REPORT TO CONGRESS ON DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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INTRODUCTION

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-134; hereafter the Head Start Act) requires the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct a study on the status of limited English proficient children and their families participating in Head Start programs (including Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and tribal programs). The Office of Head Start has long required programs to support children who speak languages other than English at home in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive, including promoting both their home language and English language development, and providing comprehensive services in ways that are culturally responsive. These requirements are consistent with provisions of the Head Start Act), which emphasizes improving outreach, enrollment, and quality of services to children with limited English proficiency.

The use of varying terms and definitions by different researchers and policy makers can complicate learning about children and families who are not native English speakers. Thus, this introduction starts by defining the group that is the focus of this report. After establishing terminology, we present the research questions addressed in the report and the data sources and analytic methods used to address the research questions. Finally, we summarize the key findings from the report.

Definition of Dual Language Learners (DLLs). In this study, we use the term "dual language learners" (DLLs) to encompass "limited English proficient" (LEP), as defined in the Head Start Act. This term is recognized in the Early Childhood Field as one used for a child who comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken. A DLL is a child learning two (or more) languages at the same time, or a child learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language. DLL also includes key groups of children served in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs; AI/AN or MSHS children served in programs located in federal regions not under the auspices of AI/AN Head Start or MSHS; and children served in programs in Puerto Rico and U.S. territories.

Research Questions. The Head Start Act put forward several questions about this sizeable group of children and the services provided to them (the actual text from the legislation is included in the report). In response, the report addresses the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of children who are dual language learners (DLLs) and their families receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services?
2. What is the nature of the Head Start/Early Head Start services provided to children who are DLLs and their families?

3. What are the qualifications and training of Head Start and Early Head Start teachers/staff that serve children who are DLLs and their families?
4. What are the languages that Head Start and Early Head Start teachers/staff use in relation to the children and families they serve?
5. What developmental progress is observed in children who are DLLs in Head Start/Early Head Start programs?

To provide important context for interpreting the answers to these questions, the report also highlights differences in each area between DLLs and children from homes where English is the primary language spoken.

The report makes use of three existing datasets designed to describe the experiences of children in Head Start programs to address as many of the questions posed by Congress as possible. The report also discusses the limitations of current data and current research methodologies to address many of the questions that are of critical interest to policy makers and practitioners. Some of these questions can be thoroughly answered, such as describing the demographics of DLLs who are served by Head Start and Early Head Start. Other questions can only be answered partially. For example, available data can describe the range and nature of services offered to children and families; however, the content, duration, and intensity of all types of services cannot be described in as much detail as desired (e.g., quality or intensity of instructional supports for language and literacy development). The report provides as much of a response as the available data and existing methods can reliably address. For example, reporting the rate of progress made by children who are dual language learners and their families enrolled in Head Start programs is limited by the state of the field more broadly in the area of assessment of young dual language learners (discussed more in the report). For some questions, important information is available beyond that specified in the Act, such as in the area of qualifications and training provided to teachers. While data do not exist to answer some of the questions posed by Congress at this time, several efforts are underway to build capacity in this area in order to improve the state of knowledge about the children and families served by Head Start, as well as those served by other early childhood programs. Such efforts funded by ACF are discussed in the final chapter of the report.

Data Sources. The current report utilizes three datasets to describe the children and families enrolled in Head Start programs and their experiences in the programs: the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), the Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES). In this section, we present a brief overview of each of the data sources analyzed for this report, and we briefly explain the limitations of the data for the purposes of this report. Please refer to the full report and to the supporting documentation for each data source for more information regarding the respective research designs, samples, and data limitations.

Head Start Program Information Report (PIR). The Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) provides comprehensive descriptive data on the services and staff of Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide.[1] All grantees and delegate agencies are required to submit Program Information Reports annually. The report presents data from the 2007-2008 program year, which were the most current PIR data available at the time that data analyses began.

Information from the PIR is aggregated at the program, or grantee, level and therefore, it is not possible to break down and examine the data by subsets of children, such as children who are dual language learners. Primarily, we use PIR data in the report to describe program characteristics, including enrollment, regional distribution, program options, qualifications of staff, and services available to and received by children/families at the grantee-, regional-, and national-level. These data permit us to look at the staff and services provided by grantees with different concentrations of children and families speaking languages other than English at home. For example, where are grantees with higher concentrations of children and families speaking languages other than English located?

The PIR is the only data source that provides information about the universe of Head Start programs, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) programs, and programs in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories. This permits us to describe limited demographic characteristics of children and families enrolled in MSHS and AI/AN-HS, and the program options and types of services available to and utilized by families enrolled in these programs.

Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is a nationally representative cohort study of 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in Head Start.[2] The report uses data from the 2006 cohort, which includes 3- and 4-year-old children who entered Head Start in the fall of 2006, their families, and local program staff.

FACES complements PIR data by bringing analyses down to the child and family level. We present FACES data from interviews with parents at Head Start entry and exit, interviews with teachers, education coordinators, and center directors, teacher reports of each child at Head Start entry and exit, observations of Head Start classrooms in the spring of 2007, and direct child assessments at Head Start entry and exit. FACES data are used in the report to describe, at the individual level: (1) characteristics and experiences of children and families enrolled in

[1] For more information on the Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), see descriptions and survey forms on the ACF website at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Headpercent20Startpercent20Program/pir .
[2] For more information on the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), see technical reports on the ACF website http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/faces/.

Head Start; (2) staff qualifications, credentials, and beliefs; (3) classroom practices and quality; and (4) developmental progress of children.

FACES data permit us to describe the characteristics and experiences of children and their families by varying degrees of exposure to languages other than English (i.e., children whose parents primarily use a language other than English to speak with them, children with low English proficiency at Head Start entry). Due to the small sample sizes among groups of children speaking languages other than English or Spanish and limited assessment tools in these other languages, FACES has far more data on Spanish-speaking children in Head Start than on children speaking any other non-English languages. Children were not assessed directly if they could not be assessed in English and they spoke a language other than Spanish.

For multiple reasons, FACES has not sampled from programs operated by federally recognized AI/AN tribes, consortia, or corporations, MSHS programs, or programs located in Puerto Rico and the Pacific Islands. Therefore FACES data cannot be used to describe children and families served by these programs. These limitations are discussed in greater depth in the full report and in the FACES technical reports.

Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES). The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES) is a nationally representative sample of infants who enrolled in Early Head Start in 2009.[3] We use data from the "1-year-old cohort," which includes children who were between 10 and 15 months of age at the time of data collection in the spring of 2009, their families, and local program staff.

Baby FACES supplements PIR and FACES data with a focus on infants served by the Early Head Start programs, and by bringing analyses down to the child- and family-level for this group. The report presents analyses of Baby FACES baseline data collected in spring of 2009 from interviews with parents, interviews with home visitors and caregivers, interviews and self-administered surveys with program directors, home visit observations, and direct classroom observations. These data are used to describe, at the individual level: (1) characteristics and developmental status of 1 year old children in Early Head Start; (2) program services, including quality of home visits and classrooms; (3) staff qualifications and credentials; and (4) family well being, parent-child interactions, and aspects of the home environment.

Baby FACES data provide a snapshot of infants' developmental status and family experiences when children are 1 (and eventually, will depict these children at 2- and 3-years old). Baby FACES data permit analyses of children by DLL status. However, as described above, due to the small sample sizes of families speaking non-Spanish LOTEs and the lack of reliable

[3] For more information on the Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES), see technical reports on the ACF website at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/ehs/descriptive_study/index.html.

instruments in languages other than English and Spanish, we are unable to present as much information about infants in families where non-Spanish LOTEs are spoken.

Limitations of Research for this Population. The limitations of extant research and methodology concerning young children who are dual language learners (DLLs) restrict the quality of data that are available on DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Both FACES and Baby FACES utilized the best and most feasible methods available at the time of data collection for nationally representative, comprehensive, large-scale studies to represent the experiences of young children who are dual language learners. These two studies represent the cutting-edge of national surveys in assessing development of young children who are dual language learners (DLLs), but they had to balance the need to represent the experiences of all children in Head Start and Early Head Start, respectively, with a commitment to accurately reflect the experiences of DLLs. As discussed more fully in the report, data on developmental progress of DLLs is generally limited, for Head Start as for other early childhood programs, by lack of widely recognized, reliable measurements in the field at this point in time.

Operational Definitions. The report operationally defines DLLs as children for whom a "language other than English" (LOTE) was the primary language that parents reported speaking to them. Most of the findings reported reflect children who match this definition. Analyses of Program Information Report (PIR)4 data distinguish children who live in homes where a LOTE was the primary language spoken by the family at home. Analyses of data from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) and the Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES) distinguish children who live in homes where a LOTE was spoken in the home, regardless of which language was the primary language spoken by the family. Children for whom English was the only language that parents reported speaking in the home are referred to throughout the report as children from monolingual English homes. There is diversity in the language experiences of children in both of these groups: nearly one out of four "DLLs" in Head Start live in homes where English is also spoken and it is likely that some "children from monolingual English homes" hear other languages at home. Clearly, distinguishing home language experiences in dichotomous or simple terms is not fully accurate or completely satisfactory. However, as with the vast majority of research studies investigating the implications of home language experiences, this report must present analyses and findings in somewhat simple terms, due to limited subgroup sizes and for the sake of clarity of discussion. Within the findings presented on children's developmental progress, DLLs are distinguished into two groups: DLLs who passed an English language screener and were administered an assessment battery in English) and DLLs who did not pass the screener and

[4] The Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) provides comprehensive data on the services, staff, children, and families served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. All grantees and delegates are required to submit Program Information Reports for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Go to http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/mr/pir for additional information about the PIR.

completed an assessment battery in Spanish. In general, the data described do not include children in AI/AN or MSHS programs, except where noted. Also, the data do not include children and programs in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories, as speaking a language other than English in these contexts, where English is not the dominant language, does not have the same meaning.

This executive summary provides a synopsis of the major findings regarding children who are dual language learners, their families, and the services they receive.

KEY FINDINGS

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF DLLs: What are the characteristics of children who are dual language learners (DLLs) and their families receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services?

Slightly more than a quarter of children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken. According to the 2007-2008 PIR, 29percent of children enrolled in Head Start and 26percent of children enrolled in Early Head Start are DLLs. Most children enrolled in MSHS programs are DLLs (89percent), while only 7percent of children enrolled in AI/AN programs are DLLs.

DLLs are most heavily concentrated in the West and South regions of the U.S., but there are DLLs in all regions and U.S. territories. In 2007-2008, over a third (37percent) of DLLs in Head Start, Early Head Start, MSHS, and AI/AN programs were located in the West, while 23percent attended programs in the South. The remaining DLLs were almost evenly distributed across programs in the Northeast (15percent), Midwest (13percent), and U.S. Territories (13percent). MSHS programs are concentrated in the South (42percent) and West (45percent), with far fewer in the Midwest (9percent) and Northeast (4percent).[5]

For most DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start, Spanish is the primary language spoken at home. More than four-fifths of DLLs enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start are from Spanish-speaking homes. Within Head Start, 84percent of DLLs were from Spanish-speaking homes, 5percent were from homes where an Asian language is spoken, 3percent were from homes where an African language was spoken, and the remaining DLLs came from homes where other languages were spoken, including European/Slavic languages, Pacific Island languages, and Native North American/Alaska Native languages.[F] Within Early Head Start, 91percent of DLLs were from Spanish-speaking homes (the remaining 9percent reflecting all other LOTEs).[B] Among the children enrolled in MSHS programs, approximately 9 out of 10 speak a language other than English at home, and Spanish is the most common language

[5] Data from the 2007-2008 Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR). All subsequent statements reflecting PIR 2007-2008 data will be identified with superscript "P".

spoken (85 percent). Only approximately 4 percent of MSHS families primarily speak one of the native Central American, South American, Mexican, or Caribbean languages.[P]

Few children enrolled in tribal programs speak a language other than English at home. The most common non-English language spoken among families in tribal programs is a native language (Native North American/Alaska Native language), spoken by 5 percent of families in AI/AN programs.[P]

Most DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start were born in the United States. The majority of their parents were born outside of the U.S. 92percent of DLLs entering Head Start in fall 2006 were born in the U.S., but most of their parents (86percent of mothers and 90percent of fathers) were born outside the U.S.[F] Eighty-two percent of DLLs entering Head Start had two parents born outside the U.S. Two-thirds of 1-year-old DLLS in Early Head Start in spring 2009 had foreign-born mothers and three-fourths had foreign-born fathers. Both parents were foreign-born in 64percent of DLLs' families.[B] The majority of foreign-born parents of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start came from Mexico.

The majority of parents of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start have been in the U.S. for 6 years or more. In fall 2006, approximately three-quarters of foreign-born mothers and fathers of DLLs had been in U.S. for 6 years or more.[F] Similarly, in Early Head Start, more than two-thirds of foreign-born mothers and three-quarters of foreign-born fathers of DLLs had been in the U.S. for 6 years or more.[B]

More than half of parents of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start report that they don't understand English well or don't understand it at all. Among DLLs in Head Start, 48percent of their parents reported that they did not understand English well and an additional 15percent did not understand it at all.[F] In Early Head Start, 47percent of parents of DLLs did not understand English well and an additional 10percent did not understand English at all.[B] However, nearly all parents of DLLs entering Head Start in 2006 were literate in their first language, and the parents of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start reported reading very well (60percent) or well (34percent) in their native language.

The majority of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start live with both their mother and their father. Among DLLs in Head Start, 72percent lived with both their mother and their father (biological or adoptive).[F] Similarly, 71percent of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start lived with both their mother and their father (biological or adoptive).[B] 75percent of children enrolled in MSHS programs, most of whom are DLLs, lived in two-parent families. Among DLLs in Head Start who live with two parents, their parents are more likely to be married (49percent) than unmarried (23percent). Among DLLs in Early Head Start, 37percent were living with two parents who were married. DLLs in Early Head Start and in Head Start are more likely than their peers from monolingual English homes to live with two parents and with parents who are married.

On average, DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start live in households of 5 people. DLLs in Head Start lived with an average of 2.4 adults and 2.7 children.[F] About 13 percent of DLLs lived in intergenerational households (i.e., with at least one biological or adoptive parent and at least one grand- or great-grandparent). In Early Head Start, DLLs lived with an average of 2.1 adults and 2.9 children, and about 13percent lived in an intergenerational household.[B] On average, DLLs live in larger households than children from monolingual English homes.

A small proportion of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start were born to a teenage mother. Nine percent of DLLs in Head Start were born to a teenage mother.[F] Sixteen percent of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start were born to teenage mothers.[B] DLLs were less likely than children from monolingual English homes to have been born to a teenage mother (in Head Start 9percent vs. 19percent; in Early Head Start 16percent vs. 25percent).

The majority of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start are living with parents who have not earned a high school diploma or GED. Approximately half of DLLs in Head Start were living with at least one parent who had earned at least a high school diploma or GED; 22percent of DLLs were living with at least one parent with education beyond high school.[F] Approximately 62percent of DLLs in Early Head Start were living with at least one parent who had earned a high school diploma or GED; 29percent were living with at least one parent with education beyond high school.[B] Over three-quarters of children enrolled in MSHS programs, most of whom are DLLs, were living with parents who had not completed a high school diploma or GED.[P] On average, DLLs' parents have lower educational attainment than parents from monolingual English homes.

Most DLLs come from working families. Among DLLs in Head Start programs, 85percent lived with at least one parent who was employed, and 70percent lived with at least one parent who was employed full-time.[F] Among parents of DLLs in Early Head Start, 80percent lived with at least one employed parent, and 64percent lived with at least one parent who was employed full-time.[B] In MSHS programs, at least one parent is employed in 90percent of two-parent families and 76percent of single parent families.[P] DLLs were more likely than children from monolingual English homes to live with a parent who was working and less likely to live with a parent who was unemployed and looking for work.

Most DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start are living in poverty. Among DLLs in Head Start, 64percent lived in a household with income at or below the poverty threshold; 81percent lived in a household with income at or below 130percent of the poverty threshold.[6 F] Among 1-

[6] The federal poverty threshold for a family of four was $20,000 in 2006. Head Start qualifying criteria are based on family income, not household income, and there are other circumstances not dependent on family income that may qualify a child or family for the program, regardless of income. Other qualifying criteria include children in foster care and children with special needs. Individual grantees may also propose qualifying criteria to target special populations within the communities they serve (e.g., families in transitional housing)

year-old DLLs in Early Head Start, 76percent lived in a household with income at or below the poverty threshold; 90percent lived in a household with income at or below 130percent of the poverty threshold.[B] Even though DLLs are more likely than children from monolingual English homes to live with a parent who is employed, their household's income is more likely to fall at or below the poverty threshold.

Most parents of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start are not receiving welfare cash assistance, but many are receiving food stamps, and most participate in WIC. Among DLLs who entered Head Start in fall 2006, 15percent lived in households that received federal cash assistance, 31percent lived in households that received food stamps, and 74percent participated in WIC at the time.[F] Thirty percent of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start lived in households that received federal cash assistance, while 52percent lived in households that received food stamps, and 92percent participated in WIC.[B] Only 3percent of families in MSHS programs were receiving federal cash assistance in 2007-08, but 57percent were receiving WIC benefits.[P] DLLs' parents, especially in Head Start, are less likely than parents who reported English was the primary or only language spoken at home to be receiving public assistance, but they are more likely to participate in the WIC program.

Financial struggles are common in families of DLLs in Early Head Start. Among DLLs in Early Head Start, 48percent of their parents reported having at least one out of five financial security difficulties they were asked about, including paying the full amount of their rent or mortgage or their utility bills.[B] Half of the parents of DLLs also reported having at least one out of five food security difficulties they were asked about. Parents of DLLs in Early Head Start were more likely than their primarily English-speaking counterparts to report more than one food security difficulty (51percent vs. 26percent) and twice as likely to report difficulty affording balanced meals (39percent vs. 19percent).

Relatively few DLLs in Head Start have had a disability identified by a professional. Teachers reported that approximately 8percent of DLLs who entered Head Start in fall 2006 had a developmental problem, delay or special need indicated by a professional.[F] Programs reported that 4.1percent of children enrolled in MSHS programs had a disability.[P] DLLs in Head Start were less likely than children from homes where English is the primary or only language spoken to have been identified by a professional as having a disability (8 vs. 14percent).[F]

Nearly all DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start receive regular medical and dental checkups appropriate for their age. Among DLLs in Head Start, 99percent had received a regular medical checkup in the past year, and 92percent had received a regular dental checkup in the past year.[F] Among 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start, all were reported to have received a regular medical checkup in the past year, and 28percent had ever visited the dentist.[B]

Nearly all DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start have some health insurance coverage. Among DLLs entering Head Start in 2006, 91percent were covered by health insurance—approximately 57percent had private health insurance coverage, 66percent had Medicaid coverage, and 6percent were enrolled in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).[F] Among DLLs in Early Head Start in 2009, 95percent were covered by health insurance—24percent were covered by private insurance, 77percent through Medicaid coverage, and 19percent through SCHIP.[B] In MSHS programs, 97percent of children were covered by health insurance by the end of the enrollment year, most by Medicaid (72percent), SCHIP (3percent), or both (5percent).[P] DLLs in Head Start were less likely than children from homes where English was the primary or only language spoken to have Medicaid coverage (66percent vs. 75percent).[F]

Many DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start receive child care in other settings, most often in home-based care by relatives. Among DLLs in Head Start, 26percent were in some child care arrangement outside of Head Start,[F] mainly provided by relatives or by nonrelative family child care providers.Over half of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start were in some kind of child care arrangement outside of Early Head Start,[B] again, mainly through relatives or nonrelative family child care providers. DLLs in Head Start were more likely than children from homes where English was the primary or only language spoken to be in a child care arrangement outside Head Start (26percent vs. 12percent), but in Early Head Start, DLLs were less likely to be in a child care arrangement outside Early Head Start (58percent vs. 72percent)

Some parents of DLLs report symptoms of psychological distress. Among DLLs in Head Start, 12percent of their parents reported symptoms indicating they may have had moderate to severe depression.[F] In Early Head Start, 13percent of DLLs' parents reported symptoms indicating that they were moderately or severely depressed.[B] Parents of DLLs in Head Start and Early Head Start were less likely than parents from homes where English was the primary or only language spoken to report symptoms indicating moderate to severe depression.

Primary caregivers of DLLs in Early Head Start report a mix of parenting beliefs. They report relatively high levels of both traditional, authoritarian parental beliefs (mean of 20 out of 25 possible points) and progressive, democratic beliefs (mean of 19 out of 25 points).[B] DLLs in Early Head Start were less likely than children from homes where English was the primary or only language spoken to have parents who reported that they spanked their child in the past week (6percent vs. 15percent).

B. HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START SERVICES PROVIDED TO DLLs: What is the nature of the Head Start/Early Head Start services provided to children who are DLLs and their families?

1. Service Approaches:

The majority of DLLs in Early Head Start are in the home-based option. Slightly more than one-half of DLLs in Early Head Start were enrolled in home-based programs, while one-third were enrolled in center-based programs.[B] Nine percent were enrolled in a combination program, and 2 percent were enrolled in a family child care program.

Center-based care for DLLs was most likely full-time in Early Head Start and part-time in Head Start. Three-fourths of DLLs in Early Head Start were enrolled in a full-day program (according to program directors' definitions, 65percent in a year-round full-day program and 14percent in a part-year, full-day program).[B] In contrast, two-thirds of DLLs in Head Start were enrolled in a part-day program.[F] Nearly all children enrolled in MSHS programs in 2007-2008 were in full-day center-based programs.[P] Compared to children from monolingual English homes, DLLs were less likely to be enrolled in programs that offered full-day center-based early education and care.

2. Classroom Features and Quality

In Head Start, the average classrooms of DLLs who entered in fall 2006 exceed standards for group size and child-adult ratio, and in their interactions with children, the lead teachers demonstrated sensitivity, responsiveness, and encouragement. The average classroom environment, however, was rated in the minimal to good range, and the teacher's instructional support was rated low. Similarly, in Early Head Start, the group size and child-staff ratio in the average classroom of 1-year-old DLLs in spring 2009 exceed standards, but the quality of the average classroom was rated in the minimal to good range

Average child-adult ratios and group sizes in Early Head Start and Head Start exceed recommended levels. On average, the classrooms of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start classrooms in spring 2009 included 5.7 children and 2.5 adults, for a child-adult ratio of 2.3 to 1 (well within the maximum group size and ratio recommended by the American Academy of Pediatricians, American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education).[B] On average, DLLs who entered Head Start in fall 2006 were in classrooms that included 15.2 children and 2.2 adults (a ratio of 6.9 children per adult), within the levels recommended by the NAEYC.[F]

Global ratings of classroom quality indicate that, on average, Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms provide minimal to good quality care. The average ITERS score for the classrooms of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start in spring 2009 was 3.9, in the minimal to good range.[B] According to the ECERS-R data, the average quality of the classrooms of DLLs who entered Head Start in fall 2006 was between minimal and good.[F] DLLs and their counterparts from monolingual English homes experienced similar quality of care in home visits and Early Head Start centers.

On average, the quality of interactions between children and lead teachers in Head Start is good. The Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale scores show that the average quality of interactions between lead teachers and children in classrooms of DLLs was good.[F] The average Arnett score for lead teachers in the classrooms of DLLs was 67.8, suggesting high levels of teacher sensitivity, responsiveness, and encouragement of children's independence and self-help skills.

The average quality of instructional support in Head Start is low. The average CLASS Instructional Support score in the classrooms of DLLs was 1.9, with average subscores ranging from 1.7 for concept development to 2.1 for language modeling.[F]

Most DLLs in Head Start were in classrooms that provided reading and language activities as well as math activities on a daily or nearly daily basis. More than half of DLLs who entered Head Start in fall 2006 were in classrooms in which teachers reported each of 11 reading and language activities took place daily or almost daily.[F] The extent to which Head Start teachers reported reading and language activities and math activities was very similar for DLLs and children from monolingual English homes. However, DLLs were less likely to be in classrooms in which daily activities included discussing new words (71percent vs. 82percent).

Almost all DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start were exposed to adults speaking English, and the majority of DLLs were exposed to adults speaking Spanish. Nearly all (98percent) of 1-year-old DLLs receiving center-based Early Head Start services in 2009 were exposed to adults speaking English in their classroom, and 81percent were exposed to adults speaking Spanish in their classroom.[B] Similarly, in Head Start, 98percent of DLLs who entered in fall 2006 were in classrooms in which English was used for instruction, while 58percent were in classrooms in which Spanish was used for instruction.[F] The majority of DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start were in classrooms that used their home language for some instruction (85percent in Early Head Start centers, 60percent in Head Start). According to parents, 85percent of DLLs in Head Start were in a program in which staff members speaking their child's home language were available in the program. In MSHS programs, PIR data indicate that 71percent of non-supervisory staff members, including teachers, assistant teachers, and family child care providers, were proficient in a language other than English.

3. Characteristics and Quality of Home Visits in Early Head Start.

Early Head Start home visits with 1-year-old DLLs typically lasted more than an hour (82 minutes, on average) and involved an average of one adult, the 1-year-old, and often a sibling. Nearly three-quarters of home visits with DLLs were conducted in Spanish.[B]

On average, the observed quality of home visits (using the HOVRS) was rated as slightly above adequate.

There were some differences in activities observed during home visits with DLLs compared to visits to monolingual English homes.[B] Activities during home visits with DLLs were less likely to include provision of education or information (61percent vs. 75percent), evaluation/feedback on parent-child interactions (35percent vs. 49percent), or child/parent observation/assessment (59percent vs. 68percent).

4. Other Services

In Head Start, about half of DLLs with a disability had an IEP. Eight percent of DLLs had a teacher-reported disability, and 53percent of these children had an individualized education program (IEP) or individualized family service plan (IFSP).[F]

A wide range of services are offered to families of DLLs in Early Head Start. Virtually all 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start were in programs that offered a wide range of family services, either directly, by referral, or through a community partner on- or off-site.[B] These services included employment assistance and job training, assistance in obtaining health and mental health services, information about Head Start, and information about community resources. Two-thirds of programs provided activities and workshops targeting parents of DLLs. However, ***many families of DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start do not report receiving family services***. A minority of families in Early Head Start reported receiving these types of services from any source during the past year. In Head Start, only 12percent of parents of DLLs reported that Head Start made them aware of or helped them obtain one or more of these types of services.[F] Parent reports about services received from or with the assistance of Head Start were similar across DLLs and children from monolingual English homes.

Family involvement in Early Head Start activities varies widely. Nearly 80percent of parents of DLLs in Early Head Start reported that they attended group activities for parents and their children during the past year.[B] Nearly two-thirds of parents of DLLs reported that they attended an Early Head Start social event, and 57percent attended parent education meetings or workshops related to children. Nearly half reported volunteering in an Early Head Start classroom. In 18percent of families of DLLs, the father or father-figure attended events just for men/fathers.

In Early Head Start, DLLs were more likely than children from monolingual English homes to be in programs offering English language and literacy-related services, their parents were more likely to have received several literacy and language-related services and health services, and their parents reported higher involvement in many program activities.[B] The Early Head Start programs attended by DLLs were less likely to have formal connections with Part C agencies (i.e., agencies that provide early intervention (EI) services to children aged birth to three with developmental delays or a medical condition likely to lead to a developmental delay.)

C. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING OF STAFF WHO SERVE DLLS: What are the qualifications and training of Head Start and Early Head Start teachers/staff that serve children who are DLLs and their families?

The teachers and home visitors caring for DLLs, and their managers, provide the care that shapes the experiences of DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start. The report examines the characteristics and employment experiences of the teachers, home visitors, and managers caring for DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start.

1. Teachers Caring for DLLs in Early Head Start, Head Start, and MSHS

More than half of teachers of DLLs are Hispanic. A substantial proportion of DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start are cared for by teachers who are also Hispanic. Half of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start classrooms had teachers who were Hispanic [B] Similarly, nearly half of DLLs in Head Start in fall 2006 had lead teachers who were Hispanic.[F]

The majority of DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start centers have teachers who have a college degree, although there is variability. In Early Head Start, 55percent of DLLs in center-based care had a teacher with an associate's or bachelor's degree.[B] Only 15percent were cared for by a teacher with only a high school diploma or less. Most DLLs (87percent) in Head Start were cared for by a lead teacher who had an associate's or bachelor's degree.[F] Only 5percent of teachers serving DLL children had only a high school diploma or GED. In MSHS programs in 2007-2008, 54percent of teachers had an associate's or bachelor's degree.[P] DLLs in Early Head Start were less likely to have teachers with a college or graduate/professional degree than children from monolingual English homes (55percent vs. 68percent).[B]

One-fourth to one-half of teachers of DLLs had a degree in early childhood education. The education and training of teachers may have greater impact on their practices if it includes some focus or specialized preparation in child development and early childhood education. Among teachers of DLLs in Early Head Start with a college degree, nearly half (45percent) had early childhood education included in their field of study.[B] Among DLLs in Head Start, 28percent had a teacher with a degree in early childhood education.[F] Two-thirds of teachers of DLLs in Early Head Start and 60percent of lead teachers of DLLs in Head Start had earned a CDA. More than half (57percent) of teachers in MSHS programs in 2007-2008 had a CDA credential.[P] Fewer teachers have a state-awarded preschool certificate or license. One-third of DLLs in Early Head Start have a teacher with such certification, and nearly half (47percent) of DLLs in Head Start had one.[B,F] DLLs in Head Start were more likely than their peers from monolingual English homes to have a lead teacher who had a state-awarded preschool certificate (47percent vs. 23percent) or a teaching certificate or license (59percent vs. 36percent).

Many teachers of DLLs have more than 5 years of experience in Early Head Start and Head Start. Nearly half (48percent) of DLLs in Early Head Start, and three-quarters of DLLs in Head Start had teachers who had worked in Early Head Start for 5 or more years.[BF] In Head

Start, the lead teachers of DLLs had been teaching for an average of 13 years. DLLs and children from monolingual English homes have teachers with similar years of teaching, years of teaching in Head Start, and teaching in the current program. However, in Early Head Start, teachers of DLLs had fewer years of experience caring for infant or toddlers than teachers of children from monolingual English homes.

Average turnover of Early Head Start and MSHS teachers is moderate. Teacher turnover during the past 12 months in programs of 1-year-old DLLs in center-based Early Head Start care in 2009 was 14percent.[B] About one-fifth of Early Head Start programs offering center-based care experienced a teacher turnover rate greater than 25percent. Similarly, the average teacher turnover rate in MSHS programs in 2007-2008 was 15percent.[P]

2. Home Visitors Caring for DLLs in Early Head Start

More than half of home visitors serving DLLs are Hispanic. Three-quarters of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start who were receiving home visits had home visitors who were Hispanic.[B]

Depression may afflict some home visitors. Most home visitors serving DLLs in Early Head Start did not report elevated symptoms of psychological distress.[B] However, for a small proportion (4percent), moderate or severe depression may be a problem.

Nearly all DLLs receiving home-based Early Head Start services have home visitors with education beyond high school, and many had home visitors with specialized training in early childhood development and/or education. Nearly two-thirds (62percent) of 1-year old DLLs in Early Head Start who were receiving home-based services had a home visitor with an associate's or bachelor's degree, and nearly two-thirds (64percent) had home visitors whose field of study included early childhood education.[B] Almost half (45percent) of DLLs had a home visitor with a CDA credential, and similarly, 45percent had home visitors with state-awarded preschool certification. DLLs in home-based Early Head Start services were less likely than children from monolingual English homes to have a home visitor who had completed college, but more likely to have a home visitor who had either received some college education or a state-awarded preschool certificate.

More than a third (43percent) of DLLs in Early Head Start had home visitors who had worked in Early Head Start 5 or more years.[B] DLLs had home visitors who had less experience caring for infants and toddlers, on average, than home visitors of children from monolingual English homes (7 vs. 10 years).

Average turnover of Early Head Start home visitors is moderate. Home visitor turnover during the past 12 months in programs of 1-year-old Early Head Start DLLs in home-based care in 2009 was 15percent, on average.[B] About one-fifth of programs offering home-based services experienced a home visitor turnover rate higher than 25percent.

3. Managers Overseeing Teachers and Home Visitors Caring for DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start

Although supervisors, coordinators, and directors do not normally care for children in Early Head Start and Head Start directly, they can have an impact on the care children receive through their monitoring of teachers and home visitors and the policies and practices they set and model for frontline staff.

Managers in programs serving DLLs have high levels of education. Three-quarters of DLLs were enrolled in programs in which mid-level managers (program manager/supervisor in Early Head Start and center director in Head Start) had a bachelor's degree or higher (75percent in Early Head Start and 72percent in Head Start), and notable proportions of DLLs were enrolled in programs with mid-level managers who had a graduate or professional degree (27percent in Early Head Start and 43percent in Head Start).[B,F] Most DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start were in programs led by a director with a bachelor's degree or higher, and two-thirds to three-quarters were in programs in which the director had a graduate or professional degree.

Many managers in Head Start (but not in Early Head Start) have a child development or early education credential or certification. Very few of DLLs in Early Head Start were in programs in which program managers/supervisors or directors had a CDA credential (less than 1percent) or state-awarded preschool certificate (3percent).[B] In contrast, one-third of DLLs in Head Start were in programs in which the center director had a state-awarded preschool certificate, and nearly half (47percent) were in programs in which the education coordinator had a state-awarded preschool certificate.[F]

A majority of DLLs in Head Start are in programs in which center directors and education coordinators have a teaching certificate or license. More than half of DLLs in Head Start had center directors (53percent) with a teaching certificate.[F] Nearly two thirds (63percent) of DLLs in Head Start were in programs in which the education coordinator had a teaching certificate.

Head Start managers have more than a decade of experience working in Head Start. On average, DLLs had center directors with 11 years of experience in Head Start, 9 of those in their current program.[F] On average, DLLs were in programs with education coordinators who had worked in Head Start for 14 years, all in their current program. They also had program directors who had worked in Head Start for an average of 18 years, 15 of those in their current program.

D. LANGUAGES USED BY STAFF WHO SERVE DLLS: What are the languages in which Head Start and Early Head Start teachers/staff are fluent in relation to the children and families they serve?

The available data provide information that indirectly informs the question posed by Congress about the languages used in providing services to children who are DLLs and their

families. However, there are no data that speak directly to the question of the fluency of Head Start staff in particular languages.

Multiple languages are often used in classrooms and home visits. Among DLLs in Early Head Start home-based services, adults speak English during 70percent of home visits and Spanish during 77percent of home visits, reflecting that teachers and home visitors use both languages within many visits.[B]

English is the language most often used to read to children in the classroom; however, children's home language is used in most home visits and classrooms. In Early Head Start, the child's home language was used during 89percent of home visits.[B] The child's home language was used in the Early Head Start classrooms of 85percent of DLLs. In Head Start classrooms, the child's home language was used for at least some instruction in the classrooms of 60percent of DLLs.[F] In Early Head Start classrooms, DLLs were most likely to have a lead teacher who spoke a language other than English in the classroom (69percent), followed by an assistant teacher (47percent), classroom aide (30percent), and volunteer or other non-staff person (19percent). Most DLLs in Head Start (85percent) were in programs in which staff members speaking the child's home language were available, as reported by parents.

Teachers and home visitors use a variety of strategies to communicate with the families of DLLs. Half (52percent) of the families of DLLs in Early Head Start had teachers or home visitors who spoke to them only in English.[B] Two-thirds (67percent) had teachers or home visitors who used an informal interpreter. Three-fourths had teachers or home visitors who used physical cues or hand gestures to communicate with families speaking languages other than English.

E. DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS MADE BY DLLS IN EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START: What developmental progress is made by children who are DLLs in Head Start/Early Head Start programs?

The data addressing this question are limited, due to the overall state of the field to reliably or accurately describe the developmental progress of young children who are dual language learners. The research field lacks consensus regarding a variety of methodological issues in the assessment of development among DLLs. For instance, the norms established for the most common measures of child development have not been shown to be valid for children who are dual language learners. In addition, it is unclear what the best approaches are for assessing comprehensive development over time, as children's proficiency in one or more languages and perhaps their dominant language changes. In this context, the information presented regarding the developmental progress of DLLs in Early Head Start and Head Start

reflects data collected utilizing the best methods available at the time the respective studies were designed.

The data available for DLLs in Early Head Start provides a single snapshot of their developmental status during their first year in the program. The data regarding children in Head Start provides three snapshots of DLLs: one of all DLLs at Head Start entry, another of the DLLs who were still enrolled in the spring of their Head Start exit year, and, finally, another of DLLs who were still enrolled in the spring and have valid, comparable data at Head Start entry and exit.

First, here is what Baby FACES data show about the developmental status of 1-year old DLLs in Early Head Start:

DLLs in Early Head Start are just beginning to develop their vocabulary. On average, 1-year old DLLs understood 22 English words and spoke 1 English word, while DLLs identified as understanding Spanish and whose Early Head Start teacher or home visitor also spoke Spanish understood 36 Spanish words and spoke 2 Spanish words. On average, DLLs understand and use fewer English words than children from monolingual English homes. DLLs have a larger vocabulary when both English and Spanish words are considered (41 words in English or Spanish, while children from monolingual English homes understood 33 words in English).

Parents and staff reports about the social-emotional development of DLLs differ. According to staff (teachers and home visitors), 10percent of 1-year-old DLLs in Early Head Start had high levels of problem behaviors indicating a delay in social-emotional development. In contrast, according to parents, more than three times as many DLLs (34percent) were reported to have high levels of problem behaviors indicating a social-emotional delay. Teachers/home visitors rated similar proportions of DLLs and children from monolingual English homes as having high problem behaviors or low social-emotional competence (25percent). In contrast, parents provided more divergent ratings (43percent of DLLs compared with 29percent of children from monolingual English homes).

In brief, here is what the FACES 2006 data show regarding developmental status of DLLs during Head Start:

DLLs in Head Start increase their receptive English vocabulary during Head Start, but they begin and end their Head Start year(s) with receptive English vocabulary well below national norms. Average Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-4) scores of both DLLs and children from monolingual English homes increased slightly by spring of children's Head Start exit year, indicating that all children made slight gains relative to their age peers in English vocabulary development. Among children with valid data at both time points, however, it appears that DLLs made greater gains during the Head Start year, relative to their peers from monolingual English homes (DLLs increase from 71.8 to 79.8; English dominant increase from 87.4 to 91.9).

By the end of Head Start, DLLs assessed in English demonstrated English letter-word knowledge and spelling skills near the norm for their age. DLLs with adequate English language skills to pass the English screener and take the English assessment battery at Head Start entry resembled their peers from monolingual English homes in their English letter-word knowledge and spelling skills at Head Start exit, and they experienced similar gains over time.

On average, Spanish-speaking DLLs did not show gains in their Spanish language skills over time. They began and ended Head Start with receptive Spanish vocabulary below national norms. Moreover, among Spanish-speaking DLLs with valid scores at Head Start entry and exit, TVIP scores (measuring receptive Spanish vocabulary) decreased slightly from 86 to 83, about one standard deviation below the (monolingual Spanish speaking) norm.

By the end of Head Start, DLLs assessed in English demonstrate math skills similar to their Head Start peers. DLLs, regardless of language of assessment, improved their math skills, beginning and ending Head Start similarly behind their peers in the population as other Head Start children from monolingual English homes. Those assessed in Spanish demonstrated math skills a half standard deviation below the norm.

In literacy skills and approaches to learning, DLLs and children from monolingual English homes look similar. According to teachers and parents, DLLs and children from monolingual English homes have similar literacy skills both at the beginning and at the end of Head Start. Similarly, the approaches to learning of DLLs and children from monolingual English homes are the same, on average.

Teacher reports suggest that DLLs' behavior problems may decline during Head Start; however, parent reports remain the same. At Head Start entry, total numbers of behavior problems reported by parents and teachers of DLLs were similar, on average. At the end of Head Start, the average number of behavior problems reported by parents remained similar, while teachers reported fewer problems, on average. According to teachers, DLLs exhibit fewer behavior problems than children from monolingual English homes, on average, both when they enter Head Start and at the end of their Head Start exit year(s). However, parents of DLLs perceive greater problem behaviors in their children than parents from monolingual English homes at both time points.

The cognitive-social skills of DLLs and children from monolingual English homes are similar between groups and over time, lagging behind their age peers in the norming population. Leiter-R Rating Scales (completed by assessors) of children's cognitive-social development (i.e., attention, organization, and impulse control, activity level, and sociability) show that both DLLs and children from monolingual English homes demonstrated cognitive-social skills below their age peers by between one-half and one standard deviation both when they entered Head Start and in the spring of the Head Start exit year(s).

DLLs come from less literacy-rich home environments. When they entered Head Start, DLLs came from homes with 19 children's books on average, less than half as many books as in the homes of children from monolingual English homes (47 children's books, on average).

Weight problems increase dramatically among DLLs during Head Start. Among DLLs with valid data at both time points, the percentage overweight or obese increased from 37percent at entry to Head Start to 47percent at the end of Head Start. The extent of weight problems increases among DLLs but not children from monolingual English homes during Head Start.

In sum, the available data show that on average children served by Head Start lag behind their peers in the population in many areas when they first enter Head Start. For DLLs, the lag is even greater. Neither DLLs nor children from monolingual English homes lose ground during Head Start, on average, relative to their same age peers in the norming population, but neither do they catch up. On average, DLLs enter Head Start with a disadvantage in some developmental areas (pre-academic achievement), relative to their peers in Head Start from monolingual English homes, and typically, their gains are similar, so they leave Head Start with a similar relative disadvantage. In other developmental areas (social-emotional development), the data show no differences between DLLs and children from monolingual English homes in their status at Head Start entry or in their developmental progress during Head Start. In some areas (English vocabulary development, approaches to learning, cognitive-social skills), DLLs appear to make greater gains than their peers during their time in Head Start, and this parallels findings in other recent studies of at-scale preschool education programs that have found that DLLs benefit more than their native English-speaking peers (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2005; Horm, 2010; Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2011). One area of particular concern is children's physical health and development—DLLs are more likely than children from monolingual English homes to be overweight or obese, and the prevalence of weight problems increases during their time in Head Start.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The substantial and rapidly growing population of young DLLs in the United States presents unique challenges as well as unique strengths to Head Start programs and other early education programs poised to serve them. While research capacity builds to improve our understanding and methods for promoting DLLs' development, there are opportunities to strengthen the services offered to young DLLs and their families. The findings in this report rely on descriptive data; therefore, we cannot draw causal inferences regarding relationships between the services received and experiences or outcomes among DLLs or their families. In some areas, such as in program services, the implications of the data are stronger and suggest areas for renewed focus or effort in engaging families of DLLS, targeting services in culturally sensitive ways, improving

efforts to address health and nutrition issues such as food insecurity and obesity, and developing individual family plans), program activities and workshops, and links to community resources in ways that are responsive to family's needs and preferences.

Improving research capacity to understand DLLs' development and experiences in Head Start. While data do not exist to answer some of the questions posed by Congress at this time, several efforts are underway to build research capacity in this area in order to improve the state of knowledge about the children and families served by Head Start, as well as those served by other early childhood programs. As discussed more fully in the report, many of the limitations and challenges found in national research studies on Head Start programs reflect gaps in the field of research on early childhood more generally, as well as challenges specific to national studies of young children. Several ACF-funded research efforts are addressing the gaps in research on this population and the questions posed in the Head Start Act. The efforts undertaken by ACF to improve information on children who are dual language learners include a combination of adjustments to the instruments and methods used in national surveys, and – more substantially – efforts to launch supplemental research projects to gather more detailed information on key populations of dual language learners in Head Start, to build capacity in the research field to provide better information regarding the development, needs, and strengths of young DLLs, and to develop new curricula and assessment tools for young DLLs and their families. These activities are discussed in the final chapter of the report.

Current programmatic initiatives. While research activities are in progress to address the limitations and gaps in existing data concerning young children who are dual language learners, ACF is also implementing several programmatic initiatives to improve services to DLLs and their families. In addition to the requirement for this report to Congress, there were many implications for DLLs in the Improving School Readiness Act of 2007 that helped frame and promote several initiatives to increase support for centers and staff to better serve children who are dual language learners and their families. Starting in early 2008, the Office of Head Start has developed a variety of publications, conferences, and online resources to improve staff access to the most current information regarding how to promote growth and school readiness among DLLs and how to better support their families. Most recently, as part of revisions to the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance System, a National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness was established in 2010 to provide the Head Start community with research-based information, practices, and strategies to ensure optimal academic and social progress for linguistically and culturally diverse children and their families. In addition, the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Revised Child Outcomes Framework) gives staff clear information regarding the importance of gaining an understanding of what children who are dual language learners know and can do across all domains of the framework, regardless of language spoken, as well as an emphasis on progress

towards English Language Development. In combination, these activities and resources serve as a model of strengthening infrastructure to promote the well-being of diverse children and families responsively and comprehensively.

In conclusion, many efforts are currently underway to strengthen programs, staff, and the knowledge base to better serve all children and families in Head Start and Early Head Start programs, including those who speak languages other than English at home. Activities that are building research capacity to answer questions concerning young dual language learners and their families go hand in hand with programmatic efforts to improve services.