

Understanding Many Languages

Preparing Early Educators to Teach Dual Language Learners

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Summary: The population of children served in early care and education (ECE) settings is culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse and becoming more so. It is important that early childhood degree programs deliver content on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices so that upon degree completion, teachers are prepared to support the learning and development of dual language learners (DLLs) in their classrooms. Creating the conditions in which early childhood higher education faculty and degree programs can successfully prepare a robust and diverse cadre of early educators who are able to teach dual language learning children in their classrooms will require investment and reforms in early childhood degree programs to ensure that they can rise to this challenge.

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Key Findings

- Early childhood degree programs more often require topics related to broad issues of self-awareness and beliefs about diversity than courses focused on pedagogical content and practical strategies for working with DLLs.
- Only one-quarter of programs require students to work with DLLs in their student teaching or practica.
- About one-quarter of faculty members said they were not capable of preparing teachers to support the cognitive and social development of young DLLs.

Policy Recommendations

- Increase the requirements for content and field experiences related to DLL development and learning across degree programs.
- Increase the diversity of early childhood education faculty to strengthen and improve the ability of institutions of higher education to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse early childhood education students.
- Increase opportunities for faculty professional development to effectively prepare early childhood education students to work with young DLLs.

Introduction

Throughout the United States, the number of dual language learners (DLLs)¹ under the age of eight has increased by 24 percent since 2000 (Park, O’Toole, & Katsiaficas, 2017). DLLs are children who have at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home and who are learning two or more languages at the same time. Today, there are more than 11 million young DLLs in the United States, accounting for nearly one-third (32 percent) of all children age eight and under (Park et al., 2017). The increase in the young DLL population is not limited to border states like Texas and California; recent immigration and refugee resettlement trends have led to significant growth in the DLL population in states like Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, and Connecticut (Park, Zong, & Batalova, 2018). As the population served in early care and education (ECE) settings is becoming more linguistically diverse and “superdiverse” classrooms² are becoming more common (Baker & Páez, 2018), ECE teachers must be prepared to employ practices that are responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the children in their programs in order to optimize early learning (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASSEM], 2017).

Recent research indicates that bilingualism can be beneficial to children cognitively, socially, and academically (Callahan & Gándara, 2014). Children who use two languages to navigate the world must constantly gauge when to attend to, choose between, or inhibit languages, a mental flexibility that may transfer to other cognitive skills related to how children learn (Martin-Rhee & Bialystok, 2008; Poulin-Dubois, Blaye, Coutya, & Bialystok, 2011). This flexible approach to learning can help to ensure school readiness and success for DLLs. Despite these benefits, classroom models and practices that support this advantageous approach to learning (e.g., dual language immersion or bilingual programs) are not regularly implemented (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018). Children who are DLLs continue to lag academically when compared to their monolingual English-speaking peers, particularly in language, literacy, and math (Murphey, 2014).

ECE programs need to be prepared to deliver the types of high-quality early learning experiences and interactions that optimize children’s development and learning for all children — including those who are DLLs — and be able to function effectively in settings in which a number of different languages are spoken among children. Just as high-quality early learning experiences require educators to have training and educational experiences that prepare them to work with children on early literacy, early math, and socioemotional skills, early childhood professionals must also be prepared to work with young children from a variety of backgrounds and family settings, who may speak a number of languages other than English. Research shows that DLLs are better able to transfer their knowledge and skills from their home language to English

1. Children learning more than one language are referred to in a number of ways in research and other literature (e.g., dual language learners, English-language learners, English learners). This report will use the term “dual language learner” or “DLL” to refer to these children, even when quoting a resource that uses a different term.
2. In the field of ECE, “superdiversity” refers to the presence of children who speak a variety of languages learning together in a single classroom, program, or school.

when this home language is spoken in the classroom, thus, it is likely that teachers who speak children’s home language and English may be more effective teachers of DLLs (Castro et al., 2014; Chang et al., 2007; Loeb, Soland, & Fox, 2014).

Attracting and retaining a linguistically diverse ECE workforce is paramount to optimizing the benefits of high-quality early care and education for DLLs. Simultaneously, it is critical that all early educators understand language development and have effective strategies to support DLLs, regardless of language match (which may change as children in a program change or present multiple languages in a single classroom).

Although having teachers fluent in children’s home languages may be ideal, it may not be possible given the number of languages that may be present in a classroom. However, even a little knowledge of another language can make a difference. Research done in pre-K classrooms that included DLLs learning both Spanish and English suggests that “teachers who speak little to no Spanish in the classroom interact less frequently with [DLLs] (in either language) compared to teachers who speak some Spanish” (Chang et al., 2007, p. 267). Furthermore, research on pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward teaching English learners shows a positive correlation between pre-service teachers’ second-language proficiency and personal experiences with diversity and their attitudes toward use of English learners’ first language in content instruction (Wessels, Trainin, Reeves, Catalano, & Deng, 2017).

Early educators who are most successful in supporting the development and learning of diverse children possess myriad qualities: a strong grasp of language development and some understanding of a language other than English; a strengths-based attitude regarding the value of multilingualism; and knowledge of and the ability to implement developmentally appropriate and pedagogically sound practices in the classroom.

Key Findings

To better understand how higher education degree programs are situated to educate and prepare ECE professionals to address the needs of all children, including DLLs, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) developed the *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory* (hereafter, “the *Inventory*”; see **Box A** for a description of the *Inventory* process and instruments). In addition to broad questions around curricular requirements and student field experiences, a series of questions³ developed for the *Inventory* focused specifically on the issues related to the preparation of ECE professionals to work with DLLs, with particular attention to program content and faculty capacity. Considering the challenges facing the ECE field in supporting DLLs, this brief presents highlights of the *Inventory* findings related to programmatic requirements, faculty competence, and faculty professional development needs across the 13 states that have participated in the *Inventory* to date.

3. As the *Inventory* studies took place over several years (from 2012 to 2017), adjustments were made to the *Inventory* survey tools to provide more detail about program requirements and faculty perspectives and experiences (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment [CSCCE], 2016).

Box A. About the Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory

The *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory* is a research tool that describes the landscape of a state's early childhood degree program offerings at the associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels (Kipnis, Ryan, Austin, Whitebook, & Sakai, 2012). The *Inventory* was created to look closely at a number of variations among programs at different degree levels (e.g., curricular focus, age-group focus, field-based experiences). The *Inventory* applied three modules — the mapping module, the program module, and the faculty module — to a total of 13 states: Arkansas, California, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington.

Through an extensive document review, the mapping module identified a state's early childhood higher education programs by collecting information on each college or university, the departments that house the programs, the degrees and certificates offered, and the characteristics of students attending the programs.

Using an online survey tool completed by each degree program's dean or coordinator, the program module collected information on program content and age-group focus; alignment of curricula to state or national standards; accreditation; methods of student assessment; types, sequencing, duration, and supervision of clinical experiences; student supports; and challenges currently faced by the institution.

Finally, using an online survey tool completed by all faculty members teaching in a given degree program, the faculty module collected information on faculty employment status, teaching experience and expertise, professional development experiences and interests, and past experience in the early childhood field.

See the **Appendix** for the number of programs and faculty members who participated in the *Inventory* in each state.

We explored *Inventory* data from the participating states to answer the following questions:

1. How are early educators being prepared to work with young DLLs?
 - a. What course content is required, and for what age groups?
 - b. What experiences are early educators having in their field-based learning (e.g., practica and student teaching)?
2. How prepared do faculty members feel to teach content related to teaching DLLs?
3. What kinds of professional development have faculty members participated in related to DLLs? What kinds of professional development are faculty members interested in?
4. What challenges do programs face in preparing educators to work with young children who are DLLs?

Program Requirements

The *Inventory* program module includes a section completed by program deans or coordinators (hereafter referred to as “program leads”). Program leads were asked to note which topics related to teaching DLLs were *required* curriculum to earn the degree. The present analyses related to this topic area were done separately, in two distinct cohorts of states. Between 2012 and 2015, CSCCE conducted *Inventory* studies in seven states (cohort 1): California, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. In these *Inventory* studies, our survey questions on teaching DLLs were general and focused on teaching DLLs as a broad topic area (teaching children from multiple cultural and ethnic backgrounds and teaching children who are DLLs). In our analysis of the *Inventory* results for the first cohort of states, we found that across the states, 66 percent of degree programs at all levels (e.g., associate, bachelor’s, and graduate) required general DLL content for infants and toddlers, and 80 percent required general DLL content for older children (preschool age through grade 3 or higher). Findings from these general questions suggested an overall lack of content related to young DLLs. These findings, combined with a growing interest in the field related to teaching DLLs, led to a revision and expansion of the survey questions related to preparing teachers to work with young DLLs in subsequent studies (see **Box B**).

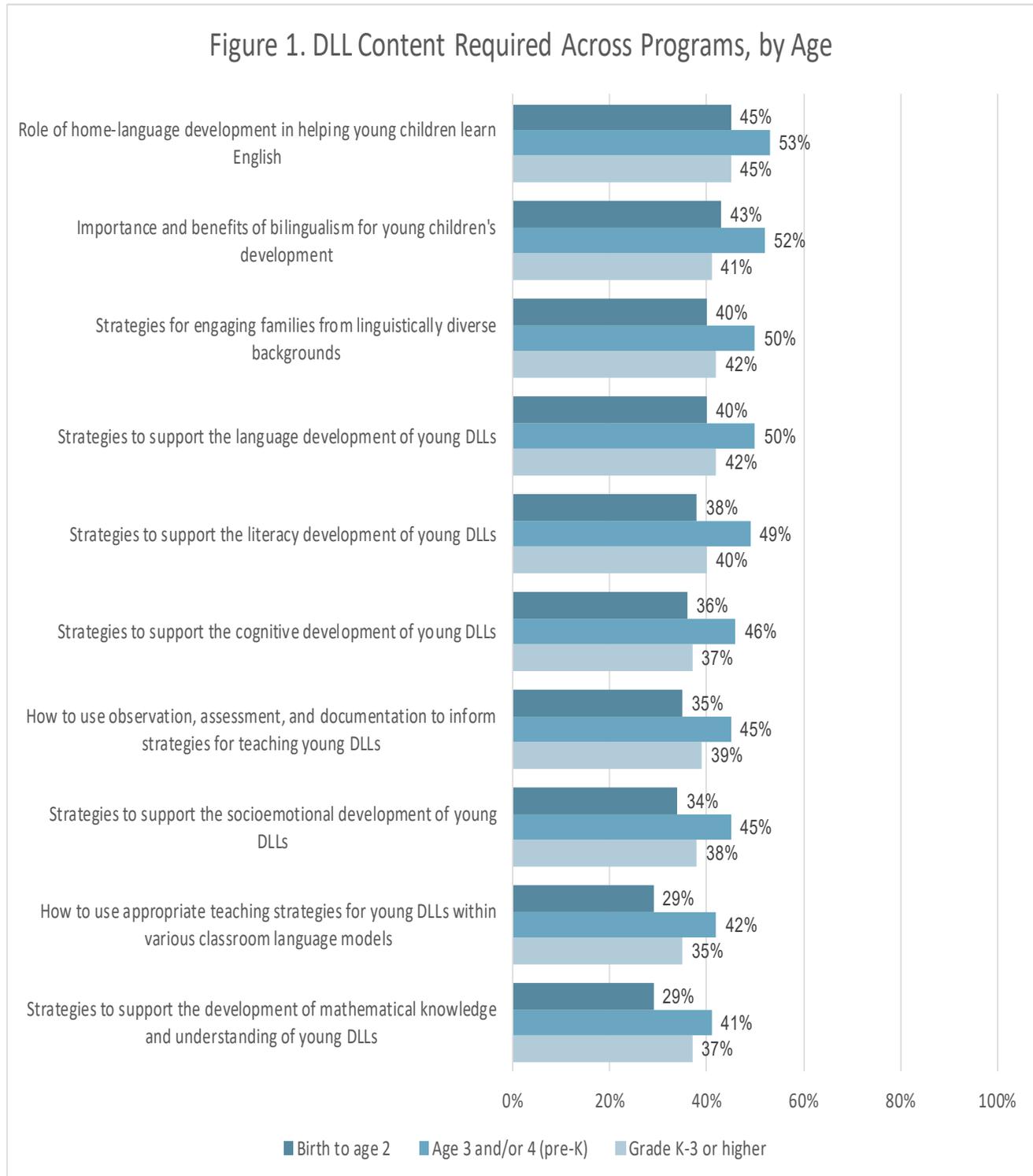
Box B. DLL Survey Topics Included for States in Cohort 2

- Importance and benefits of bilingualism for young children’s development
- Role of home-language development in helping young children learn English
- Strategies to support the cognitive development of young DLLs
- Strategies to support the language development of young DLLs
- Strategies to support the literacy development of young DLLs
- Strategies to support the socioemotional development of young DLLs
- How to use appropriate teaching strategies for young DLLs within various classroom language models (e.g., English only, dual language, English with home-language support)
- How to use observation, assessment, and documentation to inform strategies for teaching young DLLs
- Strategies for engaging families from linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Strategies to support the development of mathematical knowledge and understanding of young DLLs

During 2016 and 2017, *Inventory* studies conducted in Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington (cohort 2) included a deeper dive into this program area. Unless otherwise noted, the findings in this brief are drawn from cohort 2.

Analysis of the more detailed options presented to the second cohort of states demonstrated great variation in whether content related to DLLs is required within and across states. When it is required, the focus is generally on preschool-age children. On average across topics, fewer than 50 percent of programs required content related to working with infant and toddler DLLs (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. DLL Content Required Across Programs, by Age





While programs do address the important role home language plays in children’s ability to learn English, they are less likely to deliver content within the degree program that prepares students to facilitate learning for DLLs.

Findings illustrate that while programs are addressing the important role home language plays in children’s ability to learn English, they are less likely to deliver content within the degree program that prepares students to facilitate learning for DLLs. A lack of focus on effective teaching practices for DLLs is concerning because research shows that teachers working in preschool classrooms already provide limited language and literacy instruction (Girard, Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2013; Justice, Mashburn, Hamre & Pianta, 2007; Mihai, Butera, & Friesen, 2017; Pelatti, Piasta, Justice, & O’Connell, 2014; Rohde, 2015). Thus, adding children who are DLLs into the preschool mix likely brings a layer of complexity to language and literacy instruction, where most teachers are already challenged. In fact, research suggests that English-speaking teachers tend to implement very few strategies to support Spanish-English DLLs (Buysse, Castro, & Peisner-Feinberg, 2010, Sawyer et al., 2016).

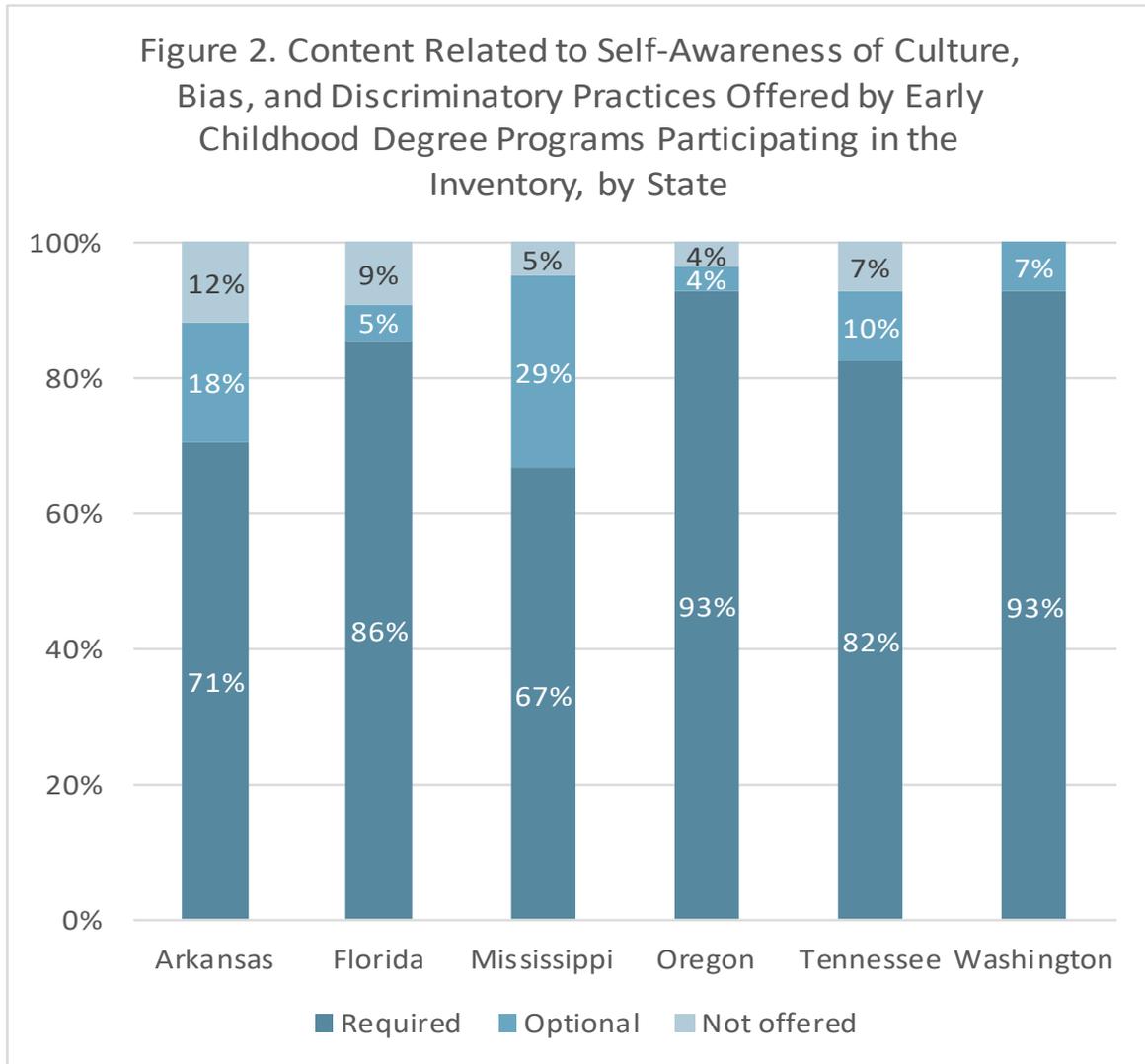
Promising Practices: Teaching Credentials for Teachers of Dual Language Learners

States are beginning to address the issue of insufficient teacher preparation by developing teaching credentials for teachers of DLLs from pre-K to grade 12. For example, Utah has created specific credentials for educators working in dual language programs. The Utah Department of Education partnered with universities across the state to develop “world language and dual language immersion (DLI) endorsements in the language of instruction,” and teachers must acquire one of these endorsements in order to be qualified to teach in either a one-way or two-way dual language program (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2015, p.74). These endorsements may be attached to an Educator License with an Early Childhood, Elementary, or Secondary area of concentration (Utah State Board of Education, 2018).

California has also focused attention on teaching young DLLs by developing a set of teacher competencies for working with preschoolers that offers general guidance related to the instruction of DLLs for teachers and program directors (Lopez & Zepeda, 2012). As states like Utah and California continue to raise the importance of specific competencies related to teaching DLLs, early childhood degree programs will likely need to expand the delivery of content related to teaching DLLs in their program offerings.

With regard to topics aimed at developing cross-cultural competency and anti-bias dispositions, the majority of programs in the *Inventory* studies required this content of their early childhood education students. Across the six most recent states we analyzed, an average of 84 percent of programs require students to participate in content related

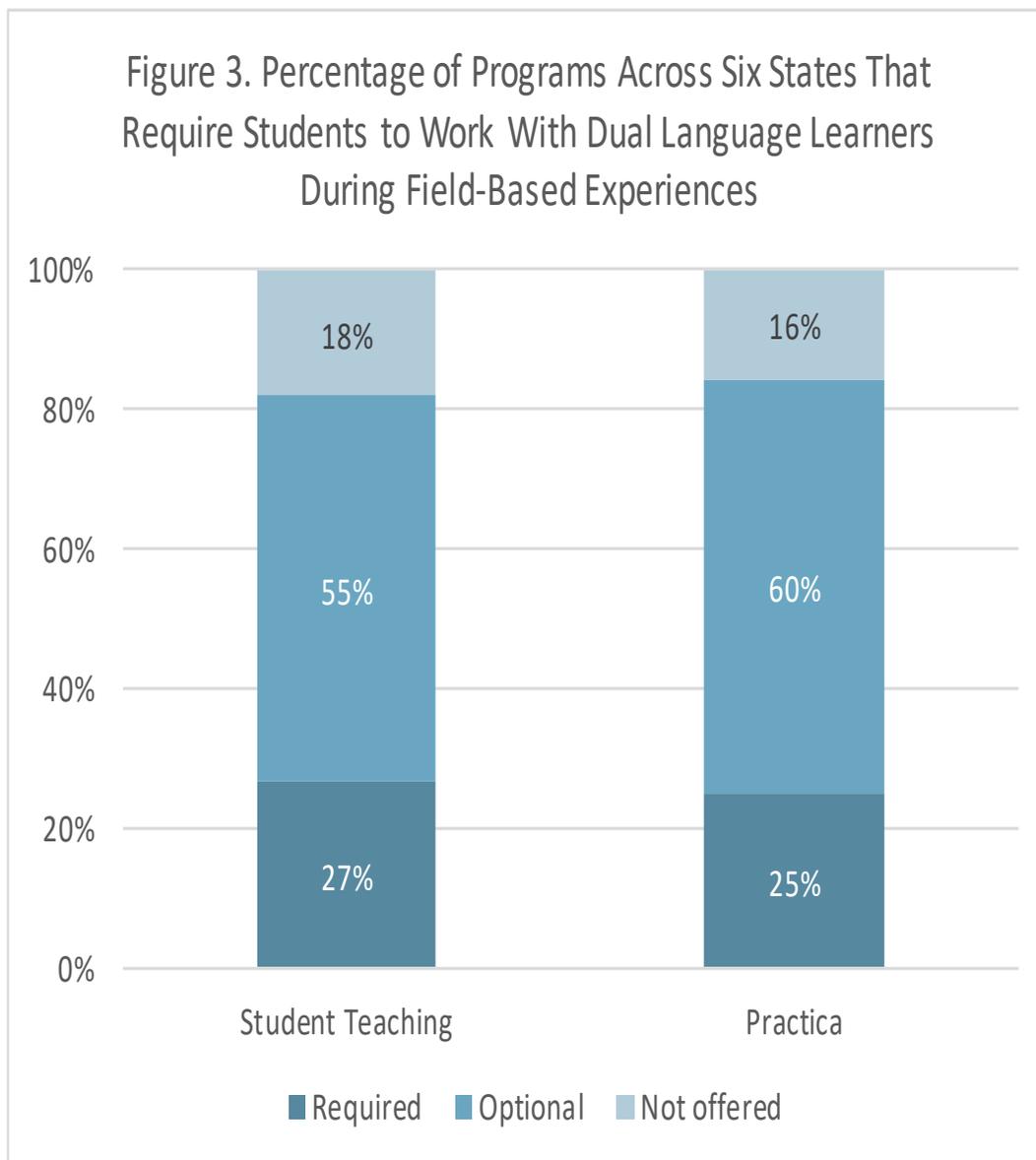
to “developing self-awareness of culture, bias, and discriminatory practices, as well as examining the effects of teachers’ own beliefs and attitudes.” Another 10 percent offer but do not require this content, and 6 percent do not offer any content on this topic (see state-specific data in **Figure 2**).



Although content related to examining teachers’ own beliefs and attitudes is important and valuable, research has shown that teachers’ beliefs do not solely determine whether teachers engage in linguistically responsive language and literacy practices (Sawyer et al., 2016). Indeed, teachers also need to understand “the fundamental principles regarding how children learn second languages, effective research-based instructional practices, and how cultural factors impact [DLLs’] schooling experience while examining their own beliefs about [DLLs] in the future classrooms” (Wessels et al., 2017, p.457). Other research on early educators’ teaching practices with DLLs found “a consistent internal battle between what educators believed and what they practiced” (Griffin Spies, Lyons, Huerta, Garza, & Reding, 2017, p.40). As much as early educators strive to be responsive and aware of cultural and linguistic diversity, they are not getting the

pedagogical training in their degree programs to do so effectively in classroom practice (NASEM, 2017). A more concerted focus on teaching practices and pedagogy related to working with DLLs is needed to ensure that early childhood education students are prepared to support the learning and development of young DLLs.

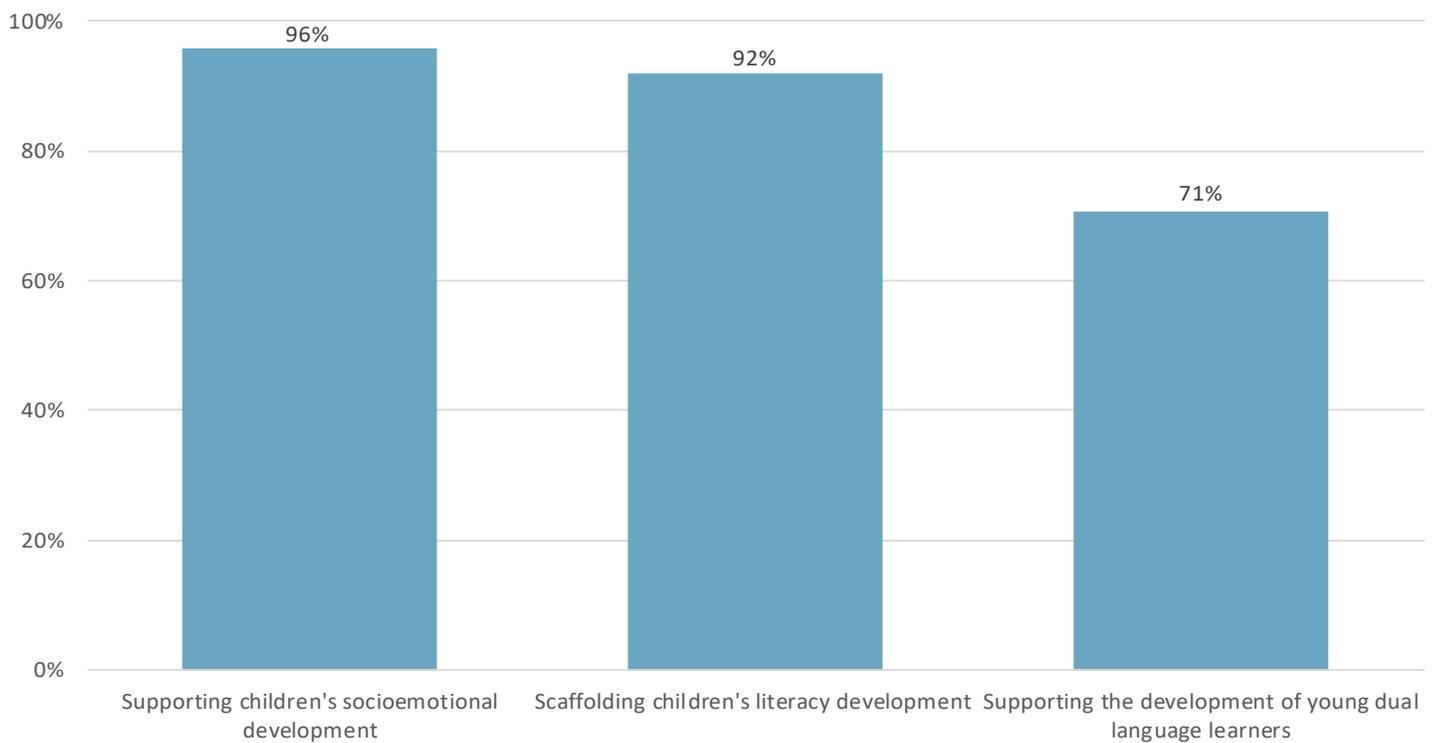
One method of ensuring a focus on effective teaching practices is to require that student teaching or practicum placements include work in classrooms serving DLLs. Yet, an examination of student placement requirements in programs across the six states most recently studied in the *Inventory* revealed that only one-quarter of programs require students to work with DLLs in their student teaching or practicum experiences. About one-half of programs allow the option of working with DLLs, and another one-fifth do not offer any student teaching or practicum experiences that incorporate this element of field-based learning (see **Figure 3**).



Faculty Capacity to Prepare Students to Teach DLLs

The *Inventory* also addressed faculty members' self-assessment of their ability to prepare early childhood education students to work with young dual language learners. In the survey, faculty members were asked about their capacity to teach content related to teaching DLLs across a variety of topics and age groups of children. Among the six states in the second cohort, about one-quarter of faculty members said they were not capable of preparing teachers to support the cognitive and social development of young DLLs for any age group or grade level. Depending on the state, 20 to 36 percent of faculty members said they were incapable of preparing teachers to work with DLLs. When faculty members did report feeling capable, they were more likely to be capable of preparing teachers working with pre-K children than infants and toddlers or older children. By way of comparison, when asked about other content areas in the *Inventory*, 96 percent of faculty members across programs and states felt capable of preparing teachers to support social and emotional development, and 91 percent felt capable of preparing teachers to support children's literacy development (see **Figure 4**).

Figure 4. Percentage of Faculty Members Indicating the Capacity to Teach Content to Teachers Working With at Least One Age Group of Young Children



To build and strengthen faculty capacity, a clear focus on content delivery methods is needed. Immersing faculty members in rich professional learning on strategies to teach DLLs is a promising practice that could begin to mitigate the issue of limited faculty capacity to teach in this area. One promising example is work conducted at Texas A&M to incorporate DLL competencies in its early childhood degree program. Faculty members engaging in this professional development process participated in an immersion program that included book studies, lectures from visiting scholars, and conferences in other settings in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of DLL children and to revise course content to reflect crucial tenets of cultural competency. Evaluation of the program showed increased knowledge of effective teaching strategies as a result of faculty members' experiences (McCrary, Sennette, & Brown, 2011).

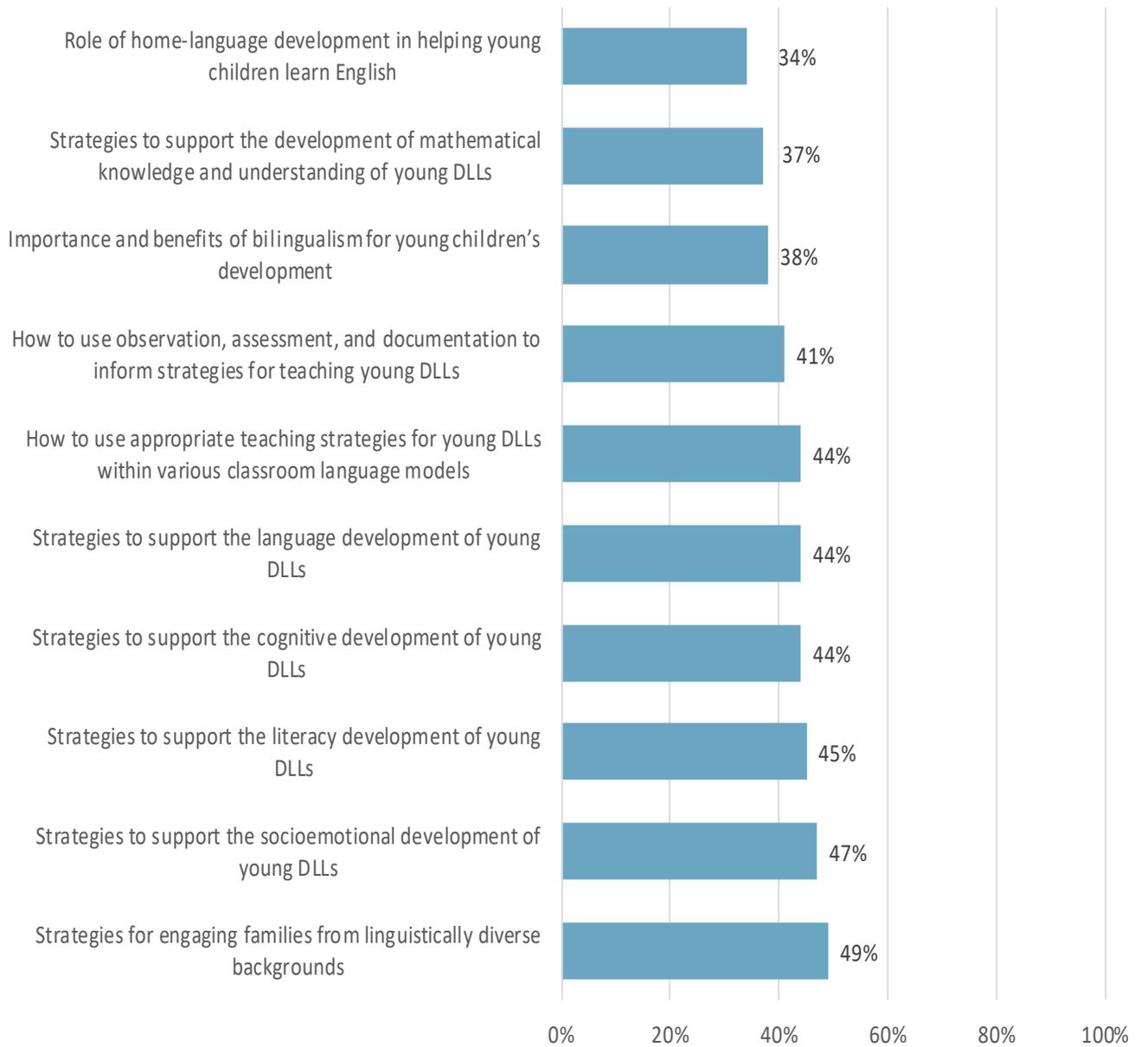
Faculty Experience With and Interest in Professional Development Related to DLLs

To assess ongoing learning for faculty members in early childhood degree programs, the faculty module included questions around prior experiences with and interest in future opportunities for professional development. In the first cohort of *Inventory* states, faculty members were asked a general question about participating in professional development related to working with DLLs. In the initial cohort, 30 percent of faculty members indicated that they had participated in some professional development related to working with DLLs, and 60 percent of faculty members said it would be helpful to have additional professional development in this area. In the subsequent cohort, we expanded our inquiry about professional development and identified 10 specific topics related to preparing teachers to work with young DLLs. Faculty members in six states were asked to indicate whether they had participated in professional development during the last three years on these 10 topics (see **Box B** on page 5).

Across the six states included in cohort 2, faculty participation rates in professional development depended on the specific topic, with a range in participation from 14 percent (strategies to support the development of mathematical knowledge and understanding of young DLLs) to 38 percent (strategies for engaging families from linguistically diverse backgrounds).

In the second part of our examination of professional development, we also asked faculty members to rate their interest in 10 topics related to working with young DLLs (see **Box B** for topics) using a scale of 1 (“not interested”) to 5 (“very interested”). When asked about their interest in participating in additional professional development related to working with young DLLs, faculty members were least interested in participating in future professional development around the role of home-language development in helping children learn English. They were most interested in strategies for engaging with families: nearly one-half of faculty members across six states noted that they were “very interested” in pursuing additional professional development around engaging with linguistically diverse families (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5. Faculty Interest in Professional Development Topics Related to Dual Language Learners (DLLs): Percentage of Faculty Members Indicating They are "Very Interested" in Professional Development Topics



Faculty members' interest in topics related to engaging families is a promising trend. When working with young DLLs, teachers must establish good communication and collaboration skills with families to learn not only about the child, but to also understand the important values and beliefs of the family that shape the child's development and environment (Zepeda, Castro, & Cronin, 2011). Students in early childhood degree programs need to learn how to engage families so that parents and other relatives feel comfortable and encouraged to share information about

their culture, their expectations and views about their children’s development, and children’s early experiences in their homes. Learning about DLLs’ family life and culture can help teachers ensure consistency across home and school settings. Building this consistency in turn fosters DLLs’ healthy socioemotional development and promotes school readiness (Jeynes, 2003; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001). Thus, teaching early childhood education students to work with families to ensure rich learning experiences across home and school is a critical teaching strategy related to working with DLLs.

Faculty members’ interest in professional development related to engaging families may well indicate an understanding of the important role that families play in ensuring effective teaching and learning for their children. However, while family engagement is an important factor in supporting DLLs, faculty members also need to develop and expand the skills necessary for preparing early childhood education students to provide appropriate and effective instructional supports for DLLs. In these areas, faculty members indicated less interest in professional development. For example, slightly more than one-third (37 percent) of faculty members indicated a strong interest in professional development related to specific strategies to support young DLLs’ mathematical abilities.

It should be noted that faculty members were not asked why they were or were not interested in future professional development opportunities. It could be that a majority of the faculty who did not indicate they were “very interested” in some topics have recently participated in those topics or that these faculty were not highly interested in professional development opportunities in general. Future analyses will shed more light on the topic of faculty professional development experiences.

Challenges Related to Working With DLLs

The *Inventory* also examined perceived challenges across many areas of degree programs. Within the *Inventory*, respondents indicated whether there are programmatic challenges that influence their teaching or program offerings. Once a respondent has indicated that challenges exist, they are asked to further indicate what those challenges are by selecting topics from a list that included items about faculty expertise in content areas related to supporting children who are DLLs as well as resources related to supporting students from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Across all 13 states, 42 percent of program leads indicated that their program experiences a “need for additional faculty expertise in teaching young children who are dual language learners.” Additionally, 20 percent of program leads noted that “insufficient academic support for students for whom English is a second language” is a challenge for their programs.

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More than one-third of early childhood degree programs noted a need for additional faculty expertise in teaching young DLLs.

Diversity of Faculty

Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8 identified a challenge for early childhood degree programs in “the lack of diversity among faculty members, whose composition does not tend to reflect the teacher candidates in preparation programs or young children in early childhood programs” (IOM & NRC, 2015, p.380). This issue of faculty diversity — including the ability of faculty members to speak the language of students in their degree programs — is related to the *Inventory*-identified challenge of “insufficient academic supports for students for whom English is a second language.”

Although many institutions of higher education provide supports for adult English-language learners (ELLs) through remedial English or English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, research shows that ELLs who are required to complete remedial courses have a lower rate of persistence in higher education, likely due to the extended time these courses add to degree completion and a misalignment between ESL content and the subject matter that ELL students are most interested in (Bergey, Movit, Simpson Baird, & Faria, 2018). Making sure that subject-matter experts — in this case, early childhood degree faculty members — possess language proficiency beyond English can help ensure that ELL students can work on their English skills within the early childhood courses and subject matter that is most meaningful to them (Bergey et al., 2018).

In addition, research indicates that early childhood degree programs with a diverse faculty body are more likely to include content on cultural and linguistic diversity within the program curriculum (Lim, Maxwell, Able-Boone, & Zimmer, 2009). Programs across all 13 states included in the *Inventory* studies indicated minimal diversity among their early childhood education faculty. The vast majority of faculty members in these programs are white/Caucasian (81 percent) (see **Figure 6**) and use English to communicate with and teach students (see **Table 1**).

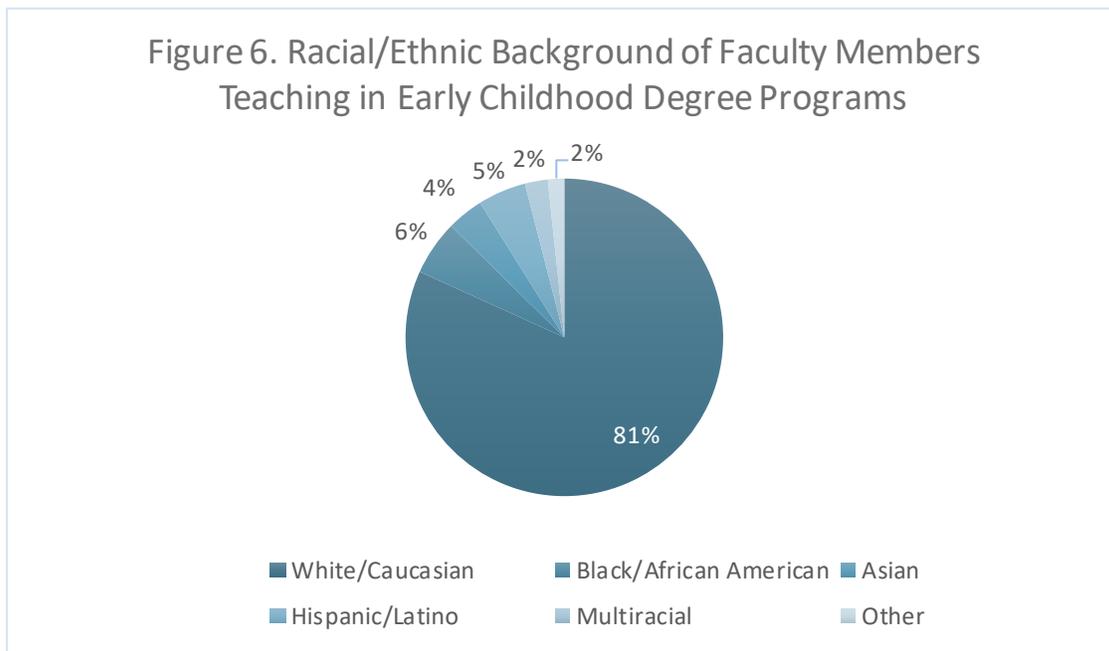


Table 1 Languages Used by Faculty Members to Communicate With Students ⁴	
Language(s)	Percentage of Faculty Members Using Language(s) With Students
Cohort 1 (CA, IN, NE, NY)	
English Only	88%
English and Spanish Only	9%
English and another language not Spanish	2%
Cohort 2 (AR, FL, MS, OR, TN, WA)	
English	99%
Spanish	19%
Other	10%

In the first cohort of states, we asked faculty members which languages and combinations of languages they used with students, and we found that 88 percent of faculty members used only English to communicate with students, while 9 percent used both English and Spanish. A small number of faculty members (2 percent) indicated that they used English and another language (not Spanish) to communicate with students.

In the second cohort of states, we simply asked faculty members whether they used English, Spanish, and/or some other language to communicate with their students. In these six states, 99 percent of faculty members indicated using English, 19 percent of faculty members indicated using Spanish, and 10 percent indicated using a language other than English or Spanish. Perhaps in response to this lack of diversity in languages spoken, 28 percent of faculty members participating in the *Inventory* believe there is a need for more linguistic diversity among faculty.

If faculty members indicated that they would like to know an additional language to better communicate with students, we asked them to identify which language(s) they wanted to learn. About one-half of faculty members across all 13 states reported wanting to learn another language, and the vast majority of these faculty members indicated Spanish (89 percent) as a language they would like to know in order to better communicate with students. Other languages indicated with frequency across the states included Arabic and Cantonese/Mandarin (10 percent each), as distant second choices. The capacity for faculty members to be responsive to students' needs naturally depends on the ability to communicate effectively with students. To that end, it is not surprising that faculty members in the *Inventory* studies see the need for expanded linguistic abilities both for themselves and among their ranks.

4. In three states within Cohort 1 — New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Rhode Island — faculty members were asked only about their fluency in a variety of languages and not what languages they used to communicate with students. These states are excluded from this table.

Recommendations for Program Practice and Policy

Young dual language learners account for one-third of the current U.S. population, birth to age eight. It is essential that early childhood degree programs routinely deliver content on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices so that upon degree completion, early educators are prepared to support the learning and development of dual language learners in their classrooms. Early childhood degree programs must also ensure culturally and linguistically responsive practices and policies in their own program offerings, as well as faculty who are prepared to be responsive and sensitive to their early childhood education students so that a diverse workforce — one that resembles the children in early care and education settings — can be nurtured and sustained in the ECE field.

Achieving these goals depends on the resources and infrastructure provided to faculty members in early childhood degree programs to increase their capacity to support a diverse body of early childhood education students. Creating the conditions in which degree programs can successfully prepare a robust and diverse cadre of early educators who are prepared to teach DLL children in their classrooms will require public and private investments in early childhood degree programs to ensure that they can rise to this challenge.

Studying the preparation of early childhood education students to work with children from diverse backgrounds was a significant part of the *Inventory* studies. Looking across 13 states and examining a range of programs, from associate to graduate degree, offered us insight into the types of DLL topics and field-based learning experiences that early childhood degree programs are currently requiring for pre- and in-service early educators.

To strengthen program content, advance faculty expertise, and ensure that students in early childhood degree programs are supported in their preparation to work with young DLLs, we recommend the following efforts.

Program Recommendations

Increase the requirements for content related to DLL development and learning across domains (e.g., language/literacy, math, socioemotional) and across program levels. To respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse child population, it is necessary to increase the skills and expertise of early educators working directly with children as well as those going into leadership or higher education teaching roles who will supervise or prepare students teaching

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On average, fewer than 50 percent of programs required content related to working with infant and toddler DLLs.

in ECE settings. This objective requires robust pedagogical content related to teaching DLLs so that students and faculty members understand and can apply effective teaching practices for working with DLLs, and in particular, infants and toddlers who are learning more than one language.

Provide increased opportunities for students to work with DLLs in their field experiences, with opportunities to implement specific strategies they have learned in early childhood education classrooms. Optimal field-based experiences are completed alongside formal coursework so that early educators have the opportunity to apply what they are learning to their classroom practice under the mentorship of experienced teachers (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009). To help early childhood education students translate their knowledge of DLL development into effective teaching practices, programs should be structured so that high-quality field placements are embedded throughout the course of study and coincide with in-class instruction related to teaching children who are DLLs, including developmentally appropriate methods. These field experiences should include placements in early learning settings where DLLs are enrolled so that students can observe the teaching practices of more experienced teachers of DLLs while also developing their own teaching skills.

Recommendations for Supporting Faculty Development

Provide opportunities for faculty professional development focused on strategies for teaching young DLLs; professional development should address how to effectively translate this pedagogical content to degree students. In light of the changing demographics of children in the United States, just as all teachers should be prepared to instruct students from diverse backgrounds and linguistic abilities (National Research Council, 2010), so should all faculty have the skills and knowledge to prepare teachers to facilitate the learning of all students. Across the states and programs in the *Inventory* studies, between one-fifth and one-third of faculty members noted feeling incapable of preparing teachers to work with young DLLs. A majority of faculty members also indicated a desire for professional development to increase their ability to teach early childhood education students about working effectively with DLL students and their families. In addition to this critical area, faculty members also need professional development to ensure they feel confident teaching practical strategies to support the development of children who are DLLs across all developmental areas. These professional development opportunities should involve content related to practical teaching strategies that support DLLs and involve work with clinical or visiting faculty who currently teach young DLLs. Emerging models of professional development, like the one implemented at Texas A&M (McCrary et al., 2011), should be explored and adapted by institutions of higher education to meet the needs of faculty at other colleges and universities across the country.

Ensure leadership pathways for culturally and linguistically diverse early childhood education students as a strategy to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of early childhood degree faculty. Recruiting diverse faculty and early childhood education students can help to ensure a diverse body of teachers who reflect the population they teach (Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006). Faculty members

in the *Inventory* studies acknowledged the need for greater diversity among their ranks to provide responsive supports to students preparing to work with young DLLs, including faculty members who are fluent in the home languages of these early childhood education students. Clear pathways and educational supports, such as financial/academic supports and mentoring, are crucial for facilitating the successful degree attainment of culturally and linguistically diverse early childhood education students (Whitebook, McLean, Austin, & Edwards, 2018) and encouraging them to seek leadership roles during their careers, including faculty positions.

Policy Recommendations

Build consensus on the value of multilingualism. In many communities and states across the United States, the ability to communicate in multiple languages continues to be viewed as a deficit rather than a strength. Continued education and outreach to build public awareness about the benefits of multilingualism would help to ensure that children in ECE settings and public schools are encouraged and supported to build competency in both their home language(s) and English.

Expand the research base on the most effective strategies to prepare all teachers to work with young DLLs. There is a need for further research to identify skills that are “most effective at building knowledge and skills among various teacher populations and at producing positive outcomes for children” (Whitebook et al., 2009, p.9). While the research literature is providing clearer guidance on teaching strategies that support young DLLs, much less empirical evidence exists about the specific adult teaching and learning strategies that are most effective at preparing current and future teachers to work with this population. Large-scale implementation and evaluation of promising programs, such as the Nuestros Niños School Readiness Program (Castro et al., 2014), should be undertaken to expand our understanding of effective pre-service and in-service training strategies.



All education agencies ... and intermediary units and agencies responsible for early learning services and pre-K to 12 should support efforts to recruit, select, prepare, and retain teachers, care and education practitioners, and education leaders qualified to serve dual language learners/English learners. (NASEM, 2017, p.14)

Draw upon effective strategies and competencies for supporting DLLs’ early learning and development to align teacher certification requirements and teacher preparation programs. Provide opportunities for teacher preparation programs and state and local education agencies to collaborate on their teacher certification standards and core content for working with young DLLs, aligning them with best practices and with one another. Working together, states and institutions of higher education can ensure that the knowledge and experiences early educators need to effectively support young DLLs are articulated in qualifications and incorporated into degree programs. States like California, Illinois, and Texas have all made important inroads in requiring specific DLL, ESL, or bilingual certification for teachers of young children, and lessons learned in these states may be relevant for state policymakers and higher education administration and faculty (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018).

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Appendix

Respondents to the Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory

State	Number of Program Leads Participating in Inventory	Number of Faculty Members Participating in Inventory
Arkansas	19	25
California	217	359
Florida	33	122
Indiana	74	134
Mississippi	21	25
Nebraska	30	109
New Hampshire	21	68
New Jersey	53	203
New York	114	268
Oregon	25	75
Rhode Island	7	36
Tennessee	30	45
Washington	28	82
Total	672	1551
Cohort 1 (CA, IN, NE, NH, NJ, NY, RI)	516	1177
Cohort 2 (AR, FL, MS, OR, TN, WA)	156	374

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This report is part of *By Design: Preparing Early Educators*, a series of briefs exploring strategies to support effective and accessible early childhood teacher preparation in institutions of higher education. The briefs take a closer look at the content of curricula and experiences that are offered to students in early childhood degree programs across states that participated in the *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory*, carried out by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment from 2012 to 2017. Future reports in this series will examine other topics of interest related to the preparation of early educators.

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Established in 1999, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) is focused on achieving comprehensive public investments that enable the early childhood workforce to deliver high-quality care and education for all children. To achieve this goal, CSCCE conducts research and policy analysis about the characteristics of those who care for and educate young children and examines policy solutions aimed at improving how our nation prepares, supports, and rewards these early educators to ensure young children's optimal development. CSCCE provides research and expert analysis on topics that include: compensation and economic insecurity among early educators; early childhood teacher preparation, access to educational opportunities, and work environments; and early childhood workforce data sources and systems. CSCCE also works directly with policymakers and a range of national, state, and local organizations to assess policy proposals and provide technical assistance on implementing sound early care and education workforce policy.

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