

*The National Academies of*  
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

*Board on Children, Youth, and Families*  
*Board on Science Education*

**Fostering School Success for English Learners: Toward New Directions in Policy, Practice,  
and Research**

**Statement of Task**

An ad hoc committee under the auspices of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will establish one committee to address the continuum of young English and Dual language learners (DLL) with two focus areas addressing the development of language and cultural influences from the home to the community birth to Age 8; and systems and policies affecting English and Dual language learner children and youth in grades K-12., including standards and practices across diverse contexts to foster educational achievement among young ELLs/DLLs. The committee will come to consensus on findings and recommendations that aim to inform a research agenda to address gaps in the knowledge base, policies that impact young ELLs, and practices in the range of settings where young DLLs/ELLs learn, grow and develop, including homes, classrooms and health care settings. The committee will explore the implementation implications of its recommendations within the frame of cost and scalability. The committee will review the evidence from international and US studies including, but not limited to, the following disciplines: neuroscience, developmental psychology, linguistics, demography, general education, special education, sociology, public health, maternal and child health, home visiting, public policy, and cultural anthropology. Evidence will be drawn from high-quality research, including peer-reviewed literature and government reports and reflecting various study designs (e.g., descriptive, longitudinal, qualitative, mixed methods, experimental and quasi-experimental.)

In this document, the term “ELL” is used to refer to a child from a home where a language other than English is spoken and who may be learning two (or more) languages at the same time. “ELLs” encompasses “dual language learners” (DLLs), “limited English proficient” (LEP), “language minority,” “bilingual,” and other common terms used in the field for children who speak a language other than English.

*Birth to Age 8 Focus*

This focus area will be on the foundational elements of language development, developmental progress, school entry, and practices for early school success for young ELLs who are Dual language learners (whether that is a heritage, native, or a second language). The Birth to Age 8 focus area will include the following questions:

1. How do young ELLs/DLLs develop? What are the normative learning trajectories across domains, including socio-emotional as well as language and knowledge development in any/all languages spoken by a child?

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2. What are the roles of languages, culture and cultural identity in the development of young ELLs/DLLs?
3. What practices and principles show evidence of positively affecting socio-emotional well-being, health, language and literacy development in home languages and English, and content learning for young ELLs/DLLs 0-8 years old across various settings (e.g., home, child care, health care, school, inclusive settings)?
4. What strategies and practices show evidence of supporting young ELLs/DLLs who are also children with disabilities, homeless, from migrant families, or living on tribal lands?
5. What strategies and practices show evidence of supporting optimal transitions establishing a learning progression in a continuum of education for young ELLs/DLLs from birth through third grade (i.e., between home, early childhood education and care settings, pre-K, kindergarten, and through third grade)? What are the barriers to implementing a continuum of education for young ELLs/DLLs?
6. How does the literature inform promising practices in the identification, screening, and assessment of ELLs/DLLs, from birth through third grade, to reliably document the progress of young children's learning, health, and development?
7. How does the literature inform improvements needed in data collection and measurement of young ELLs/DLLs to enhance the next generation of research and evaluation studies in this area?
8. How does the literature identify promising practices including dual language approaches of early learning (birth to grade 3) programs and systems, that are linguistically and culturally responsive to young ELLs/DLLs and their parents/families and promote long-term learning, health, and academic achievement among ELLs/DLLs?

*K-12 –Focus area*

This focus area will be grounded in elucidating instructional practices and systems including dual language approaches that can help EL/DLLs attain both new content as well as the newly emerging English language proficiency standards. Among several questions, the Committee will address:

1. What should an effective language program look like when applying appropriate dual language approaches?
2. What are the key features of English as a Second Language (ESL)/ELD instruction that foster acquisition of the complex social and academic uses of language delineated in the new content standards?

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3. How should ESL/ELD instruction be coordinated and integrated with the “regular” core content instructional program particularly in dual language programs?
4. What principles should govern how educational or health care programs provide language development and rigorous academic content for ELLs and DLLs particularly in dual language programs?
5. How should the diversity of the ELLs/DLLs student population be addressed? For example, what should language instruction look like for ELLs at different levels of English language proficiency and Heritage language Proficiency?
6. What are appropriate time expectations for progress in various components of content and language development, as measured by summary assessments that can be applied to accountability systems?
7. What are the competencies of teachers and staff working with ELLs and DLLs in educational and health care or medical home settings?

Outcomes

- Recommend policies and practices that have been proven to enhance early school success, health, and improve educational outcomes for ELLs and DLLs.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and develop a conceptual framework to guide future research priority-setting, including priority-setting on data collection and evaluation activities on ELLs and DLLs.
- Develop evidence-based resources, derived from the consensus report, for practitioners and policymakers to guide efforts to serve young ELLs and DLLs and their families.