

PreK-K ELL Reference Handbook

A Resource for Serving Preschool and
Kindergarten English Language Learners

Kentucky Department of Education

June 2009



This document serves as a reference tool for Kentucky administrators and educators of preschool and kindergarten English language learners. This guide provides the necessary information relating to cultural considerations, family involvement, language acquisition, identification procedures, funding information and effective strategies to serve this population.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The *PreK-K Reference Handbook* is an informative resource guide for all preschool and kindergarten teachers and instructional assistants, administrators, educational leaders, and family advocates who work in educational settings with English language learners (ELLs). It is organized around various topics that will assist staff in providing developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs of this population. It also includes information on family involvement and cultural considerations that impact learning.

Kentucky has experienced a dramatic increase in the numbers of ELLs served in the state-funded preschool and federally funded Head Start programs. Currently, eligibility for the state-funded preschool program does not specify ELLs, although many districts have seen increased numbers of children whose home language is not English. This increase is seen both in rural and urban areas.

Since many preschool and kindergarten educators depend on limited resources and support to meet the needs of ELLs, this document may be used as a starting point to enable ELLs to continue with their development as they acquire English proficiency. Teachers and administrators also are encouraged to contact their district ELL coordinators or seek guidance from their local Regional Training Centers (RTCs) or other local resources as needed.

Many educators will recognize that much of the advice given in this document are examples of “good teaching,” especially with regard to developmentally appropriate practices. Indeed, much of what occurs in high quality preschools and kindergartens will enable children learning English to acquire the language skills and become comfortable with functioning as learners within the school environment in the United States. Often, with a few modifications taken from the resources presented in this document, even teachers who don’t speak the language of the students will be able to document success of children in preschool and kindergarten.



For the purpose of this document the acronym ELL refers to English language learners.

A glossary of terms used in this document is located in the Appendix.

Cultural Considerations

As you enter the door of the classroom, you instantly notice the happy faces of many children actively playing together. The classroom is rich with the sounds of the many languages spoken by the students in this diverse classroom. You can see that this is a culturally rich learning environment.

Common Myths

To begin, here are some common myths about working with English language learners.

Myth 1: Learning two languages during the early childhood years will overwhelm, confuse and/or delay a child's acquisition of English.

No; sometimes preschoolers insert their home language into their English sentences, or they may go back and forth between the languages in conversations with their peers. This "code switching" is not a sign that they are confused. Children switching between languages may feel that a word in one language may fit their communication needs or they don't yet have the exact word in the new language.

Learning a language is a huge task; however, many young children throughout the world learn more than one language. Our brains are wired for language. Recent brain research has shown that learning two languages during the early years is doable. Children are able to separate out each language and distinguish in which context to use each language. In fact, there is increased brain activity related to language processing with dual-language learners. Speaking more than one language does not delay learning English when both languages have support. (Espinosa, 2008)

Myth 2: Total English immersion in preschool and kindergarten is the best way for young English language learners to learn English.

While this may be true for older students and adults who have mastered the fundamentals of language, it is not true for the younger students. Research has shown that young children in English immersion programs who have not yet mastered the elements of their first language struggle. This "sink or swim" strategy has been shown to have a negative effect on achieving English fluency and academic achievement. Also, children may lose their ability to communicate in their first languages, posing communication problems with their families and possible dire cultural effects. One example of this is children who learn English in one generation and refuse to speak their home language. This may result in children not being able to communicate with their grandparents.

In preschool, evidence suggests supporting the home language helps learning English. Support could include families working with concepts taught at school including talking with, reading to and singing with children in their home language. Teachers should encourage families to speak their home language, and include the family culture and language in the classroom (Espinosa, 2008)

Myth 3: ELLs are so called “border crossers.”

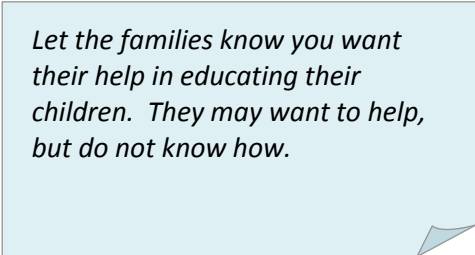
More than half of children in schools identified as ELLs were born in the United States. Currently children defined as second-generation students, or those children born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent, make up approximately 23 percent of the children in the US. (Flannery, 2009)

Myth 4: Immigrants don’t want to learn English.

Some immigrants may lack education and lack opportunities to go back to school to advance their education. Some immigrants are wary of the educational system in the United States, especially if they are here illegally and do not want to accept services. Others may be working long hours and are not able to attend classes offered by the community. (Flannery, 2009)

Myth 5: You can’t get families involved in their children’s education.

Many immigrant families value education for their children, which is why many of them relocated to the United States. They may have cultural differences, such as the belief that their job at home is to make sure the children are fed, clothed and have good manners. Some cultures believe the role of the teacher is to educate the children, and they do not want to interfere with the teacher’s role. Many families are uncomfortable when teachers stress the idea of becoming partners in their children’s education. Also, it’s important to understand that some of the immigrants may not have received much formal education in their home countries or had a negative experience related to school. It’s up to the teacher to help the family members feel comfortable in the school environment. (Flannery, 2009)



Let the families know you want their help in educating their children. They may want to help, but do not know how.

Myth 6: These newcomers all want to live in a community with others from their native country; they don’t “fit in”.

Even though many newcomers may live in neighborhoods close to others who speak the same language, most immigrants want to be in the United States to have new opportunities for themselves and their children. Many are eager to learn English and become assimilated. Even though they may start off speaking their home language, often the home language is lost within one generation. Many second-generation children use English as their language of choice, even at home. (Flannery, 2009)

Cultural Information

One of the basics behind working in culturally sensitive environments is the knowledge that we all have a culture from which we operate. Many persons in the United States respond by saying that they don’t have a culture, they’re American. While that may seem to be the case, everyone operates with a certain set of values and beliefs that are collectively agreed upon in a community. Even though families, children and individuals are unique, they are influenced by their racial, ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds, although these factors do not necessarily define them. These influences should enhance our interactions rather than to separate us. On the other hand, it’s important to recognize that culture is

something that changes over time, and in new geographic locations, cultures may evolve. An immigrant may adopt some of the cultural aspects of the United States while keeping other cultural practices of the home culture. Each family is different. Influences such as income, extended family and the influence of other community members may affect how a family decides to accept or reject the norms, values and beliefs of their new environment.

In our role as educators, we are obligated to make sure our interactions are culturally competent ensuring that we respect the family's values and beliefs as well as helping them negotiate the new culture in which they now live. This is a challenging task, one that is filled with opportunities for success and failures. The first step for educators is to understand their own culture. This knowledge will help us create the sensitivity for being able to help others with their culture shock and help families help their children become successful learners (Lynch & Hanson, 1997).

Stages of Acculturation

Learning a new language is a process of assimilation during which students must "decode" the new behavior of native speakers, and gradually, a new identity emerges. Four stages of acculturation have been identified: euphoria, culture shock/alienation, anomie and assimilation or adaptation. (Brown, 2000)

Euphoria is characterized by a sense of excitement about the new culture. **Culture shock**, or alienation, may range from irritability to feelings of panic, presenting itself as homesickness, anger, hostility, indecision, sadness and sometimes physical illness. **Anomie** is a stage of tentative, vacillating recovery from the feeling of alienation during which individuals may develop more empathy with people from the second culture. **Assimilation**, or adaptation, is characterized by acceptance of the new culture and self-confidence interacting with its members.

In Kentucky, there are over 100 different languages spoken. Instead of trying to give clues about cultural distinctions, we will share tips about gathering information about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of ELL students.

Rules for Gathering Information on ELLs

Rule #1: Do not make any assumptions about a child's cultural or linguistic background without obtaining further information. Even though this applies to all the children in the classroom, this is especially true of ELLs. If this information is collected formally such as through a survey or a written format, it must be collected for all the children in the class.

The preschool or kindergarten teacher may begin the school year without knowing the background of the children in his or her care. Here are some rules to use to guide collecting information about ELL children.

Rule #2: Decide what information is important to know. Categories may include basic demographic information, linguistic practices in the home and relevant cultural practices. Considerations in the areas of toilet training and feeding practices could be noted, along with expected behaviors toward adults and in group situations.

Rule #3: Plan how to get this information. Often, the preschool teacher is able to find out the answers in the initial home visit, or the kindergarten teacher may plan a time to meet with families early in the school year. If it is not possible to gather cultural information from the families, decide upon other methods of acquiring information, such as library and Web resources or community members from the same country. (Tabors, 1997)

Establishing reciprocal relationships with families: With parents who do not speak English, teachers/administrators seek strategies to facilitate communication, such as hiring bilingual staff or using translators at conferences or meetings (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Statement from NAEYC (National Association for Educating Young Children)

“Children all develop in a relatively predictable sequence. This development is affected by elements in the child’s world such as family and environment which includes community and society. Similarly, culture also shapes development. Educators must recognize the ways in which both culture and social influences affect children’s development.”

In the areas of language and literacy, listening, speaking and understanding:

Teachers support English language learners in their home language (e.g. by gathering books and tapes/CDs in each child’s language and involving family members and others who speak the language in the program) and promote their learning of English.

(Copple & Bredekamp, 2009)

Culture in the Classroom

In classrooms of diverse learners, an individual student's usual ways of learning and communicating will often differ from the expectations and routines of the school community. This is particularly true of learners whose home cultures and languages are different from the mainstream and who lack experience in mainstream classrooms. Making education meaningful for these students includes both modeling and explicitly teaching school routines, linguistic and social norms, and academic behaviors

“Teachers attend to the particular language needs of English language learners and children who are behind in vocabulary and other aspects of language learning. They engage the child more frequently in sustained conversations and make extra effort to help them comprehend.” (Copple & Bredekamp, p.165)

that are valued and appropriate in American schools. Some of the particular challenges for teachers include:

- learning students' prior knowledge
- applying students' prior knowledge to literacy instruction
- identifying and practicing students' learning strategies
- facilitating classroom interactions
- supporting homework assignments

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/classics/culture/sociocultural.htm>

To understand and facilitate learning, teachers should know not only the focus of the current learning, but also how it relates to what has already been learned. The learning of culture, like the learning of language, begins with a child's first experiences with their families, their communities, and the overall environment in which he or she lives. By the time children begin their formal education at the age of five or six, they have already internalized many of the basic values and beliefs of their native cultures, learned the rules of behavior that are considered appropriate for their roles in the community and established the procedures for continued socialization; they have learned how to learn.

Not only do previous learning experiences in the home affect learning at school but so do child-rearing practices. Each culture, if not each family, has its own preferred manner to raise children (Savile-Troike, 1978). These methods range from very lenient to very strict when compared to the dominant cultural group. Some employ little physical restraint or coercion while others exhibit very strict control of behaviors.

Another element of home learning that greatly impacts school learning is that of literacy in the home language. Is the ELL student from a "literacy oriented community" or a "non-literacy oriented community"? "Literacy oriented" is a home where parents are typically well-educated and weave into the child's upbringing a preparation for school success. The goal is an independent learner. These parents also foster critical thinking, conversational skills and building of vocabulary by interacting a great deal with the child (Pransky, 2009). This seems to match closely with what is expected of students in US schools. Generally, ELL students from a literacy oriented home often do well in US schools once they attain enough oral proficiency.

A "non-literacy oriented community" is a home that also values education but the parents may have less formal schooling themselves and be unable to spend as much time interacting with the child. This limits the amount of adult-like thinking and language skills to which the child is exposed. These parents know that with time, as the child grows, he or she will think and use more adult-like language when necessary. They believe there is no hurry. (Pransky, 2009) While this orientation does not match as closely to US schools' expectations as does a literacy orientation, students can be (and often are) successful. Teachers must be diligent in providing students with opportunities to build basic readiness skills while also extending these to grasp new learning.

While most PreK and K teachers are aware of the impact of literacy level on school readiness with native English speakers, it is important to note that this issue is equally significant with English language

learners. Some ELLs have home languages that are not written and/or have parents who do not have a high level of education themselves (the importance of reading aloud to children may not be fully understood if even possible). Or, even if the home language has a written script, they may lack the resources/money to have print items in the house (magazines, books...). Thus, the ELL's first experience with print may not happen until his/her first day of pre-school or kindergarten. While many native English speakers may also come from "non-literacy oriented homes", they have environmental print (at least) or radio, TV to support and confirm what they hear each day. Some (maybe many) ELLs do not have this benefit even in their first language. Careful consideration must be taken to see the complexities of the needs in our ELL students; is the main need language acquisition or literacy skills or, a combination of both.

Children who must learn in the modes of another culture clearly experience some confusion in the process. They are unfamiliar with the school structure, the expectations of the teacher and the classroom procedures. For example, they may encounter very different values that are considered essential for learning (i.e., cleanliness, attendance and punctuality). They may find behaviors that they have been taught to follow suddenly being unacceptable in the new culture (e.g., being asked to look directly at a teacher, bathroom habits, being asked to do work alone, being asked to be quiet, being very concerned for correctness). Modifying their behavior in addition to learning new ones is stressful for ELLs. This stress, in addition to language learning and communication frustrations, can be overwhelming especially for recent immigrants who may also be experiencing culture shock.

Cultural attitudes and values also affect teaching. Educators naturally acquire the attitudes and values of their own cultural group. This can greatly influence their beliefs about and expectations of students from cultural groups different from their own. Some ELLs are used to working cooperatively on assigned tasks. What may look like cheating to you is actually a culturally acquired learning style – an attempt to mimic, see or model what has to be done. Use this cultural trait as a plus in your classroom. Assign buddies so that ELLs are able to participate in class activities. For cooperative learning strategies you can use with ELLs, go to www.idoline.org/educators/content/cooperative.



Follow established rules in their new culture

Teaching classroom management rules as soon as possible helps to avoid misunderstandings, discipline problems and feelings of low self-esteem. The following strategies may be effective:

- Use visuals like pictures, symbols, and reward systems to communicate your expectations in a positive and direct manner.
- Physically model language for ELLs in classroom routines and instructional activities. ELLs will need to see you or their peers' model behavior when you want them to sit down, walk to the bulletin board, work with a partner, copy a word or do other activities.
- Be consistent and fair with all students. Once ELLs clearly understand what is expected, hold them equally accountable for their behavior.

Teachers can aid ELLs in adjusting to the new culture in several ways.

1. *Encourage ELLs to share their language and culture with you and your class.*
2. *Show-and-tell is a good opportunity for ELLs to bring in something representative of their culture.*
3. *They also could tell a popular story or folktale using words, pictures, gestures and movements.*
4. *ELLs also could try to teach the class some words from their native languages.*

Using materials related to ELLs' cultures and labeling classroom objects in the ELLs' native languages facilitates adaptation.

Culture and Nonverbal Communication

Scientific research on nonverbal communication and behavior began with the 1872 publication of Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Since that time, there has been an abundance of research on the types, effects and expression of unspoken communication and behavior. Several types of nonverbal communication are facial expressions, gestures, paralinguistics (tone of voice, loudness and pitch), body language and posture, proxemics (personal space), eye gaze, touch and appearance. Because cultures vary in their values and beliefs, learning about the nonverbal communication practiced in the cultures of ELLs can lead to more effective teaching and learning.

Nonverbal communication plays an important role in our daily lives; sometimes it can be more powerful than verbal communication. Gestures and body language carry many meanings. Each culture has its own unique set of gestures that a person from that culture uses to elicit very specific emotions from the intended receiver. Due to differences in culture and background, the *same* gesture used in two different cultural settings can be interpreted in two very *different* ways. A gesture from one culture that is meant to imply "Come here, please" may mean "Go away!" in another. Thus, it is important for us as educators to better understand the people we serve by striving to learn their basic nonverbal communicative method.

Resources:

Ashworth, M. & Wakefield, H.P. (1994). *Teaching the World's Children, ESL for ages Three to Seven*. Ontario, Pippin Publishing Limited.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Longman, pp. 183-184.

Copple, C. & Bredekamp, S. eds (2009) *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through age 8*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Espinosa, L. (2008) Challenging Common Myths about Young English Language Learners. Foundation for Child Development. http://www.fcd-us.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=669789

Flannery, M.E. (2009, Jan/Feb). Born in the U.S.A. and other things you might not know about today's English language learners. In *NEA Today*, V.27, number 4 p. 24-29.

Lynch, E. W. & Hanson, Marci (2000). *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and their Families*, second edition. Brooks Publishing Co., Baltimore

Saville-Troike, M. (1978). *A guide to culture in the classroom*. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Tabors, P. (1997). *One Child, Two Languages*. Baltimore: Brooks Publishing Co.

Helpful Web Sites:

<http://www.ethnologue.com/> An encyclopedic reference work cataloging all of the world's 6,912 known living languages

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/practice/itc/skills.html> Cultural School Skills. Appropriate techniques or "tools" shown to work in developing the school skills necessary for strong literacy and academic achievement.

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/classics/culture/sociocultural.htm> Sociocultural Influences on Learning and Teaching

http://www.fcd-us.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=669789 Espinosa, L. (2008) Challenging Common Myths about Young English Language Learners. Foundation for Child Development.

<http://www.ldonline.org/article/14312> How to Create a Welcoming Classroom Environment

<http://psychology.about.com/od/nonverbalcommunication/a/nonverbaltypes.htm> Nonverbal Communication

<http://www.connecting-cultures.net/new/index.html> Connecting Cultures raises awareness and promotes understanding across cultures and faiths. Connecting Cultures provides informative training on diversity and cross-cultural communication.

<http://www.nclrc.org/cultureclub/> Culture Club. This site contains articles, book reviews, lesson plans, and other information about various cultures.

<http://www.cal.org/co/> The Culture Club Project. This Web site links overseas providers of cultural orientation and domestic resettlement programs. The site provides information about resettlement in the United States and provides basic facts about new refugee groups arriving in the U.S.

<http://www.epals.com/> ePals Global Network connects students and educators in 191 countries for classroom- to-classroom projects and cross-cultural learning in an online classroom community.

<http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/penpals.asp> E-mail Exchange of Language and Cultures (penpals)

http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/socialstd/MBD/Lessons_index.html Making Multicultural Connections through Trade Books; index of books associated with teaching multiculturalism, referenced for easy retrieval in libraries and with many lesson plans attached

<http://www.nameorg.org> National Association for Multicultural Education. Information, listserv, and publications pertaining to multicultural education.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html> Portals to the World contains in-depth information about the nations and other areas of the world. Information is arranged by country or area with the links for each sorted into a wide range of broad categories.

<http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org> Reducing Stereotype Threat. This Website offers summaries of research on stereotype threat and discusses unresolved issues and controversies in the research literature on the phenomenon. Included are some research-based suggestions for ameliorating negative consequences of stereotyping, particularly in academic settings.

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/?source=redirect&url=teachingtolerance> Teaching Tolerance supports the efforts of K-12 teachers and other educators to promote respect for differences and appreciation of diversity.

Communicating with Speakers of Other Languages

As educators try to communicate with their students and their families, it is important to know how to use translators and interpreters effectively.

The Difference between an Interpreter and a Translator

An **interpreter** is one who communicates language ideas orally for parties conversing in different languages or one who explains or expounds.

A **translator** is one who changes one set of written symbols to another language.

Interpreters

When teachers and administrators do not speak the language of a preschooler's or kindergartener's family, the schools must demonstrate their best efforts to obtain an interpreter. This is especially true if the children have special needs. Care must be given to choose interpreters who possess the language skills and culture of the family. Similarly, the interpreter needs to have the necessary vocabulary to adequately describe the situation. One suggestion would include hiring members of the community as paraprofessionals to help in the classroom and help with interpreting. Sometimes, it's helpful if the teachers and administrators give the interpreter a list of key vocabulary words before the meeting so that he/she can research the correct translation for these words.

Care must be taken if the interpreter is a member of the family because issues related to privacy may arise. Also, there are times when a school-age child or other family member is called upon to interpret for a family. Placing a young family member in a position of authority may disrupt the family hierarchy. This situation may be problematic because of confidentiality issues. For example with regard to special education processes, someone with the ability to effectively communicate the special education regulations and laws in both languages is required.

Districts are responsible for communicating with the families of language minority children in a manner, mode and language the families can comprehend. It will benefit the district in the long run to invest in hiring qualified interpreters to ensure high quality education and services for ELLs and their families.

Characteristics of an effective Interpreter:

- 1) *proficient in the language*
- 2) *educated and experienced in cross-cultural communication and principles and dynamics of serving as an interpreter*
- 3) *educated in the appropriate professional field relevant to the specific family-interventionist interaction*
- 4) *able to understand and appreciate the respective cultures of both parties and to convey the more subtle nuances of each with tact and sensitivity*

(Lynch & Hanson, 2000)

Translating Documents

It is tempting to find a Web site that will translate a document, but be aware that these programs provide a literal translation, word-for-word. This type of translation may not adequately express the intent of the passage. These sites might serve in a pinch when there are no resources for communication and the teacher has a short passage that needs translation, but be aware that the translations could give a completely different meaning.

If there is no one who is able to translate or interpret, it is up to the teachers and administrators to communicate with the children and families who are ELLs.

TransACT

TransACT® is a high-quality communication tool that all Kentucky schools use to assist them in meeting parent communication requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Office of Civil Rights. The site offers a comprehensive set of forms and notices in a wide range of languages for both native English and limited English speaking parents. TransACT® offers forms in the areas of NCLB Parent Notifications, Section 504 Compliance Collection, free and reduced-price meal forms, and General Education Parent Notifications (health and medical forms, school administration forms, and more). To find more information, visit <http://www.transact.com/>.

Characteristics of a Person who is Effective in Cross-Cultural Communications:

- *Respects individuals from other cultures*
- *Makes continued and sincere attempts to understand the world from the other's point of view*
- *Is open to new learning*
- *Is flexible*
- *Has a sense of humor*
- *Tolerates ambiguity well*
- *Approaches others with a desire to learn*
(Lynch & Hanson, 2000)

Resources:

Bennett-Armistead, V.S, Duke, N.K., Moses, A.M. (2005). *Literacy and the Youngest Learner, Best Practices for Educators for Children Birth to Five*. New York: Scholastic.

Tabors, P (1997). *One Child, Two Languages*. Baltimore: Brooks Publishing Co.

Lynch, E. W. & Hanson, M. (2000). *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and their Families*, second edition. Brooks Publishing Co., Baltimore
http://www.amazon.com/Developing-Cross-Cultural-Competence-Children-Families/dp/1557667446/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1233249093&sr=1-1

Here are some instant translation links to sites you could use with caution.

<http://babelfish.yahoo.com/>
www.NiceTranslator.com

Family Involvement

The family unit of today has many cultures and values. To be effective educators, we must be aware of this change and be able to embrace it in the school setting.

One of the most important ways to improve schools is to increase parent and family involvement. Many studies confirm that parent involvement makes an enormous impact on students' attitude, attendance, and academic achievement. With English language learners, one of the keys to success is communicating with parents early, letting them know concrete suggestions of how they can help their children's development, including early literacy skills (AFT Toolkit, 2005). The *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* has a *Parent Guide* that has been translated into Spanish for Spanish-speaking families.

Establishing a sound parent and family component is important to the success of any educational program. This resulting partnership between parents and teachers will increase student achievement and promote better cooperation between home and school. Even though it may be challenging to communicate with families who speak other languages, once they learn how they can support their children's learning, there's more of a chance that they will become eager partners in their children's success in school.

No Child Left Behind

According to the federal No Child Left behind (NCLB) Act, there must be extensive family involvement in a child's education, starting with kindergarten. Families of ELLs can now expect to have their children learn English and other subjects at the same academic level as all other students; apply for supplemental services if they are from low-income families and their school has been identified as "in need of improvement" for two consecutive years; have their children tested annually by their school districts to assess progress in English language acquisition (Kentucky ACCESS for ELLs Assessment); and receive information regarding their children's performance on academic tests. (AFT toolkit, 2005)

Programs with Family Components

Some programs integrate the following four components to create a more powerful educational intervention for families: early childhood education, adult education, parent time, and parent/child interactive literacy. Examples of programs with family literacy components include Even Start Family Literacy, Head Start, Kentucky Adult Education, and Family Resource Youth Service Centers. Even Start Family Literacy is an intensive Federal Title I, Part B program for low income families designed to improve the academic achievement of parents and their young children, especially in the area of reading. Instruction in all components is provided by highly qualified staff. Local projects build on existing community resources to create a wider range of services to assist children and adults. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) competitively awards grants to partnerships involving school districts and community agencies to serve eligible parents and their children ages birth to eight.

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs, serving children from birth to age 5, pregnant women and their families. Programs are child-focused and designed to increase the school readiness of children in low-income families. In addition to home visits and parent involvement activities, Head Start programs address family access to materials, services and activities essential to family literacy development.

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) offers adult education centers in all Kentucky counties to improve an individual’s ability to communicate and function effectively in the workplace, family and society. In adult education centers with family literacy programs, parents learn to participate as full partners in their children’s education and prepare for success in school and life. Services focus on families with school age children.

The mission of Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSC) is to enhance student’s ability to succeed in school by developing and sustaining partnerships that promote early learning and successful transition to school, academic achievement and well-being, and graduation and transition into adult life. FRYSCs offer family training and family literacy services to provide opportunities for parents and children to learn together and promote lifelong learning.

ELL Family Information

The family unit of today has many cultures and values. To be effective educators we must be aware of this change and be able to embrace it in the school setting. In developing family partnerships with schools, there are six themes to consider.

Communication	The quality is positive, understandable and respectful of the family values and culture. It is efficient and effective.
Commitment	Devotion and loyalty to the child and family are shown, along with a belief in the importance of goals.
Equality	There is a sense of equality in decision making and services. Families should feel equally powerful in their ability to influence outcomes.
Skills	Demonstrate competence to fulfill roles and recommended practices in working with children and families.
Trust	Share a sense of assurance about the reliability and dependability of the team (teachers, staff and family)
Respect	Regard each other with and demonstrate esteem for all involved in the child’s education.

Blue-Banning, M., Summers, J.A., Frankland, H.C., Lord Nelson, L., & Beegle, G. (2004). Dimensions of family and professional partnerships: Constructive guidelines for collaboration. *Exceptional Children*, 70, 167-184.

Families of English language learners (ELLs) have significant communication challenges that impact their lives. This challenge also is a struggle for school administrators and teachers who understand the impact of effective communication between schools and home to meet students’ educational needs.

When working with families from different cultures, it is important to become informed about their cultures and to be culturally responsive toward their family relationships and values. It is important to honor and be aware of their educational backgrounds, especially in the areas of language and literacy development. When educators work to develop and strengthen the community and school experience, culturally diverse literature and experiences in the school or family interactions should be incorporated.

As you work to develop or strengthen the family involvement in your school or district, here are some important points to consider.

Building & Establishing Relationships

It is important for teachers and administrators to establish good relationships with language minority families.

1. Reach out to ALL families and community members without judgment, in the language and culture they understand.
2. Create a welcoming atmosphere in the front office; place signage in languages of all families throughout the school.
3. Make frequent contacts, speak to parents' strengths, and elicit response to ensure you have been understood.
4. Communicate positive reports to parents on student behavior and growth on a continuous basis.
5. Give prizes (games for children, books, writing and art materials, dinner for the family at a local pizza parlor) at every gathering.
6. Provide an ongoing process of parent involvement so parents gain confidence in participating as partners in their children's education.

Three ways to accommodate parents and families of ELL students include:

Improve communication by establishing relationships with ELL families through cultural responsiveness, sensitivity, appreciation and respect that will encourage them to participate in school meetings and activities.

Establish a reliable and effective means of communication through providing interpreters for families. Interpreters may be available through foreign language programs in schools, universities or community colleges, church ministry groups for immigrants, hospitals or business organizations.

Use appropriate technology to involve ELL families. These opportunities may include telephone conference calls with interpreters, Web-based meetings, translated documents and school information forms.

(Ann Logsdon, About.com)

Home Visits

To prepare for the visit, the teacher should research appropriate customs and interaction expectations of diverse families' cultures. There are resource recommendations included within this handbook available for this purpose. Cultural respect and understanding will assist the teacher in building strong, respectful relationships with the families of his/her students. This initial home-school relationship is crucial in building a strong foundation for educational success.

The home visit provides an opportunity for the teachers and parents to get to know each other. This is important in establishing good relationships. This can be done through informal conversations that include questions such as:

- When did your child start to speak in their native language?
- Do you read books to your child in your native language?
- What is your child's favorite activity?
- How long have you lived in the USA?
- What are your expectations/needs, how can we assist you?

Preschool

Family members often are most comfortable in the familiar surroundings of their homes when first meeting their children's teacher. This time may be used by the teacher not only to meet and begin developing relationships with the child and family but also to introduce important information concerning preschool. If possible, bring a copy of the preschool handbook translated into the family's home language that contains important information and policies for the parents to know and understand. These policies may include attendance, food services, and pick-up/release procedures. Staff contact information and school phone numbers also should be included in the school/program handbook. Other recommended information to share during the home visit may include the classroom daily routine or schedule, the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards Parent Guide (available in both English and Spanish) and a brief summary of the preschool program's curriculum and continuous assessment. (Some publishers have translated products and information related to early childhood curricula and continuous assessment tools -check with the publisher for availability.) Parents and family members are very interested in knowing what their children will be doing in preschool. Sharing this information will encourage understanding and appropriate expectations for their preschoolers. Bringing required paperwork, translated in the home language, and filling it out together during the home visit time is often very helpful for both the family and teacher. Completing this task together assures the paperwork is completed and on file before the child's first day of school. If translated copies of the handbook, forms and other information are unavailable, a translator should accompany the teacher on the home visit if at all possible. Be sure to let the family know prior to the visit that the translator also will be coming.

Resources:

Kentucky Early Childhood Standards Parent Guides - available in both English and Spanish; in Birth - 3 years and 3 - 4 years; www.kychildrennow.org

Kindergarten

A home visit is a wonderful opportunity for the teacher to discover information about the background of the students and their strengths and needs. This occasion also gives a chance for the teacher to observe the family culture first hand.

In order to support their child’s education, the teacher and administrator may need to acquaint the family with the school system in the United States. Topics could include how the school works and the curriculum, standards, benchmarks and materials. Also, the teacher could share the expectations for families, including reading to the children (in their home language) and don’t forget to share the parent’s rights, including access to interpreters, translated materials, free meal programs and other services. Teachers may need to work with their Family Resource/Youth Services Center coordinators with regard to access to services.

Some suggested activities when working with ELL families:

1. Hold listening sessions. Ask parents what they want to learn and listen to their concerns.
2. Provide transportation, child care and meals.
3. Provide a bilingual center with resources in the school.
4. Study what writers of diverse cultures have to say. Connect parents and students to their cultural legacy.

Strategies for Working with Families

Families and teachers both work together to nurture and educate children to prepare them for future success. To meet this common goal, it is important for schools and families to work collaboratively. Provide translators and make sure all materials are translated.

Empowering Families at Home

Sometimes, family members who speak little or no English do not feel confident about contributing to their children’s education, especially in early literacy. The following suggestions are for working with those family members who speak little or no English.

1. Tell stories. Many cultures have an oral tradition in which stories are shared from generation to generation. This process helps children develop vocabulary and oral language skills. Families also can encourage children to add to the stories or make up their own.
2. “Read” wordless books. These books may be “read” in the home language and provide a source of conversation between the adult and the child.
3. Say rhymes and sing songs. These activities develop oral language, phonological awareness and beginning reading skills.
4. Make frequent trips to the library. Many cultures do not have a public library. A weekly visit to the library with the opportunity to check out books will help children develop a love of books and reading.

Shared community resources for families:

1. *Work with local media in other languages in supporting children’s education and development.*
2. *Give gift certificates for food from local grocery stores.*
3. *Pay participants for attending parent training sessions; this works especially well with parents in poverty.*

5. Engage in meaningful conversation. Engaging children in conversations that require more than a yes or no answer develops many early literacy and critical thinking skills.
6. Watch closed-captioned TV. This feature will enable adults to practice their English as well as help young children understand the connection between the written and spoken word.
7. If families read only in Spanish or another language, read books in that language. This will introduce children to book-reading behavior. Another suggestion is to read bilingual books, with the teacher reading the book in English in class and the family reading the book in the home language. (AFT Toolkit, 2005)
8. Encourage students to listen to books-on –tape in the home in English. This will give the students more opportunities to hear the flow of the English language being read.

Home/School Connection

Since this may be the first opportunity that ELL families have with school contact, it's vital that they feel welcome. Below are some suggested activities that will assist in accomplishing this goal.

1. Host a back-to-school night with interpreters. Make accommodations for parent's schedules, offer transportation, food and childcare. Use this as an opportunity to find out how to establish and maintain regular contact with families. Also include information about adult education opportunities.
2. Find bilingual volunteers, parent liaisons, or staff assistants to translate or serve as interpreters
3. Develop family learning activities (including multi-lingual activities.) Send home for the purpose of involving the family.
4. Consider sponsoring single parent and/or native language parent groups. Consider having meetings away from the school campus.
5. Involve language minority parents on advisory committees, councils and key communicator groups.
6. Hold family nights on parenting issues, including child development, early math, writing, science and literacy, setting up a work area at home and goals for their children and family; provide translators.
7. Find bilingual volunteers, parent liaisons or staff assistants to bridge the gap between families and the school.
8. Offer ongoing interactive training sessions for parents on topics such as homework, school attendance, standards, report cards and discipline.
9. Implement a bi-lingual hotline number where parents can get information on how to help their children at home.
10. Form a citizen advisory group that can advise the principal on how to improve services for students and families in poverty, single parents, and those who do not speak English.

Resources for Family Involvement

Petroff, S. & Meissner, D. Eds. (2005) *The AFT Toolkit for Teachers, Reaching out to Hispanic Parents of English Language Learners*.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators> This site is filled with useful information, strategies, activities, and resources. Many of the activities have been designed for children in PreK-3. Even though many of the suggestions and worksheets are in Spanish, the content also is valuable for speakers of other languages.

<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/diversitykit.shtml> *The Diversity Kit: An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education*. The Diversity Kit includes information on "Building on Family Strengths." Under Part II: Culture, see "Culture, Family, and Community."

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/parent/index.htm> *If Your Child Learns in Two Languages - A Parent's Guide for Improving Educational Opportunities for Children Acquiring English as a Second Language* This pamphlet is intended for parents of English language learners and offers guidance for improving educational opportunities. It also is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Haitian Creole.

http://www.alliance.brown.edu/public/pubs/keep_talking/KeepTalking.pdf *Keep Talking: The Family on Your School's Agenda* These five conversation guides will help principals facilitate discussions about family partnerships. They are designed to encourage teachers, parents, and administrators to talk about family and community partnerships in a different way.

<http://www.idra.org/Services/Services.htm#Education> *Links for Involving Families in Education* This is a program from the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) to help educators develop school-family partnerships.

<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/public/pubs/pc/ppperMar2000-ELL.pdf> *Perspectives on Policy and Practice: Involving English Language Learners in Community-Connected Learning* This publication lists effective strategies for involving English language learners in community and project-based learning programs, including first steps for schools to take and a list of resources for further reading.

<http://sedl.org/connections/focus.html> The National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), is a national resource for research and expertise in building family, school, and community partnerships

<http://www.chalkboardproject.org/what-we-do/current-initiatives/running-start/parent-training-toolkit.php> The second phase of Running Start is designed to help parents become full partners in their children's education. The interactive content covers a variety of topics from "How to navigate the U.S. education system" to "Benefits of Parent Engagement" and are provided in English, Russian and Spanish

<http://www.familit.org/site/c.gtJWJdMQIsE/b.1204561/k.BD7C/Home.htm> The National Center for Family Literacy

Activities

<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/community/resources-activity1.shtml> - Building on Family Strengths. Connecting academic content to the real-life experiences of students can enhance student learning and strengthen school and community relationships.

<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/community/resources-activity2.shtml> - Challenging Cultural Assumptions in Family Involvement. As community and schools populations change, school culture must adapt to new values and beliefs.

Basics of First and Second Language Acquisition

The stages of language production progress along a continuum from babbling to one-word utterances to multiple words or sentences. This is true for all children learning any language.

Administrators, educators and staff in preschool and kindergarten need to be aware of the progression of language development of English language learners. Establishing background knowledge in the stages of language acquisition and how they relate to and impact classroom instruction is essential.

First Language Acquisition

In order to better understand the developmental process of children who are acquiring an additional language, it is helpful to understand the stages of language acquisition in children. In nearly all cases, children's language development follows a predictable sequence. However, there is a great deal of variation in the age at which children reach a given milestone. Furthermore, each child's development is usually characterized by gradual acquisition of particular abilities; thus, "correct" use of English verbal inflection will emerge over a period of a year or more, starting from a stage where verbal inflections are always left out, and ending in a stage where they are nearly always used correctly. During this developmental process, English language learners may at times mix words from both languages as they speak and write. This appears mostly in the early stages of language acquisition.

There are many different ways to characterize the developmental sequence of acquiring language. As children develop and learn a language they begin with babbling sounds then progress to one word utterances. Next, children begin to link words and form two-word phrases. The stages of language production progress along a continuum from babbling to one-word utterances to multiple words or sentences. For more information on first language development, go to http://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_2003/ling001/acquisition.html.

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition is the process by which people learn a second language in addition to their native language(s). Students acquiring another language progress through various sequential stages of language acquisition. The time that students spend in each stage vary greatly depending on many factors including similarity of the language to English, amount of prior exposure to English, English use at home, and temperament such as shyness or outgoing personality. Younger children have been known to spend longer amounts of time in the nonverbal period.

The following are the stages of language acquisition and how they relate to English language learners. (Based on information from http://www.everythingsl.net/inservices/language_stages.php and <http://www.nwrel.org/request/2003may/overview.html>)

Stage I: The Silent/Receptive or Preproduction Stage

This is the silent period. English language learners may have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary, but they are not yet speaking. Some students will, however, repeat everything you say. They are not really producing language, but are parroting.

These new learners of English will listen attentively, and they may even be able to copy words from the board. They will be able to respond to pictures and other visuals. They can understand and duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension. Total Physical Response methods will work well with them. Teachers should focus attention on listening comprehension activities and on building a receptive vocabulary.

English language learners at the silent/receptive stage will need much repetition of English. They will benefit from a “buddy” who speaks their language. Remember that the school day is exhausting for these newcomers as they are overwhelmed with listening to English all day long.

Here are some suggestions for working with students in the Early Production stage of English language learning:

- Ask yes/no and either/or questions.
- Accept one- or two- word responses.
- Give opportunities to participate in some of the whole class activities.
- Use pictures and real life objects to support questions.
- Modify content information to the language level of the ELLs.
- Build vocabulary using pictures.
- Provide listening activities.
- Simplify the content materials to be used.
- Focus on key vocabulary and concepts.
- Use simple books with predictable texts.
- Support learning with graphic organizers, charts and graphs.

Stage II: The Early Production Stage

The early production stage can last an additional six months after the initial stage. Students have usually developed close to 1,000 receptive/active words (that is, words they are able to understand and use). During this stage, students can usually speak in one- or two-word phrases and can demonstrate comprehension of new material by giving short answers to simple yes/no, either/or, or who/what/where questions. They can use short language chunks that have been memorized, although these chunks may not always be used correctly.

Stage III: The Speech Emergence Stage

This stage can last up to another year. Students have usually developed approximately 3,000 words and can use short, simple sentences to communicate. Students begin to use dialogue and can ask simple questions, such as “Can I go to the restroom?” and are able to answer simple questions. Students may produce longer sentences, but often with grammatical errors that can interfere with their communication. ELLs also will initiate short conversations with classmates. They will understand easy stories read in class with the support of pictures. They also will be able to do some content work with teacher support.

Here are simple tasks ELLs can complete in the Speech Emergence stage:

Sound out stories phonetically.

Read short, modified texts in content area subjects.

Complete graphic organizers with word banks.

Understand and answer questions about charts and graphs.

Match vocabulary words to definitions.

Study flashcards with content area vocabulary.

Participate in choral reading activities.

Understand two step directions.

Compose brief stories based on personal experiences

Stage IV: The Intermediate Language Proficiency Stage

Intermediate proficiency may take up to another year after speech emergence. Students have typically developed close to 6,000 words and are beginning to make complex statements, state opinions, ask for clarification, share their thoughts, and speak at greater length. They are beginning to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts. They will ask questions to clarify what they are learning in class. These English language learners will be able to work in grade-level math and science classes with some teacher support. Comprehension of English literature and social studies content is increasing.

At the Intermediate Language Proficiency Stage stage,

students will use strategies from their native language to learn content in English.

Student writing at this stage will have many errors as ELLs try to master the complexity of English grammar and sentence structure.

Stage V: The Advanced Language Proficiency Stage

Achieving cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language can typically take from five to seven years. By this stage, students have developed some specialized content-area vocabulary and can participate fully in grade-level classroom activities if given occasional extra support. Students can speak English using grammar and vocabulary comparable to that of same-age native speakers. Students at this stage will be near-native in their ability to perform in content area learning. Most ELLs at this stage have been exited from ESL and other support programs.

Getting started in a Second Language

As we have noted, there is a consistent sequence of development in how children learn a second language:

1. There may be a period of time when children continue to use their home languages in the second language situation.
2. When they discover that their home languages do not work in this situation, children enter a nonverbal period as they collect information about the new language and perhaps spend some time in sound experimentation.
3. Children begin to go public using individual words and phrases in the new language. Children have been known to say English types of sounds without producing anything understandable.
4. Children develop productive use of the second language. (Tabors, 1997)

Fortunately, the cognitive demands of young children are not as great as with older students. Children are not expected to learn to understand, speak, read, write and comprehend academic texts like their older siblings.

Dual Language Learners in the Early Years

In 2008, the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) released a report, *Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting Ready to Succeed in School*, which looks at the significant growth within the last decade in the number of children in the U.S. who speak English as a second language. The report examines the particular needs and challenges facing these children in the early childhood years and identifies appropriate indicators to assess their school readiness. These young dual language learners (DLLs), or children who are learning a second language while still acquiring their first, are more likely to be from low-income families and to lag academically behind monolingual, English-speaking children by the end of elementary school. The report notes that limited data is available on young DLLs.

In 2006, almost one in three children in Head Start or Early Head Start came from families where English was not the primary language spoken at home. However, young DLLs are less likely than children from English-only backgrounds to be attending preschool, so this proportion may not accurately reflect the total population of young DLLs. Using the framework of the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative (NSRII), the report identifies four components necessary to prepare young DLLs for optimal school readiness: Ready Communities, Ready Families, Ready Services, and Ready Schools. The report

finds that young DLLs are less likely than English-only speaking children to be receiving comprehensive supports, such as high-quality early education services, within each of these components. Among its recommendations, the report calls for improved access to these supports. The report also emphasizes the importance for schools to address the specific linguistic, cultural and learning needs of young DLL children, citing research that shows that nurturing all aspects of a child's early development improves school experiences. Teachers must be sensitive to the particular language backgrounds of this population and provide accurate assessments to chart their developmental progress. The NCELA Report is available at: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/resabout/ecell/earlyyears.pdf>

Resources:

Second Language Acquisition:

http://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_2003/ling001/acquisition.html

http://www.audiblox2000.com/early_childhood/talk.htm

http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/language_stages.php

<http://www.nwrel.org/request/2003may/overview.html>)

http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/MythsOfTeachingELLsEspinosa.pdf

http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/language_stages.php

<http://www.nwrel.org/request/2003may/overview.html>)

First Language Acquisition

http://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_2003/ling001/acquisition.html

Dual Language Information

http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Dual_Language_Learners.pdf?docID=6741

Educational Standards

Standards were developed to guide educators to implement instructional programs that develop the student's abilities to acquire and apply knowledge and skills, integrate knowledge and understanding, make decisions, problem solve, think critically and creatively, and make real-life connections to the world beyond the classroom.

Kentucky Early Childhood Standards

The *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* were developed to guide instruction in early childhood programs in Kentucky. These standards assist educators in developing a basic understanding of appropriate expectations for young children from birth to age five. Early childhood programs use these standards as a guide to provide appropriate experiences to support the overall growth and development of students. For 3- and 4-year-olds, the standards in Language Arts, Social Studies and Health Education are particularly meaningful for English language learners.

A selection of the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* for 3- and 4-year-olds is listed below.

Language Arts

1. demonstrate general skills and strategies of the communication process
2. demonstrate general skills and strategies of the listening and observing process
3. demonstrate general skills and strategies of the reading process
4. demonstrate competence in the beginning skills and strategies of the writing process

Social Studies

1. demonstrates basic understanding of the world in which he/she lives

Health Education

1. demonstrates health/mental wellness in individual and cooperative environments

Kentucky Program of Studies

The *Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools Primary-12* helps ensure that all students

throughout Kentucky are provided with common content and have opportunities to learn at high levels. The purpose of the Program of Studies is to outline the minimum content required for all students before graduating from Kentucky high schools. This document specifies the content standards for the required credits for high school graduation. The content standards are outlined for primary, intermediate, middle and high school levels leading up to graduation requirements. This document provides administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in school districts with a basis for establishing and/or revising their curricula.

Kentucky's public schools' instructional programs should develop students' abilities to acquire and apply knowledge and skills, integrate knowledge and understanding, make decisions, problem solve, think critically and creatively, and make real-life connections to the world beyond the classroom. The instructional program should assure that appropriate accommodations are made for the diverse populations of students found within Kentucky schools; incorporate an understanding of the students' families, cultures and communities; and draw on these understandings to create a rich context and environment for learning. Curriculum and instruction are culturally responsive and provide for the diversity of students to assure that all students in Kentucky public schools have the opportunity to learn at high levels. Schools provide appropriate supports and accommodations to facilitate student learning and preparation for the 21st century.

The preschool curriculum addresses early-learning standards that are integrated into a variety of activities within an environment that supports optimal development for the whole child. A major focus of the preschool program is language development – listening, speaking and becoming familiar with books. As children are developmentally ready, they begin to explore and learn about writing, letters, sounds and mathematics concepts. Teachers promote child learning and development by embedding assessment activities within the curriculum and daily schedule.

The primary program comprises the time children begin elementary school until they are ready to enter the 4th grade. The critical attributes of the primary program include developmentally appropriate practices, multi-age and multi-ability classrooms, continuous progress, authentic assessment, qualitative reporting methods, professional teamwork and positive parent involvement.

To view the *Program of Studies* go to

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Program+of+Studies/default.htm>.

Kentucky English Language Proficiency Standards

Kentucky joined the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium in 2006 and adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for grades K-12. The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 mandates that states administer a standards-based English proficiency test annually to all English language learners in grades K-12. ACCESS (Assessing Communication and Comprehension in English State to State) is the yearly assessment for measuring growth towards attaining English language proficiency and the W-APT (WIDA Advanced Placement Test) is the screener for new students. These two assessments are based on the WIDA ELP Standards for grades K-12. Each of these assessments provides an English language proficiency level ranging from level one to level six. Students are assessed in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In 2007, these ELP Standards were revised to include the grade level cluster for preK-K students to address their unique linguistic developmental ability. The WIDA standards for preschool age students address and provide guidance for instructional and assessment purposes. Grade levels preK-K are grouped together because the primary focus is on creating a learning environment that nurtures the development of young English language learners.

The five English Language Proficiency Standards include both social and academic uses of the language students must acquire for success in and beyond the classroom.

As Kentucky educators find themselves working with English language learners they can use both of these standards documents as guides to develop meaningful units of instruction for their preschool and kindergarten students. A copy of the English Language Proficiency Standards for PreK-K can be downloaded from <http://www.wida.us/standards/PreK-5%20Standards%20web.pdf>

English Language Proficiency Standards:

1. English language learners communicate for **social and instructional** purposes within the school setting.
2. English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Language Arts**.
3. English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Mathematics**.
4. English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science**.
5. English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Social Studies**.

WIDA “Can-Do” Descriptors

To accompany the WIDA ELP Standards the “Can-Do” Descriptors were developed for teachers and administrators who work closely with English language learners. The “Can-Do” Descriptors provide a range of student performance expectations for classroom instruction and assessment.

The descriptors provide educators with indicators of expected activities for all six proficiency levels in all four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). A copy of the “Can-Do” Descriptors for PreK-K can be downloaded from this site:

http://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/PreKK%20CAN%20DOs.pdf.

The Can-Do Descriptors work to expand the information in the WIDA ELP Standards by expanding the Performance Definitions in each of the four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The descriptors are more closely linked to instructional practices by providing the information necessary for differentiated instruction for English language learners. Teachers can look at the current level of an ELL student and strive to develop lessons and learning experiences that move the child towards the next level. For example, if a PreK or K ELL child currently has a Listening level of 1-Entering (the child can Match, Point, And Find) the teacher can look at the next level (2-Beginning) and see that these skills expand to include Respond, Identify, Follow. The teacher can then scaffold activities to help the child attain this next level in Listening. The same can then be done for Speaking/Reading/Writing. While this

type of intentional planning for the needs of ELLs may be new to the classroom teacher, each district's ELL Coordinator or building level ELL Teacher may be able to assist in this process.

Program Services Plan (PSP)

An individual language service plan for students with limited English proficiency is required under federal law (Title III, Sec 3302, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). In Kentucky an individual Program Services Plan (PSP) is required for all students identified as having limited English proficiency in grades Kindergarten through 12. They are not required for preschool ELLs.

The PSP is developed jointly by the ELL teacher and the classroom teachers who work with the student. The PSP contains the scores from the yearly English language proficiency assessment for Kentucky (ACCESS® for ELLs) and the appropriate instructional modifications that must be included as part of the daily classroom instruction for the kindergarten student.

Resources:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Program+of+Studies/default.htm> - Kentucky *Program of Studies*

<http://www.wida.us/standards/PreK-5%20Standards%20web.pdf> - Kentucky English Language Proficiency Standards

http://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/PreK-K%20CAN%20DOs.pdf - "Can-Do" descriptors.

www.kidsnow.ky.gov

Strategies and Interventions for English Language Learners (ELLs)

*The English language is best learned when it is the medium of instruction, not the focus or object of instruction.
An integrated approach that combines English language development with content knowledge is proven to be the most effective for ELLs.*

Valuing Native Language and Culture

Young children who are learning the English language and culture are still learning culture and language, so it's important to value their home environments. The English language has such a strong influence that it's very easy for the children to embrace their new language and announce that they no longer want to speak their home languages. Parents also may have the impression that the children must only speak English because they are now in the United States and if they are going to succeed, they must immerse themselves in English. For older children, this may be true, but for younger children, they haven't yet established a language system, and the home language connects them with their families.

Sometimes, the expectations of the mainstream culture conflict with the culture of the children from ELL homes. Cultural confusion may arise when children have different languages and cultural systems at home from the one at school. Every family is unique and should be respected for their individuality. Some of the following examples are presented as generalities and not examples of all children from certain cultures; they are meant as guidelines for teachers to use to become aware of differing expectations from various cultures. For example, a child from a Latino culture respects authority and group harmony. They are given directives and expected to obey elders. Teachers fall into the category of respected members of the community. Children do not speak up for their rights. They will not look an authority figure directly in the eye. Cleanup is usually a group activity, not something that is accomplished individually at the end of working in a particular center. They are comfortable touching and sitting close together. (Kaiser & Rasmisky, 2007) Eye contact is important to consider because insufficient or excessive eye contact can create communication barriers among different cultures. In relationships, it serves to show intimacy, attention, and influence. However, patterns of eye contact are different across cultures. For example, some Americans feel uncomfortable with the "gaze" that is sometimes associated with Arab or Indian communication patterns. For Americans, this style of eye contact is too intense. Yet too *little* eye contact may also be viewed negatively, because it may convey a lack of interest, inattention, or even mistrust. The relationship between the lack of eye contact and mistrust in the American culture is stated directly in the expression "Never trust a person who doesn't look you in the eyes." In contrast, in many other parts of the world (especially in Asian countries), a person's lack of eye contact toward an authority figure signifies respect and deference. (Levine & Adelman, 1982)

Our faces reveal emotions and attitudes, but we should not attempt to "read" people from another culture as we would "read" someone from our own culture. The degree of facial expressiveness one

exhibits varies among individuals and cultures. The fact that members of one culture do not express their emotions as openly as do members of another does not mean that they do not experience emotions. Rather, there are cultural restraints on the amount of nonverbal expressiveness permitted. For example, in public and formal situations many Japanese do not show their emotions as freely as Americans do. More privately and with friends, Japanese and Americans seem to show their emotions similarly. Many teachers in the United States have a difficult time knowing whether their Japanese students understand and enjoy their lessons. The American teacher is looking for more facial responsiveness than what the Japanese student is comfortable with in the classroom situation. (Levine & Adelman)

There are cultural differences in teaching styles as well, although the acquisition of specific teaching skills during professional training is part of the socialization of educators to the subculture of the school. It is not at all certain that teachers from a similar cultural background to the students' will teach them more effectively, although research in this area is still far too sketchy to draw definite conclusions. It does seem clear, however, that all teachers would profit from greater understanding of differences in learning styles, and greater tolerance of differences. Particularly inappropriate are claims about the best way to learn or teach *anything*; the claim that 'children learn best by doing', for instance, is not true for all children. Cultural sensitivity and respect requires *relativism* and *flexibility* in teaching styles. It becomes necessary when teaching students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. (Saville-Troike, 1978)

In working with ELL students and their families, the key is to try not to judge people whose ways of showing emotions, values and attitudes are different. If we judge according to our own cultural norms, we may make the mistake of "reading" the student inaccurately. Examples such as these are found in every culture. For a more in depth description of cultural features of young children and their families, consult the Lynch and Hanson text on Developing Cross-Cultural Competence.

Young children have a wonderful opportunity to embrace multiple languages and at this time in their lives, it is possible for them to become fully bi- or multilingual with the skills that could last them a lifetime. This opportunity could be lost if the children are instructed to speak only English. One strategy for teachers is to learn a few key phrases in the language(s) of the children in their care. Parents could be invited into the classroom to share food and crafts, read stories and help out. The most important concept here is to establish an atmosphere of respect for the home language and culture. Events such as a multicultural day in which all the various cultures are shared are not recommended because a one time event demonstrates the strangeness of the culture and may serve as an embarrassment for the children. Instead, culture should become an everyday event such as having chopsticks in the dramatic play area with the teacher using them as the children share a pretend meal together.

Classroom Practice Do's and Don'ts (Bennett-Armistead, Duke, Moses, 2005)

The following practices may hinder oral language practices in native English speaking children and also may stifle English language learners from the desire to practice their newly found skill.

1. DO respond to the children using correct format/grammar or rephrase/repeat what they said. DO NOT correct the children explicitly.
2. DO accept partial phrases. DO NOT insist on complete sentences.
3. DO encourage the children to use their native language and include phrases and songs in everyday use in the classroom. DO NOT dismiss the children's native language use in the classroom.
4. DO insist on a "quiet" classroom environment during work times - While a teacher could stress using inside voices, it isn't necessary to have a completely quiet classroom while the children are practicing their language skills. A buzzing of low voices is an optimal environment to help children practice their oral language skills in a new language. DO NOT insist that the children remain completely silent during work times.

General Classroom Strategies

In general, the teachers working with young language learners need to focus on the content of what is being communicated instead of correcting the speech. Teachers need to understand that the children will make mistakes. Children will eventually learn the conventions. If teachers accept how the children communicate and focus on what they are saying, the children will feel more comfortable in taking risks in formulating their responses. If the classroom is set up so that there is real conversation and discussions, with adults and among children, then language has a chance to flourish. (Vukelich, Christie & Enz, 2002)

Preschool Classroom strategies

Suggestions about classroom strategies from Tabors (1997)
One Child, Two Languages, a Guide for Preschool Educators of Children Learning English as a Second Language

- Start slowly. At the beginning of the year or when the ELL student first comes to the class, the teachers could give the child a smile and a greeting. If the teacher has learned to say hello in the language, that would give a welcoming atmosphere. Aside from that, the teacher could give the child time to focus on becoming familiar with the classroom sounds and routines.
- In the beginning, the children's ability to comprehend supersedes their ability to speak. The teacher would have more success with an ELL in using a "low-demand situation." (Tabors, 1997) In such a circumstance, the teacher would refer to the child

Preschool classroom strategies:

1. *Start slowly.*
2. *Use less complicated language.*
3. *Include pictures with directions.*
4. *Use a lot of repetition.*
5. *Start with what the child knows.*
6. *Insist on verbal communication.*
7. *Continue to challenge the child to increase their proficiency level.*

using his/her name. The approach would include the child in a group without requiring a response from the child. For example, a teacher could say, "Let's include Diego at our table. I see Diego playing with the blocks."

- Use less complicated language and speak in simple sentences.
- Directions could be coupled with a picture, pointing or a gesture. In that way the children have additional support for comprehension.
- Repetition. The teacher could emphasize the words they are using as well as putting those near the end of the sentence.
- Talk about here and now.
- Expanding and extending – Start with what the child knows and expand upon that knowledge.
- Once children have started to express themselves, start to insist on verbal communication
- Decide where the child is in terms of proficiency and continue to challenge the child to move to increased proficiency

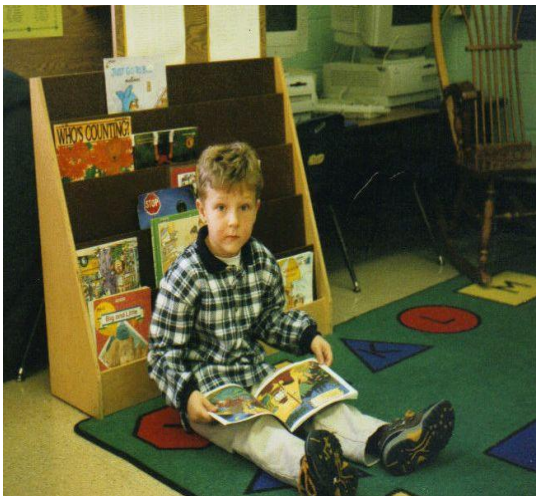
Classroom Routines

A consistent set of routines in the early childhood and kindergarten classroom helps the ELL feel comfortable and secure in his/her environment. Display pictures of the classroom schedule and point to the appropriate picture when the class is transitioning to the next activity. In establishing routines, encourage social and play interactions between children including creating "buddies" for children to help them navigate through the day.

Allow the children to use the home language when they choose.

Book Reading Time

Reading a book can be a challenge when ELLs do not understand what is being read. The following are some guidelines for success when reading orally with groups of children who are ELLs (Tabors, 2000).



1. Keep it short.
2. Consider small-group book reading.
3. Choose books carefully for content, vocabulary, length, and special features including cultural sensitivity.
4. Talk the story, rather than read it.
5. Read books more than once.
6. Encourage children to "read" to other children.

Circle Time

As with other routines, the teacher should call the children to circle at approximately the same time each day. The teacher should keep the same routine during circle time, such as writing the news of the day. Be careful to keep this gathering time short, not longer than 15 minutes for preschool children, as their ability to concentrate may wane. Include music and movement, especially music with predictable components. Along the same lines, a large-group activity could include choral responses, chanting, or responding in unison. In that way, the children will be able to speak aloud in a safe environment. This circle time should also be a time to introduce the thematic material to the class. Once again, keep it short and simple, preferably using visual cues to help children with their understanding of the changes. (Tabors, 2000)

The *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, Revised 2005) devotes a section to promoting acceptance of diversity. To achieve the highest rating in this scale, a classroom must include diversity as a part of the daily routine and play activities. Also the activities in the classroom promote understanding and acceptance of diversity. This is in addition to a “good” rating in which the classroom has many books, pictures and materials accessible showing people of differing cultures in non-stereotyping roles and props representing various cultures included for use in the dramatic play area. (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005)

Kindergarten Instructional Strategies

Teachers working with English language learners in the kindergarten classroom must focus on making the content comprehensible for their learners. One way to provide comprehensible input directly is by teaching content in English using strategies and techniques that make the content understandable or comprehensible to the English language learner. This will enable the student to acquire skills in English language and learn the content effectively. An integrated approach that combines English language development with content knowledge is proven to be the most effective for ELLs. The English language is best learned when it is the medium of instruction, not the focus or object of instruction.

Strategies and techniques for the classroom:

1. Present information through diverse media forms: real life objects, graphic organizers, demonstrations, pre-reading and pre-writing strategies.
2. Bring real life objects into the lessons.
3. Use videotapes and audiocassettes with books.
4. Have students participate in hands-on activities.
5. Be aware of different learning styles.
6. Allow enough wait time for ELLs to respond to questions.
7. Post content objectives and language objectives so the learning and the tasks are clear.
8. Build background knowledge.
9. Front-load vocabulary needed for content areas.
10. Develop basic vocabulary needed for success and understanding in the classroom.
11. Provide comprehensible input when new terms or concepts are introduced.

12. Provide many opportunities for the English language learner to practice using their new language.
13. Establish consistent classroom routines.

Resources:

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- Help! They Don't speak English Starter Kit for Primary Teachers, a resource guide for educators of limited English proficient migrant students, grades PreK-6 <http://escort.org/?q=node/150>
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- Krashen, S. (1980). The Input Hypothesis. In J. Alatis (ed.), *Current issues in bilingual education* (pp. 168-80). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
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- Levine, D.R. & Adelman, M.B. (1982). *Beyond Language: intercultural communication for English as a second Language*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall.
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Tabors, P (1997). *One Child, Two Languages*. Baltimore: Brooks Publishing Co.

Vukelich, C, Christie, J., Enz, B (2002). *Helping Young Children Learn Language and Literacy*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

<http://nieer.org/research/topic.php?TopicID=4> - research on English Language Learners in Early childhood education.

Assessments

“All young children have the right to be assessed in ways that support their learning and development. For children whose home language is not English, this means being assessed in culturally and linguistically responsive ways.”

Where We Stand on the Screening and Assessment of Young English Language Learners
National Association for the Education of Young Children

Preschool

Young English language learners have the right to be assessed for the same reasons and benefits as all children. Moreover, they have the right to be assessed with high-quality assessments and under assessment conditions responsive to the needs of young English-language learners. (NAEYC Screening and Assessment Position Paper, 2005)

Critical to the teaching learning cycle is assessment of learning. The results of the assessment guide lesson planning and improve instruction within the classroom. The state-funded preschool program requires assessment of participating children, outlined in 704 KAR 3:410 Section 6 (18):

Assessment of children within the preschool program shall be for the purpose of planning activities and evaluating progress, and shall not be used to restrict entry into or exit from the preschool program. The program shall include developmentally appropriate assessment of children which:

- a) Provides for ongoing observation, recording and evaluation of each child's growth and development for the purpose of planning activities to suit individual needs;
- b) Is accomplished by observation or activity with the child in familiar structured and informal situations;
- c) Includes information from parents;
- d) Is used to inform parents on a regular basis regarding the child's progress in physical, intellectual, communication, social, emotional, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills and development; and
- e) Considers the cultural background of the child.

Assessment is conducted in the preschool program with the use of approved classroom instructional instruments. The approved instruments are curriculum-based tools. (A listing of the approved instruments is in the Appendix). Most instruments are administered by authentic methods such as observation and work samples. Teachers use the data from the assessment chosen by their district to plan appropriate learning opportunities for each child in the classroom and gauge progress of each child.

Issues of test bias must be addressed by the selection of approved instruments that included diverse populations in the field tests of the instrument. Ensuring that the field tests included populations of the

race or ethnicity of the children in the preschool program helps minimize test bias. Many preschool teachers may not be knowledgeable of the home culture of a child. Also, many teachers and administrators don't speak the home language of the children being assessed. Similarly, some teachers lack knowledge of language acquisition. This makes the scoring and interpretations of observations and work samples without bias difficult.

The following are recommendations from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with regard to screening and assessments of young children (2005)

1. **Using Screening and Assessment for Appropriate Purposes.** As with assessment of all young children, assessment of young English-language learners should be guided by specific, beneficial purposes, with appropriate adaptations to meet the needs of children whose home language is not English.
2. **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Assessments.** In assessing young English-language learners, great emphasis should be given to the alignment of assessment tools and procedures with the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the children being assessed.
3. **Characteristics of Assessments Used to Improve Instruction.** The primary purpose of assessing young English-language learners should be to help programs support their learning and development; classroom-based assessment should maximize the value of the results for teachers' curriculum planning and teaching strategies.
4. **Using Standardized Formal Assessments.** The development of state and other accountability systems has led to increased use of standardized formal assessments of young children. Specific considerations about the development and interpretation of these assessments should guide their use with young English-language learners.
5. **Characteristics of Those Conducting Assessments.** Whatever the purpose of the assessment, those conducting assessments of young English-language learners should have cultural and linguistic competence, knowledge of the children being assessed, and specific assessment-related knowledge and skills.
6. **The Role of Family in the Assessment of Young English-Language Learners.** Families of young English-language learners should play critical roles in the assessment process, being closely involved in a variety of appropriate ways.
7. **Needs in the Field.** Resources should be invested to ensure rapid progress on several fronts: expanding the knowledge base; developing more and better assessments; increasing the number of bilingual and bicultural professionals; and creating professional development opportunities for administrators, supervisors, practitioners, and other stakeholders in effective assessment of young English-language learners.

For further explanation of these recommendations, please refer to the complete document at http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/ELL_Supplement.asp.

Kindergarten

When kindergarten students enroll in school, part of the enrollment packet includes a Home Language Survey (HLS). If this document shows a language other than English spoken in the home, the W-APT is given to determine the level of English proficiency in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The W-APT must be administered within the first 30 days after school begins or within two weeks after a student enrolls in school anytime throughout the school year.

Kindergarten English language learners also will participate in the ACCESS for ELLs©. This is the yearly English proficiency assessment for Kentucky. ACCESS for ELLs© test administration training and certification must be completed by all teachers and staff who plan to test the kindergarten ELLs. For more information about this test, talk to your district assessment coordinator or your Title III- ESL coordinator.

While much work has been done to create assessments that are appropriate for children and families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to ask many questions when selecting an assessment tool, such as:

- Has the assessment been widely used with children from diverse backgrounds?
- Are questions and activities contained in the assessment culturally relevant? (e.g., questions related to making snowmen may have little meaning for children living in warm climates).
- Are different dialects taken into account in translating a given assessment (For example, vocabulary is not the same across all Spanish-speaking cultures)
- Do translated versions of an assessment keep a comparable format, structure, and complexity as the English version though the items or questions likely differ across languages? (e.g., if children are asked to point to the picture that corresponds with target words in English, they should be asked to do the same thing in Spanish).

Most important, no single assessment is perfect. Nonetheless, asking some of the above questions may help to ensure the most *appropriate* assessment tools are used for children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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Espinoza, L. & Lopez, M. *Assessment Considerations for Young English Language Learners across Different Levels of Accountability*. (Paper prepared for The National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force and First 5 LA, August, 2007.)

Rous, B. & Townley, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Building a strong foundation for school success: Kentucky's early childhood continuous assessment guide*. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of Education.

Resources:

http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/ELL_Supplement.asp

<http://www.education.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/5BCCEAF4-F3E7-4888-A821-96AB3F936D40/0/AssessmentGuide93008changes.pdf> *Building a Strong Foundation for School Success: Kentucky's Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide*

<http://clas.uiuc.edu/review/RG-ChildAssessment.html> - review guidelines for early childhood assessments from CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services, Early Childhood Research Institute).

Identification of ELLs with Disabilities

The identification of children with educational disabilities is governed by specific procedural safeguards and rights to ensure that children are identified in an unbiased, equitable manner.

Identification Steps

Districts must locate, identify and evaluate children who may need special education and related services. The referral systems developed by school districts must ensure that inappropriate over identification or over-representation of children by race or ethnicity does not occur. Districts are required to have a referral system that ensures that each child receives appropriate instruction and intervention services prior to referral for special education.

Steps to identify a child with a disability include provision of instruction/interventions, and documentation of progress along with the variety of assessment tools and strategies. Relevant functional, developmental and academic information is required for the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) to review when determining eligibility for special education.

The identification of children with educational disabilities is governed by specific procedural safeguards and rights to ensure that children are identified in an unbiased, equitable manner. Listed below are the specific requirements regarding evaluation of children with limited English proficiency. (Please see 707 KAR 1:300, Section 4 for the full listing of regulations for evaluation and reevaluation.)

- Tests and other evaluation material are chosen and administered so as to not be discriminatory on racial or cultural basis
- Tests and other evaluation materials are provided and administered in the child's native language unless clearly not feasible to do so
- Materials and procedures used to assess a child with limited English proficiency are selected and used to ensure that they measure the extent to which the child has a disability and needs specially designed instruction and related services, rather than measuring the child's English language skills.

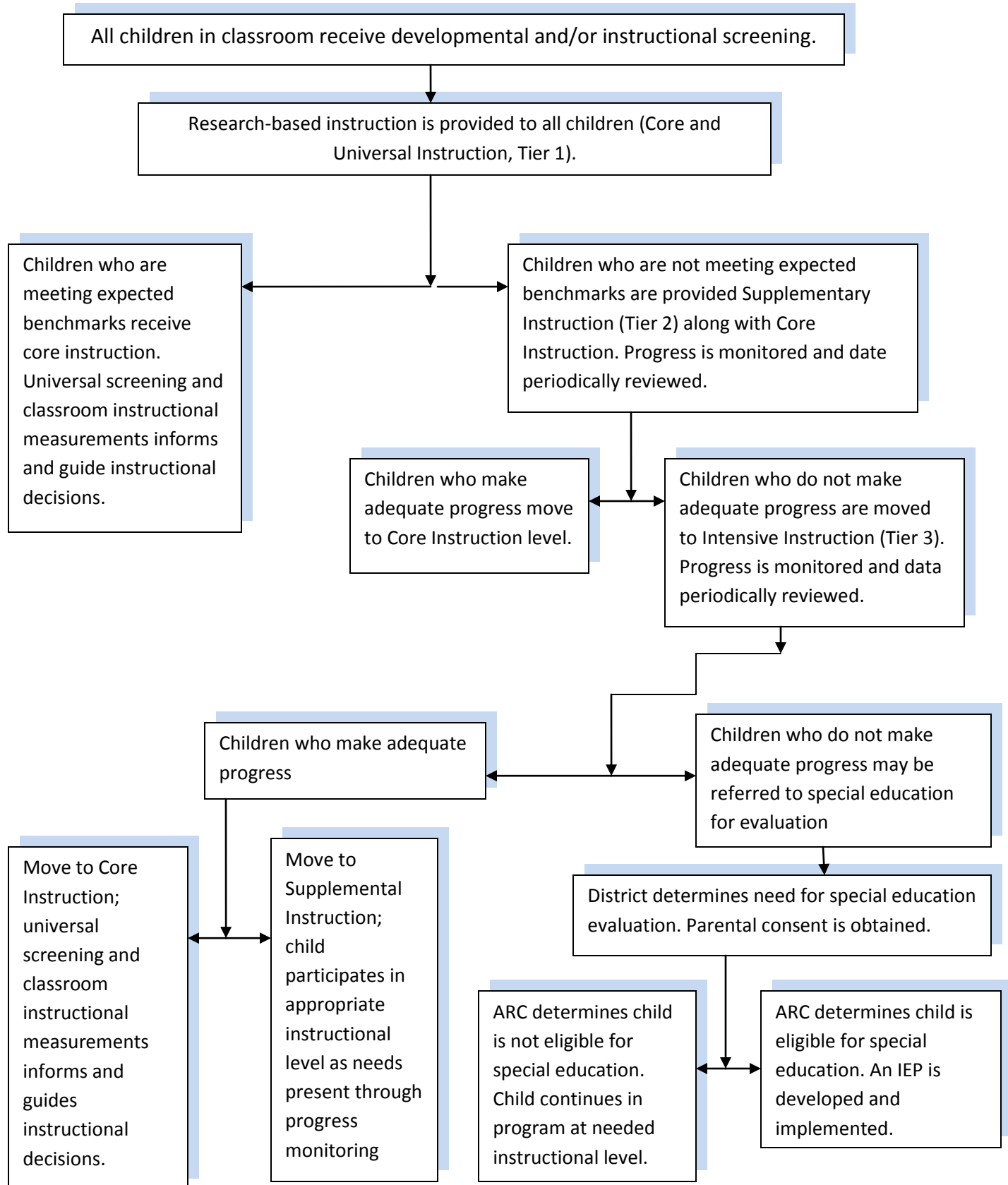
Child Find Process

Districts typically conduct developmental screenings in their communities for Child Find. This screening is usually associated with recruitment for the preschool program offered by the district or for kindergarten registration. The purpose of developmental screening is to identify children who need further assessment. Child Find for students in kindergarten programs may differ. Some districts conduct instructional screening or development screenings either before the start of school or very soon after the start of school. All kindergarten level ELL students are screened with the W-APT to establish the level of proficiency with English.

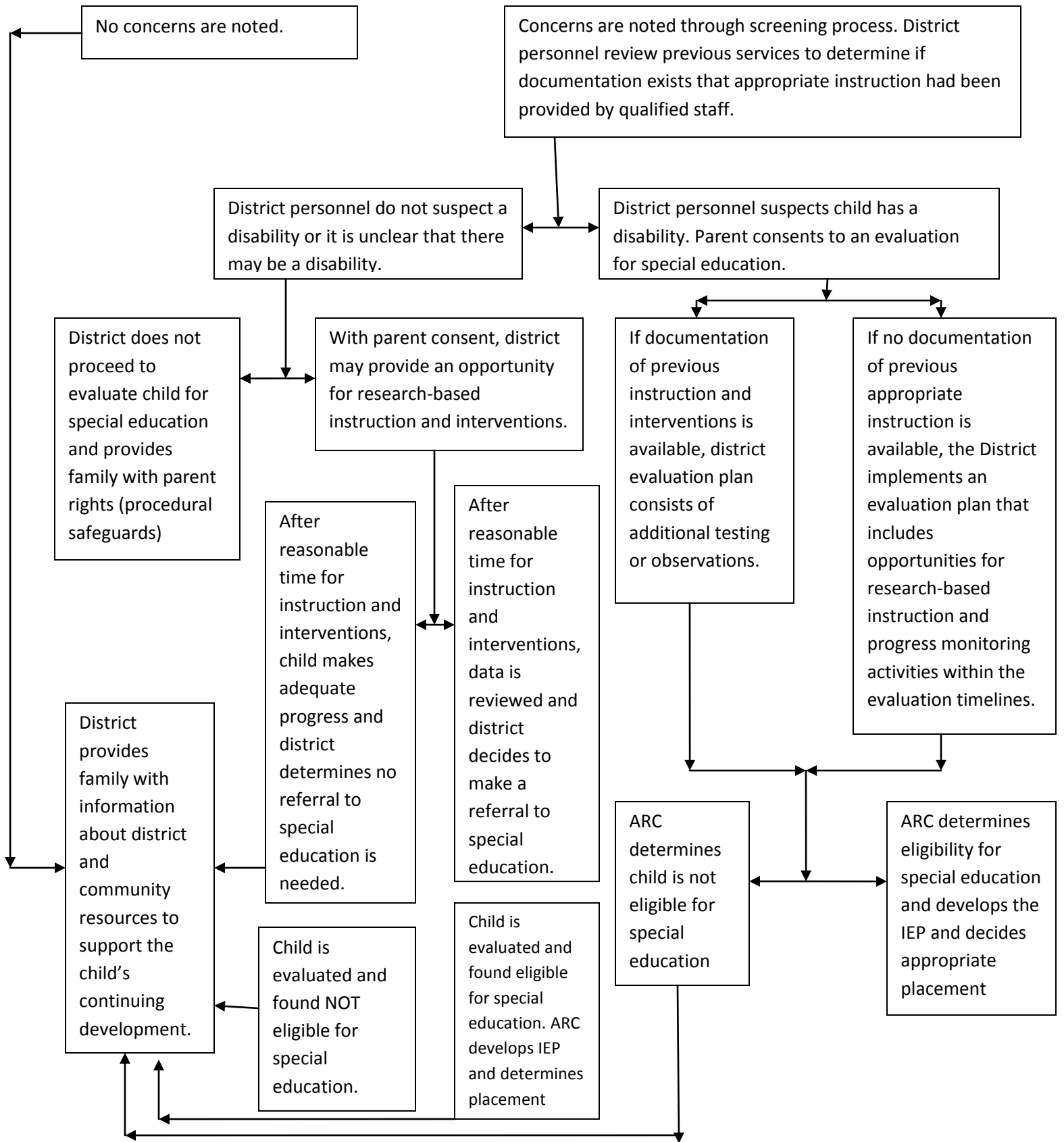
Once concerns are noted, appropriate, relevant, research-based instruction and interventions must be provided in the regular educational setting. Documentation of progress is collected during this period of instruction/intervention. Student assistance teams review this documentation periodically to determine the effectiveness of the instruction/intervention and suggest changes. If the student does not make adequate progress over a reasonable time of instruction /intervention, then a referral to special education for eligibility determination may be made.

The flow charts on the following pages outline the steps for special education eligibility.

Child Find Process for children Eligible for Preschool & Primary



Child Find Process for Children Not Eligible for State-funded Preschool and Primary



Student Eligibility

It is important that ELL students are not identified as children with disabilities due to their limited English proficiency. In Kentucky, a child with a disability is a child evaluated in accordance with 707 KAR 1:300, who meets the criteria for autism, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional-behavior disability, hearing impairment, mental disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment that has an adverse effect on the child's educational performance and leads to special education and related services (707 KAR 1:280 Section 1). Regulations also define adverse effect as meaning that the progress of the child is impeded by the disability to the extent that the educational performance is significantly and consistently below the level of similar age peers.

Eligibility for special education is determined by the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC), of which parents are members. The ARC for an English language learner (ELL) student also includes an English language specialist. Parents with native languages other than English also have the right to have an interpreter during the ARC meetings.

The chart below provides guidance information to assist in determining if the ELL has a disability or needs further time to develop their skills in English.

Language Differences Demonstrated by ELLs...	Language Differences Demonstrated by ELLs with a Language Disability
a lower level of English proficiency than monolingual peers.	difficulty in learning language at a normal rate compared to learners from similar backgrounds, even with special assistance in both languages.
second language acquisition follows a developmental course similar to first language acquisition.	short utterances in both languages.
language loss is normal when opportunities to hear and use native language are minimized.	auditory processing problems (e.g. poor memory, poor comprehension)
shifting from one language to another within utterances is not necessarily an indicator of language confusion (code switching).	poor sequencing skills, disorganized and/or incoherent communication in both languages.
lack of fluency associated with lack of vocabulary, word finding difficulties and/or anxiety.	communication difficulties when interacting with peers from a similar background.
	lack of organization, structure and sequence in spoken and written language, difficulty conveying thoughts in both languages.

Adapted from Upton & Ferrell, *Special Education Process & ELLs*, Kentucky Exceptional Children's Conference, 2008

The majority of preschool and kindergarten children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are identified as children with developmental delays or speech or language impairments. Both of these categories have specific criteria for eligibility:

1. Developmental delay means that a child within the ages of 3 through 8 has not acquired skills or achieved commensurate with recognized performance expectations for his age in one (1) or more of the following developmental areas: cognition, communication, motor development, social-emotional development or self-help-adaptive behavior. Developmental delay includes a child who demonstrates a measurable, verifiable discrepancy between expected performance for the child's chronological age and current level of performance. The discrepancy shall be documented by:

(a) scores of two standard deviations or more below the mean in one of the areas listed above as obtained using norm-referenced instruments and procedures

(b) scores of one-and-one-half standard deviations below the mean in two or more of the areas listed above using norm-referenced instruments and procedures

OR

(c) the professional judgment of the ARC that there is a significant atypical quality or pattern of development –(Professional judgment shall be used only where normal scores are inconclusive and the ARC documents in a written report the reasons for concluding that a child has a developmental delay.)

2. Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, including stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, voice impairment, delayed acquisition of language, or an absence of language, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

For children who are limited English proficient, the disability must be detected by appropriate methods and not a manifestation of deficits in English language. The ELL student should spend considerable time in the English language environment before a referral to special education is considered. The student should be referred for a special education assessment only when it appears that socio-cultural factors may not be the primary contributors to the student's learning problems and the student has demonstrated insufficient progress in response to appropriate interventions and instruction.

Resources:

Early Childhood Regional Training Centers

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Preschool/For+Preschool+Coordinators+and+Teachers/Preschool+Regional+Training+Centers.htm>

Special Education Cooperatives

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Exceptional+Children/Special+Education+Partners/Ky+Spec+Ed+Coop+Network.htm>

Synthesis Brief: English Language Learners with Disabilities:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/ELL_ELLsWithDisabilitiesNASDSE.pdf

Referring and Evaluating Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students for Programs and Services for children with Special Needs: <http://ncschoolpsy.org/NCSPALEPProfessionalPracticePaper.pdf>

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt):

<http://www.nccrest.org/about.html>

Desired Results Access Project. The California Institute on Human Services Sonoma State University

<http://www.draccess.org>

NAEYC Position Paper: ELL Supplement

http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/ELL_Supplement.asp (full version)

NAEYC and NAECS/SDE Position Statement on Assessment

http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/ELL_Supplement_Shorter_Version.pdf

Common Questions and Answers

1. Are children eligible for the state-funded preschool program if they are ELL?

No state funding is available for ELL; however school districts may use district general funds, flexible focus funds or tuition to support ELL children as space is available.

2. What funding sources are available for preschool ELLs?

Title III funding for limited English proficient (LEP) and immigrant students may only be used for K-12 grades only at this time. Nevertheless, preschool ELLs are being supported through tapping into the expertise of the district ELL coordinator. The teachers and the preschool coordinator consult with the district ELL person to seek advice and share in professional development offered to district personnel. The preschool program could use preschool funds to help with LEP materials.

3. Are districts required to evaluate preschool and Head Start children on the W-APT or are districts supposed to wait till they start kindergarten?

The state requires testing of K-12 students whose home language survey indicates a language other than English in the home. Some districts with high LEP numbers choose to test preschool students at the end of the year, and the results are still valid when school starts. This helps with placements for kindergarten students in the fall.

4. Do districts have to offer accommodations and resources in the preschool classroom for non-English speaking students although they are not counted as LEP in the district?

That's correct. Districts must still provide support for language development and academics for all students in the preschool program.

5. Does this mean that, although we are giving accommodations, these students will not have a Program Service Plan that documents them?

That's right. Some districts give preschoolers the K-WAPT at the end of the year to get an idea of their oral language proficiency levels as a snapshot of their abilities. The WIDA English language proficiency standards, which cover pre-K through 12th grade, give classroom teachers a clearer idea of what the student can do in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Appendix

Glossary

Academic Language is the language used in formal contexts for academic subjects; the aspect of language connected with literacy and academic achievement. This includes technical and academic terms.

ACCESS for ELLs® is the Kentucky-approved annual English language proficiency assessment. It assesses social and instructional English, as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science and social studies within the school context across four language domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing). See www.wida.us.

BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) is social language that is less cognitively demanding. It includes face-to-face conversational fluency, including mastery of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. ELLs typically acquire conversational language used in everyday activities before they develop more complex, conceptual language proficiency.

CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) is language proficiency related to the academic setting. This language is more intellectually demanding and abstract than BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills).

Comprehensible Input is the language the learner already knows plus a range of new language that is made comprehensible by the use of planned strategies.

Culture is the sum total of the ways of life of a people; includes norms, learned behavior patterns, attitudes and artifacts; also involves traditions, habits or customs; how people behave, feel and interact; the means by which they order and interpret the world; ways of perceiving, relating and interpreting events based on established social norms; a system of standards of perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting.

ELL (English language learner) refers to the student.

LEP (limited English proficient) refers to the student.

ESL (English as a Second Language) refers to the language support program.

ESOL (English speakers of other languages) are students whose first language is not English.

Home Language is defined, in most cases, as the language most frequently spoken at home. In the student identification system, home language also refers to the first language the child learned, the language most frequently spoken by the child or to the child. In the case of a foreign born student living in an English speaking home of his/her adopted family, the student's native language is the home language.

Home Language Survey (HLS) is administered to all students enrolled in the district as a first screening to identify students with limited English proficiency. The Home Language Survey (703 KAR 5:070) shall be based at a minimum of the following questions:

- (1) What is the language most frequently spoken at home?
- (2) Which language did your child learn when he/she first learned to talk?
- (3) What language does your child most frequently speak at home?
- (4) What language do you most frequently speak to your child?

Immigrant refers to a student or individual who is aged 3 through 21, was not born in any state of the United States of America and has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years.

Informal Assessment is an appraisal of student performance through unstructured observation; characterized as frequent, ongoing and involving simple but important techniques such as verbal checks for understanding, teacher-created assessments and other non-standardized procedures. This type of assessment provides teachers with immediate feedback.

L1 (First Language) is a widely used abbreviation for primary, home or native language.

L2 (Second Language) is a widely used abbreviation for second language acquired by the individual.

Language Proficiency is the level of competence at which an individual is able to use language for both basic communicative tasks and academic purposes across four domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Migrant student is federally defined as an individual who is, or whose parent or spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, obtained or accompanied such parent or spouse in order to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work.

Mnemonics are devices to jog the memory. For example, steps of a learning strategy are often abbreviated to form an acronym or word that enables a learner to remember the steps.

Multilingualism is a proficiency in more than two languages.

Primary language is the first or native language spoken by the individual.

Realia are the concrete objects used to relate classroom teaching to real life (e.g., use of actual foods and supermarket circulars to develop the language related to foods and food purchasing).

Refugee is defined as a student outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugee families also may have fled from war or natural disaster. A refugee student may or may not be an immigrant or may not be a migrant.

Scaffolding is adult support for learning and student performance of the tasks through instruction, modeling, questioning, feedback, graphic organizers, and more across successive engagements. These supports are gradually withdrawn as the student's level of English proficiency progresses, thus transferring more and more autonomy to the student.

State-funded preschool program - is mandated by Kentucky law to be provided to at-risk 4-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities.

Strategies are mental processes and plans that people use to help them comprehend, learn and retain new information. There are three types of strategies – cognitive, meta-cognitive and social/affective- and these are consciously adapted and monitored during reading, writing and learning.

TransACT is a free multi-lingual service available to all Kentucky districts. It helps administrators and teachers communicate with parents in multiple languages, meeting the complex and rigorous federal No child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations.

W-APT (WIDA ACCESS Placement Test) is the Kentucky approved identification English language proficiency assessment. See www.wida.us.

WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) is a consortium of states, which includes Kentucky, dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. See www.wida.us.

Legal Information

KRS 156:160 Promulgation of administrative regulations by the Kentucky Board of Education

With the advice of the Local Superintendents Advisory Council, the Kentucky Board of Education shall promulgate administrative regulations establishing standards that public school districts shall meet in student, program, service and operational performance. These regulations shall comply with the expected outcomes for students and schools set forth in KRS 158:6451.

Administrative regulations shall be promulgated for:

- Courses of study for the different grades and kinds of common schools; and
- The minimum requirements for high school graduation.

704 KAR 3:304 Required program of studies

This administrative regulation adopts into law the *Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools Primary - 12*, dated June 2006.

704 KAR 3:410. Preschool education program for four (4) year old children

<http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/704/003/410.htm>

This administrative regulation provides the required components of the preschool program offered through Kentucky public schools.

707 KAR 1:002 -707 KAR 1:380. Special Education Regulations

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Exceptional+Children/Special+Education+Regulations/Kentucky+Special+Education+Regulations.htm>

These administrative regulations provide the required components and legal rights for special education and related services provided through Kentucky public schools. Child find regulations are found at 707 KAR 1:300.

Civil Rights Act (1964)

- 1) Forbade discrimination on account of race, color, age, creed, or national origin in any federally funded activity.
- 2) Authorized the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to apply compliance procedures and reviews and withhold funds.
- 3) Authorized the Department of Justice to sue in federal court to secure the desegregation of public facilities.
- 4) Authorized the U. S. Office of Education to provide financial assistance.

Lau V Nichols (1974)

- 1) Found a denial of equal educational opportunity under the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- 2) Affirmed the authority of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (D/HEW) to enforce the Civil Right Act of 1964 (equal educational opportunity)
- 3) Affirmed the validity of the May 25th Memorandum extending the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to language minority children.
- 4) Affirmed the authority of the D/HEW “to require affirmative remedial efforts to give special attention to linguistically deprived children.” (Lau Remedies)

“Under these state-imposed standards there is no equality of treatment merely by providing the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum for students who do not understand English effectively.”

“Basic English skills are at the very core of what the public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experience incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.”

Justice Douglas Lau v. Nichols 1974

Plyler v Doe [457 U.S. 202 (1982)]

The U. S. Supreme Court has ruled in Plyler v Doe that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are obliged under state law to attend school until they reach a mandated age.

As a result of the Plyler ruling, public schools may not:

- ❑ Deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status
- ❑ Treat a student differently to determine residency
- ❑ Engage in any practices to “chill” the right of access to school
- ❑ Require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status
- ❑ Make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status
- ❑ Require social security number from all students as they may expose undocumented status

Students without social security numbers should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for free lunch and/or breakfast program on behalf of a student need only indicate on the application that they do not have a social security number.

Finally, school personnel-especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities-should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U. S. immigration laws.

Castañeda v Pickard (1981)

- ❑ The program must be based on sound educational theory, or at least a legitimate experimental strategy
- ❑ The school must effectively implement the program
- ❑ The program results must demonstrate the program’s effectiveness.

(Case Law not the Supreme Court)

Assessment Instruments for Preschool

Assessment, Evaluation and Programming system for Infants and Children (AEPS). Second Edition, Brookes Publishing Co.

Brigance Inventory of Early Development II. Curriculum Associates, Inc.

The Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs (CCITSN), Second Edition, Brookes Publishing Co.

The Creative Curriculum Development continuum Assessment for Ages 3-5, Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Early learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LEP), Kaplan Early Learning Co.

Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP), VORT Corporation

Additional Website Resources

General Resources

TransACT: www.transact.org

TransACT is a site available to all Kentucky educators. It provides a wide variety of documents in many languages to meet the NCLB requirement to communicate with parents.

WIDA: www.wida.us

This site provides information about the standards and assessments used for Kentucky's English language learners

Starfall.com: www.starfall.com

This is a free children's literacy site that teaches children ages 2-8 HOW to read.

USA Learns: <http://www.usalearns.org>

A free site for adults to learn English sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Education.

Homeschool.com: <http://www.homeschool.com/articles/top100-2008/default.asp>

This site provides a listing of the top 100 educational Web sites.

Allen, JB. (June 2007). *Creating Welcoming Schools: A Practical Guide to Home School Partnerships with Diverse Families.*

Cepeda, J. & Mayer, E. *Tomasito's Mother comes to School/La mama de tomasito visita la escuela.*

Educational/Instructional Sites:

Handwriting for Children:

Animated Math--

<http://www.handwritingforchildren.com/handwrite/manuscript/animation/numbers.htm>

Animated Uppercase--

www.handwritingforchildren.com/handwrite/manuscript/animation/uppercase.htm Animated

Lowercase--www.handwritingforchildren.com/handwrite/manuscript/animation/lowercase.htm

Pumarosa: www.pumarosa.com

English-Spanish speaking for adults (audio)

OmPersonal Multi-Media English: www.OmPersonal.com.ar

English-Spanish speaking and writing for family (interactive, many levels, music, poetry, etc.).

Sites for learning languages:

LanguageGuide.org: www.languageguide.org

Audio visual and interactive language lessons in 11 languages for speakers of 11 optional languages are available at this site.

Live Mocha: www.livemocha.com

This site provides online Rosetta Stone™-like language lessons with option of conversation partners.

Quia: <http://www.quia.com/shared>

This site provides memory games, matching, hangman, and other interactive activities in more than 100 categories and in 25 languages.

FSI Language Courses: <http://fsi-language-courses.com>

Adults can learn 30 languages for free (download books and audio-lessons).

Literacy Center Education Network: http://www.literacycenter.net/play_learn/index.htm

Basic literacy activities in Spanish, German, French and English are available for children.

Phonetics: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics>

This site provides the animated phonetic sounds in Spanish, German and English.

Word 2 Word Language Resources: <http://www.word2word.com>

This site provides resources to learn or teach virtually any language online.

Free multilingual online books for children and adults:

International Children’s Digital Library: www.childrenslibrary.org

Thousands of free online books for children in over 50 languages are available here.

Librivox The Acoustical Liberation of Books in the Public Domain: <http://librivox.org>

This site holds thousands of audio books and downloadable books for adults

Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/languages/es>

This is a literary archive with thousands of books and audio for adults.

Related Resources

Harvard Family Research Project:

<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/making-the-case-for-parental-involvement-and-engagement-part-i-parental-family-school-and-community-partnerships-make-a-difference-workshop>

This slide presentation addresses the importance of family involvement in education. Strategies for engaging families are shared.

<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/preparation-for-building-partnerships-with-families-a-survey-of-teachers-teacher-educators-and-school-administrators>

This publication provides a summary of research conducted in Kentucky on the preparation of teachers and school administrators to work with families.

<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/parents-and-teachers-together-creating-schools-our-children-deserve>

This course gives students an opportunity to think about current school problems within a power framework and then design constructive ways to empower parents and teachers to be more effective in creating “schools our children deserve.”

Reading is Fundamental: <http://www.rif.org/>

Good source for books and reading information