

Dear Parent/Guardian

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages at the New York State Education Department strives to provide students whose home languages are other than English access to equity and excellence in education. If your child's home language is other than English and he or she is learning or on the way to learning English, your child is becoming bilingual. Congratulations! Bilingual children have unique assets and advantages.

8.1(i)-640 The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

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How is my child identified as an English Language Learner (ELL) / Multilingual Learner (MLL)?

In New York State, all newly enrolled students and students re-enrolling after two years are required

Programs in Focus

What are the programs available for English Language Learners?

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Will my child learn English if he or she is using the home language that often?

A common concern is that students will be confused when learning in two languages. Research conducted for over 30 years has repeatedly demonstrated that there is no language confusion. In fact, using a student's home/primary language is the most effective way for him or her to develop English. In addition, bilingual learners develop a flexible brain and a range of cognitive skills that help them learn in very powerful ways. In One or Two Way Dual Language Programs, the language of instruction is separated, meaning students have certain times or days for a particular language. When parents visit the programs, they see that this setting is not confusing but actually conducive to the development of bilingualism in students. Research has shown that by the age of ten, children in One Two Way Dual Language Programs can perform on par with or above English monolingual speakers.

What kind of lessons and activities should I expect to see in a Bilingual Program?

Students receive part of their instruction in English and part in the home/primary language, but the curriculum is the same as in the monolingual classes. Students develop literacy and content knowledge in math, science, language arts, and social studies in both languages. Depending on the program model, a bilingual and biliterate child is able to listen, speak, read, and write in both English and the primary language. Skills in one language transfer to the second language. When a student has strong literacy skills in the home/primary language, those skills transfer to the second language.

English as a New Language Program

Instruction in this program, formerly known as English as a Second Language (ESL), emphasizes English language acquisition. In an ENL program, language arts and content instruction are taught in English using specific ENL instructional strategies. Some content area classes are Integrated ENL classes. Students receive core content area and English language development instruction, including the use of the home/primary language as support.

Languages used Generally 50% English and 50% home or target language or 90% home or target language and 10% English, which increases until reaching 50%.

Goals Biliteracy and bilingualism in English and the home/target language

Languages used Home/primary language

Myth 1: Most ELLs are born outside of the United States (US).

There are more than 215,000 English Language Learners (ELLs) ages 5 to 18 attending school in New York State. Of those, 61.5% were born in the US, according to the 2013 NYS Information Repository System (SIRS)

Myth 2: In the past, immigrants succeeded without English as a New Language (ENL) and bilingual classes.

Being bilingual is of great value, ~~as~~ times have changed. Students face a job market that requires greater educational accomplishments than ever before. NYS's adoption of the Common Core ELA standards requires higher level language skills so that graduates will be competitive in our global economy. Since ELLs come with knowledge in their home/primary language, educators must build upon that prior knowledge to further develop ELLs' academic knowledge and skills and prepare them for college and career readiness.

Myth 3: Once ELLs can converse socially in English, they are then capable of succeeding academically.

While ELLs may acquire social language within three years, it may take up to seven years for an ELL to

Myth 7: Students should be discouraged from using their home/primary language in school.

Schools in which students are encouraged to use their home/primary languages support

The following are important research-based facts on bilingualism and bilingual education. There are many

How can we as parents/guardians support our children?

- x Read to your child in his or her home/primary language and/or English. Research shows that reading to your child in your home/primary language will help support English literacy skills
- x Tell stories to your child

Colorín Colorado

A bilingual website for families and educators of English Language learners which is a project in partnership with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). It includes information about teaching English Language learners

Parents with information are the best
advocates for their children.

For questions and concerns about ELL services please contact:

nysparenthotline@nyu.edu

(800) 4698224

For questions please visit:

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL)

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/>