

# Supporting children who are learning two languages

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# Agenda

- What we know
- Building relationships
- Code switching
- Strategies to support



# Activity:

**\*you will need paper  
and a pencil**

Think of something you had to learn how to do that you didn't know how to do.

What was it?

How did you learn what to do?

How did you feel?



Learning can  
be....



# Common terms for language acquisition:

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- Dual-language learners
- English language learners
- English as a second language
- ~~Non-English speaker~~



# Research shows....

- Children are capable of learning subject matter in two languages

## DO YOU EVER FIND IT HARD TO DO TWO THINGS AT ONCE?

The National Institutes of Health discovered that people who speak more than one language are much better at multitasking, which means walking on your hands while chewing gum should be a breeze.



**\$128,000**

According to an MIT study, people who know two or more languages earn an average of \$128,000 more in their lifetimes.



# Research shows....

- Children have cognitive benefits from learning two languages

## 6 BRAIN-BENEFITS TO LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE



# Research shows....

- Early literacy skills learned in the home language transfer to English, even if they were not in English to start with





# Research shows....

- Children taught in English-only classrooms did not perform academically well, especially if they didn't have strong speaking skills in their primary language





# Myths and Realities

## Myth

- Learning two languages during the early childhood years will overwhelm, confuse, and/or delay a child's acquisition of English

## Reality

- Infants learning a second language have **MORE** neural density and **brain activity** related to memory, language, and attention
- Children **across the world** learn two languages
- Children are **better** able to learn context clues
- Preserves the culture of the **family**



# Myths and Realities

## Myth

- Total English immersion from PreK (age 3) through third grade is the best way for a young DLL to acquire English

## Reality

- Research shows children **lose** their ability to communicate in their first language, start to prefer English, develop communication **problems** with their extended family, and experience **depressed academic achievement** in English
- Loss of ability to learn WHILE learning only English
- Children **fall behind** academically from those who were still able to use their home language



# Myths and Realities

## Myth

- Native English speakers will experience academic and language delays if they are enrolled in dual language programs

## Reality

- Research shows these programs are **effective for all children**
- Experiences benefit all children and **promote bilingualism and biculturalism**
- Children had **higher testing scores** and **positive reports** from families, teachers, and administrators

# What about you?



Sean Pang  
Rockville High School (MD)

# What can you do?



**Build  
Relationships**



**Support  
Code  
Switching**

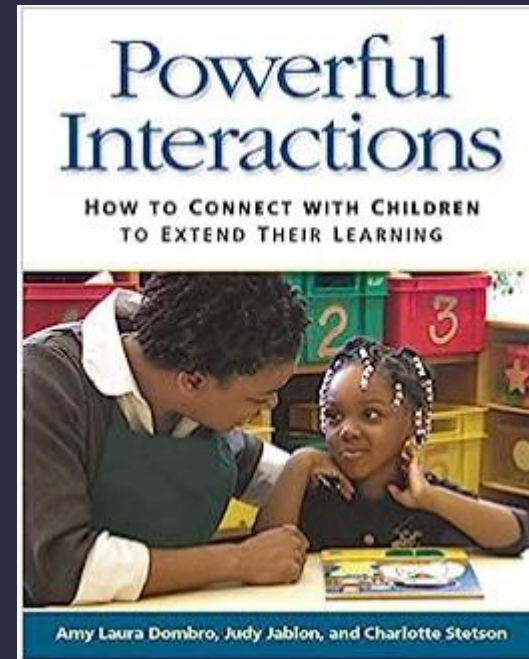


**Implement  
Strategies**

# Build Relationships

## *Powerful Interactions*

- Be Present
- Connect
- Extend



# 3 STEPS OF A POWERFUL INTERACTION



Be Present



Connect



Extend Learning





Build Relationships

Be Present



Build Relationships

Connect



Build Relationships

Extend



# Supporting Code Switching

When a speaker alternates between two or more languages

- Most common is to begin in one language, then switch to another
- Also called “language switching”





Examples of child code switching in English and Spanish:

- ▶ ***“Quiero jugar outside.”***  
 (“I want to play outside.”)
  
- ▶ ***“This is not what I want to **comer.**”***  
 (“This is not what I want to eat.”)



## Adults can use instances of children's code switching to

- ▶ observe their language skills, and
- ▶ present strong language models to support learning and development.

## Adults who listen carefully

- ▶ understand a child's vocabulary, ideas, and knowledge, and then
- ▶ support the child to interact, extend conversations, and learn more.



## What you can do:



**Sample adult responses that invite the child to continue the conversation**

- Extend the original comment or question
- Listen responsively
- Start and continue conversations children are interested in
- Support vocabulary
- Let them share!



# Let's practice!

- Look at the picture and what the "child says" in the picture
- Think about what you might say next if you were with this child





## Meal time

Child says

Possible adult responses

More *leche.*

More milk.

*¡Rica* food!

Good food!



## Block play

Child says	Possible adult responses
<b><i>Bloques fall.</i></b> Blocks fall.	
<b><i>My casita.</i></b> My little house.	
<b><i>Big torre.</i></b> Big tower.	



## Social Studies

Child says	Possible adult responses
<p><u>When I grow up, <i>quiero ser un astronaut para ir a la moon.</i></u></p> <p>When I grow up, I want to be an astronaut so I can go to the moon.</p>	
<p><u>My uncle is a <i>policía.</i></u></p> <p>My uncle is a police officer.</p>	



# Implement Strategies

## Michaela Bedwell (She/Her)

Graduate Assistant

### Academic Interests:

- Ph.D Student, Combined Counseling/School Psychology
  - Clinical Psychology
  - Educational Psychology
  - Social-Emotional Learning
  - Trauma-informed Care

### Personal Interests:

- Watching movies
- Working out
- Traveling
- Finding new restaurants



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# Implement Strategies

- Talk about what you are doing or what the child is doing
- Learn a few words in the child's native language
- Use visuals, props and symbols
- Point out previous learning or experiences
- Provide encouragement
- Read a book one language at a time



# Activity:

\*You will need a pencil and paper

- Draw a.....





# Implement Strategies



Theme  
Tema

Camping

Campamento

Ocean

Oceano

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Implement  
Strategies

Daily Schedule/El Horario  
Diario

Centers/Centros



Morning meeting

Junta de la mañana



Groups/Grupos



Recess/Recreo



Story time/ La  
hora del cuento



Lunch/Almuerzo



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# Implement Strategies

# Implement Strategies



**Susana:** This is my baby.

**Teacher:** Hello, baby. What's her name?

**Susana:** She is Lupita.

**Teacher:** How old is Lupita?

**Susana:** She is one.

**Teacher:** Lupita is one year old?

**Susana:** Yes, it was her *cumpleaños* last week.

**Teacher:** Did she have a birthday party?

**Susana:** Yes, she did. She had a cake and a party. We sang. She got presents.

**Teacher:** What presents did she get?

**Susana:** She got clothes. Some toys. And a blanket.

**Teacher:** [points to the doll] You got a blanket to cover the baby with and keep her warm?

**Susana:** *Sí, la noche es muy fría.*

## Which language should I use with a young child if I don't speak the language her family uses at home?



- ▶ Speak primarily your own strongest language. Modeling the language you know very well provides even the youngest child with a deeper, fuller language experience.
- ▶ Learn and use some important words, phrases, songs, and/or rhymes in children's home languages. Children's families can help you learn special and meaningful words in their home language. When you use these words, you are not only speaking in the language children understand, you are demonstrating that you value them—their identity and language. Plan to use their home language at important times, especially during transitional times, such as naptime, and to comfort them when they are upset.

# What is one thing you will try?



**Build  
Relationships**



**Support  
Code  
Switching**



**Implement  
Strategies**



**Areli Schermerhorn**  
Peer Educator, English as a New Language  
Systemic Day School District 205

Remember, YOU make a difference to a child!

# Questions?

You can find these slides at <https://nau.edu/early-learning-development-center/resources/>

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