

## **ECE Advocacy Paper**

### **I.**

Dual language learners are struggling very much and very little support is given to them. There are children who grow up with their native language and their families probably speak that native language and/or minimal English. Although, with the language barrier, there are not enough teachers, staff or educators that can fully help them work together for the child or children's education. It is an issue that it is still being seen to this day and I really would want to bring in the support children and their families need. There are many children and families that just know their native language before English and they are the ones who are really affected. Also, because of the lack of support, children can fall behind in school because they are not receiving the appropriate help that can support the child and understand the child even with a different language. Families also struggle due to the fact that they might know little English or no English at all. If a family member can't communicate with the child's teacher, they won't be able to know the child's progress or what ways to help them so it really leaves a big impact on families and on the child. The dual language learners community might feel like an outcast and feel like they are being put to a side for not getting the support that they need. Personally, I have experienced this myself. I'm the oldest from an hispanic family. My family only speaks Spanish. As a child I debated a lot with both Spanish and English because English was the language that I would have to use at school and Spanish at home to communicate with my parents. I would have to translate English to Spanish to my parents when anyone called, when someone spoke to her, when we go to the Supermarket, when reading mails and much more. It was

difficult because I was the oldest and my responsibility was to help my parents and focus on school. Whenever I had trouble with homework, I had to figure it out myself due to the fact my parents didn't know English. So I was in that barrier where I had to hold onto both languages on my own.

This is an issue that had to be addressed a long time ago. This is an issue that I personally experienced and I believe it still has been happening before I had to experience it. I don't see the involvement of teachers and families together to have both languages incorporated to a child's education. Children from a young age go through the same thing as I have gone through yet children don't get the support. In order to be able to have that, action needs to be taken. What I would like to add is more bilingual programs that can support parents because it will very much help them and feel like they are included in the school system. I would also like for bilingual teachers to be added in children's classes because if a child needs help, a bilingual teacher would help better to understand the child's concern than just a teacher who knows English only. There should be more put into a classroom such bringing in both languages in the classroom such as naming certain things and translating them to another language. Families will also feel welcome knowing that the school has their culture, languages involved a lot. This is really an issue that needs to be addressed in order to help children academically, be able to better their future in any way we can.

I want parents and providers to be part of my audience because they are who will help me raise our voices and have this issue addressed as soon as possible. If we don't make the change, no one else will. Having families that can relate to difficult situations being a dual language learner or having a child that knows more than one language will

want to address the issue. Uniting families that have similar struggles and approaching educators will create a big change by raising our voices, creating organizations, going to schools and we will not be alone facing the problem.

## II.

It would be good to stop for a minute and think about the issues that are going in the education system. Dual language learners support has become an issue of the lack of support and it can create consequences for them. In the article called, *“Transforming Early Childhood Education for Dual Language Learners: A Theory of Change”*, it is said, “Despite increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in our communities, our education system and workforce is under-prepared to serve dual language learners (DLLs), resulting in inequitable educational experiences for children.”<sup>1</sup> Through this article, it begins to talk about the diversity of language that is seen through the outside community but it also mentioned their view of the lack of support within the education system. Through this article, I was able to learn how they were able to recognize the problem, but I was able to learn how they approach the situation and show the ways that they can help and better the issue.

Everyone deserves to get the help that they need not just academically but emotionally and mentally as well. Not receiving the appropriate help for a child such as for a language dual learners can lead to psychology conflicts. In the article called, *“White Paper: the Provision of School Psychological”*, it is said, “Dual language learner students enter school at virtually every grade level. They range in histories of school

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<sup>1</sup> Ansari, S., Fehrer, K., & Tognozzi, N. (2018, August). Transforming Early Childhood Education for Dual Language Learners: A Theory of Change. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED594178.pdf>

attendance from none to full, come with and without disabilities, and often have backgrounds of poverty and family strife or fear.”<sup>2</sup> When children are in the school system, it should be known that there are children who have different kinds of struggles and should be noted that there should be help provided for them and be able help in all different aspects of any struggle that they can go through. Through this article, I was able to see more in depth on how dual language learners are receiving support, how families can be engaged when there might be struggles of being a dual language learner and speaks about how there should be proper help to be provided and what to contribute to better their future.

### **III.**

What I would do to bring attention to others about this topic would be by approaching families I know who are dual language learners or that their child or children are dual language learners. I would want to speak with how they and their kids are feeling about balancing their native language and language that is spoken at school. I would gather information about their struggles for both children and parents and get their opinions to what they think about the situation. I would also gather their opinions on what they think should be done in school. I believe that is important to include everyone who has the same struggles and to know that they are not alone and get them the support they need.

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<sup>2</sup> Robinson-Zañartu, C., Draper Rodriguez, C., & Olvera, P. (2019, February 05). White Paper: The Provision of School Psychological Services to Dual Language Learners. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330894639\\_White\\_Paper\\_the\\_Provision\\_of\\_School\\_Psychological\\_Services\\_to\\_Dual\\_Language\\_Learners](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330894639_White_Paper_the_Provision_of_School_Psychological_Services_to_Dual_Language_Learners)

#### IV.

I would first write a letter to the Department of Education expressing the concerns of the lack of support to families that are bilingual and how children are struggling. I will also include some of the family's concerns as well. I will encourage for families to send letters as well because I want the Department of Education to know the family's personal struggles and point of view to how they are living with this issue. I would also want the Department of education to realize that many families are struggling and the schools is not giving them the support they need and have to take it into serious consideration. I would also create peaceful protests and gather families to join so our voices can be heard. We'll go to the Department of Education, we'll go to schools and speak with teachers to express our concerns as well. We'll reach out to educators who believe and think the same way about dual language learners not receiving enough attention, education and dedication to help children out.

#### V.

There are many issues in this world that need to be fixed. My issue that I want to fix involves bilingual families, a community that I believe that don't get the support that they deserve and they need. Those families need a voice that needs to be heard. I strongly feel dual language learners and their families need for schools to have them more included, have a better learning system for them and for every child that needs it. This issue is extremely important to me because as the oldest child and as the only child back then, I struggled a lot figuring things on my own at school. I remember during class I always struggled to read and when it was time to participate it was really hard for me to do so. Since I knew Spanish before learning English it was very complicated to

separate both languages and I don't remember having bilingual teachers that could help me go through the issue I was having. My parents only being Spanish speakers, there was no way a teacher could have spoken to my parents about my progress due to the language barrier. Addressing this issue will help other families to be able to attend school programs, speak to bilingual teachers and staff, attend bilingual school meetings and gatherings and much more. My goal is for schools to come as a community and have everyone included no matter their skin color, no matter their race, no matter their language. I just want to be able to find all the resources and support all the families need especially when my family didn't receive that when we really needed it.