

*Language and Literacy Development in Young Language  
Minority Children: Research, Policy and Practice*

*Washington DC, April 16th- 17th 2008*

*Supporting Implementation of Classroom Practices:  
The Divide Between Research, Policy, Practice, and the  
Barrio view*

*Pilar Torres, MA  
ptorres@centro-familia.org*

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY: A REALITY SNAP SHOT

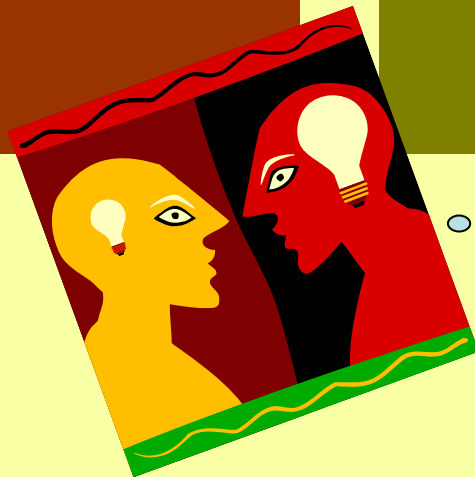
- *WDCMA bedroom community, wealthy, progressive*
- *MD's economic engine*
- *Latino population has almost doubled in 16 years (1990 7.5% to 2006 13.8%)<sup>1</sup>*
- *45% of foreign-born pop of MD lives in MoCo<sup>2</sup>*
- *12% children speak a language other than English<sup>3</sup>*
- *Latino children are 20 pts. below in school readiness scores<sup>4</sup> (prior care, ethnicity, language, poverty)*
- *70% of childcare center staff are foreign-born<sup>5</sup>*

*RESEARCH*

*POLICY*

*PRACTICE*

*BARRIO  
VIEW*



Are they linked?

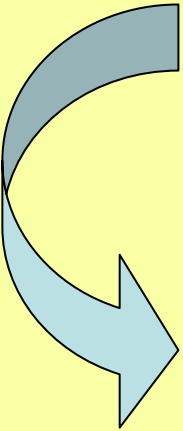


# Good news from the barriers

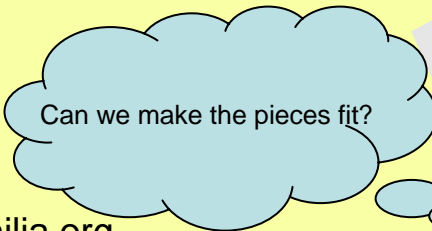
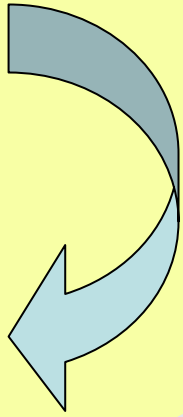
*RESEARCH*



*POLICY*



*PRACTICE*



# Centro Familia

*To develop the economic and educational opportunities of low-income women and children that live in Latino and other immigrant communities, by addressing early care and education as the primary*

*means of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty*

- *Career Development Ladder for LEP Early Care and Education workforce*
- *Technical Assistance/Mentoring*
- *Leadership Development*
- *Model-preschool*
- *Family Childcare Network*
- *Referral and childcare case-management for at-risk populations*

# Dual-Language Curriculum

*Children in well-implemented, two-way bilingual programs outperform students in traditional one-language classes <sup>6</sup>*



*ESL approach to English-learners  
No dual-language policy*



*Ambivalence and confusion as to how to teach preschoolers;  
Programmatic Restrictions  
Bilingual immersion programs are targeted to Spanish learners (SES)*

*“Knowing two languages is only for los ricos blancos”*

# *Good news from the barrio: Converging dimensions*

- *La Escuelita Dual-Language Project*
  - *Dr. Dina Castro and Dr. Judith Guerrero*
    - *Define and implement strategies*
  - *Working with LEP educators working with dual-language learners*

# *Barrio View*



- *Adapt curriculum*
- *Bicultural enrichment*





## Role of Families

*Family's use of language, parents' literacy are indicators of academic success*



*Parent Involvement*



*Strategies involve parent education, "PTA", multicultural activities*

*Families are disengaged, "no entiendo nada"*

# *Good news from the barrio: Converging dimensions*

- *Systemic approach: School becomes community center and provides extensive resources to families*
- *Parent Engagement & Ownership*
- *La Escuelita de Centro Familia (Co-oping model)*
  - *Parent leadership development*
  - *Parent workforce development*
  - *Parent specialist*
  - *Environmental validation*
  - *Día de los Niños*

# BARRIO VIEW



# BARRIO VIEW

## •2006-2007

- 63% of parents attended Mandatory Trainings
- 80% of parents participated in Coop. 1303 hours of Coop accumulated
- 100% participated in parent teacher conferences
- 99% increase in families reading to children at least 10 minutes a day
- 80% increase in families reading 20 minutes a day
- 99% of families have incorporated a daily routine

## •2007-2008

- 100% of parents doing coop work totaling 202.47 hours
- 53% of families reported reading aloud to their children.
- 17.85% of families reported reading every day to their children.
- 73.3% of families attended 1st and 2nd mandatory trainings
- 62% of families participating in coffee meetings
- 30% of families participating in “reading partners”



# Assessment

*Native language assessment gives more accurate picture of “whole child”<sup>7</sup>*



*School-readiness screening is conducted only in English*



*“Language development” is synonymous to “English Proficiency”  
Labeled as having language disorders/delays*

*Child is fragmented, strengths are minimized, deficits highlighted, sets child up for failure, integrity is compromised: “Ciquiriqui!”*

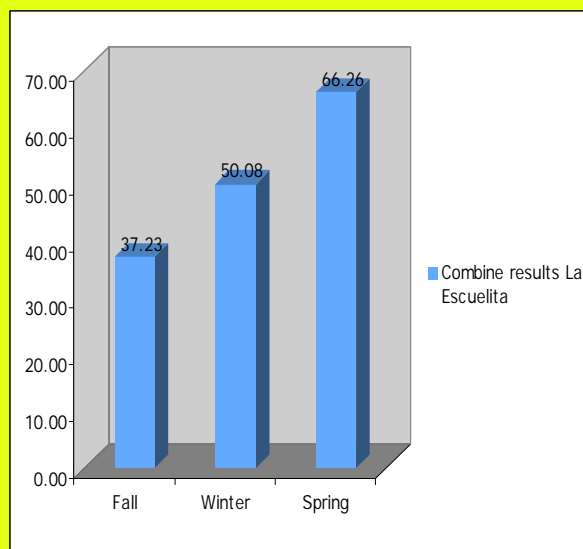
# Barrio View

- “Stealth” screening in Spanish
  - Attention to Subtleties of Cultural understanding
  - Psychological impact on families

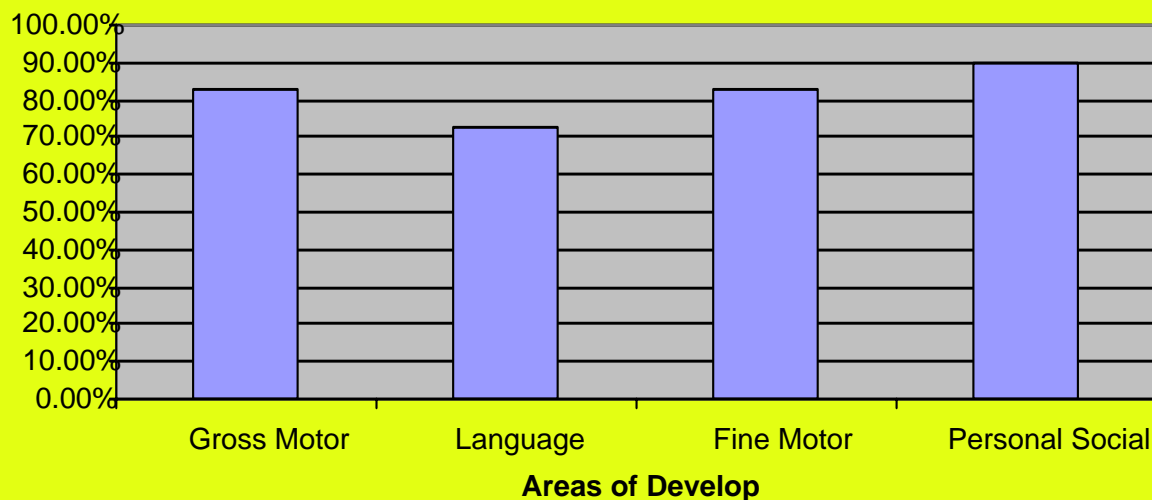
Class 2007-2008

Screening Test Denver II performed in Native Language (Spanish)

ECOR 2006-2007



Denver Screening Test/ Native



The standardized screening test Denver II was selected for its sensitivity to our population (Spanish version). It is used at the beginning of the year as a tool to identify if a child's development is within a normal range. We are able to identify which children need further assessment and have a clear idea of where every child is, for planning purposes.

## Cultural Integration

*Programs should reflect cultural values of children served<sup>8</sup>*



*“Multiculturalism/Diversity”  
is included in all strategic plans*



*One-dimensional translation of  
curriculum and materials*

*Children and families are passive  
recipients of superficial understanding of  
culture*

# *Good news from the barrio: Converging dimensions*

- *Tito, Nacho y Miguel: Los tres cerdos (the three little pigs) translation vs. interpretation/adaptation*
- *Environmental transformation*
- *Integration of essential values*
  - *Respect & Dignity*
  - *Community*
  - *“Standing”*
  - *Above and beyond*



## LEP Teacher Training

*Demographic projections indicate a shortage of qualified pre-school teachers, and dramatic increase in Latino preschoolers<sup>9</sup>*



*MSDE's 3-year strategic plan has no specific strategies for LEP educators*



*Very limited funding for LEP educators  
no "approved" methodology*

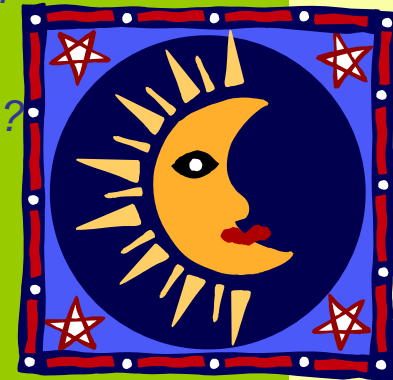
*Pool of potential teachers not recognized; LEP educators are in lowest levels; few programs address their professional development needs*

# *Good news from the barrio: Converging dimensions*

- *Family Child care as a quality alternative*
- *Career ladders to level playing field*
- *Targeted training*
- *Leadership development*
- *“Lab-schools” to develop LEP professionals*
- *University of Cincinnati*

# *Things-that-keep-me-up at-night OR research questions*

- What is the relationship between language, identity, social -family relationships, self-esteem and spiritual integrity? “Lengua Materna”*
- Are the results of MSDE ‘s school-readiness assessments an accurate/fair portrayal of Latino children?*
- Are we applying research finding equitably to English-learners?*
- Are teacher qualifications as important as outcomes?*
- What is quality? Who is defining these standards and for whom?*
- What does it mean that Latino kids in regulated family childcare are doing as well as HeadStart kids (sometimes better)?*
- How do we move LEP workforce through the professional pipeline?*
- Is the issue bilingualism or literacy, and why are these terms used interchangeably?*



*Pilar Torres,  
MA*

*ptorres@centro-  
familia.org*

*35 University Blvd. East  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
301-754-1801  
301-754-1803 fx*



QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# References



- 1) Montgomery County Park and Planning <http://www.mc-mncppc.org/>
- 2) Montgomery County Park and Planning <http://www.mc-mncppc.org/>
- 3) Montgomery County Public Schools <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/>
- 4) [Maryland State Dept. of Education](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/school_readiness.htm)  
[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/school\\_readiness.htm](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/school_readiness.htm)
- 5) Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Services
- 6) Thomas, W. & V. Collier. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence. 2002. Retrieved from:<http://www.cal.org/crede/pubs/ResBrief10.htm>.
- 7) National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics. (2007). *Para nuestros niños: Expanding and improving early education for Hispanics*. Main report. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University.
- 8) Universal Preschool Task Force Report  
[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care)
- 9) Connections and Commitments: Reflecting Latino Values in Early Childhood Programs  
Costanza Eggers-Pierola