

Guidelines for Addressing the Needs of Preschool English Language Learners

Federal Law defines a Limited English Proficient (LEP) student or English Language Learner (ELL) as a student who is aged 3 through 21 and is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school and who is not born in the United States or whose native language is other than English (Refer to [Title IX-20 U.S.C. 7801 et seq.](#)). Students may not be denied access to public preschool programs based solely on their home or native language. Ohio school districts serving preschool LEP/ELL students are required to identify LEP/ELL students properly, assess their English language proficiency and provide appropriate language development support. Although districts are required to provide appropriate services in accordance with U.S. Supreme Court case *Lau V. Nichols* for all school-aged LEP/ELL children, districts do not receive federal supplemental Title III funds under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for preschool LEP/ELL students. In addition, districts are not subject to accountability requirements under Title III of NCLB for these students.

Identification and Assessment

To properly identify an LEP/ELL student, Ohio school districts may use the Home Language Survey included in the *Guidelines for the Identification and Assessment of Limited English Proficient Students* (see Resources at the end of this document). The survey is designed to identify the existence of a heritage language other than English in the student's home environment. Once the district verifies the existence of a heritage language other than English, it must assess the student to determine the level of English language proficiency using a commercially developed screening assessment, such as those listed in the *Guidelines* document. Students identified as LEP/ELL in preschool should be reported as such in Ohio's Education Management Information System (EMIS) and, therefore, do not need to be given an initial screening assessment for LEP/ELL identification in Kindergarten. All kindergarten LEP/ELL students, however, are required to take the Ohio Test for English Language Acquisition (OTELA).

Educational Support: ELL Services to Children in Early Childhood Settings

Services for Pre-K English Language Learners may include the following:

1. Provide professional development to all staff on research-based strategies for interacting with and teaching ELLs.
2. Provide classroom educational materials in both languages when possible.
3. Provide language development support services in regular classroom environment by an individual who speaks the heritage language when possible.
4. Provide ELL students access to intervention services available in school for additional support.

5. The early childhood administrator and/or teacher should collaborate with K-12 ELL program staff for professional development opportunities and/or classroom support.
6. Arrange for teacher with an endorsement in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) to supervise or oversee language support services provided to preschool ELLs.
7. Involve families in their child's early school experience by providing opportunities for them to share their skills with staff, children in the program and other families.
8. Provide options for home based activities that can support what children are learning at school.

Resources:

Ohio Department of Education, [Lau Resource Center](#), 614-466-4109, and Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, (614) 466-0224.

[Guidelines for Identification and Assessment of Limited English Proficient Students](#)

[Lau v. Nichols](#)

[Preschool Learning Guide for Families: Preparing for Kindergarten Success](#) (published by the Ohio Department of Education in English, Spanish and Somali).

Preschool English Learners, Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy and Learning. A resource guide, Second Edition, California Department of Education, 2009.

Preschool Issues Concerning English Language Learners and Immigrant Children: [The Importance of Family Engagement, Children Now, Executive Summary](#), December 2004.

Six Research Based Guiding Principles Serving the Needs of English Language Learners in Preschool "School Readiness" Programs, Southern California Comprehensive Assistive Center COE EL Service Providers & COE School Readiness Educators Sept. 30, 2005.

[Fostering Second Language Development in Young Children, Principles and Practices](#), by Barry McLaughlin, University of California at Santa Cruz.

[Pre-School Children's Help To Second Language Learners](#) by Julie Hirschler.

Latino Legislative Hearing on Pre-K & The Early Grades, NALEO Education Leadership Initiative September 2008.