

**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 2, 2016

**FACT SHEET: Supporting Dual Language Learners in Early Learning Settings**

Today the White House is announcing a new Federal policy statement from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education on better supporting our country's youngest dual language learners (DLLs) in early childhood programs. The Obama Administration will be joined by public and private sector organizations that will also announce new commitments to support DLLs. Additionally, the White House, in collaboration with Too Small to Fail and Invest in US, is holding a regional convening today at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education in Miami, FL to highlight the importance of supporting our country's DLLs in early childhood programs.

Data indicate that about one in five school-aged children speak a language other than English at home, a figure that has more than doubled in the past few decades. Estimates suggest that this number may be even higher for learners under the age of six; for example, nearly a third of children in Head Start programs are DLLs. Research with young DLLs clearly reflects that children's bilingual skill development promotes overall language development and should be encouraged.

The Federal policy statement being released today recognizes the cultural and linguistic assets of this population of children, and provides important resources and recommendations to the early childhood field to ensure that our nation's early education programs are accessible to these families, and that they appropriately foster the learning and development of this large and growing group of children. Today's announcements also mark progress on the President's My Brother's Keeper Initiative, which aims to ensure that all young people, including children of color, can reach their full potential.

Collectively, today's Federal actions include:

- **A New Federal Policy Statement on More Effectively Supporting Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs:** The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) will release a Federal policy statement on supporting DLLs in early childhood settings. The statement includes comprehensive policy recommendations to States and to early childhood programs. It also recommends that States and local communities work together to ensure that all early childhood programs are welcoming and linguistically accessible to families of DLLs, foster children's emerging bilingualism and learning more broadly, and support the early childhood workforce in building their capacity to stimulate the learning of DLLs.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/dual-language-learners>

- **A New DLL Electronic Toolkit for Programs, Early Educators, Child Care Providers, and Families:** The new DLL Toolkit, released by HHS' Office of Head Start, includes free resources on supporting the learning and development- including dual language development - of DLLs at home, in early learning settings, and in the community. The DLL toolkit will be available at no cost to all early childhood programs, including all Head Start programs, which serve more than 300,000 DLLs every day. The toolkit will also be disseminated to home visitors in all 50 States supported by the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, and the families they serve.

Additional Announcements Made at Today's Convening Include:

- **Too Small to Fail, in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami- Dade and Monroe County and Univision** will launch a new citywide “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” public awareness campaign in Miami, with an emphasis on reaching families of young DLLs. The campaign promotes early brain and language development by encouraging parents to engage in meaningful activities with their young children starting at birth -- like counting toes while giving a bath or singing a song while changing a diaper. Miami is the seventh community with which Too Small to Fail has partnered, with three more expected this summer. Too Small to Fail also promoted a set of parent and early educator resources developed in partnership with HHS and ED— in both English and Spanish - to encourage parents and early educators to talk, read, and sing with young DLL's in their home language.
- **First Five California** will announce that they are developing a \$16 million DLL Pilot to identify effective culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to better support young children who are DLLs. The pilot will focus on three priority areas while ensuring they are scalable and implementable across California's multi-lingual early learning settings. The strategies include: professional development for early educators and program directors on successful teaching strategies and curricula approaches to promote dual language acquisition; proven practices to partner with families of DLLs; and appropriate child and program assessment tools.
- **The University of Washington's Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences** will release a new report on bilingual language learning in young children. The report showcases the Institute's latest studies demonstrating that the baby brain is fully capable of learning multiple languages at the same time. The report also describes major milestones in bilingual language learning and highlights the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, including enhanced abilities to control attention, think flexibly, and update information in working memory.
- **The Civil Rights Project at the University of California Los Angeles** will release a new research brief outlining the economic benefits of bilingualism in a global economy. The report includes findings that suggest that the average difference in earnings between a children who lose their home language, compared to those who keep their home language and become bilingual, is more than \$5,400 annually.
- **The National Head Start Association** will partner with Head Start programs across the nation, business bureaus, and local chambers of commerce, to develop and widely disseminate a toolkit to promote two-generation best practices that support the parents of DLLs in areas such as job training, enrolling in adult education programs, and accessing English language courses, in order to foster family stability and promote child wellness. The toolkit will include a review of best practice examples from Head Start programs that are supporting two generation approaches for children who are DLLs and their families, and guidance for how to replicate the best practices across the country.
- **New America** will release a new report citing the significance of increasing the linguistic diversity of educators in the early childhood workforce. The report highlights the gap between the proportion of children who speak a language other than English at home, and the proportion of educators who speak a language other than English fluently. The authors outline a comprehensive research agenda to identify the barriers to increasing linguistic diversity in preschool through third grade settings, and the best strategies to move forward.

These actions build on President Obama's broader agenda to expand access to high quality early education for all children. Over the course of the President's time in office, he has:

- **Improved and Expanded Head Start:** For over 50 years, Head Start has been at the heart of America's communities. From our urban and rural neighborhoods, to our farmworker communities and tribal nations, it has played an important role in the lives of more than 32 million children and their families. The Obama Administration has invested an additional \$4 billion in the program, and implemented important reforms to raise Head Start's standards, focus on school readiness results, and promote accountability, including the launch of a new process designed to ensure that only the most capable and highest quality programs receive Head Start grants. Head Start and Early Head Start have grown by an additional 40,000 children in the years since President Obama took office.
- **Launched the new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships:** Research indicates that gaps in development begin to form as early as the first year of life. Through the President's signature Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, we have expanded access to high quality early learning opportunities to more than 30,000 additional infants and toddlers in 275 communities across America by creating strong partnerships between our Early Head Start grantees and child care providers that serve young children. These Partnerships are building early learning capacity and infrastructure in the neighborhoods across our country that need it most-- and for our children who need it most. To date, these grants are working to enhance the quality of 1200 child care centers and more than 600 family child care homes across the country.
- **Launched the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program:** In 2009, President Obama launched the MIECHV program to support pregnant women and families and help parents with young children tap the resources and hone the skills they need to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready for school. To date, the MIECHV program has provided 2.3 million home visits, reaching nearly 150,000 families across all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five territories.
- **Signed a new and improved child care bill into law and put forward a bold plan to expand access to high quality affordable child care:** In 2014, President Obama signed a landmark Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization into law, marking a significant step forward in improving our child care system. The new law makes important reforms including shoring up standards that help ensure our children are safe and healthy while they are in child care and ensuring continuity of services. It also increases the amount of funding states can use to increase the quality of their child care systems. A few months later, during his State of the Union address, the President put forth a landmark child care proposal that would guarantee all eligible families with young children have access to affordable, high quality child care. The proposal would also ensure that child care workers have greater access to training and higher education-- and commensurate with new competencies, higher and more fair compensation.

- **Invested in High Quality Preschool and Proposed a Bold Plan to Expand Access to all 4-year-olds:** In his 2013 State of the Union Address, President Obama proposed a landmark plan that would ensure that all 4-year-olds from middle- and low- income families have access to high-quality preschool. Since his call to action, 38 states and D.C. have increased funding in their public preschool programs, investing an additional \$1.5 billion, and totaling almost \$7 billion in investments this year alone. Beyond these state investments, the President has dedicated \$750 million- through his signature Preschool Development Grant program - in high quality preschool, so that 230 high-need communities can provide more than 100,000 additional children with access to preschool.
  
- **Launched the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):** The Obama Administration invested over \$1 billion in 20 States through the Early Learning Challenge, a competitive fund that enabled states to increase the quality of their early education programs, to establish higher standards across programs and to provide critical links with health, nutrition, mental health, and family support for our neediest children. By December of 2014, more than 200,000 children with high needs are enrolled in the highest quality state-funded preschool programs across the 20 States, and nearly 230,000 children with high needs are enrolled in the highest quality child care programs. This effort has also helped to almost double the number of early childhood programs participating in initiatives to improve their quality in those 20 States. This effort has also helped to almost double the number of early childhood programs participating in initiatives to improve their quality in those 20 States.
  
- **In December 2014, the White House held the Summit on Early Education where President Obama announced over \$ 1 billion in new public and private investments for early education.** More than \$330 million in new actions from corporate and philanthropic leaders and \$750 million in new Federal grants were announced to support early education. The President also released a Playbook to offer strategies for local leaders to develop and expand early education in their communities.