

2011 STAM – CCPRC Meeting
Workshop A5
November 16, 2011, 10:00-11:15 am

Emerging Findings from the Center for Early Care and Education Research: Dual-Language Learners

Description

In this workshop, presenters shared findings from critical research reviews and a secondary data analysis (SDA) conducted by the Center for Early Care and Education Research: Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL). The critical research reviews focused on the language, literacy and socio-emotional development of young dual-language learners (DLLs) and ECE practices and quality measures in settings that serve DLLs. The SDA of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) examined factors associated with the development of DLLs. Implications of these findings for child care policy and practice were discussed.

Facilitator

Ann Rivera, OPRE

Presenters

Margaret (Peg) Burchinal, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Dina Castro, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Discussants

Melody Jurado, Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation
Camille Maben, California Department of Education

Scribe

Nina Chien, Child Trends

1. Documents in Session Folder

- “Emerging Findings from Critical Reviews of Literature and Secondary Data Analysis;” Margaret Burchinal and Dina Castro

2. Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Dina Castro
 - Dina began by describing the mission, activities, and products of the Center for Early Care and Education Research – Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL).
 - A literature review on ECE and dual language learners was conducted. Criteria included: published in peer-reviewed journals after 2000; analysis focused on children who are DLLs; children were under 6 years in at least one time point; instruments involve either direct child assessments or observer/parent/teacher reports.
 - The literature review had the following findings:
 - *Language development.* DLL’s language development differs from that of monolinguals with vocabulary scores lower in the dominant language. Conceptual

vocabulary (words they know in either language) was the same between DLL and monolingual students. DLLs have two separate language systems with the two languages being reciprocal and knowledge transfers occurring in both directions. DLLs' abilities in the two languages are affected by the amount of exposure they receive in those languages.

- *Social-emotional development.* 4 of 9 studies found no differences in social-emotional development, but 5 of 9 studies found differences favoring DLL students. The effect sizes, however, were small.
 - *Early care and education.* 27 studies looked at this. Some interventions used only English, and other interventions incorporated the home language. English-only interventions had positive effects for English. Interventions that incorporated home language had mixed results.
 - *Early care and education quality measures.* 9 studies looked at this. There is no evidence that the measures function differently for DLL versus monolingual settings. That is, the psychometric properties of the quality measures function the same way in both settings. Higher quality was related to better outcomes regardless of DLL status.
 - *Methodological issues.* There are inconsistent definitions of DLL across studies. For example, did the DLL student learn the two languages sequentially or simultaneously? Many studies had small samples, and few studies were longitudinal. Also, in the field there are very few instruments standardized on DLL's. Finally, there is almost no research on infants and toddlers.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Peg Burchinal**
 - ECLS-B Analysis: Factors Associated with DLLs' Development.
 - The ECLS-B oversampled for DLL children, making it a very good dataset for this analysis. Children were classified into 3 groups: only heritage language was used in the home; both English and heritage language were used in the home; and only English was used in the home. The analysis accounted for the following variables: whether the mother immigrated, country of heritage, child gender, child race, income, and mother's education.
 - After taking into account these variables, only a few differences emerged: DLL students had better social-emotional outcomes, greater reading gains, and lower cognitive scores as infants. Overall, DLL status is a weak predictor of cognitive outcomes and a stronger predictor of social-emotional outcomes.
 - DLL children were in fewer hours of care, (except for Hispanic children in their preschool years). DLL families used more relative-care and less home-based care, but there were few differences in center-care by DLL status. There were also few differences in quality of care by DLL status. Hispanic children experienced lower quality care when in home-based, but not center-based care.
 - In short, there are big effects of demographic factors, and relatively few associations related to DLL status. DLL status is related to some child outcomes, and some child care characteristics, but it is certainly not the most dominant influence. Generally speaking, more positive effects are found during the preschool years as compared to infancy.

- **Summary of Presentation #3: Melody Jurado (Discussant)**
 - Dual language is typically viewed as a deficiency, which is illogical because DLLs speak two languages, compared to most Americans who only speak one. Providers often encourage “English only” to parents of DLL children. As a result, parents who are not multi-lingual feel they can’t communicate as well with their children. In one example, parents were considering “English only” because their child’s development was lagging, but upon further assessment, the child was determined to have hearing loss.
 - Melody described a center where everything was labeled in English and Spanish; and mornings are in English, and afternoons are in Spanish. Each child has an English or Spanish peer mentor, and can be in a position of both mentoring and being mentored. She advocated the following: teaching in the primary language first; providing a rich oral English environment; promoting access to early child care via media, TV, Spanish radio shows; separating out various different Latino/Hispanic nationalities.

- **Summary of Presentation #4: Camille Maben (Discussant)**
 - California devotes \$1.9 billion to child care, serving 500,000 children, more than 40% of whom are Spanish speaking. A quarter of children entering kindergarten don’t speak English. What’s important is to provide rich oral language environments in English or Spanish. Kids who are fluent in neither language are at risk.
 - To be more effective with families, we need to honor their culture and language and bring that to what we do. California has a set of foundations/standards for DLL learners. Another challenge/opportunity is recruiting DLLs teachers.