



Leading Programs that Accelerate Language and Foundational Literacy

A Quick Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide leaders with key information and strategies to ensure that multilingual learners (MLs)—referred to as English learners (ELs) in federal documents—receive an excellent education that provides them with quality literacy development and instruction in language and that is responsive to their needs.

Though the information in this resource has applications to any program model (e.g., English language development [ELD], dual language) is not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive.

Requirements for ML instruction

Leaders should ensure that everyone on the leadership team is familiar with requirements. The United States Department of Education requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to:¹

1. ensure that ELs receive appropriate language assistance programs and services,
2. offer language instruction educational program (LIEP) services until ELs have exited, and
3. select programs and services that meet civil rights requirements.
 - a. “Services and programs... enable ELs to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program, within a reasonable length of time” (*English Learner Tool kit*, Chapter 4, page 1).

Schools are required to provide all students with Tier 1 classroom instruction. It is important to note that Tier 1 and intervention programs may need to be enhanced for MLs. For more information, refer

¹List items 1. and 2. are adapted from U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents*, January 7, 2015, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>.

List item 3 is adapted from U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies (SEAs and LEAs)*, revised October 2017, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>.

See those resources for additional guidance and support on meeting these requirements.



to *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*, pp. 59–60.²

Strategies for ML instruction

The following strategies can help leaders ensure that MLs receive quality literacy education:

1. Collaborate with school and system Title III program staff to ensure that all MLs are provided time for instruction in language development standards to develop their skills in their new language along with instruction in academic standards/content. For example:
 - a. Early literacy instruction—which is content instruction—is provided in two languages using a dual-language program model, which offers MLs ample opportunities to develop English skills while ensuring that they don't miss out on important content because they haven't yet mastered English. Teachers explicitly name and teach connections and contrasts between the languages (i.e., use bridging strategies).
 - b. Language services in the English language development (ELD) program model are provided by co-teaching literacy lessons with a focus on language objectives. For example, an early literacy teacher may be teaching the alphabet. They could help students explain how the alphabet is the same or different from the one used in their primary language(s).
 - c. See #6 below for additional examples.
2. Provide adequate resources, including staff, high-quality and responsive instructional materials, professional learning, and time for instruction and collaborative planning for LIEP services.
3. Build capacity for LIEP staff (e.g., ELD teachers) to reinforce foundational skills through their language standards and objectives. LIEP staff training and coursework typically focus on teaching students to use and understand social, instructional, and discipline-specific language for learning content and may not include any background in teaching foundational skills. LIEP staff are charged with developing students' language skills in all dimensions of language—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—in ways that provide greater access to

² This paragraph was adapted from Baker, S., N. Lesaux, M. Jayanthi, J. Domino, C. P. Proctor, J. Morris, R. Gersten, K. Haymond, M. J. Kieffer, S. Linan-Thompson, and R. Newman-Gonchar. *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. April 2014. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf



grade-level content and discipline-specific standards. Language development standards include a focus on language skills; for example:³

- a. Exchange and respond to information, ideas, and opinions orally and in writing on a range of social and academic topics
- b. Narrate, inform, explain, and construct arguments:
 - i. with increasing organization, cohesion, detail, complexity, and precision
 - ii. by following models of specific language features connected to the content and content texts (e.g., varied sentence lengths, sentence types, and connecting words; varied and precise vocabulary).

³ These examples were crafted by combining elements of ELD Standards from **CA, TX**, and the **WIDA Consortiums' 2020 Framework**. Leaders can consult their LIEP specialists and teachers for more information about language development standards for their state.



4. Share examples, such as those that appear in the table below, to build LIEP staff’s capacity to reinforce foundational skills.

Sample foundational skill⁴	Sample language objective⁵	Sample student language frames and/or supports <i>Students develop the language to articulate and discuss their learning related to foundational skills through teacher modeling, opportunities for guided practice, and positive reinforcement and productive feedback.</i>
Identify and count the number of words in a sentence	Offer and support opinions <i>(variety of grammatical/sentence structures)</i>	I think ____ is a word because ____. I think there are ____ (# of) words in the sentence. You can try ____ -ing (verb) to count the number of words in a sentence.
Identify rhymes	Recount and restate ideas <i>(variety of grammatical/sentence structures, justification language)</i>	____ and ____ rhyme because the end sound ____ is the same. Two words that rhyme are ____ and ____ because they have the same sound at the end.
Identify rhymes	Compare and contrast the end sounds of two words <i>(comparative language)</i>	The end sound in the word ____ is ____ . That is the same as the end sound in the word ____ . They are rhymes! The end sound in the word ____ is ____ but the end sound in ____ is ____ . They are different, so they are NOT rhymes!
Count the number of syllables	Describe attributes or characteristics with relevant details <i>(prepositional phrases, noun groups, adjectives)</i>	____ is a ____ (#-syllable) word. A ____ (#-syllable) word I know is ____ (provided in any language).

⁴ Sample foundational skills were created based on a review of multiple state standards and sets of curricular materials.

⁵ Possible language objectives were created based on a review and synthesis of multiple state standards, including those from the WIDA Consortium.



Sample foundational skill⁴	Sample language objective⁵	Sample student language frames and/or supports <i>Students develop the language to articulate and discuss their learning related to foundational skills through teacher modeling, opportunities for guided practice, and positive reinforcement and productive feedback.</i>
		____ is a single syllable word, and ____ is a multisyllable word.
Count the number of syllables	Offer ideas and suggestions (<i>variety of grammatical/sentence structures</i>)	If you want to count the number of syllables, you can ____. I count the number of syllables by ____. Another idea I have for counting syllables is _____.
Recite the alphabet	Retell personal experiences (<i>verbs for actions, nouns for visuals, prepositional phrases</i>)	When I first started learning the alphabet, I ____. ____ helps me remember the alphabet and the names of the letters.
Identify a letter name/letter sound	Describe details and facts (<i>verbs for actions, nouns for visuals, prepositional phrases</i>)	I make the sound ____ by ____ing (verb) my ____ (description of articulation gestures for mouth, lips, and/or tongue). I see ____ my teacher ____ (verb) when they make the ____ sound.
Use proper letter formation	Follow and describe steps in procedures (<i>sequence language connectors</i>)	First, I need to ____ when making the letter ____. I make the letter ____ by first ____. We start making the ____ part of the (letter) from top to bottom. Then, we make the ____ part of (letter) from left to right.
Read words with short and long	Define and classify objects or concepts (<i>comparative language</i>)	Two words with short/long vowel sounds are ____ and _____.



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vowels	connectors, sorting language)	____ is a word with a short vowel sound, but ____ has a long vowel sound. ____ and ____ are the same because they both have a short/long vowel sound.
Learn about minimal pairs	Discuss the meaning of words and make personal connections (variety of grammatical/sentence structures)	____ means ____, and ____ means ____. I think an example of a minimal pair in my language is ____ and _____.
Learn blends	Recount and restate ideas (verbs for actions, nouns for visuals, prepositional phrases)	To blend sounds, I _____. I can blend the sounds ____ and ____ to become _____.
Preview text	Share observations about topics they know (first person, variety of grammatical/sentence structures)	I think this book is about ____ because ____. What I know/think about ____ (topic) is _____.
Read decodable	Describe story events (sequence, verbs for character actions, pronouns)	First, _____. Then, _____. Next, _____. Last, _____. ____ was/were the character(s). He/She/They ____ (verb).



Sample foundational skill⁴	Sample language objective⁵	Sample student language frames and/or supports <i>Students develop the language to articulate and discuss their learning related to foundational skills through teacher modeling, opportunities for guided practice, and positive reinforcement and productive feedback.</i>
Read decodable	Create multimodal texts with drawings and spelling approximations	My story is about ____. Once upon a time, ____.



5. Support collaboration between language development specialists and teachers who provide grade-level early literacy instruction so that they can support student progression and proficiency across their respective standards. For example:
 - a. sharing strategies and resources related to their respective areas of expertise;
 - b. adding elements of language development standards into foundational skills instruction through oracy and vocabulary building activities; and
 - c. using Tier 1 foundational skills materials in ELD classes (e.g., letter cards, mouth articulation charts, letter formation guides to reference as students need more support in the context of the language development activity). This could look like:
 - i. As they learn to describe themselves and/or family members, teachers affirm students for their bravery in practicing new words and sounds then model articulation gestures for sounds they need additional support with.
 - ii. Teachers remind students about proper letter formation when writing words and sentences about a story they heard.
6. Refer to **Leader Checklist for Implementing Teacher-Facing Multilingual Learner Resources** for professional learning planning steps.
7. Celebrate evidence of collaboration and/or evidence of simultaneous language and literacy instruction; continue to provide support as needed.

Additional resources referenced

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