

PULL-OUT: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes for English Language Learners

Using content from The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes specific instructional strategies for English Language Learners are suggested. Teaching teams can easily use the strategies offered to support children's progress across eight general Domains of learning and development. Specific strategies are linked to each of the Domains included in the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.

The following is an excerpt from...



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The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes presents instructional strategies to support children's progress across eight general Domains of learning and development. The strategies highlighted here are helpful when planning for culturally and linguistically diverse children and ensuring the progress of English language learners.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Build positive, warm, nurturing relationships with English language learners so that they feel safe and less anxious. Not being able to communicate creates considerable anxiety for young children who cannot learn anything well if they are stressed.
- Speak English in ways that help English language learners understand. Use simple sentences, repeat what is said, use gestures and facial expressions, point to objects, and use everyday vocabulary.
- Gradually expand your vocabulary so English language learners continue to make progress in vocabulary development and are conceptually challenged.
- Help children link English vocabulary to real life-events, experiences with concrete objects, and pictures. Focus on the here and now until they become more proficient in English.
- Help children acquire book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness, and phonological awareness in their home language, drawing on family and community members as resources. Once acquired, these skills will transfer to English.

LITERACY

- Support early writing experiences for English language learners in their home language whenever possible.
- English language learners may recognize and identify letters of the alphabet in their home language as well as in English.

MATHEMATICS

- Math is an area where many English language learners can accelerate because they can manipulate materials, as well as their bodies and hands, to practice math skills.
- If children know how to count in their home language they can easily transfer that knowledge of numbers into English.

SCIENCE

- English language learners can touch, manipulate, and explore science materials without using language until they are comfortable verbalizing.
- It is preferable that children first learn science content in their home language so they are familiar with the concepts when introduced to science in English.

CREATIVE ARTS

- Dance, art, pantomime, and creative expression are areas where English language learners can be included without needing to rely on language skills in English.
- Ask families to share traditional stories from their cultures. Dramatize these stories.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Make sure the learning environment is welcoming to every child and reflects his or her identity and culture.
- Demonstrate respect for the children's cultures and home languages by reflecting them in books, signs, and learning experiences.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

- How linguistically diverse children approach learning will differ and will affect how quickly they progress in learning English.
- A child who is more willing to take risks with language may develop more rapidly than a child who is hesitant in attempting to speak English.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- English language learners may show competence in physical skills which can help them feel more confident about their other activities and skills.

"Pull-Out: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes for English Language Learners." English Language Learners. Head Start Bulletin #78. HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 2005. English.

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