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PreK Report Shows State Policies Weak on Meeting Needs of English Learners

**The State of Preschool 2017 Released by
National Institute for Early Education Research**

(April 18, 2018, New Brunswick, NJ)

More than 20 percent of all preschool-aged children in the United States speak a language other than English at home, yet most state prekindergarten (preK) programs do not collect data on children's home language, making it nearly impossible to design effective supports for young English learners*, according to a new report from the National Institute for Early Education Research.

The State of Preschool 2017 annual report, based on 2016-17 academic year data, is the only national report on state-funded preschool programs. This year's report includes a special section on policies affecting dual language learners (DLLs, called ELs in some states).

Nationwide, more than 1.5 million children are enrolled in 60 state-funded preschools in a variety of settings. But instead of supporting quality early learning with adequate resources, most state programs invest too little to help children catch up with their more advantaged peers by kindergarten.

"We are continually striving to close achievement gaps, including those between children who speak a language other than English at home and children who speak only English," said Ellen Frede, NIEER senior co-director. "We know the earlier we start with high-quality education programs the better."

Six states with a high proportion of English learners in their populations also have high EL enrollment in state preschool: California, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico and Texas. These states also have policies supporting dual language learners in preschool.

Fast Facts

19 state preschool programs use non-English home language as an eligibility criterion.

6 state preK programs require lead teachers to have specific training to work with DLLs.

20 state preK programs require communications about a child be provided in the family's home language.

Many states with high numbers of non-English speaking children (including Ariz., N.M., Nev., and N.Y.) do not require preK teachers to have *any* trainings specific to working with DLLs.

However, several states with high populations of English learners - including Arizona, Florida and New York - cannot even report the home language of children enrolled in their state-funded preschool programs.

Research shows qualified teachers are key to providing the high-quality early learning experiences that can help prepare young children for kindergarten. Yet California, Illinois, and Texas are the only programs to require teachers to have bilingual certification.

"Due to the numbers of young DLLs, their learning outcomes have consequences for our future," said Allison Friedman-Krauss, co-author of *The State of Preschool 2017*. "Our report shows few states have policies supporting the quality early learning experiences these children need to thrive in kindergarten and beyond."

The State of Preschool 2017 yearbook was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation. Data used in the report come from a general survey funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The supplemental survey of state policies related to dual language learners and report was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions in this report are solely those of the authors. For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality access, and funding, please visit nieer.org.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (www.nieer.org) at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research. For more information, contact: Michelle Ruess mruess@nieer.org 848-932-4350.

* Note: NIEER uses the term "Dual language learners" for children who speak a language other than English at home.

IDRA Model Frames Early Childhood Classrooms of Excellence

Grounded in IDRA's research, we developed a "**Classroom of Excellence**" model for early childhood classrooms. The model has three components: dynamically-enriched environment and instruction; a professional development model that embraces culturally-relevant pedagogy; and building strong teacher, child and family relationships.



The model showed dramatic school readiness results among participating children as they developed their oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and print awareness. Teachers encouraged communication and language exploration through discussions in both Spanish and English as a basis for learning English.



Semillitas de Aprendizaje™ Tools for Classrooms *Supplemental Early Childhood Curriculum & Training*

IDRA's research also informed Semillitas de Aprendizaje™ - a unique bilingual (Spanish/English) supplemental curriculum that is helping teachers **foster literacy, numeracy and social-emotional development**, while valuing and **capitalizing on children's home language and culture**.

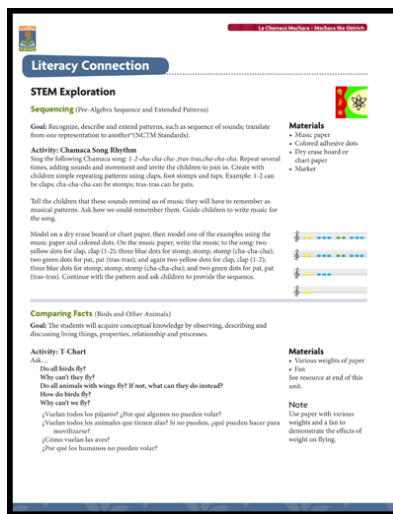
The curriculum reflects elements of **Ellen Galinsky's seven essential life skills** every child needs to thrive as life-long learners and to take on life's challenges. These skills give children the ability to focus on goals, expand their intellectual capacity, cultivate strong, positive self-esteem and stimulate intellectual curiosity. Using culturally appropriate and robust language encourages children to learn easily and communicate what they have learned.

Semillitas de Aprendizaje also incorporates the **Head Start Early Childhood competency indicators** through literacy center activities that focus on listening and understanding, speaking and communicating, phonological awareness, comprehension, book knowledge and use, and print knowledge and emergent writing.

Through this early childhood set of materials, IDRA gives you a process for redesigning and re-energizing your early childhood education program that is more responsive to the characteristics of diverse learners in your school or district. IDRA provides customized **technical assistance and training** that can include: classroom demonstrations and observations, coaching for success, nurturing of innovations, and building on existing strengths.

The materials include a 10-unit teacher guide with STEM integration, 10 big books and 10 unabridged storybooks, 15 books for math and socio-emotion skills, a set of 20 letters (10 English, 10 Spanish) for teachers to send home for parents, and a DVD with storytelling & storyreading videos. A Readers Theatre tool is coming soon!

Learn more!
www.semillitasdeaprendizaje.com



See a sample lesson



See video clips from the
**Storytelling &
 Storyreading DVD**

See Video
 Clips

Unit	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9	Unit 10
Developing listening ability to attend to and understand conversations, stories, songs and poems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Express through movement and dancing what is felt and heard in various musical forms and styles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participate with increasing interest and engagement in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, games and performances	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Show growing awareness of how to follow patterns of text and rhythm in music	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Show increasing interest and engagement in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, games and performances	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Show increasing levels of proficiency, control and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, toe-tapping and galloping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

See scope & sequence

Get Lesson

Get Sample

A promotional banner for the IDRA app. On the left is a black smartphone displaying the app's interface, which features a photo of three children and the text "Assuring educational opportunity for every child" above the IDRA logo. To the right of the phone, the text "Download Our Free App" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below this, it says "Get IDRA's email newsletters, Classnotes Podcast, videos, infographics and more!" and "Available now for iPhone, Android, Mobile Web, and Blackberry". Further right, there are two logos: "Available on the App Store" and "ANDROID APP ON Google play". At the bottom right is a QR code that, when scanned, likely leads to the app download page. Below the QR code, the text "Scan this code or visit www.idra.org/apps" is displayed.

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.