

# Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior



Project funded by the Child Care and Head Start Bureaus in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



## What Works Brief Training Kit #2



Center on the Social and Emotional  
Foundations for Early Learning  
[www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/)

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The **What Works Brief Training Kits** were developed to help in-service and pre-service providers conduct staff development activities. Each Kit is based on one What Work Brief and contains the following items: presenter's PowerPoint note pages, participant handouts, activity ideas, pre-training survey, demographic form, training evaluation, and training certificate.

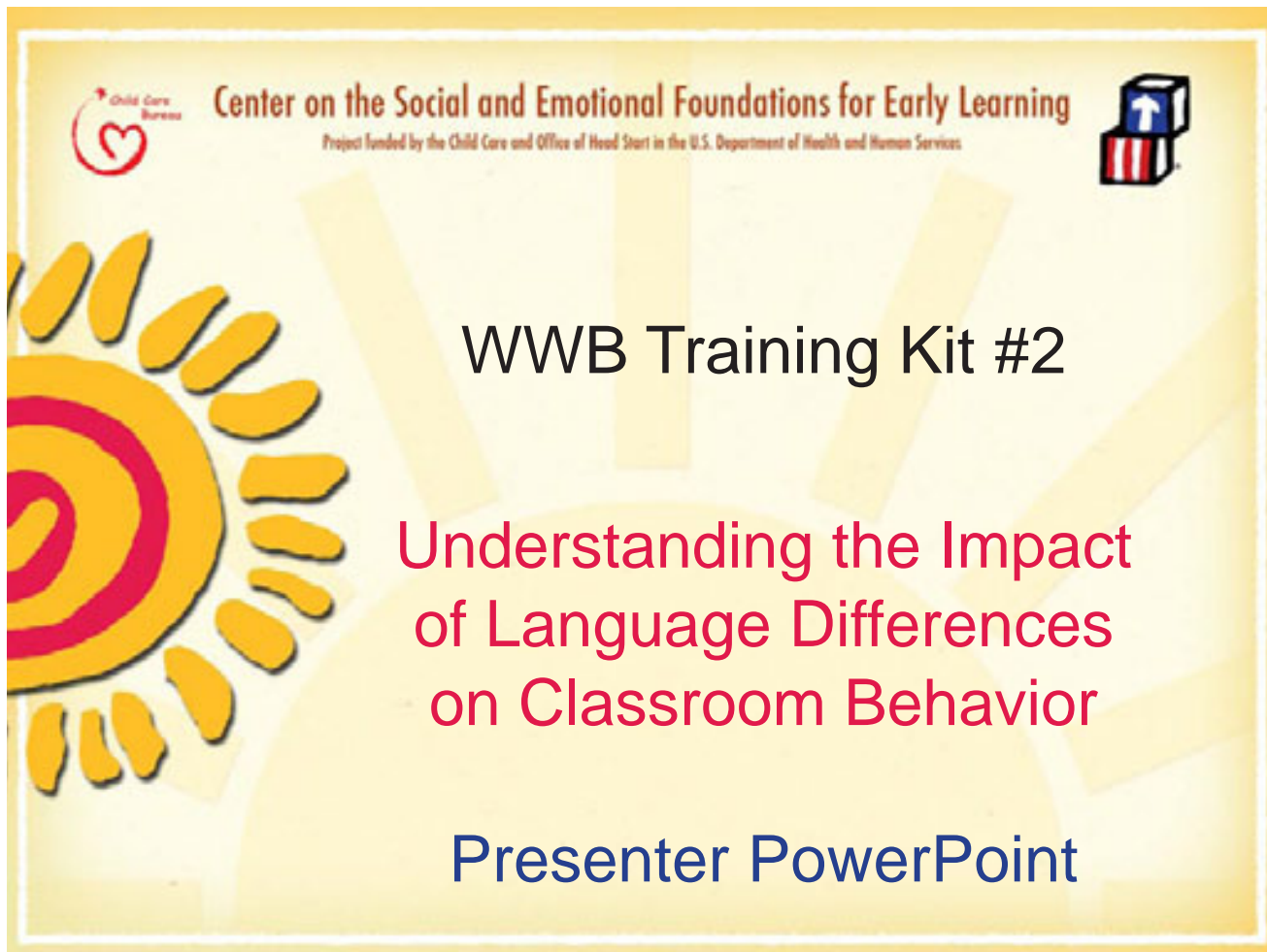
The What Works Brief Training Kits are grounded in the Pyramid model depicted below which provides a framework for describing the four interrelated levels of practice that address the social and emotional development of all children. The Pyramid is designed to guide practitioners in understanding the importance of children's social emotional competence in terms of school readiness and the prevention of challenging behavior. This What Works Brief Training Kit relates to the "High Quality Environments" level of the Pyramid.



We welcome your feedback as you provide professional development activities with these materials.

Special thanks to the Meginnis Endowment at UIUC for funding to help support this effort and to the following individuals who developed the What Works Brief Training Kits materials: Micki Ostrosky, Hedda Meadan, Greg Cheatham, Monique Mills, Sallee Beneke, Nancy Gaumer, Amy Hayden, Elenor Rentschler, and Angel Fettig.

## Presenter Notes



### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Presenter should be familiar with the content in *What Works Brief #2* and Module 1, Section III on Understanding the Relationship between Challenging Behavior and Social Emotional Development (available at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>).
- Consider using the *What Works Brief # 2* handout as a supplemental resource.
- Welcome participants.
- Take care of any logistics (e.g., length of time for session, break, handouts, etc.)
- Pass out pre-training survey for all participants to complete and turn in, if desired.
- As you present the workshop:
  - Remind participants to take the culture and background of children into consideration and to work hand-in-hand with parents when they select target behaviors, since some behaviors may be part of the child's culture.

## Why is Understanding the Impact of Language Differences Challenging for Teachers?

- Second language learners and dialect speakers may exhibit social interaction patterns along with limited communication abilities similar to children with disabilities.
- The time it takes to learn a new language may vary from child to child depending on age, motivation, knowledge of first language, personality, and exposure to new language.



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Increasingly, centers have children who speak languages or dialects at home that are different from what is used for instruction. These children may need additional support to be successful within the center. Greater understanding by teachers and care providers is important to these children's success. Some behaviors exhibited by second language learners are similar to those of children with disabilities.
- Some children acquire a second language more easily than others. Teachers should be prepared for children's linguistic developmental differences by understanding how children learn a second language and how they can support children who are learning a second language.

## Stages in Children's Second Language Learning

- The continued use of the home language
  - The silent or nonverbal period
  - Sound experimentation and use of telegraphic speech (e.g., the use of a few content words as an entire utterance)
  - Productive use of the new language
- (Tabors, P.O., 1987)



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

1. The continued use of the home language—Children continue to use their home language in the classroom even with children and adults who do not speak that language.
2. The silent or nonverbal period—Children become quiet; they speak little of their home language or English.
3. Sound experimentation and use of telegraphic speech—Children begin to use a few content words as an entire utterance (e.g., saying “water” rather than “Can I have some water?”).
4. Productive use of the new language—Children know and can produce enough English to interact within the classroom/center.

Emphasize that children will go back and forth between these four stages (shown on the PowerPoint slide) as they acquire English. Also, the second language acquisition process can be frustrating for some children as they work to be understood and to understand others.

## Discussion Question

What challenging behaviors might an English language learner exhibit?



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

Discussion Question: What challenging behaviors might an English language learner exhibit?

#### Suggested Responses:

- Not talking
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty expressing ideas and feelings
- Difficulty responding to questions consistently
- Pretending to understand English
- Biting, hitting
- Socializing only with children who speak the same home language

# Activity 1

## Pair-Think-Share

**Pair** with a partner

**Read** the scenario

**Think** about the child in the scenario

**Share** your thoughts



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Assign partners.
- Have each pair read the scenario about “Janelle” on the next slide (or on handout).
- Pairs should think about
  1. To what extent do you think Janelle’s behavioral difficulties are due to language differences? Why do you believe this? Have you seen children in this situation?
  2. What supports might help Janelle?
- Share thoughts with the larger group.

## Janelle

Janelle is a new student in Ms. Corinne's classroom. She is extremely shy, generally quiet, and seems to like to keep to herself. When asked to participate in an activity, Janelle often refuses- especially when it involves large groups of children. She vigorously shakes her head in response to anything Ms. Corinne asks her to do. Lately, she has resorted to crying and throwing temper tantrums, especially when forced to join the group. To reduce the stress on Janelle and the other children, Ms. Corinne lets Janelle out of the activity to allow her to calm down. Ms. Corinne tries to explain to Janelle what she has to do, but Janelle often looks at her teacher blankly and does not respond to Ms. Corinne's questions or follow her directions. Ms. Corinne is becoming more and more frustrated as the weeks progress.



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Pairs should think about
  1. To what extent do you think Janelle's behavioral difficulties are due to language differences? Why do you believe this? Have you seen children in this situation?
  2. What supports might help Janelle?
- Share thoughts with the larger group.



## Getting to Know English Language Learners

Look closely at a child's strengths and needs when developing curricular ideas. Investigate the following:

- The child's abilities (cognitive, social emotional, and physical development)
- The child's abilities in the first language
- The child's capabilities in the second language (English)



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

Discussion Question:

How might you investigate a child's skills and weaknesses in each of the three areas listed above?

Suggested Responses:

- Observe the child during typical interactions within the class room and in the home/community.
- Talk with the child in English.
- Ask someone who speaks the child's home language to talk with the child.
- Ask the child's parents about behavior as well as the child's other abilities (cognitive, social emotional, and physical).
- Conduct a developmental screening in the child's home language.

## Supporting Young English Language Learners

- Provide a supportive and safe environment in which children can use their home language and English
- Promote meaningful participation in classroom routines and activities
- Encourage parents to continue using their home language with their young children (including children with disabilities)



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

Have participants brainstorm a list of specific supports that could be included in the points above.

Suggested Responses:

- How to create a supportive and safe environment—hugs, smiles, caring tone of voice, quiet, predictable routines, talk at child’s level, hold hands (if culturally appropriate)
- How to encourage meaningful participation—pair with a buddy, pair with a buddy from same language group, allow child to be a leader (e.g., line leader as appropriate). Provide home language support and materials within the classroom/center (e.g., placing culture-specific clothing in dramatic play). Assign child to relay messages to other children (e.g., “Time for snack!”).
- Support instruction by
  - Speaking slowly and clearly
  - Using pictures, objects, and gestures
  - Providing thematic instruction and hands-on activities
  - Providing repetitive stories, songs, and rhymes
- Continue using the home language at home—Without continued support, children frequently lose their home language which can lead to family discord and challenges to identity. Studies have shown that children, including children with disabilities, can be bilingual.

## Supporting Young English Language Learners

- Build on what children know and engage them in situations that at the beginning do not require them to give specific responses (e.g., low-demand situations)
- Use language strategies, such as pairing new words with gestures, pictures, and cues; commenting; expanding and extending children's words; using repetition to support children's language acquisition (e.g., repeating what children say to provide model responses)



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

Have participants brainstorm specific ideas that could be included under the two points above.

#### Suggested Responses:

- Low-demand situations—Do activities the child is good at, ask yes-no questions, ask questions that need single word responses.
- Language strategies—Pair bathroom with a gesture or a picture/icon of a toilet; when a child responds with a single word, model how the child would respond with several words or a complete sentence; give a “running commentary” on a child’s activities (e.g., “Wow, you’re putting the thread into the hole. And you’re pulling the thread through...”).

## Supporting Young English Language Learners

- Promote children's engagement in literacy activities in English and the home language
- Ask parents for common phrases in the child's native language
- Invite family members to the classroom/center



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

1. Ask parents to read and discuss with their child in their home language; Read in class—groups or individually—and ask questions; relate what is read to the children's lives; have English and home language books available.
2. Ask parents for common phrases in the child's native language—"I need to go potty," "I'm hungry," "Help!" and use these phrases with the child.
3. Invite family members to the classroom—Family members can ease a child's transition to the classroom by providing home language and emotional support.

Stage	Support Strategies
Continued use of home language	
Silent or non-verbal period	
Sound experimentation/ telegraphic speech	
Productive English use	

### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Have large-group discussion or assign partners to describe strategies specific to each of the 4 stages of second language acquisition.
- Ask, “What strategies can teachers use when children are in each of the stages of second language acquisition?”
- Participants can use their power point handout for making notes.

### Suggested Responses:

- Continued use of home language—An older sibling or peer can translate for the younger child; ask parent to teach teachers essential words and simple sentences in the child’s home language
- Silent or non-verbal period—Encourage classmates to play with the child; ask a peer to be a helper; sit next to the child a peer who is a good role model, outgoing, and who has a fluent English vocabulary; assist parents in arranging play dates with bilingual classmates
- Telegraphic speech—Praise child for his/her efforts or attempts at participation and interaction; repeat and extend child’s utterances; note progress (write words or sentences for parents to see); keep questions simple (give two choices only)
- Productive use—Make a journal page and talk about it; act out songs and poems and rhymes; use repetition

## Additional Resources

- Coltrane, B. (2001). Working with young English language learners: Some considerations. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED481690) <http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/0301coltrane.html>
- De Houwer, A. (1999). Two or more languages in early childhood: Some general points and practical recommendations. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 433697) <http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/earlychild.html>
- Delpit, L. (1997). Ebonics and culturally responsive instruction. *Rethinking our Classrooms*, 2, 22-26.
- McLaughlin, B. (1998). *Assessing and fostering the development of a first and a second language in early childhood: Training manual*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.
- Tabors, P. O. (1997). *One child, two languages: A guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.



### ***Speaker Notes:***

- This slide contains additional resources that participants can use to find more information on language differences.
- Thank the participants for participating and have them complete the evaluation form, if appropriate.
- Distribute the certificate of attendance if appropriate.

# Pre-training Survey

WWBTK #2: Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

☀ To what extent do language differences matter when assessing children's behavior?

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☀ What are two challenging behaviors that English language learners may exhibit?

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☀ What are two strategies that you can use to support English language learners' social-emotional competence?

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☀ What are the three most pressing issues you face as an early childhood professional?

1. 

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3. 

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# Pre-training Survey

WWBTK #2: Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

## Demographic Information

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Describe yourself (check the boxes that best describe you):

Your gender:  Female  Male

Your age:  under 30  31 to 40  41 to 50  
 51-60  61 and above

Your ethnicity:  European American  Asian-Pacific  Hispanic  
 African-American  American Indian  Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Check your current teaching certificates:

- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education
- Special Education
- Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Check the one that best describes your education:

- High school or GED
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Your teaching experience:


How many year(s) have you taught preschoolers? \_\_\_\_\_

How many year(s) have you taught preschoolers with IEPs? \_\_\_\_\_



Thank you for completing this survey.



# Participant Notes



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## WWB Training Kit #2

### Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

#### Participant PowerPoint

Notes

### Why Is Understanding the Impact of Language Differences Challenging for Teachers?

- Second language learners and dialect speakers may exhibit social interaction patterns along with limited communication abilities similar to children with disabilities.
- The time it takes to learn a new language may vary from child to child depending on age, motivation, knowledge of first language, personality, and exposure to new language.



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### Stages in Children's Second Language Learning

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- Productive use of the new language

*Tabors, P.O. (1987)*



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## Getting to Know English Language Learners

Look closely at a child's strengths and needs when developing curricular ideas. Investigate the following:

- The child's abilities (cognitive, social emotional, and physical development)
- The child's abilities in the first language
- The child's capabilities in the second language (English)



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## Notes

## Supporting Young English Language Learners

- Provide a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ environment in which children can use their home language and English
- Promote meaningful \_\_\_\_\_ in classroom routines and activities
- Encourage parents to continue using their \_\_\_\_\_ with their young children (including with children with disabilities)



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## Supporting Young English Language Learners

- Build on what children \_\_\_\_\_ and engage them in situations that at the beginning do not require them to give \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., low-demand situations)
- Use \_\_\_\_\_, such as \_\_\_\_\_
- Promote children's engagement in \_\_\_\_\_ in English and the home language
- Ask parents for \_\_\_\_\_ in the child's native language
- Invite family members to the \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_



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## Notes

Stage	Support Strategies
Continued use of home language	
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## Additional Resources

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## Notes

# Activity 1

## Pair-Think-Share

WWBTK #2: Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

### ☀ Directions:

*Pair* with a partner, *Read* the case study below. *Think* about the child in the scenario, and *Share* your thoughts on the discussion questions below.

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### ☀ Case Study: Janelle

Janelle is a new student in Ms. Corinne's classroom. She is extremely shy, generally quiet, and seems to like to keep to herself. When asked to participate in an activity, Janelle often refuses—especially when it involves large groups of children. She vigorously shakes her head in response to anything Ms. Corinne asks her to do. Lately, she has resorted to crying and throwing temper tantrums, especially when forced to join the group. To reduce the stress on Janelle and the other children, Ms. Corinne lets Janelle out of the activity to allow her to calm down. Ms. Corinne tries to explain to Janelle what she has to do, but Janelle often looks at her teacher blankly and does not respond to Ms. Corinne's questions or follow her directions. Ms. Corinne is becoming more and more frustrated as the weeks progress.

### ☀ Discussion Questions:

To what extent do you think Janelle's behavioral difficulties are due to language differences? Why do you believe this? Have you seen children in this situation?

What supports might help Janelle?

# CSEFEL Training Workshop Evaluation

WWBTK #2: Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Speaker(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Your position: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ☀ Circle the number that best expresses your reaction to each of the following items:

- |  |                       |   |   |   |   |                        |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. This topic is important to me.            | (Extremely Important) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not Important at All) |
| 2. The amount of information covered was     | (Just Right)          | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Inadequate)           |
| 3. The information covered was clear.        | (Very Clear)          | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Vague)                |
| 4. The activities conducted were beneficial. | (Very)                | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not at All)           |
| 5. The handouts provided were useful.        | (Very)                | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not at All)           |
| 6. Overall, this presentation was            | (Very Useful)         | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not Useful)           |

## ☀ Things I liked about this presentation:

## ☀ Things I would change about this presentation:

## ☀ Additional information I would like on this topic:

## ☀ New things I am going to try as a result of this workshop:

## ☀ Additional comments:

# Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

## *Certificate of Training*

Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

This is to certify that

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successfully completed the above training

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*Trainer*

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*Trainer*



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*Participant*

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*Date and Location*