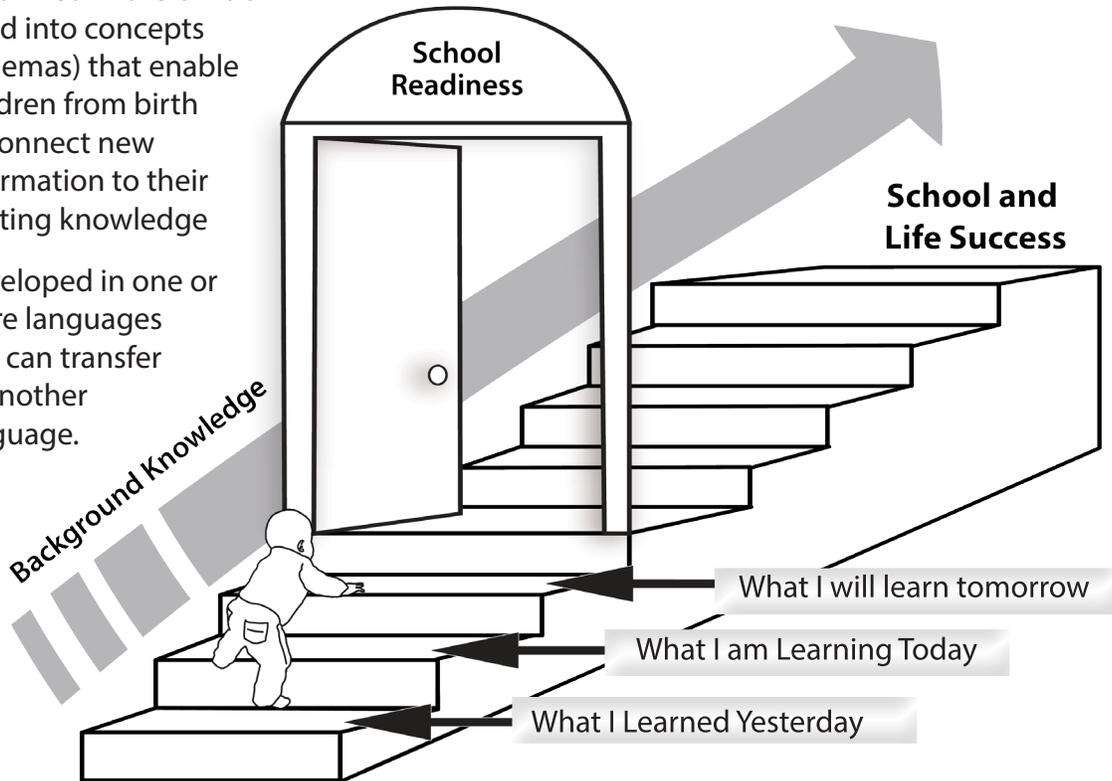
Background Knowledge

1. Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing
2. **Background Knowledge**
3. Book Knowledge and Print Concepts
4. Oral Language and Vocabulary
5. Phonological Awareness



Background Knowledge is...

- ▶ All the information that children learn and store in memory about themselves, other people, objects, and the world around them
- ▶ Beliefs, values, rules, and expectations for behavior developed in different cultural settings and environments
- ▶ Developed through children's daily interactions and experiences within their family and in their community
- ▶ Organized in the child's mind into concepts (schemas) that enable children from birth to connect new information to their existing knowledge
- ▶ Developed in one or more languages and can transfer to another language.



Children develop and use Background Knowledge by:

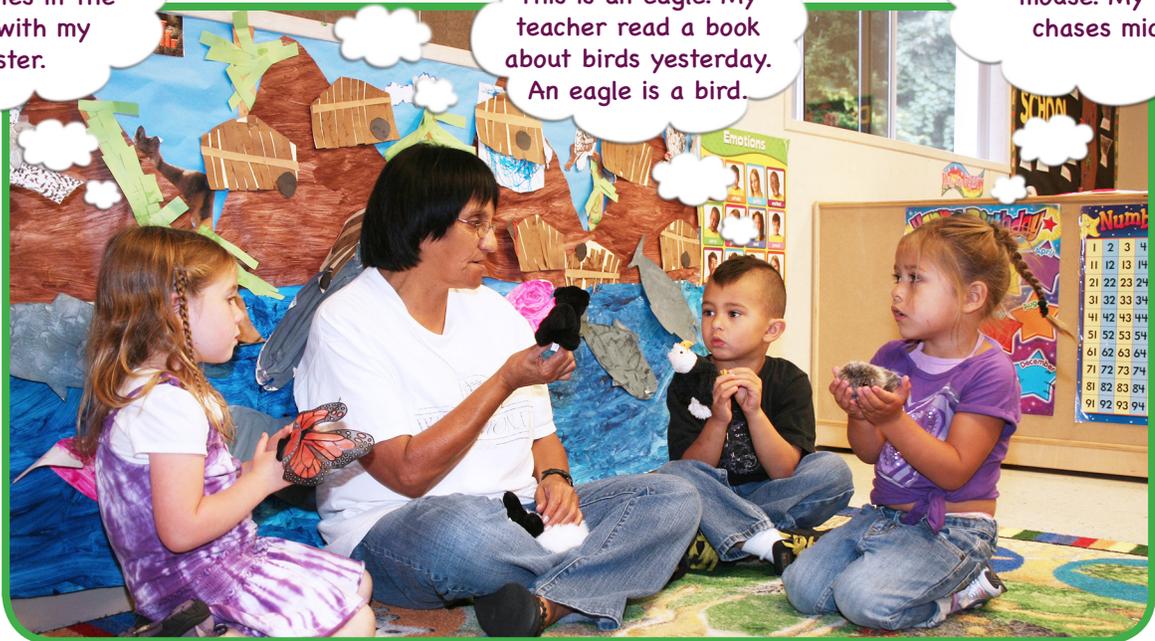
- ▶ Connecting new learning to knowledge they have already stored and organized
- ▶ Understanding and gaining new knowledge through (1) a wide variety of diverse experiences including observations and interactions and (2) instruction including modeling, explanations, books and other intentional interactions
- ▶ Solving problems and figuring things out based on their emerging and basic scientific understandings about how objects and their world works
- ▶ Expanding their use of language and developing new vocabulary as they learn more about their world
- ▶ Reflecting on their knowledge, gaining new insight, rethinking and asking questions based on those insights (preschoolers and older)

Children will be connecting this new information to what they already know about animals and birds.

I chase butterflies in the park with my sister.

This is an eagle. My teacher read a book about birds yesterday. An eagle is a bird.

I'm holding a mouse. My cat chases mice.



What Background Knowledge Looks Like



Eight-month-old Juanita touches a soft stuffed animal her mother has given her, and then the hard floor, enjoying feeling the different surfaces at home.

Juanita is developing her knowledge of texture and how to make sense of what she feels!

- ✦ When she comes to the EHS center, she notices that there are hard and soft surfaces in the classroom and builds on knowledge she has developed at home.

- ◆ Two-year ten-month-old Min is having a picnic with his family at the playground when he sees that his neighbor Miguel is also having lunch with his family. Min sees that Miguel also eats rice with his family, even though Miguel's family is eating rice and beans rather than bi bim bap.

Min is developing his knowledge about rice and about different cultures!

- ◆ Min tells the home visitor about the rice and beans. The home visitor tells Min that she eats biryani at home, which is also made with rice. Min's mother shares that rice is also in sushi. Together, they all help build Min's background knowledge.





- Four-year-olds Ari and Jean tend their pot of sprouts every day, making sure it gets both sun and water.

Ari and Jean are developing their knowledge about plants, the water cycle, and where food comes from!

- As Ari eats an apple in the classroom, he says his Abba (Daddy) told him apples were also plants and need sun and water.
- Ari's teacher Kia notes that he is continuing to develop his background knowledge of plants, and shares a book about apple trees with Ari and his classmates. Kia tells all the children that apple trees grow just like their sprouts do!

- Five-year-old Alex learns the names and eating habits of fifteen kinds of dinosaurs, an interest he picked up from his seven year old brother.

Alex is developing his content knowledge about dinosaurs, learning how to categorize, and becoming enthusiastic about learning and sharing knowledge!

- At Alex's Head Start center, he acts out the different dinosaurs, careful to stretch out tall or squat down short depending on how big the dinosaur is. Alex creates drawings of dinosaurs, sometimes relying on books for pictures and the spelling of the names.
- Alex's teachers support his interests by having conversations about dinosaurs and providing him with materials about dinosaurs, including books and computer printouts from the Internet.

Placeholder image



Children have different funds of knowledge

Children have similarities and differences in their background knowledge, because each child has their own funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge are a way of thinking about all of the information that children have developed through their experiences within their culture and family.* Some children may have lived in another country and be familiar with a different climate and landscape. Other children may have traveled little, but have wide and varied experiences in their local community that include going to the zoo, the playground, the library, or the beach. These differences can be a rich source for classroom conversations as children bring different backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge to the classroom. It is important not to assume what background knowledge a child possesses. The best way to find out is to engage with the child and family. Understanding the child's prior experiences and background knowledge is important for valid screenings and assessments!



* Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.



Why Background Knowledge Matters

- ▶ "...the development of knowledge-based competencies occurs over a lifetime; beginning with the language a child is exposed to from birth, and must be supported with good instruction throughout schooling" (Lesaux, 2013).
- ▶ "...a child's literacy experiences determine not only how many and what kinds of words she or he will encounter but also the background knowledge with which a child can conceptualize the meaning of any new word. Every opportunity should be taken to extend and enrich children's background knowledge and understanding" (Neuman, 2000).
- ▶ "Knowledge begets knowledge. Everything that children read or hear is automatically interpreted relative to what they already know about similar subjects. ...children with rich knowledge bases are more successful at learning new information" (Pinkham, Kaefer, & Neuman, 2012).
- ▶ "Content knowledge is important not only for content and conceptual development but is central for reading achievement as well. Prior knowledge is important for reading comprehension" (Duke, Halvorsen, & Knight, 2012).

“Clearly, then, children’s knowledge base is a critical component of their cognitive development and academic success”

(Pinkham, Kaefer & Neuman, 2012)



How Background Knowledge Develops

See how Alicia's knowledge develops throughout her early childhood and supports her school readiness.

INFANT/TODDLER

Infants and toddlers develop background knowledge primarily from their varied experiences exploring their world. Adult support can help them to make sense of these experiences.

- Alicia has always known the family dog, Zuke.
- Alicia knows that Zuke is a dog, and names other 4 legged animals dog.
- As she has experiences with cats, she now knows the correct name and characteristics of two animals.
- Alicia expands her knowledge of 4 legged animals through experiences and books, learning the names and characteristics of many different animals.

PRESCHOOL

Preschoolers can connect the experiences they have with the books they hear and other sources of knowledge. They also enjoy displaying and sharing their knowledge with others.

- Through books and project activities, Alicia learns to categorize the animals she knows into Farm, Zoo and Jungle Animals.
- Alicia learns to categorize animals that are domesticated and wild and those that are extinct and endangered and why.
- Alicia begins to understand the larger concept of mammals and their characteristics.
- Alicia becomes curious about insects and the differences between mammals.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Early experiences building background knowledge support school readiness, including word recognition, reading comprehension, and positive approaches to learning.

- Alicia can recognize and understand words like "mammal," "jungle," and "wild" when reading.
- Alicia can write some of the names of her favorite animals and insects.
- Alicia uses her knowledge of animals to comprehend the books she reads.
- Alicia confidently asks questions and engages with science and social studies activities because she likes showing what she knows and learning new things.



Dual Language Learners, and Culture, Background Knowledge

- ▶ Each child has their own background knowledge that is unlike any other child's and that is based on the child's own experiences and interests.
- ▶ Dual language learners bring background knowledge that has developed in their own language
- ▶ Screening and assessment of dual language learners should be involve families and include understanding the child's prior knowledge and experiences.
- ▶ Dual language learners may need additional support in learning about classroom topics that are new to them, but familiar to other children.
- ▶ Dual language learners may be valuable resources for learning about classroom topics about which they have had many experiences.
- ▶ Teachers should support all children, including dual language learners, in learning the vocabulary of their theme/content area.

Placeholder image



Alicia

Animals are pets. My dog cuddles with me. He licks my face. He loves me!

My dog has a collar around his neck with my phone number. He stays close to me on a leash.



Xiao

Animals are food. We buy chicken from the market and my grandmother makes delicious soup. I help!

You can make lots of food from chicken. My favorite is chicken dumplings. I help make the wrappers and we fold the meat inside the dough.



Alicia and Xiao are preschoolers who have both developed background knowledge about animals based on their experiences in their family and community. Note that Xiao's knowledge about animals would be expressed in Chinese, her home language. She can speak very little English, but she already knows quite a bit about cooking with chicken! She has already developed a lot of background knowledge in her home language that will transfer to English as she develops more knowledge of the language.

Alicia and Xiao bring different background knowledge about animals to school based on their prior experiences at home!



Cultural knowledge is one important type of background knowledge. Children, from birth, learn how to participate in a culture. For example, preschoolers learn how to participate in a classroom culture. They learn to sit quietly in a circle, how to line up to go to the bathroom, that loud voices should be saved for outdoors, and that they must raise their hand to speak during circle time. They are probably expected to behave quite differently at home!. It is important that teachers are aware of the different expectations between home and school and support children who are confused about having different sets of expectations.



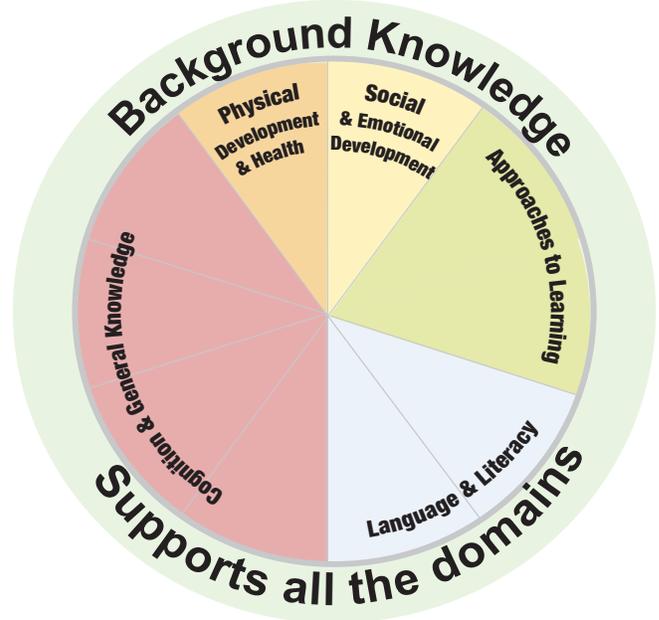
- ✓ Decide as a teaching team how you will transition between activities and what behavior you expect from children during different activities.
- ✓ Expect to spend weeks explaining, describing, modeling and practicing these behaviors with children.
- ✓ Use graphics or picture cues to help remind children what kind of behavior is expected during classroom activities.
- ✓ Lead a discussion with children about how to behave in different places, including home, the center, stores, houses of worship, homes of friends, in the car, on the bus, etc.
- ✓ Expect that some children will need reminders more often than other children.
- ✓ Expect to spend extra time with children who are new to the classroom, and support these children with explaining, modeling, and practice. Sometimes pairing a new child with a child who has already learned the classroom expectations well is a good strategy!



The Core Concepts for Background Knowledge

► Explore rich and engaging topics together over time

- Choose fun and interesting topics to explore based on children's preferences, families' suggestions and your own interests and knowledge.
- Explore these topics repeatedly over time, even over the whole year! We remember things much better when we keep coming back to them
- Create a classroom environment in which children's questions are taken seriously and respected even if they cannot be answered immediately.
- Involve families as providers of background knowledge at home and in the classroom. Tell them what topics you are exploring and ask them to share their knowledge and experiences with the children in the classroom and at home.



► Build on the child's prior knowledge

- Talk with families about what their children know, do, say and enjoy. Look to families as a source of understanding about the child's background knowledge.
- Consider a child's prior knowledge as you conduct assessments and screenings
- Talk with the children about the connections between what children are doing and seeing at the moment, what they have done and seen in the past, and what they will be doing or seeing in the future.
- Ask children about what they already know about an activity or a topic as you begin to explore it.
- Plan activities that build on prior experiences and that consider school readiness goals.
- Share information with families on an ongoing basis as you all build children's knowledge.



The Core Concepts in Action for Infants and Toddlers

Mara supports Tom as he explores his world. While his explorations of food can be a distraction at mealtime or snack time, Mara knows that they can also be rich opportunities for learning. Mara decides to use his interest as an opportunity!

Mara has noticed that her toddlers love to touch their food. Tom seems very interested in separating the bread from its crust. Mara has spoken with Tom's family about his interest in bread. They explained that they eat bread daily and that Tom has

always loved bread. As an infant, he would grab for it. His family shared that the home visitor encouraged them to follow his lead in exploring bread. Mara provides Tom with opportunities to explore bread. Recently she learned that the family has also begun exploring different toppings for bread, like butter, jam and cheese.

Mara provides Tom with the word "crust" when he tears the crust off the bread. She asks him to help her serve the bread as well, and shows him what a whole "loaf" looks like. Tom won't use these new words yet, but with Mara's support he is learning information about his world that interests him greatly!

Mara also shares books about bread with him, reminding him as she reads that he eats bread. She encourages Tom to explore his bread toppings as new ones are introduced – like hummus and sunflower butter. She has even included Tom in sharing crumbs with the birds.



The Core Concepts in Action for Preschoolers

Mara moves to the preschool room with Tom's class, including some new children. This new class is culturally diverse, with Spanish-speaking, Bengali-speaking, and French-speaking children. Tom and the other children have been talking about what they eat at home during lunch time and many of them have mentioned bread.

She decided to explore the topic "making bread" with the children. She talked to families

about the bread that they eat and families responded by providing her with the names of the breads in their home languages, recipes for making the breads and how the breads are used used in their cultural traditions (for example, for certain holidays or at particular times of the day or year). One family shared gluten-free bread recipes because one of their family members has celiac disease. Some families helped lead bread-making activities in the classroom.

Children learned the vocabulary of making bread including: knead, rise, bake, crust, dough, and yeast. They read books about bread (a favorite was Bread by Ann Morris) Mara and the children made a chart of all the steps involved in making bread. They even made an illustrated recipe book together that they gave to their families. The children like to page through the book, remembering making the different breads and deciding which bread to make next!



Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

Six month old Mohammed cuddles in his aunt's lap as she reads to him from a picture book. He reaches out to touch the picture of an apple. Three year old Sam walks over to the book area of her classroom and takes out a book about bugs that her teacher read yesterday. She pages through the book saying "bug" as she points to different types of bugs.

Book knowledge and print concepts include:

- The understanding that print is "speech written down" (Bus & deJong, 2006) [NOTE TO FORMATTER: MAKE THIS BIG AND FANCY]
- Experience with and knowledge of the different purposes of print
 - Communicating with others
 - Finding information
 - Documentation (recording our ideas)
 - Pleasure or entertainment
- Recognizing common signs, symbols and logos
- Experience with and knowledge of different types of print materials (e.g., books, pamphlets, lists, letters, fliers, journals, etc.)
- Knowledge of how to use books appropriately, including how to hold books, turn pages, etc.
- Actively participating in shared book readings and other experiences with print including asking and answering questions about what is read
- Identifying basic story elements, including characters, sequence, main events and setting, and discussing the characters and events in stories, including making predictions and retelling
- Understanding that some books provide information rather than tell a story and, with adult support, finding information in books
- Enjoying books and other experiences with print, having favorite books, and requesting that some books be re-read
- Pretending to read books (emergent reading)

Spotlight on languages!

Children learn book knowledge and print concepts in the languages that are read to them and shared with them. Some print concepts may be different across languages, including:

- Some languages are read from right-to-left and others are read from left-to-right
- Some languages are read from the back of a book to the front of a book, and others from the front of a book to the back of a book
- Some languages do not have a written form

Why does this matter?

Book knowledge and print concepts developed in **any** language support children's book knowledge and print concepts in English. For example, the central insight that "print is speech written down" (Bus & deJong, 2006) can happen in any language and transfer to other languages.

However, children may have developed knowledge of print, and how books work, in a home language with a written form that is different from English. Children may expect English language books to look and work differently like books in their home language. This prior knowledge of the home language is not "wrong" but the child may need support in understanding how the written system of English works.

Miss Karen notices that Ahmed opens books to the end rather than to the front. She does not correct him, but when she reads aloud to Ahmed,

she shows Ahmed how she opens English books and explains “English books open to the front.” After modeling this for a few days, she sees Ahmed opening an English book to the front.

	Arabic and English	Chinese and English	Spanish and English	Swahili and English
Written form of the language	Letters represent sounds. However, the letters look quite different from English letters.	Chinese does not use letters to represent sounds. Words are symbolized by characters.	Letters represent sounds. Spanish uses many of the same letters as English, though the letters do not always make the same sounds as in English.	??
Print concepts	Arabic, unlike English, is read from right to left, and from down to up. Readers turn pages from left to right.	Chinese, unlike English, is read from right to left, and from down to up. Readers turn pages from left to right.	Spanish, like English, is read left to right, and from up to down. Readers turn pages from right to left.	??

** Please note that this chart provides general information on how languages are similar to and different from English. Speakers of these languages may or may not need additional support in written English depending on their prior experiences.*

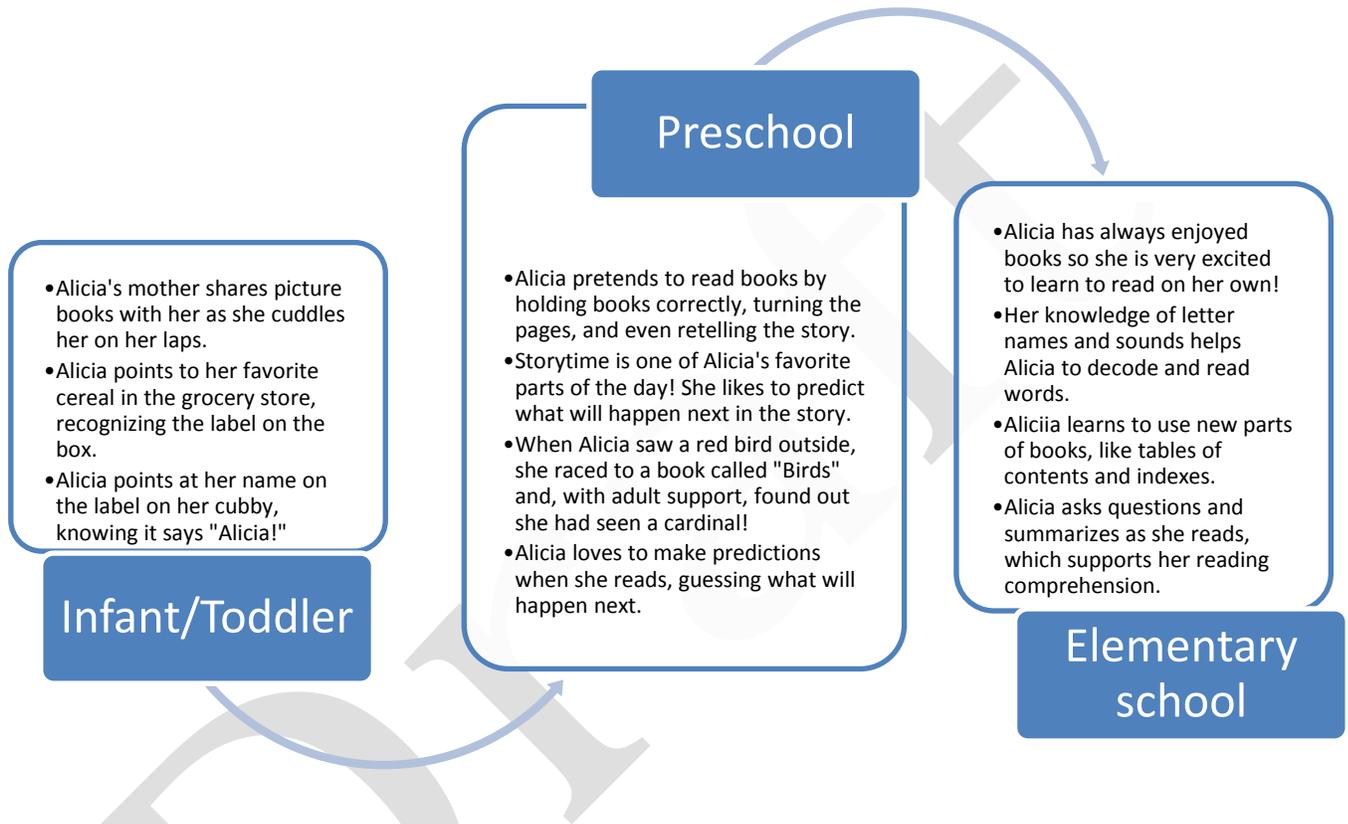
Why Book Knowledge and Print Concepts Matters!

- We contend that helping children to engage with print and to learn as much as possible about its forms and functions in the years prior to formal schooling will ease children’s transition from early to formal literacy[reading and writing] (Justice & Piasta, 2011).
- Reading-related behaviors, including book handling, language, comprehension, and emergent reading, are developmental precursors to more conventional forms of reading (Hoffman & Cassano, 2013).
- Books and other print materials can help children explore and come to understand better the people, places, and things they encounter in everyday life. They can also help children learn about the world beyond their own. (Bennett-Armistead, Duke, & Moses, 2005)
- Reading with adults, looking at books independently, and sharing reading experiences with peers are some of the ways that children experience books...Knowledge about print is built from children’s experiences with books and other written materials. (Strickland & Riley-Ayers (2006)

[Infant mouthing a book in an adult’s lap -> Toddler pointing at a picture in a book of an apple and saying “Apple” -> Preschooler saying sitting with an adult and two other children pointing at the book and saying “Maria is sad that she lost her dog. I think she is going to find him at her friends’s house!”
[We can also have the adults talk but this is the gist – should tie in to Alicia below but not be Alicia but all different kids] -> Grade schooler reading her own book saying “Yes, I thought he would win the race!!”

How do Book Knowledge and Print Concepts Develop?

See how Alicia's knowledge develops throughout her early childhood and supports her school readiness.



Infant Toddler:

- Infants and toddlers develop book knowledge and print concepts primarily through participating in shared, interactive experiences with print with caring adults. Adults share books with children by following the child's gaze and interest.

Preschool:

- Preschoolers begin to pay more attention to print with support from responsive adults. They begin to understand that print carries meaning and that it reads the same way over multiple readings. Preschoolers can ask and answer both simple and complex questions about the books that are read to them. Many preschoolers also begin to pretend to read books, practicing their emerging understanding of print.

Elementary School:

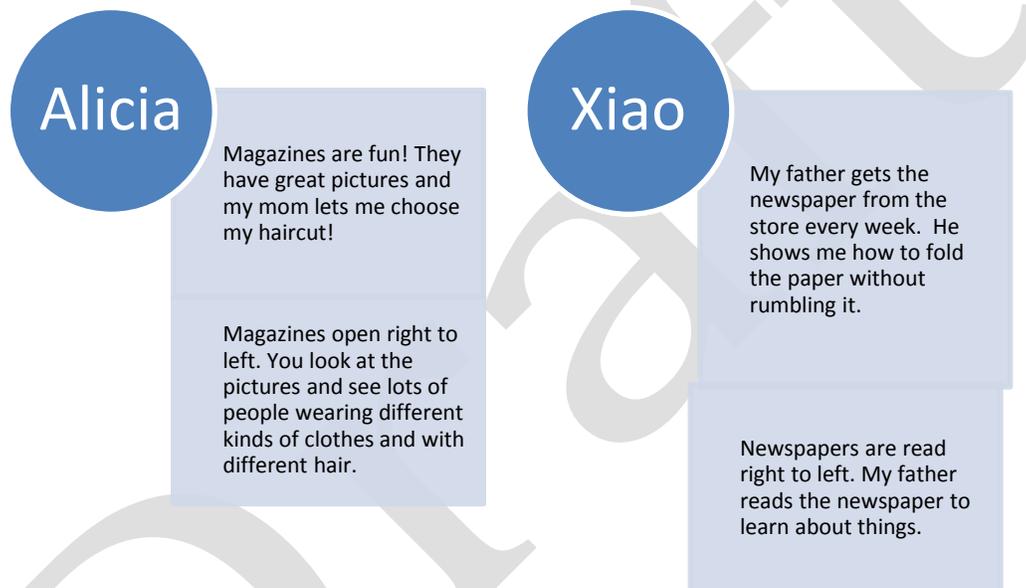
- Early experiences with books and other print materials support children in enjoying print and motivate them to learn to read. Practice asking and answering questions while hearing books read also supports later reading comprehension.

Draft

Book knowledge and print concepts and dual language learners

Alicia, a Spanish and English speaker, and Xiao, a Cantonese and English speaker, bring different knowledge about print based on their prior experiences at home. They are now preschoolers.

Alicia and Xiao have both developed print concepts based on their print experiences in their home language. Alicia has been looking at magazines in Spanish with her mother, and using them to choose her hairstyles. Since Spanish and English have similar print systems, many of her print concepts will transfer directly to English. Xiao has been looking at newspapers in Cantonese, and noting how important they are to her father. English and Cantonese have quite different print systems – while Xiao’s insight that print is “read” and used to “learn about things” will transfer to English, she will need experiences with written English in order to understand that in English, newspapers are read from left to right.



Book Knowledge and Print Concepts, Culture and Funds of Knowledge

Children develop *funds of knowledge* about books and print based on their experiences with their family and in their culture and community. *Funds of knowledge* is a way of thinking about the skills and attitudes that children have developed based on their experiences with their family. For example, some children may have families in which picture book reading is a daily activity. Other children may have developed print concepts by using signs and labels common in their neighborhood. Some children may have little direct experience with print in their families but use rich oral language to tell detailed stories about their experiences.

When teachers and caregivers develop trusting relationships with families, they can ask families about children’s experiences with books and print. These discussions, paired with observations of each child, can help teachers and caregivers to plan experiences with print that build on and extend the child’s existing knowledge and experiences. For example:

- Children who have extensive experience reading children’s picture books may use and build on this knowledge by participating in interactive and dialogic reading. With these types of reading,

adults encourage children to talk about the books, including making predictions about what will happen next, summarizing what has happened, or talking about character's feelings. The teacher may also use dictation (writing down the child's own stories) to help children to make their own books.

- Children who have developed print concepts through using signs, logos, and other symbols may use and build on this knowledge through the environmental print in the classroom. The teacher may ask these children to model using labels and signs, while supporting the child in creating some labels and signs. If book readings are not familiar to the child, the teacher may keep the initial book readings short, interactive, and on topics of great interest to the child. As the child becomes more familiar with book readings, the book readings will become longer and more involved.
- Children who have little experience with print may deepen and expand their knowledge through dictation activities. Teachers will write down the child's own speech, making a book. The book could be a story or a personal experience (e.g. the child's last birthday) of great interest to the child. The teacher and child can read these books, as well as other (short) books. The teacher will draw the child's attention to concepts of print (including how to hold a book and turn the pages), but the focus will be on making the connection between speech and print and building the child's excitement for reading.
- It is important for teachers to learn about the ways language and literacy are used and valued within the child's family. These experiences may differ from those that the teacher expects to see in the classroom. Teachers can learn about, honor, build on, and extend these experiences.

The Core Concepts of Book Knowledge and Print Concepts!

Provide children with many different types of print experiences throughout the day

- Read books daily with children of all ages in groups of one to four.
 - Read different types of books, depending on the ages and interests of the children
 - Babies and toddlers may enjoy books that can be mouthed and explored, like board books
 - Children may enjoy stories, rhymes and illustrated songs, wordless books, and books that provide information about the world
- Invite families to share books and print materials, including in a home language, at home and in the center
 - These may include books, magazines, pamphlets, and other materials
- Allow children time to explore books and other print materials on their own and in groups:
 - Include books in play areas for infants and toddlers to discover and explore
 - Provide library of books in a cozy space where children can choose and enjoy books in languages spoken in the room
 - Include print in a kitchen play area, including food containers, recipes, menus, etc.
 - Include print in the block area, including books about construction or child-made signs
 - Include print in the science area, including picture reference books and child-made observation journals
 - Label classroom materials (with words and pictures) and help toddlers and preschoolers to use the labels
 - Use pocket charts (with words and pictures) to display a classroom schedule or assign children to center activities

- **Draw children’s attention to the features and uses of print**
 - Point out and talk about letters and words, including those in the children’s names and in environmental print (beginning in infancy)
 - During shared reading, draw children’s attention to the print on the page, including what it looks like and what it does (beginning as toddlers)
 - Create environmental print with the children, such as a sign for a block structure or a snail house that they just made for the snail they found (beginning as toddlers or preschoolers)
 - Provide support for emergent writing (at any age!)

Book Knowledge and Print Concepts in Action for Infants and Toddlers

*Mara has noticed that the children in her class love to touch their food. Tom seems very interested in separating the bread from its crust. Mara provides Tom with opportunities to explore bread. She is also reading books about food, including bread. A favorite is *My Food/Mi Comida* (Rebecca Emberly). Mara shares this book with Tom. She holds him in her lap, and he immediately starts turning pages.*

Mara is impressed that at 12 months old Tom is already learning how books work. After he turns a few pages, Mara starts to note the illustrations. She says, “Where is the bread?” as Tom points to the loaf. She says, “Yes, that’s a whole loaf of bread! It’s a lot bigger than the pieces . . .” She does not finish talking before Tom has turned the page. Mara follows his lead, but tries to slow him down a little bit. She watches as Tom looks at the page. She asks, “What is this?” Tom says, “Ahh.” Mara says, “Yes, it’s an apple. Look, you can see the seeds!” She points out the seeds in the apple. Tom touches them too. He puts down the book and goes to get the toy apple from the kitchen. He proudly holds it up for Mara.

“Ahh,” he says. Mara smiles as Tom returns the kitchen to play with (and try to name) the other fruit. She knows that they only read a few pages of the book, but that it is important to follow Tom’s lead. He is clearly enthusiastic about reading and is making connections between the book and his toys. She’ll read the book again at a quieter time of day, when he might sit for a longer time.

Mara joins the preschool teaching team the following year and finds that the preschoolers are as interested in food as the toddlers were! Her class is culturally and linguistically diverse, with Spanish-speaking, Bengali-speaking, and French-speaking children. Mara follows the children’s interests into a rich and engaging exploration.

She noticed that her preschoolers all mentioned eating bread at home. She decided to explore the topic “making bread” with the children. She talks to families about the bread that they eat and families shared the names of the breads in their home languages, recipes for making the breads and how the breads are used in their cultural traditions (for example, for certain holidays or at particular times of the day or year). Mara, in partnership with families, made picture recipes for the children to follow as they made the bread.

Mara and the children made an illustrated recipe book together that they gave to their families. In order to do this, Mara and the children:

- Looked at other recipe books in order to decide what they needed to make their book
- Decided to have a cover, a title page, and a list of recipes for their book. Each recipe would have its own page and picture.

- Discussed the role of print and pictures in the book, and how they are different
- Decided that some recipes would be in two languages
- Decided a child or children would write the title of the recipe and make the picture, and that they would glue a computer printout of the recipe to the page.

Mara and the children read many books on bread, including Ann Morris's Bread, Bread, Bread. Here is part of one of Mara's read alouds of Bread, Bread, Bread.

Draft

Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing

One year old Carmen reaches for her mother's pen. She makes marks on the envelope on the table and smiles up at her mother. Four year old Ben takes the pen and says, "Carmen" and writes CRM. The home visitor says, "Ah, you wrote Carmen! Carmen and Ben like to write!"

Alphabet knowledge and early writing are separate but related skills. They include:

- Early attempts to communicate through print, from first scribbles through recognizable letters and words
 - **Scribbling** with toddlers learning to use writing tools (e.g., crayons,) to make marks
 - **Formation of letters** by toddlers and preschoolers that begin to look more and more like conventional print
 - **Name writing** by toddlers and preschoolers that begins to look more and more like conventional print
 - **Emergent writing** (intentional attempts to create letters, words and connected text) for a wide variety of authentic purposes, including lists, captions, labels, stories, or information
- Understanding that letters are special symbols that we use to read and write in English
- Observing and experiencing written language in their environments that enables children to develop an understanding that writing has special purposes, including:
 - Communicating with others
 - Writing to remember
 - Documentation
 - Writing for pleasure or entertainment
- Recognizing capital letters (A, B, C, etc.) and lower case letters (a, b, c, etc.) of the English alphabet in preschool
- Knowledge that English letters are associated with individual sounds
- Associating the letters of the English alphabet with their specific sounds

Spotlight on languages!

"Being a good reader **in English** means that a child has gained a functional knowledge of the principles of the English alphabetic system. (emphasis added, Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998, 15).

Some languages, however, are **not** alphabetic, meaning that they do not have an alphabet in which letters (and their sounds) form words. In Chinese, for example, a word is written as a whole pictorial character rather than with individual letters. The individual sounds in a word are not related to parts of the pictorial character, rather the pictorial character represents a whole word.

Why does this matter? Alphabet knowledge, while important to learning to read in English, is not related to learning to read in non-alphabetic languages. Also, children who have developed knowledge of a non-alphabetic home language may have little experience with symbols like letters that represent a sound but not a whole word. To prepare for reading English, they may need additional practice with English phonological awareness (especially phonemic awareness, or awareness of individual sounds that match English letters) and with the English alphabet.

Table: The similarities and differences of some common languages with English

	Arabic and English	Chinese and English	Spanish and English	Swahili and English
The written form of the word “baby”	बच्चा (baccha) - small baby, more colloquial बालक (balak) - child शिशु (shishu) - more formal term for baby	小人 (little person) 小宝宝 (little treasure -- for boy) 小孩子 (little kid) 小囡囡, (little sweet girl) 小朋友 (little friend) 小贝贝 (little treasure -- for girl) Xi 小东 (lit. “little thing”)	“bebé”	
Written form of the language	Letters represent sounds. However, the letters look quite different from English letters.	Chinese does not use letters to represent sounds. Words are symbolized by characters.	Letters represent sounds. Spanish uses many of the same letters as English, though the letters do not always make the same sounds as in English.	??

* Please note that this chart provides general information on how languages are similar to and different from English. Speakers of these languages may or may not need additional support in written English depending on their prior experiences.

Why Early Writing and alphabet Knowledge Matter!

Early writing and alphabet knowledge are separate but related skills that together support later reading and writing. Early writing supports later writing and, by developing children’s understanding of the purposes and functions of written language. It also supports children’s later reading. Alphabet knowledge supports children’s understanding of letter-sound relationships, which is key to both reading and writing in English and many other languages.

Being a good reader in English means that a child has gained a functional knowledge of the principles of the English alphabetic system. (Snow & Griffin, 1998)

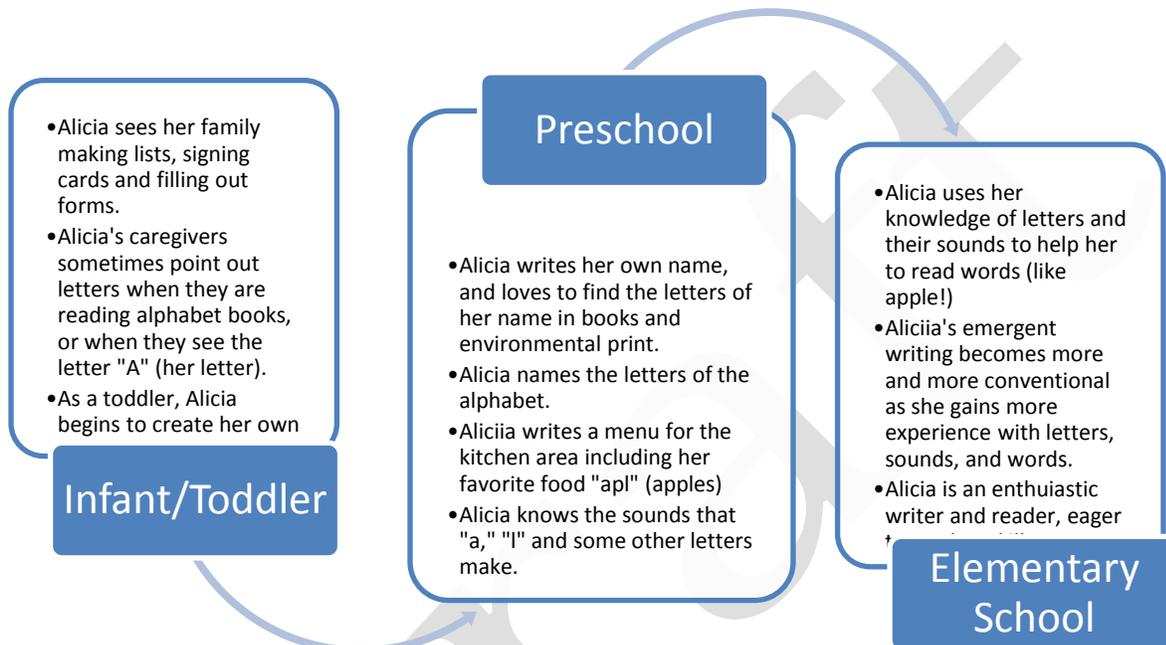
Moving towards being a good reader means that a child has gained a functional knowledge of the culture’s writing system . . . prior to real reading, young children gain functional knowledge of the parts, products and uses of the writing system and the ways in which reading and oral language activities complement each other and diverge from each other. (Snow and Griffin, 1998)

Children acquire a working knowledge of the alphabetic system not only through reading but also through writing. (IRA & NAEYC, 1998).

With instruction and practice in writing, they [children] become increasingly proficient at recognizing and forming letters and using these letters to represent the sounds that they hear. (Bardige, 2009).

How do Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing Develop?

Alicia's knowledge and skills develops throughout her early childhood and support her school readiness.



Infant Toddler:

- Infants and toddlers explore writing tools and practice making marks when adults provide them with writing materials and support for using them. With support, toddlers can begin to recognize meaningful letters (like those in their own name) in favorite books or in labels and signs.

Preschool:

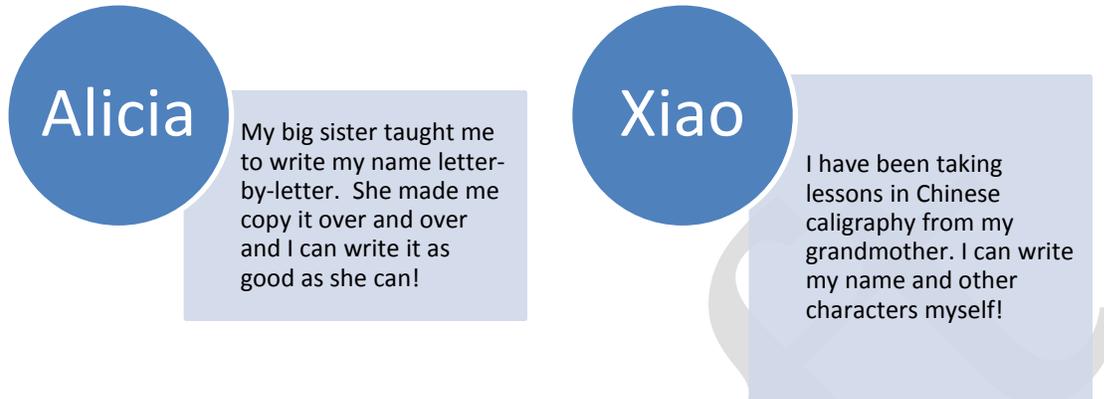
- Preschoolers begin to learn more letters and the sounds they make. They also begin to use this knowledge in their writing. For example, their emergent writing begins as scribbles that they call writing, and changes over time to look more and more like conventional writing with actual letters and even words.

Elementary School:

- Children continue to develop their writing skills into elementary school, becoming conventional writers by the end of the primary grades. Children use their alphabet knowledge to decode and read words.

Early writing, alphabet knowledge and dual language learners

Alicia, a Spanish and English speaker, and Xiao, a Cantonese and English speaker, bring different knowledge about writing based on their prior experiences at home. They are now preschoolers.



*Dual language learners are developing knowledge of **two** writing systems*

- Dual language learners are learning about the print systems of two or more languages. These languages may have similar writing systems (like English and Spanish) or very different writing systems (like English and Chinese). Some languages do not have a written form.
- When the print systems of the child's languages are quite different (e.g. one is alphabetic and the other is pictographic as in the example above) children need many experiences with each print system in order to develop writing skills in each language.
- The basic, but important, insight that print conveys meaning or is "speech written down" (Bus & deJong, 2006) transfers across the writing systems of different languages. Once a child understands this concept in one language, she may find it easier to make the same connection in another language.

English letters and sounds may be new to some dual language learners

- Some alphabetic languages, like English and Spanish, share many letters and sounds. Other alphabetic languages, like English and Arabic, may share no letters and only some sounds.
- Depending on the child's prior experiences in English and in their home language, dual language learners may need additional experiences with new English sounds (see Phonological Awareness) and with English letters.

Language, Culture, Letters, and Early Writing

Children develop *funds of knowledge* about writing and the English alphabet based on their experiences with their family and in their culture and community. *Funds of knowledge* is a way of thinking about the skills and attitudes that children have developed based on their experiences with their family. For example, some children may have practiced individual letter formation with their families at home and be proud of their ability to make conventional letter forms. Their families prize the ability to form conventional English print, even in young children. Other children may have developed a wide and varied understanding of the purposes of writing by helping their families to brainstorm what should be included on a shopping list, by signing cards and **thank you notes** with emergent writing of their name, and by using emergent writing to create labels on their pictures. Some children may have little direct experience with print in their families but use rich oral language to tell detailed stories about their experiences.

When teachers and caregivers develop trusting relationships with families, they can ask families about children's experiences with letters and with writing. These discussions, paired with observations of each child, can help teachers and caregivers to plan experiences with print that build on and extend the child's existing knowledge and experiences. For example:

- Children who bring a strong knowledge of writing individual letters may use and build on this knowledge by writing individual letters during Shared Writing activities in which both teachers and children write together. The teacher may also extend the child's experiences by connecting the letters the child knows to the letters in picture books, and provide the children with support for writing their name or simple labels.
- Children who have extensive experience with the meaning and purposes of print can build on those experiences by making lists, signing cards, and writing labels in the classroom. The teacher can extend this knowledge by helping the child connect their writing to letters and sounds.
- Children who have rich oral language, but little experience with print, can build on that language by participating in dictation activities, in which teachers write down what the child says. The teacher may also extend this knowledge by supporting the child to understand the connection between the letters and sound in the child's name.

It is important for teachers to learn about the ways language and literacy are used and valued within the child's family. These experiences may differ from those that the teacher expects to see in the classroom. Teachers can learn about, honor, build on, and extend these experiences.

The Core Concepts of Early Writing and Alphabetic Knowledge

- Infants and toddlers explore writing tools and practice making marks when adults provide them with writing materials and support for using them
 - Very young children may "write" in a high chair, a lap, or the floor
 - Toddlers may begin to point to their own writing and tell you what it says
- Toddlers and preschoolers enjoy **finding and talking about the letters of the alphabet**, especially the letters in their own name (the first letter of their name is usually a special favorite)
 - In their favorite books
 - On signs and other environmental print
 - That they "write" or see others write
- Children learn both **letter names and letter sounds** in preschool
 - Usually, children learn letter names before letter sounds, but occasionally some children learn letter sounds first
- Finding and using letters should be a **fun and enjoyable** activity for children
 - Naming and using letters can be part of reading a favorite book, or seeing a new sign or pamphlet
 - Letter experiences should be very short (1-2 minutes) and not be extended lessons
- Early writing is both a literacy activity and a fine motor skill
 - Some children may need additional support in developing fine motor skills, including gripping a ball or using scissors, beading, or putting small manipulatives together
- Early writing activities should allow children to **explore, practice, and have fun**
 - Children may choose from a variety of writing tools, including different colored markers, pencils and crayons

- Children may draw pictures and then “write” a letter, word, or scribble describing what they draw.
- Children may make cards, lists, or posters

Early Writing and Alphabet Knowledge in Action for Infants and Toddlers

Mara is a toddler teacher who has noticed that the toddlers in her room love to touch their food. She has decided to provide print-based experiences with food to support their early writing. Mara knows that the children really enjoy the kitchen dramatic play area, and often pretend to make food and serve it to each other and to adults. Mara has placed books about food in the kitchen, and has decided to label popular items in the kitchen like the stove, the cabinets, and the bread box. She also taped a large piece of paper to the table, and some crayons on it for children to write.

*She sat in the kitchen with the children, and helped them use the writing area and the books. Bridget picked up the book *My Food/Mi Comida* and pointed to the picture of “bread,” one of her favorite foods. Mara said, “Bread, you love bread! B—see the b? Bread has a “b!” Where do we keep our bread?” Bridget walked over to the bread box and took out the plastic bread. Bridget joined in. Mara asked Bridget if she saw a “b” – she pointed to the word “Bread” on “Bread box.” She said, “B – Ben!” Mara said, “Yes, Bridget and bread start with B!” Mara, with Bridget watching, wrote a label “bread” on the bread box.*

On another day, she asked the children in the kitchen if they needed any food for their kitchen. The children started to name their favorite foods. “Yes, crackers!” said Simon. “Juice!” said Amalka. “Pie!” said Tom. Mara said, “Oh, these are great ideas. Let’s make a list of what we need from the store. What did you say, Simon?” “Crackers! Cheese!” he replied. “Yes, let me see – crackers and cheese,” said Mara. After she finished the list, she said, “Hmm, let’s use one of these foods today and another one tomorrow. The first food on my list is crackers. Here are some crackers.” She gives them a cracker box. “Crackers!” says Simon.

Mara rotates different books into an out of the dramatic play kitchen area. She also includes some boxes with labels and pictures of the children’s favorite foods. Sometimes they are empty boxes supplied by the families and Mara makes them.

Early Writing and Alphabet Knowledge in Action for Preschoolers

Mara joins the preschool teaching team the following year and finds that the preschoolers are as interested in food as the toddlers were! Her class is culturally and linguistically diverse, with Spanish-speaking, Bengali-speaking, and French-speaking children. Mara follows the children’s interests into a rich and engaging exploration.

She noticed that her preschoolers all mentioned eating bread at home. She decided to explore the topic “making bread” with the children.

Mara and the children created a big book cookbook through the process of Shared Writing. Mara involved each child in the writing of the recipe titles by asking each child to participate in a way in which they could succeed. The alphabet was posted above the writing sheet, so that children could use it to write. She asked some children to write a single letter, and asked other children to write multiple letters, depending on the child’s knowledge and comfort level. For example, she asked Nancy to write the word

“Nan”(a type of Indian bread) since she could already form all of those letters. Boris wrote the “B” in bread, since he is new to English and that is the only letter he knows. He looked up at the B in the alphabet and slowly and deliberately made his B.

In this Shared Writing activity, Mara

- Placed the paper on an easel in easy reach of the children
- Allowed each child, at some point, to hold the pencil and write letters or words
- Supported children in deciding which letter came next
- Allowed children time to write the letter, and an posted alphabet to help
- Understood that errors were learning opportunities and encouraged children to have another try
- Did some of the writing herself
- Kept writing sessions short

Mara also provided opportunities for children to produce longer connected text. She used dictation to help children record their experiences eating the different types of bread. Mara asked each child to describe his or her favorite bread. She would write down what the child said, and ask the child to illustrate the words. Nancy said, “My favorite bread was nan because it was flat and chewy. I liked stretching it out and putting toppings on it. The butter was so delicious!” Boris, who was new to English said, “Bread good.” His aunt, who volunteered in the classroom every week, wrote what he said in Russian, as well. (Translated: The bread was fun to eat. I liked the bread with raisins because raisins are good to eat.)

Oral language and vocabulary development

Seven month old Vivian and her father babble back and forth at each other, smiling and enjoying the shared attention. Vivian beams to be “talking” with Papa. Three year old Sebastian uses a whisk to stir at a water table. He says, “I stir with my big spoon.” His teacher says, “That’s a wisk; it’s a lot like a spoon but made from pieces of wire. Can you say ‘wisk’!” Sebastian feels the wires and says, “Wisk! It’s a wisk made of wire. That’s a spoon [pointing at a spoon]”

Oral Language refers to all of spoken language, including a growing and diverse vocabulary of new and varied words. These related skills include:

- The ability to understand, and then use, spoken language including:
 - Interactive language skills like taking turns while speaking and listening, and gesturing
 - Receptive language skills (hearing and understanding the language or languages of a child’s environment)
 - Understanding more and more of the words (vocabulary) spoken in a child’s environment
 - Expressive language skills (making and using the sounds of a child’s language or languages) including:
 - Infant babbling -> Early word attempts -> First words
 - Putting words into sensible phrases and sentences (syntax)
 - Talking at an appropriate pace and for increasing lengths of time, including telling stories and providing explanations
 - Participating in extended conversations on a single topic with many back and forth exchanges over several minutes, including both talking and listening
 - Using an increasingly large rich and varied vocabulary, including using more and more words, and words that are longer, more complex, and more unusual
 - Knowing how to match the language to the situation, including (for dual language learners) code switching between languages

Children in poverty are at risk for having a small vocabulary. A large vocabulary is important because it helps children learn to read and understand what they read!

Why Oral Language and Vocabulary Matters!

- “Oral language” is a predictor of reading ability and includes a range of skills. It refers to expressive skills, such as the ability to comprehend vocabulary, along with expressive abilities in putting words together to form grammatically appropriate phrases and sentences, and combining words together in meaningful ways” (Landry & Smith, 2006 in Wasik & Newman, 2009).
- “Spoken language and reading have much in common.” *Readers recognize the printed words on the page **and** use their oral language knowledge to understand what the phrases, sentences, and paragraphs say.* (Italics are paraphrased; National Reading Panel, 1998).
- “Oral vocabulary is very important to reading comprehension; readers need to know the meanings of individual words to understand the text as a whole” (Schickendanz & Collins, 2013).
- Vocabulary quotes about risk
- Vocab quotes about dual language learners

How do oral language and vocabulary develop?

[Work to create a picture or graphic. A very young child should be hearing rich input and producing a simple version. For example, hearing “This big red truck is very heavy” and saying “truck” while holding a big red truck while sitting in an adult’s lap. This image should then be briefly described, perhaps with words connected to the image]

Miguel and his mother returned from the doctor’s office. His mother and uncle were at home. The uncle asked, “How’d it go, champ?” Miguel answered, “OK.” Miguel’s mother asked, “What did the doctor do, Miguel?” Miguel replied, “He listened to my chest [tapping himself on the chest], he looked in my ears [tugging his ears] and he gave me a shot [pointing at the bandaid].” His uncle asked, “Oh, did the shot hurt?” Miguel said, “Yes, it hurt so bad and then it stopped.” The home visitor noted, “Miguel, you were busy at the doctor’s office! What else happened?” Miguel said, “Well, they gave me stickers. I took the truck ones. Roar, truck! I stuck them on my shirt.”

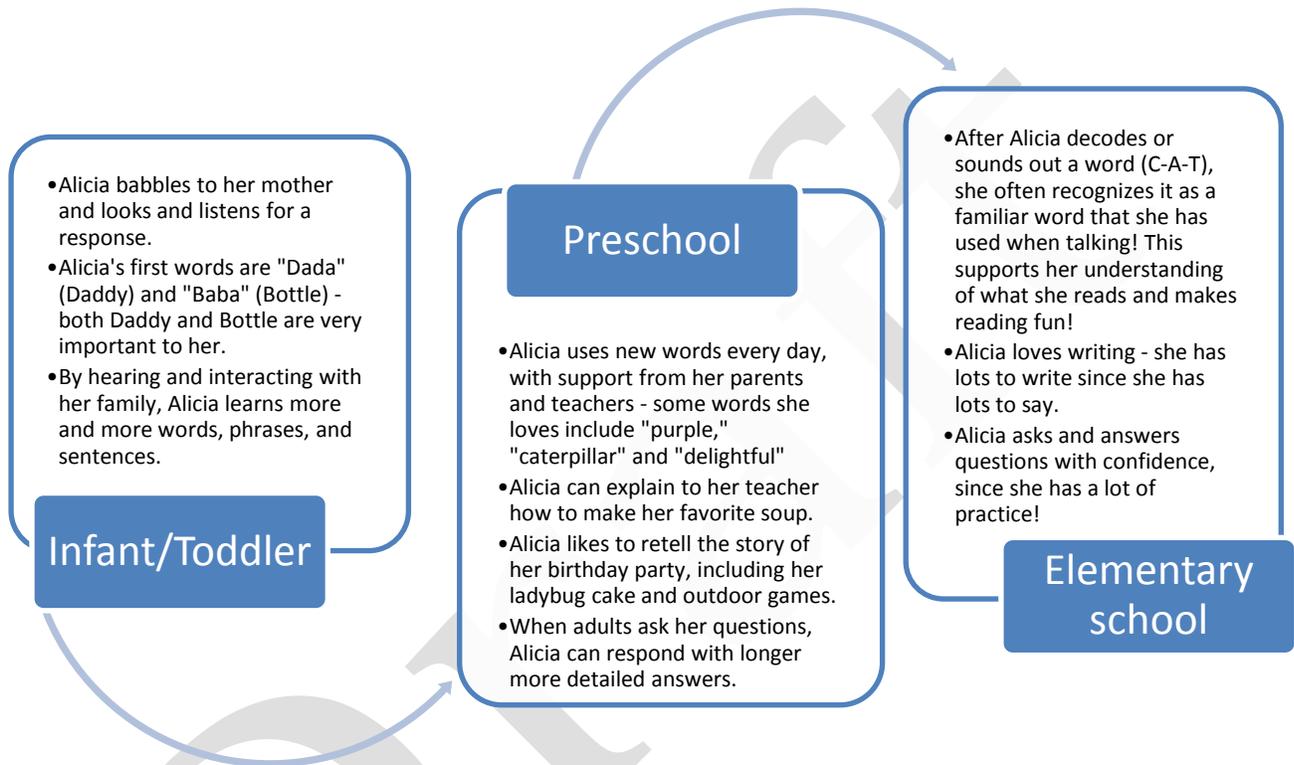


While children learn many words and oral language skills through listening and interaction, they must also be **intentionally taught** words as well. Many important words are not used a lot when speaking, but are very important when reading. Adults may use children’s picture books, children’s experiences in the world, or children’s interests as sources of new words. When adults **teach** new words to children, they often:

- Use the new word and say what it means (“Look at the nest! A nest is where birds live. They usually make them out of straw or twigs.”)
- Show a picture of the word or act out the word
- Ask the child to say the word
- Talk about the word, including words that are similar and different (“Yes, a nest is like a bed for birds!”)
- Use the word often (“Are you taking a nap in a nest? No, your bed – that’s right, you’re not a bird!”)



See how Alicia's knowledge develops throughout her early childhood and supports her school readiness.



Infant Toddler:

- Infants and toddlers develop oral language and vocabulary from birth. They first learn through listening, and then begin to make their own sounds, words, phrases and sentences.

Preschool:

- Preschoolers develop stronger oral language skills as they learn to produce talk that is longer, more complex, and uses many different words. Preschoolers' vocabularies (the words they know) can grow very fast in language-rich environments, and the number of words they know predicts their reading skills later.

Elementary School:

- Early experiences building oral language and vocabulary support children's reading skills (especially their comprehension or understanding of what they read.) Having a strong vocabulary is also associated with learning in the content areas, including science and social studies.

How do oral language and vocabulary develop in dual language learners?

Dual language learners are developing early language and vocabulary skills in **two** or more languages. When children have strong language models in their languages, they can develop strong language skills in more than one language from birth!

- Learning a new word (or label) in English for a word they already know in their home language is much easier for most dual language learners than learning a brand new word. Their understanding of the concept supports their word learning in English.
- Most dual language learners know some words in only one of their languages. For example, they have many words about bath time only in a home language, and many words about circle time only in English.
- Remember that dual language learners likely know many more words overall than they know in English! Only a portion of the vocabulary is in English.

Dual language learners can use their knowledge of their home language to support their English acquisition.

- Use your knowledge of the home language to help dual language learners learn new English words! If you are a speaker of a child's home language, help dual language learners connect English versions of words to words in the home language.

Visuals and movement can help dual language learners (and monolingual English speakers) with their English language acquisition.

- Use visuals and picture charts to help children connect words to images. For example, use pictures to illustrate your schedule, your lists or recipes, or other writing! [Provide and discuss an example]
- Encourage children to use props or act out new words. This is fun for all!
 - First, Ms. Amy held up a picture of an animal and say its name in English and Lin would act it out.
 - Then, Ms. Amy would say the animal's name in English, and Lin would act it out.
 - Next, Lin would act out an animal and then tell her its name.
 - Finally, Lin would act out an animal, say its name, and talk about the animal and what it looked like and liked to do

Oral language, dual language learners, and culture

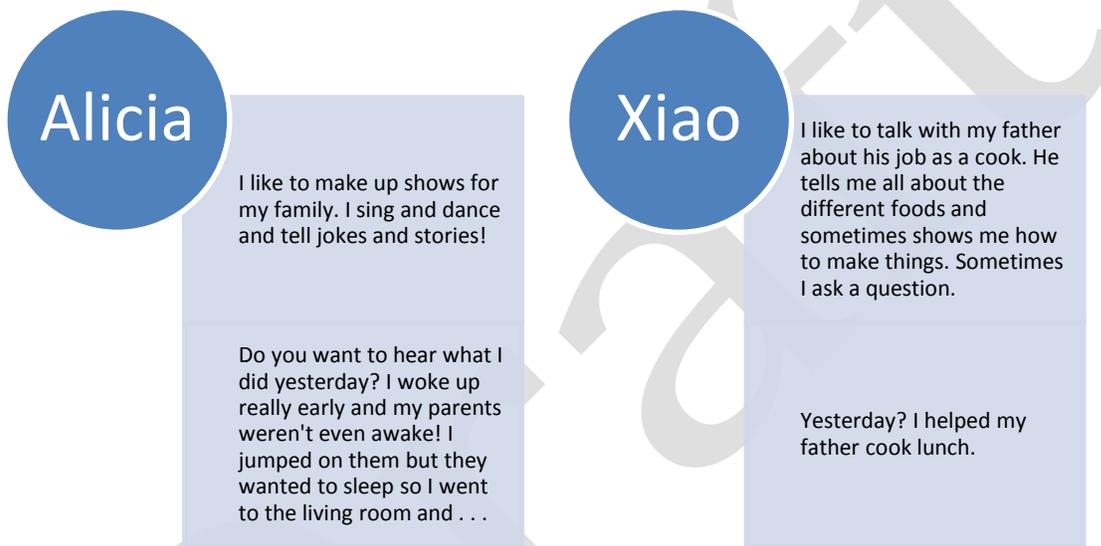
Children develop *funds of knowledge* about how to use language based on their experiences with their family and in their culture and community. *Funds of knowledge* is a way of thinking about the skills and attitudes that children have developed based on their experiences with their family. For example,

- Children learn to talk within their family and a culture. Different families and cultures value different ways of talking.
 - Some families may encourage children to talk, ask them many questions, and expect them to have conversations with adults.
 - Other families may use talk less often, or expect children to speak very little. They may value cooperation or working together more than talking.
 - Some individual children, from any culture, may talk more or less than is common in their family or culture.
- Different ways of talking, that may vary across cultures, include:
 - When children should – and should not - speak (at meals? In the car? Whenever they have something to say? Only when asked a question?)

- Who children should speak with (only people they know well? Anyone? Adults? Other children? Men? Women?)
- How long children should speak (As little as necessary to communicate a point? As long as possible?)
- How to tell a story (short and to the point? long and detailed? Another way?)

When teachers and caregivers develop trusting relationships with families, they can ask families about their goals and thoughts about their child’s oral language skills. These discussions, paired with observations of each child, can help teachers and caregivers to plan oral language experiences that build on and extend the child’s existing knowledge and skills.

Alicia and Xiao bring different experiences with oral language to their preschool classroom!



Alicia and Xiao are preschoolers who have both developed oral language within their culture, and family and in a way that is consistent with their temperaments. Note that Xiao’s oral language would be expressed mostly in Mandarin Chinese, her home language. Xiao enjoys listening to her father, but is not in the habit of talking a great deal. Alicia, however, is in the habit of talking a lot. Their teachers may need to be especially responsive to Xiao to support her to see the classroom as a place where talking is encouraged. Alicia may need some support with conversational skills like waiting one’s turn to speak.

THE CORE CONCEPTS OF ORAL LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY!

- **Children learn oral language by hearing others talk and by interacting and talking with others**
 - Infants babble the sounds they hear and, when adults respond enthusiastically, are encouraged to use more sounds
 - Toddlers begin to use words, phrases and sentences – drawing from the words they hear from others. When adults respond with encouragement to say more, toddlers deepen their language skills
 - Preschoolers talk for longer periods of time about things that are important to them. With support and encouragement, they can use a greater variety of words, and talk across more conversational turns
- Children, including those at the youngest ages, develop vocabulary by hearing and using a great variety of new words. Adults should use many different words with young children, supporting them in developing a strong and broad vocabulary.
 - Children’s picture books often include great new words that children may not yet have learned.
 - Science and social studies content area topics can also provide some wonderful words. Even young children can begin to use words like “observe” or “community.”
 - Children learn many words simply by hearing them used repeatedly; they learn other words when adults intentionally choose and teach them these words.

NEED MORE ON VOCAB HERE AND THROUGHOUT

The Core Concepts in Action for Infants and Toddlers

Mara supports her infants and toddlers to develop language by using language with them, and responding to their own early vocalizations, including babbles. She may respond by looking at a child, by responding with sounds or words, or by picking up a child, or bringing a child an object.

*Mara has noticed that snack time and mealtime are good times to speak with her toddlers. She uses **self-talk** by describing her actions to the children. For example, she will say “I am making your bottle now!” or “I am going to spread this jam on your bread.” She also uses **parallel talk** and describes what the children are doing. For example, she might say “Tom, you enjoy your bread! You are tearing the crust right off!”*

In this way, Mara is supporting the children’s oral language and vocabulary. They are hearing talk about what they are seeing and doing – which helps them understand the language they hear! Mara provides Tom with the word “crust” when he tears the crust off the bread. She asks him to help her serve the bread as well, and shows him what a whole “loaf” looks like. Tom won’t use these new words yet, but with Mara’s support he is learning information about his world that interests him greatly! Mara also shares books about bread with him, reminding him as she reads that he eats bread.

The Core Concepts in Action for Preschoolers

Mara moves to the preschool room with many of her children, and some new children as well. Her center believes in continuity of care. Her preschoolers seem as interested in bread as Tom was! Her class is culturally diverse, with Spanish-speaking, Bengali-speaking, and French-speaking children.

Mara loves to cook, and she noticed that her preschoolers all mentioned eating bread at home. She decided to explore the topic “making bread” with the children. She decides that they will make bread as a classroom activity. She sees this project as including several activities, many of which will support oral language and vocabulary development:

- In small groups, Mara and the children have conversations about bread. Some questions Mara asks the children include: a.) What kind of bread do you like to eat? b.) What other foods do you eat bread with? C.) How do you think bread is made?
- Mara creates a basic recipe for making bread, which she posts. The recipe includes picture support. Mara talks through each step with the children, talking about what they will do. She includes some words in the home languages of the children in this recipe as well – with each ingredient listed in each language.
- The children make bread together, and she talks about what they are doing at each step.
- During breaks in the recipe (i.e., when the bread rises, bakes, and cools), Mara meets with the children in small groups. She asks the children questions including: a.) What have we done so far to make the bread? b.) What did it feel like? c.) What do you think we are doing next?
- When the bread is baked, the children brainstorm many different words (in a few different languages) describing the taste of the bread. The words included: delicious, yummy, good, warm, buttery, etc.

Mara and the children also talked about the experience making the bread over the next few days. Some children re-enacted making the bread in the dramatic play area – talking through what they did. Some children drew pictures and made emergent writing about the experience. Mara told families about the experience and encouraged them to ask the children questions (in the home language). Some families made bread at home, as well!

[Strategies with examples will be developed based on the work of the strategy group. They will be presented here in a format to be determined.]

Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness includes

- Awareness of the sounds and sound patterns of language
 - Words, syllables, rhymes, and individual sounds (phonemes) in English
- The ability to hear, identify, make and work with the sounds and sound patterns of spoken language, including
 - Listening to and noticing the sounds of language
 - Playing with sound patterns, including repeating sounds, rhyming, singing, or chanting
 - Identifying sounds of words that sound the same (e.g., at the beginnings or ends of words like air-plane and air-port)
 - Blending different sounds together (e.g., blending air and plane into airplane)
 - Breaking sounds up, or segmenting sounds (e.g., breaking up today into to and day)

Phonological awareness and reading

Phonological awareness in English helps children learn to read English, because they are learning the sounds associated with words and letters. Phonological awareness in other languages, like Spanish, in which sounds match letters, also helps children learn to read the language. This relationship may not be true across all languages, however.

BOX: Heading: Supporting phonological awareness in languages you know well

You must know the sounds and sound combinations of a language very well in order to lead phonological awareness activities. Adults should only lead phonological awareness activities in languages in which they are fully fluent!

Children develop and use Phonological Awareness by:

- Making and using the sounds of spoken language (including infant babbling!)
- Playing with the sounds of words
 - Repeating sounds
 - Blending or stringing sounds together
 - Making up nonsense words made of different sounds
 - Rhyming sounds or words
- Singing, chanting or saying simple rhymes and songs, including those that have motions
- Hearing books and songs that have rhyming words or interesting sounds (i.e., PLOP! Cowabunga! Ho! Ho!)
- Practicing and recognizing sounds that sound the same
 - at the *end* of words (rhymes) such as
 - **m-y / b-y / cr-y / tr-y** [do not separate with dashes, separate with space or different colored boxes?]
 - at the *beginning* of words (alliteration) such as
 - **b-all, b-at, b-oy** [do not separate with commas, separate with space or different colored boxes?]
- Many preschoolers and kindergarteners can even manipulate sounds by:
 - **blending** sounds together to make syllables and words
 - with compound words such as *air-plane*

- with syllables such as *pan-da*
- even with individual sounds such as *B-a-t*
- **segmenting (dividing) words**
 - segmenting compound words into two words such as *air plane*;
 - segmenting words into syllables such as *pan da*;
 - segmenting words into sounds such as saying *bbb*, then *attt* for the word *bat*



Why Phonological Awareness matters

- “Through daily exposure to human and environmental sounds, infants gradually become aware of how sounds are made and how they vary. This awareness is a necessary [beginning] to hearing and making the sounds of the alphabet” (Brickmayer, Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2008).
- “Phonological awareness is critical for learning to read any alphabetic writing system. And research shows that difficulty with phoneme awareness and other phonological skills is a predictor of poor reading and spelling development” (Moats & Tolman, 2009).
- “. . . systematic instruction in phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondences is critical for early reading development (Rayner et al., 2001).
- “Instruction in phonemic and phonological awareness should be playful, as teachers, read and tell stories, play word games, and use rhymes and riddles. In addition, instruction...should be purposeful and planned. We must make sure children get the necessary experiences” (Morrow, 2007).

[Insert graphic of developmental progression I/T to Grade School]

[A baby babbling “Ba Ba” .-> A toddler rhyming “Tap Tap Dap” -> A preschooler noticing “Momma starts with mmmm just like my name, Maria!” .-> A first grader looking at the word “map” and sounding out “m-a-p”]

“Phonological awareness helps children identify the sounds of words, which helps them sound out words when they learn to read later in school!”



Phonological awareness is awareness of the sounds a child hears or makes.

Phonological awareness is about the sounds of words that children hear and NOT the written symbols that they see. Print concepts and alphabet knowledge, which are different skills, focus on the written symbol (like letters and words).

As children develop phonological awareness, they learn to break the speech they hear up into parts.

- Children hear sounds when people talk to them.
- As children they gain more experience hearing speech, they become aware that:
 - **Speech** is made up of **Words** [Can these three bullets be a graphic?]
 - **Words** are made up of **Syllables**
 - **Syllables** are made up of **Individual sounds (Phonemes)**

Infants and toddlers develop phonological awareness primarily by hearing and making sounds.

- Infants babble and practice the sounds of their language(s).
- Older infants and toddlers begin to make syllables and words.
- Adults provide infants and toddlers with lots of fun and engaging sounds by talking, singing, playing, chanting, and reading to them.
- Adults and infants and toddlers often enjoy repeating sounds back and forth, making loud and soft sounds, and making each other laugh by using sounds.

Children develop phonological awareness at their own pace.

- Some children may develop these skills quickly and easily.
- Most children will require a lot repetition and practice.
- Using familiar songs, chants, and words helps children develop phonological awareness.
- Once a child has mastered a skill (i.e., rhyming), more practice on that skill is not necessary. Instead, new skills can be developed (i.e., breaking up words into syllables).
- Small group activities allow teachers to more easily hear each child make, use, and play with sounds.
- Small groups activities should be fun, engaging, and include positive feedback and modeling.

[Insert large font quote: “Row, row, row your boat / Gently down the stream / Merrily merrily merrily merrily / life is but a dream”]

Types of Phonological Awareness in English

Phonological awareness develops in different ways in different children. Most children develop several types of phonological awareness at once. For example, they may be learning how to recognize words and at the same time they realize that some words rhyme. There is no strict sequence in which children develop phonological awareness skills in English. However, some phonological awareness skills tend to be easier and develop sooner than others. The following phonological awareness skills are listed from earlier to later skills.

Word Awareness

Children gradually become aware that English speech is made up words. For example, beginning talkers may think of “all done” or “thank you” as single words. This is developmentally appropriate! As children

develop more experience with listening and talking, they will learn “all” and “done” and “thank” and “you” are different words.

Rhyme Awareness

Many words share an ending sound or “rhyme.” As children gain experience with English sounds, they realize that some words rhyme. Many children enjoy pointing out, making, or creating rhymes. At this stage, rhyming books often become favorites to be read and reread.

Examples of common English rhymes:

- an can, ban, fan, tan (and more!)
- ingsing, ding, ping, sling (and more!)
- ent bent, sent, lent, tent (and more!)

Syllable Awareness

English is a language in which words are made up of one or more syllables. Syllables are short groups of sounds. Children learn to break up words into syllables in preschool or kindergarten.

- Some words are one syllable: eat, sleep, one, can, laugh
- Some words are two syllables: eat-ing, sleep-y, Mar-ta, ap-ple
- Some words are three syllables: ba-na-na, di-no-saur, cam-er-a
- Some words are even longer: A-mer-i-ca, tel-e-vi-sion

Phonemic Awareness

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound. Even syllables can be broken up into individual sounds, or phonemes. As children gain more experience with sound, they are able to identify, produce, and work with phonemes. Since most letter sounds are a single phoneme, knowing phonemes helps children make and identify letter sounds. Children develop phonemic awareness later in preschool and in kindergarten and first grade.

One phoneme (sound) is represented by letters in the English alphabet such as in words with the letters a,b,c as we hear the sounds:	And in letter combinations represent the sounds th and sh such as we hear in:
<u>A</u> -pple <u>B</u> -all <u>C</u> -ar	<u>Th</u> -row <u>Sh</u> -ell
We hear two sounds (phonemes) in the words:	We hear three sounds (phonemes) in the words:
a-t i-t i-s h-e sh-e i-ck	c-a-t b-i-t g-e-t th-i-s l-o-t

Beginning sound awareness is the first aspect of phonemic awareness that children develop. Many children learn the first sound in their name: **M**aria, **S**imon, **L**uci

Children soon notice when other words begin with the same sound (alliteration). For example,

Maria
Market
Mittens

What Phonological Awareness Looks Like

- Eight-month-old Juanita falls asleep every evening as her father sings her a lullaby. Her mother chants to her when she bathes her.-> Juanita is developing her awareness of sound and the meaning and comfort it conveys. -> When she comes to the EHS center, she hears different songs with different sounds. Her awareness of different sounds in the classroom builds upon the phonological awareness she has developed at home.
- Two-year-ten-month old Min’s older sister chants jump-rope rhymes which Min repeats. He also hears rhymes in Spanish when his sister plays with Mireya next door. Osito, osito, ¿puedes saltar? Ayúdame, ayúdame a contar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10... -> Min is hearing rhymes not only in his home language but in English and Spanish! - > When the home visitor arrives, Min chants I think I can! I think I can! I think I can!” Together, all these experiences help build Min’s phonological awareness.
- Four-year-olds Ari and Jean, with their teacher, are matching the first sound of the names of the children in the class. -> Ari and Jean are developing their awareness of the beginning sounds of words. -> The next day Ari shares with her teacher the first sounds of the names of her family members. Her teacher Kia notes that Ari is interested in developing her knowledge of alliteration, and shares the book, *Alligators All Around* by Maurice Sendack with Ari and a few of her classmates. Ari tells the children her name begins with the same sound as Alligator—and all the other words too!
- Five-year-old Alex is clapping out the syllables in the very long dinosaur names. -> Alex is becoming aware that very long words are made up of smaller syllables, how to break up long words and becoming enthusiastic about reading! -> At his Head Start center, he uses his skills of segmenting and blending sounds as well as uses the context and pictures in the book to identify the names of dinosaurs. When reading a book about dinosaurs, his teachers will stop reading and have Alex clap out the name of the dinosaur. They also support his interest by including the names of dinosaurs on the word wall and helping him write down the names of his favorite dinosaurs for his collection of special words.

Did you know that phonological awareness is about sounds, not print? You can babble, sing, chant, or rhyme just with your voice!

How Phonological Awareness Develops

See how Alicia’s phonological awareness develops throughout her early childhood and supports her school readiness.

Infant Toddler:

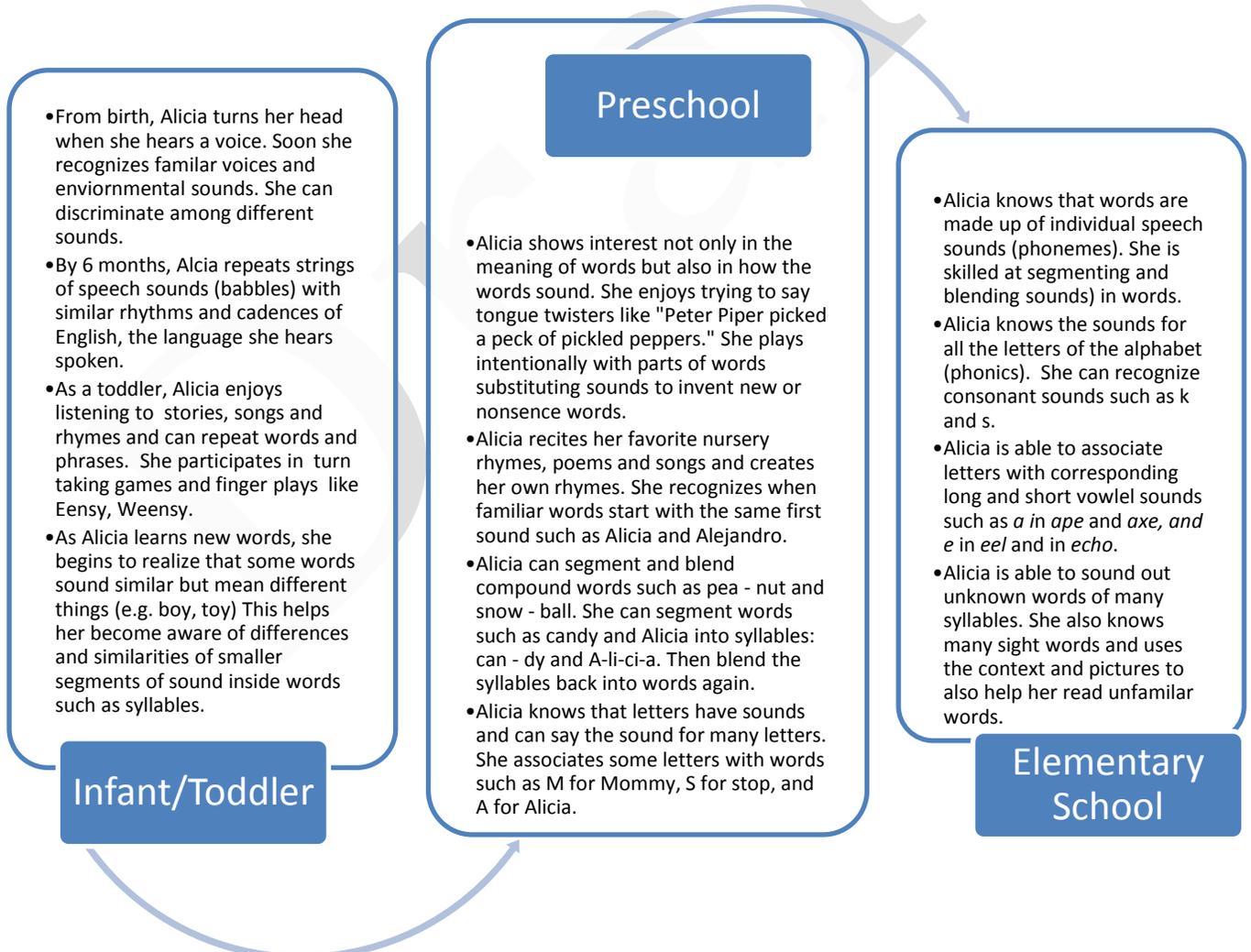
- Infants and toddlers develop phonological awareness by listening and imitating all the sounds they hear in their environment. Adults support paying attention to sound by talking, reading and singing in a way that is rich with different sounds, playful, and engaging.

Preschool:

- Preschoolers work with alliteration, rhymes, syllables and individual sounds (phonemes). They also use these new skills to continue to play with language.

Grade School:

- Children continue to develop their phonological awareness skills through first and second grade. Children with a strong foundation in phonological and phonemic awareness can apply their insight that words are made up of sounds to decoding words. Phonics skills such as decoding are important in children learning to read well.



Dual Language Learners, Culture, and Phonological Awareness

- Dual language learners are listening to, learning and using sounds in two languages. Phonological awareness skills developed in one language transfer to another language, especially if the languages have similar sounds and sound systems. If the two languages are quite different, a dual language learner may need more practice and support in making and using the sounds of English.
- There is some evidence that developing phonological awareness in the language that is most familiar to a child, and in which they have the most vocabulary, can be especially helpful. (Schickendanz & Collins, 2013)
- Phonological awareness in languages, like Chinese, develops differently than in English, since Chinese does not match letters and sounds.
- It is very important that children engage in phonological awareness activities with a fluent speaker of the language. Home visitors, teachers and caregivers should use their own strongest language during phonological awareness activities.
- Encourage families to share favorite nursery rhymes, songs, and chants with their children. Emphasize how much this helps children learn **both** languages!

Spotlight on languages!

Different languages have different phonologies, or sound systems. For example, Spanish includes a trilled “r” sound that does not exist in English. Also, in Chinese and some other languages the tone of voice can change the meaning of a word to another word (this is not the case in English). English includes some sounds that do not exist in other languages too. Different languages have different sounds, and use them in different ways – this is part of what makes each language unique!

The Core Concepts of Phonological Awareness

Playing with language every day in every way from birth through preschool!

- Create an environment in which children and adults play with the sounds of language throughout each day during activities and routines.
- Involve families by:
 - Inviting families to share their lullabies, rhymes, word games, songs, and stories with the children in the classroom and at home,
 - Sharing with families the lullabies, rhymes, word games, songs, and stories that are used at the center or family day care.
 - Asking families to help you choose new sound play activities that their children will enjoy.
- Use songs and rhymes during transitions, including at the beginning and end of the day, at snack or mealtime, at circle time, or between center activities.
- Choose fun and interesting picture books that play with sound based on the children's interests, children's families' suggestions and your own interests and knowledge.
- Emphasize interesting, rhyming or repeating sounds when you are reading by using a dramatic voice and funny faces!
- Have rhymes and songs that toddlers and preschoolers can chant repeatedly throughout the year, allowing them to change, match and substitute sounds. Many children may especially enjoy chants with motions.

Support small group sound play in preschool (insert graphic)

- Create small groups of two to three children based on your observations of children's interests and needs.
- Invite them to short small group activities of 10-15 minutes or less
- Engage children in actively participating in sound play, chanting, singing, rhyming, or other phonological awareness activities.
- Keep activities fun and engaging! Remember, rote instruction or drilling is not the best way to support phonological awareness from ages 0-5.
- Make the small groups interesting, interactive and enjoyable.

Listening and speaking provide children with a sense of words and sentences, build sensitivity to the sound system so that children can acquire phonological awareness and phonics, and are the means by which children demonstrate their understandings of words and written materials. (Strickland, 2004)

Phonological Awareness in Action for Infants and Toddlers

Mara supports Tom and the other toddlers in her class to develop early phonological awareness. She is always looking for opportunities to play with sounds. Mara has collected some musical instruments, rhyming books, and other objects that help her to make and play with sounds, and she also integrates this type of play into the whole day.

Babbling back and forth!

Tom's mother has brought his baby sister Ana to the toddler room today. Nine month-old Ana is gazing at and babbling with her mother. She is practicing some of the sounds of the language that she hears

around her. “Ma-ma-ma-ah-ah,” she says. Her mother returns her gaze, looking right at her as she replies by repeating her sounds “Ma-ma-ma-ah-ah!” She adds, “An-na!” Ana and her mother make sounds back and forth for several minutes. Mara shares with the mother how impressed she is with Ana’s sounds, “Wow! Ana is already making so many sounds. She loved when you repeated the sounds back to her, didn’t she. She looked right at you!”

Silly with sounds!

Tom and two-and-a-half year old Adam are listening to Mara read from an alphabet book about cooking. When Mara reads “bread,” Adam responds by saying: “bread, red! Red bread!” and giggling. Mara laughs too and says, “I hear a lot of –eds from you today! You’re rhyming! Maybe the redheaded bread said ‘bed’!” Tom giggles too and says, “Red bread, red head!”

Teachers, caregivers, and home visitors should not lead phonological awareness activities in languages in which they are not fluent. Children should hear adults using a language fluently during these activities. Children need a lot of exposure to how the language uses sounds, and fluent speakers of a language are best at making and using the language’s sounds.

Phonological Awareness in Action for Preschoolers

Mara moves to the preschool room with Tom’s class, including some new children, because of this center’s commitment to continuity of care. This new class is culturally diverse, with Spanish-speaking, Bengali-speaking, and French-speaking children. Tom and the other children have been talking about what they eat at home during lunch time and many of them have mentioned bread. Mara has begun to explore the topic of bread with the children.

Words, Words, Words!

Mara meets with one small group of preschoolers who are learning that speech is made of words as they sing songs. One of the children says to the group, “Bread is yummy!” Mara replies, “I think it is yummy too! “Bread is yummy’ is made up of three different words. Let’s clap each word. She claps out “Bread” and “is” and “yummy” with the children. They listen and copy her by saying and clapping “bread is yummy.” She notices that Tom is clapping randomly without showing an awareness of the words. She slows down the activity and supports all of the children in clapping out the words. They also sing some favorite songs together without clapping, just for fun and sound awareness!

Fun with Syllables!

Some children in Mara’s preschool class can already break up speech into words that they know. She has been helping this small group of children break words up into syllables. The class has been singing and acting out “Patty cake Patty cake Baker’s Man” in circle time and the children all know it well. She decides that it will be a fun activity for them to practice breaking this engaging and familiar song up into syllables. She notes that most of the words are one syllable words, so this will be a good introduction to syllables.

They start by singing together and making all of the motions. They take turns deciding whose name will be in the song. Today is Lia’s turn.

Mara supports the children in breaking up one new line into syllables for each small group session. She does not expect the children to break up the words “just right” every time, but knows that this engaging practice supports their phonological development.

Syllables in Patty Cake!

Pat-ty Cake, Pat-ty Cake Bak-ers Man

Bake me a cake as fast as you can

Pat it and roll it and mark it with a “L”

And put it in the ov-en for Li-a and me

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