

Making Preschool Classroom Assessments Work for Dual Language Learners

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Executive Summary

To effectively support the growth and learning of young children in their care, early childhood educators need to understand and be able to monitor the progress these children are making toward important milestones. Developmentally appropriate assessment practices are often used for such purposes with children whose home language is English, but for Dual Language Learners (DLLs)—young children who have at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home—such practices are often a poor fit. Many widely used assessment tools and practices are not designed to account for their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, even though DLLs now comprise one-third of all children ages 0–5 in the United States. These assessments' frequent reliance on English language proficiency and emphasis of mainstream cultural norms to gauge children's learning and development can result in inaccurate measures of DLLs' abilities and thereby lead to faulty conclusions about their developmental progress and educational needs.

Federal policies and frameworks such as the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework acknowledge the importance of linguistically appropriate assessment. Similarly, national organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children

have offered guidance on developmentally appropriate practices in diverse settings. While efforts such as these provide a strong foundation, they lack specific requirements or actionable steps that would help ensure widespread adoption and implementation of appropriate assessment tools and practices for DLLs. Several states, including California, Colorado, Illinois, and Oregon, have gone a step further and introduced early learning standards and assessment tools that reflect DLL needs. These initiatives represent meaningful progress toward effective assessment of all young children; however, they have not yet been widely or consistently implemented even within these states' systems.

To effectively support the growth and learning of young children in their care, early childhood educators need to understand and be able to monitor the progress these children are making toward important milestones.

Exploring the importance of linguistically responsive assessment practices, gaps in available tools and training, and strategies for family engagement, this issue brief provides recommendations for scaling implementation of accurate, linguistically and devel-

operationally appropriate early learning assessment practices for DLLs. These include:

- ▶ **Invest in the development of valid and reliable assessment tools.** State early learning agencies should increase and coordinate their investments in development of assessment tools that can accurately measure DLLs' abilities in both their home language and English.
- ▶ **Promote multiple appropriate assessment methods.** State early learning agencies should provide preschool programs with clear guidance and resources on the use of multiple assessment methods, such as observational assessments, interviews, home language surveys, and play-based activities, to help programs holistically capture DLLs' skills and developmental progress.
- ▶ **Include parents as partners in assessment.** Programs should facilitate family engagement in the assessment process by utilizing interpreters or family navigators to collect information pertinent to a child's progress and needs and to strengthen partnerships with families in support of their children's educational and language development.
- ▶ **Regularly review and adapt assessment tools and practices.** State early learning agencies as well as universities and research institutions should establish a regular review process to update DLL assessment guidance based on research and feedback from educators and program administrators.
- ▶ **Build educator skills for assessing DLLs.** State and local agency leaders should work to expand professional development opportunities to ensure preschool educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills to accurately assess DLLs.

- ▶ **Grow the bilingual preschool educator workforce.** State governments, in partnership with higher education institutions and early childhood programs, should implement targeted recruitment and retention strategies for bilingual educators, who are underrepresented in the workforce but have skills important to effectively assessing and serving the growing DLL population. These efforts could include scholarships, loan forgiveness, salary incentives, and clear pathways to hiring well-qualified bilingual educators who were educated or trained outside the United States.

Improving preschool assessment systems to better reflect the experiences and abilities of DLLs can support more accurate instructional planning, strengthen family partnerships, and help ensure all young children progress along a path toward school readiness and longer-term success in K-12 systems.

1 Introduction

Early childhood education pedagogy recognizes the importance of whole child development, which emphasizes nurturing all aspects of a child's growth—cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and linguistic—rather than focusing solely on academic skills. The assessment approaches that early childhood programs use to gauge development should align with this holistic perspective, ensuring they capture children's full range of abilities and potential while supporting equitable learning opportunities. To effectively do this, however, assessment tools and practices need to reflect the fact that different children have different developmental trajectories.

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are young children who have at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home,¹ meaning when they enroll in English-speaking preschool, kindergarten, or other early childhood programs, their brains are us-

ing multiple language systems that are developing at different rates.² As a result, their learning experiences and needs differ significantly from those of monolingual peers growing up in households where only English is spoken. DLLs, who now make up one-third of all U.S. children ages 0–5,³ are a highly diverse population, comprised of children from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Assessing the learning and development of DLLs in preschool requires linguistically appropriate assessment tools and methods able to accurately capture their knowledge and skills in English as well as their home language. However, assessment practices often fall short when it comes to detecting and measuring the abilities of DLLs, thereby introducing faulty data into various systems and processes—from determining eligibility for special education services to instructional planning, program evaluation, and resource allocation.

This issue brief examines critical gaps in preschool classroom assessments and identifies practices that can help meet the needs of DLLs, emphasizing the importance of linguistically responsive approaches, family engagement, and ongoing professional development for educators. By highlighting promising practices and strategies, the brief provides actionable insights for policy advocates, early childhood education leaders, and preschool educators who seek to develop more equitable and supportive learning environments that foster the growth and development of all children.

2 Gaps in the Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness of Assessments

Early childhood assessment is the process of gathering information about young children’s develop-

ment, learning, and behavior to understand their progress across key domains such as cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and linguistic development.⁴ It is an ongoing process that serves different purposes, including but not limited to the early identification of developmental delays or challenges, supporting individualized learning, and guiding curriculum and instruction to meet each young learner’s needs.⁵ As such, assessment is a key component of high-quality preschool programs.⁶

When well-designed and thoughtfully conducted, assessments can contribute to better outcomes for young children.

Careful consideration of the purposes and design of early childhood assessments is needed to ensure they are used appropriately and effectively and that they are reflective of the diversity within the country’s young child population. Assessment practices are expected to prioritize the best interests of the child, serving as tools to support their development and learning rather than imposing pressure or stress on them. When well-designed and thoughtfully conducted, assessments can contribute to better outcomes for young children, directly linking their evolving needs to the classroom support they receive.

Educators and parents are the primary audiences for the information collected, and it is essential that educators have time to reflect on and incorporate this information into classroom planning. Curriculum-based measures such as Creative Curriculum’s Developmental Continuum, the HighScope Child Observation Record, and the Work Sampling System are examples of assessment tools used for planning instructional activities. Data for these assessments can be collected through observations, children’s work samples, and direct interactions with children.

Engaging children’s families during the assessment process can help paint a more complete picture of their development and learning. By leveraging these insights, educators can design targeted interventions and responsive learning environments that foster children’s growth and development.

Because classroom assessments are essential for guiding instruction and supporting young children’s development, it is important that they are inclusive and appropriate for all children. Yet traditional assessment tools may not fully capture the strengths and needs of many of the country’s young learners, who come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This is especially true of DLLs, for whom accurate and meaningful assessments would need to take into account their development in both English and their home language.

Despite awareness of the need for culturally and linguistically responsive assessment practices for DLL children, gaps persist in many preschool systems across the country. Often, this is due to a lack of policies, assessment tools, and/or professional development opportunities for early childhood leaders and educators focused on assessing DLLs’ early learning and development, including home language and English language development.⁷ Addressing these critical gaps would help ensure educators have the information and skills to deliver tailored instructional support to all young children in their care.

A. A Shortage of Assessment Tools Fit for Diverse Populations

All assessments in the early years of education, whether they are specifically designed to track language development or designed to assess the development of other skills, are inherently a measure of language.⁸ To gather accurate information about the various facets of development for DLLs, assessments

would need to factor in the ways their language acquisition differs from that of monolingual children. DLLs are learning words across multiple languages and may experience varying levels of exposure to each language, which can influence their overall language development in complex ways.⁹ Assessment tools should thus account for DLLs’ varying levels of language development in both languages, as failing to do so can lead to the underestimation of a child’s true abilities.¹⁰

In addition to being linguistically appropriate, assessments should not rely on cultural norms and concepts that may be familiar to some children but not others. This means choosing assessment tools and methods that have been reviewed for cultural bias such as the Desired Results Developmental Profile, which is used statewide in California.¹¹ Additional strategies to prevent cultural bias include creating sustainable teams, representative of the children and families served, to review assessment tools used in a preschool program or to inquire with the assessment developer or publisher about their bias and sensitivity review process.

However, few assessment tools were specifically developed for diverse populations, particularly in the early childhood field. Most tools take the monolingual, English-speaking population as the norm and fail to account for the unique experiences, strengths, and needs of children from other cultural and linguistic contexts.¹² As a result, they may produce inaccurate or incomplete data that do not fully reflect the abilities or potential of children growing up bilingually or multilingually. This mismatch can lead to misinterpretation, often framing cultural differences as deficits.¹³

This is particularly true of assessment tools that have been translated from English into another language rather than designed specifically for speakers of multiple languages. Translated versions do not always account for differences in syntax, vocabulary, or cul-

tural context between languages, which can create unintended biases or misinterpretations of a child's abilities. For example, a vocabulary assessment tool designed for monolingual, English-speaking children might ask a child to identify the word "snowman" in a picture. While this might be an appropriate and familiar concept for children raised in cold climates, it may be entirely unfamiliar to a child from a tropical or desert region where snow is not part of their lived experience. Simply translating the word "snowman" into another language does not account for the cultural relevance or familiarity of the concept to the child. This disconnect could result in the child being inaccurately assessed as lacking knowledge or vocabulary, when the issue lies in the cultural mismatch of the assessment content.

B. The Value and Challenges to Family Engagement

Engaging families is a critical part of the assessment process, alongside other formal and informal methods of gathering data.¹⁴ Families can provide educators with valuable insights into children's home environment, language use, and cultural background that may not be captured through a traditional evaluation.¹⁵ For example, information on how a young child uses language at home during independent play and while playing with other children in the family or community can shed light on their exposure to English and the home language outside the classroom. Engaging with families also affords educators opportunities to learn about families' beliefs and goals around the home language, such as valuing it as a way of maintaining family connections or desiring for their children to grow to be multilingual adults. This collaboration provides a more holistic understanding of the child and their language development, allowing educators to design instruction that is more targeted, effective, and aligned with what parents see as priorities for their child.¹⁶

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Additionally, clear and consistent communication with parents about assessments can create pathways for them to support their child's development at home, reinforcing educational goals and supporting a continuous approach to learning. For DLLs, as for young children overall, building a strong home-school partnership is crucial for long-term academic success.¹⁷ When parents are actively engaged in selecting, conducting, and interpreting assessments, they can work with educators to create meaningful learning experiences and advocate for their child's needs.¹⁸ This relationship is especially important when educators do not speak the child's home language, as it can lead to a more complete understanding of a child's growth and individual learning needs.¹⁹

Yet even though the benefits of engaging families in the assessment process are clear,²⁰ doing so can sometimes be challenging. Language barriers and cultural differences can make it difficult for educators to fully engage some parents of DLLs, particularly those with limited English proficiency.²¹ Out of the 7,130,000 DLL children between the ages of 0 to 5 living in the United States in 2019–23, 42 percent had at least one parent with limited proficiency in English.²² Lack of clear communication between educators and parents can lead to missed opportunities for collaboration, as parents may struggle to provide valuable insights into their child's strengths, needs, and home language development. Additionally, without clear communication, parents may not receive important information about their child's educational progress or other domains of development, which can impact their ability to advocate effectively for their child's needs.

In addition, some parents with limited English skills and familiarity with U.S. early childhood systems may find interacting with educators intimidating or inaccessible, further limiting their engagement in discussions about assessment and classroom planning. This challenge can be compounded if immigrant parents, particularly recent arrivals, are uncertain about the role of their home language in their child's education. Some parents may even hesitate to use their home language out of concern that it could delay their child's English acquisition.²³ Such misconceptions, along with language barriers, can create an environment where parents feel unable to fully participate in shaping their child's educational experience. Without intentional effort to address these barriers, the effectiveness of assessment practices that rely on meaningful collaboration between educators and families will be limited.

C. *The Need for Professional Development Opportunities and Workforce Diversity*

Even when culturally unbiased and linguistically responsive assessment tools are developed and circulated, they require skilled assessors to administer them. However, many preschool educators lack the training needed to implement such assessments.²⁴ This gap in professional development can lead to reliance on outdated or ineffective assessment methods, which can harm the educational experience of young DLLs. Providing targeted professional development, training in bilingual assessment practices, and access to relevant resources is crucial for equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to conduct fair and accurate assessments.

An additional limiting factor is that early childhood educators are, overall, less culturally and linguistically diverse than young children in the United States. U.S. Census data show that educators are disproportionately monolingual.²⁵ This shortage of

bilingual educators can lead to an over-reliance on English-only assessments, which often cannot provide a full picture of a DLL child's development, and may result in inaccuracies in the interpretation of assessment information for DLLs.

While educator training and the linguistic diversity of the workforce are important factors, institutional considerations also shape how assessment practices unfold in preschool settings. Time pressures, large class sizes, and limited access to available funding to bring in translators and interpreters can make it difficult for educators to conduct assessments that fully capture children's abilities across languages.²⁶ Administrative expectations or accountability requirements may further constrain practice by prioritizing standardized, English-language tools over more linguistically responsive approaches. These systemic barriers intersect with gaps in professional development and workforce diversity, compounding inequities in how DLLs are assessed and understood in preschool.

3 Current Policies and Practices

Preschool assessment policies and guidelines are influenced by a combination of federal mandates, state regulations, and guidance from professional organizations. These frameworks aim to promote culturally and linguistically responsive practices, a crucial step toward equitable assessments for DLLs. For example, at the federal level, the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) Early Learning Guidance identifies culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and assessments, aligned with state early learning and development standards, as essential components of high-quality preschool programs.²⁷

Similarly, the Head Start program, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, outlines specific expectations for assessing DLLs

in its Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The framework mandates that DLLs be given opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in their home language, English, or both, to capture an accurate representation of their abilities and developmental progress.²⁸ Additionally, the National Association for the Education of Young Children provides guidance on assessment through its position statements on developmentally appropriate practice and on advancing equity in early childhood education, which highlight the importance of observing, documenting, and assessing children’s development in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive, particularly for children whose home language is not English.²⁹

At the state level, California, Illinois, Oregon, and Colorado have taken important steps to improve the assessment of DLLs. California’s preschool guidelines include a dedicated chapter on supporting young DLLs, with a specific focus on culturally and linguistically responsive assessment practices and additional resources on effectively assessing DLLs within classroom settings.³⁰ Illinois standards include a dedicated section on home language development among young children and provide educators with learning standards to support planning and authentic observational assessment procedures that respect and incorporate children’s home languages.³¹ Oregon integrates DLL considerations throughout its Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, emphasizing culturally responsive teaching and assessment practices and advocating for assessment methods that do not rely solely on expressive English skills.³² Finally, Colorado requires all preschool providers participating in the state’s Universal Preschool Program to implement early learning and assessment approaches that are culturally and developmentally appropriate; these approaches must address the diverse needs of individual learners and be included in the department’s Resource Bank, an online platform that was launched in June 2025.³³

Despite these uncertainties, the existing policies and guidelines reflect a clear acknowledgment of the need for assessments able to accurately capture information about DLLs and represent best pedagogical practices.

Given the rapidly shifting landscape of early childhood and education policies, shaped by changing federal and state priorities, funding adjustments, and departmental structures, it remains unclear how these policies and guidance will evolve. However, despite these uncertainties, the existing policies and guidelines reflect a clear acknowledgment of the need for assessments able to accurately capture information about DLLs and represent best pedagogical practices. States and local education agencies, school districts, and preschool classrooms should continue to utilize and follow these guidelines, as they provide a foundation for high-quality assessment practices that benefit DLLs and promote their academic success. And in the future, the development of more detailed standards, backed by sufficient resources for implementation, would encourage consistency for DLLs in preschool classroom assessments.

4 Promising Practices from Illinois

As one of the most linguistically diverse states in the United States, Illinois has developed robust frameworks for supporting DLLs, including policies that mandate bilingual education and emphasize culturally responsive assessment practices. The state’s investments in professional development, family engagement, and innovative assessment tools have positioned it as a leader in ensuring equitable learning opportunities for DLLs.

This section takes a closer look at how these practices are being implemented, drawing on insights shared in interviews and other exchanges with a variety of early childhood education stakeholders, including program leaders, university professors, and preschool classroom educators. Their perspectives helped provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes of policy implementation, as well as strategies being used to effectively support DLLs in Illinois. These strategies can serve as models for other states aiming to enhance assessment and instructional practices for linguistically diverse populations of preschool learners.

A. *Using Observation-Based Assessment Tools Available in Multiple Languages*

To support effective assessment in diverse classroom settings, some Illinois preschool programs emphasize the use of observation-based tools. One such tool—the Desired Results Developmental Profile—is the primary assessment system for some programs. This tool relies on natural observations of children’s behaviors and interactions, rather than standardized assessment approaches that may not account for the varied ways young children can demonstrate their learning. Importantly, the tool allows educators to assess children in multiple languages, recognizing that DLLs may demonstrate their knowledge and skills differently depending on the language context. For example, children are observed in both their home language and English, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of their developmental progress and reducing the risk that a child’s abilities are underestimated due to limited proficiency in one language. This approach helps educators accurately identify strengths, areas for growth, and ways to best support further development.

BOX 1 Technology and Assessment

The integration of technology into early childhood assessment offers both opportunities and challenges for efforts to enhance equitable and culturally responsive practices. For example, in some programs, technology is used to streamline the assessment process and support educators in making data-informed decisions. For instance, the Desired Results Developmental Profile system has an online platform where educators can input, organize, and analyze data to guide classroom planning. Technology can also aid in data collection by capturing photographs or recording children’s conversations, which serve as documentation of their development.

Emerging tools that involve children directly engaging with technological devices, such as iPads and computers, may allow for assessments to be completed in a child’s home language. However, such innovations should be approached with caution as they also raise questions of digital equity. Not all families have equal access to the technology and infrastructure needed to make these tools effective, potentially widening gaps rather than closing them. For example, 5 percent of DLL children in the United States lived in a household with no access to the internet in the 2019–23 period, and 13 percent had no access to a computer or laptop at home. Therefore, device-based assessment practices may end up measuring children’s digital skills rather than other aspects of their development.

Importantly, technology cannot replace the essential role of a strong educator–child relationship and the insights gained through ongoing observational assessments. These interactions support rich, contextualized understanding of a child’s abilities and needs, which cannot be fully captured through digital tools alone. A balanced approach, where technology complements rather than replaces traditional methods, can enhance the effectiveness, accuracy, and equity of early childhood assessments.

Sources: Promise Venture Studio, “[Show+Tell: Preschool Assessments Reimagined](#),” updated April 24, 2024; Katherine Habben and Victoria Kim, [A Data Profile of Young Dual Language Learners in the United States and Implications for Early Childhood Programs](#) (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2025).

B. Fostering Meaningful Family Engagement

Respect for the language and culture of families is a core component of successful family engagement. During educator recruitment, some Illinois districts assess candidates' cultural responsiveness by incorporating scenario-based interview questions that gauge their ability to work effectively with diverse communities. This method helps identify educators whose approaches align with the districts' commitment to equity and inclusion.

Ensuring meaningful two-way communication is another essential component of family engagement in assessment processes. Some Illinois preschools have adopted multiple strategies to overcome language barriers and make assessment data accessible to families, including providing translated materials, offering interpretation services, and employing multilingual staff members. Additional support from administration, such as superintendent-led discussions with families, have allowed for continuous and supportive family engagement.

A final key strategy involves enhancing the initial home language survey and screening process that takes place when a child is first enrolled in a preschool program. Some Illinois preschool programs have found that traditional screening questions do not capture enough information about a child's language background. To address this, they have implemented a more comprehensive language and education background form that includes discussions with families about their home language use. This approach ensures that assessment decisions consider the full linguistic and cultural context of the child's development. Initiatives such as the English Learner Identification Project from Early Childhood Professional Learning, in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, have focused on improving home language survey implementation, including by providing guidance on how more programs

can use these surveys to support family engagement and DLLs.³⁴

C. Supporting Ongoing Professional Development

In Illinois, professional development for educators serving DLLs is increasingly being structured as a continuous learning process rather than a one-time training. Initiatives such as Early Childhood Professional Learning, which is supported by the Illinois State Board of Education, offer workshops, peer coaching, and professional learning communities focused on linguistically and culturally responsive practice.³⁵ These opportunities help educators refine their assessment practices and share effective strategies for engaging DLLs' families. Some training modules also cover culturally responsive practices to reduce implicit bias and respect the value of children's home languages.

Educators also receive targeted training in how to adapt standardized assessment tools that may not have been designed with DLLs in mind—an important step to help ensure assessment results accurately reflect children's abilities rather than their English proficiency. In interviews, educators described participating in professional development opportunities through partnerships with universities, cultural organizations, and community groups that specialize in bilingual education and language acquisition. Collectively, these local initiatives illustrate a growing commitment in the state to fostering a culture of ongoing professional learning that strengthens educators' ability to assess and instruct DLLs effectively.

5 Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Linguistically and culturally responsive assessment practices are crucial tools for understanding the development of young DLLs and for supporting their

future academic, social, and emotional success. The gaps and promising practices identified in this brief point to a number of steps federal and state policymakers, early childhood education leaders, and preschool educators can take to scale up effective assessment practices for DLLs, including:

- ▶ **Invest in the development of valid and reliable assessment instruments designed to be linguistically appropriate for DLLs.** Federal and state education agencies should invest in the creation and validation of assessments that are specifically designed for DLLs. These assessment tools should measure a child’s abilities in both their home language and English, avoiding reliance on direct translations that may not account for cultural bias or capture linguistic or cultural nuances.

As part of this effort, universities with departments of education, linguistics, or psychology should be incentivized and supported (e.g., with targeted grants and partnerships) to collaborate in designing research-driven assessment tools tailored for DLLs. These institutions can help ensure that assessments are not only culturally and linguistically relevant but also validated for effectiveness across different contexts. Researchers should also be encouraged to conduct studies on the efficacy and fairness of existing assessments, providing recommendations for continuous improvement.

- ▶ **Use multiple assessment methods, such as observational assessments, interviews, and play-based activities.** Preschool programs should implement a variety of assessment methods such as these to allow children to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in ways that align with their linguistic and developmental progress. Standardized

approaches to assessment should be supplemented with dynamic assessment techniques that evaluate learning potential rather than just current proficiency.

- ▶ **Encourage and facilitate family engagement in the assessment process by utilizing interpreters or family navigators.**

Preschools should take proactive steps to meaningfully engage DLLs’ families in the assessment process, such as by providing interpreters, bilingual staff, and translated materials. Home language surveys should be used to gather information about children’s home language(s) and tailor the assessment process to better reflect their needs. Family navigators should be available to support parents in understanding assessment results and collaborating with educators. Preschools can also offer different engagement opportunities (such as multilingual workshops and one-on-one meetings) to help parents, including those with limited English proficiency or familiarity with U.S. education systems, feel empowered to contribute valuable insights about their child’s language development and learning experiences at home.

- ▶ **Regularly review and adapt assessment tools and practices to minimize cultural bias and enhance their relevance for DLLs.**

States should establish a structured process for reviewing and updating assessment tools to ensure they remain culturally and linguistically appropriate and can effectively capture DLLs’ abilities. As part of this process, preschool programs should be required to assess the effectiveness of their tools regularly and make necessary adjustments based on feedback from educators, families, and experts in bilingual education.

- ▶ **Expand professional development on culturally and linguistically responsive assessment.** Early childhood educators should receive ongoing training in best practices for assessing DLLs, including understanding bilingual language development, implementing equitable assessment strategies, and reducing bias in assessments. Professional development programs should include hands-on workshops, mentorship opportunities, and training on using assessment data to inform instruction. States should allocate dedicated funding to ensure all early childhood educators are able to receive this essential training.
- ▶ **Build the workforce of bilingual early childhood educators.** States should invest in recruiting and retaining bilingual educators and assessment specialists who can support the accurate evaluation of DLLs. Strategies such as loan forgiveness, scholarships, and salary incentives should be implemented to attract multilingual educators. Additionally, preschool programs and school districts should collaborate with universities to create specialized certification programs that prepare educators to assess and instruct DLLs effectively.

Furthermore, states should establish clearer qualification recognition pathways for early childhood educators who were educated or trained outside the United State and support these professionals' integration into the U.S. education system.³⁶ This can include offering guidance on how to translate foreign credentials, providing bridge programs that align international qualifications with state licensure requirements, and offering support for certification processes. By expanding recognition of foreign qualifications, states can tap into a larger pool of well-qualified educators whose language skills position them to support DLLs effectively and, more broadly, help address labor shortages in the field.

By prioritizing the development of assessments that are linguistically and culturally appropriate, engaging families as active partners in the assessment process, and providing educators with much-needed support through professional development, state early childhood systems have an opportunity to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. These measures can help ensure that DLLs receive the attention, resources, and guidance they need to thrive, paving the way for their long-term success in school and beyond.

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Endnotes

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