

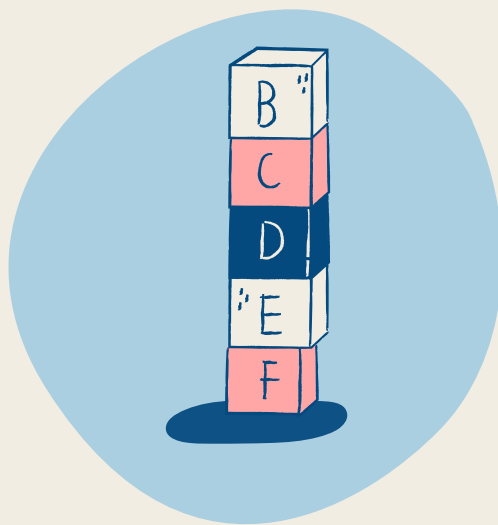
BILINGUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Dual language programs need more funding!

Dual language programs in the United States are not as common as they should be, which is because of the lack of funding going towards these opportunities for students. Bilingualism in the early years of a child's education are critical to the rest of their development. Districts, schools, educators, and parents need to work together to establish funding and provide dual language programs to as many children as possible.

From the Ground Up

The earlier that children are able to learn a new language, the better. Although it is not impossible to learn languages as one grows older, it has been proven that children who learn another language right from the get-go "show reliable and impressive ease in using grammatical gender" There are multiple benefits for children who learn in a dual language program. "They tend to have better accents, more diversified vocabulary, higher grammatical proficiency, and greater skill in real-time language processing."



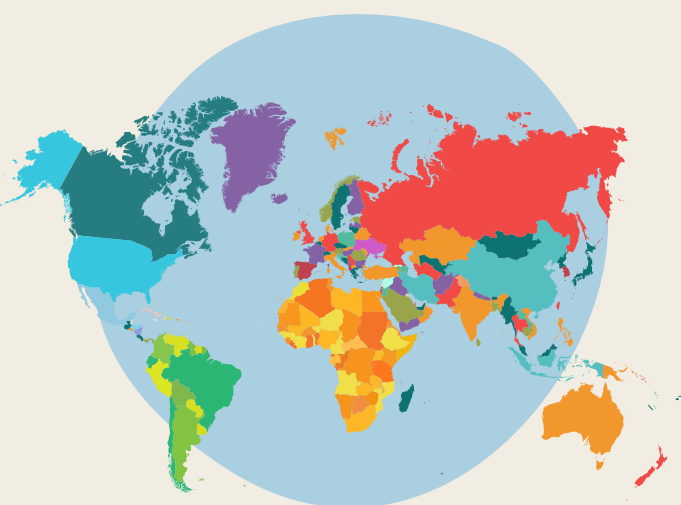
Support Dual Language Families

21% of young children are already immersed in a second language at home. A majority of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English. "Despite the robust research documenting the extensive capacity of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to learn multiple languages and the cognitive, social, and linguistic benefits of early bilingualism, most young DLLs in the United States do not receive enriched ECE that supports their emergent bilingualism."



USA vs. The World

Only in America can people graduate high school not knowing more than the English language. "Globally, bilingual and biliterate adults have more job opportunities than monolingual adults. (They) have the opportunity to participate in the global community in more ways, get information from more places, and learn more about people from other cultures."



Potential Repercussions

If school districts and education administrators do not implement bilingualism into more early childhood programs, young children will continue to receive a sub-par education. There is so much relevant research showing the importance and benefits of such programs, not only for children who already come from families who speak a language outside of English at home. Any child should be able to receive the opportunity to learn a second language from the moment their language skills are developing.

Ethical Implications

- I.4.4: To work through education, research, and advocacy toward a society in which all young children have access to high-quality early care and education programs.
- I.4.7: To support policies and laws that promote the well-being of children and families, and to work to change those that impair their well-being. To participate in developing policies and laws that are needed, and to cooperate with families and other individuals and groups in these efforts.

~NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

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ANNOTATIONS

1. The earlier that children are able to learn a language or develop bilingual skills, the better for them and their future. While a child is young, their brains and language skills are still very malleable. With the proper ability to learn a language while still engaging in play-based learning, these children will grasp onto another language much quicker than say a bilingual sequential learner. Simultaneous bilingual children have the opportunity to have their language molded and have it develop along with them as they grow.
2. In order to support families who speak a language other than English at home, which is a majority of families in the United States, dual language programs must become more common and accessible to everyone. Many times, minorities have to settle for sending their children to public schools where there are insufficient funds for a dual language program, especially in early childhood education. These children then miss out on the opportunity to grow up developing their home language in a school setting. It is very common for a lot of these students to be labeled as slower learners or potentially learning disability as they do their best to learn two languages at once without the proper support needed from educators/school personnel.
3. The U.S. is truly one of the only places around the world where learning a second language prior to graduating high school is not mandatory everywhere. Take a look at various countries where students have to choose another language to study from when they are young students. They end up growing up as simultaneous learners and have many opportunities to work around the world, communicate with a variety of different people, and overall have the upper-hand when it comes to their cognitive thinking, focus skills, and much more.
4. If more schools do not implement dual language programs, students will continue to miss out on opportunities. Not to mention, families and their cultures will not be as strong as they used to be. The reality of it is that school districts and their leaders need to work together and find the financing in every budget in order to provide students with better options.
5. In regard to the NAEYC Code of Ethics, I strongly believe that every educator should want the absolute best for each and every one of their students, particularly those who come from bilingual homes. We know the importance of dual language programs and learning therefore we should advocate for the resources to be able to provide our students with these opportunities. It is our duty to stay on top of this. Additionally, if enforcing new policies or laws on behalf of accessible dual language programs is necessary, we should most definitely do everything in our power to make a change. We as educators, along with parents/guardians, are our students' biggest advocates and we need to ensure the best learning opportunities for everyone, no matter what it takes.