



EARLY CHILDHOOD & DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Local Control Funding Formula: An Opportunity for Early Childhood & Dual Language Learners

According to the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) law, most school districts in the state are responsible for using LCFF funds to improve outcomes for English language learners, also known as dual language learners.¹ Each district has created a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), the funding plan for LCFF. The LCAP is reviewed and revised annually by each district.

Early childhood programs have been proven to have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for children from non-English speaking backgrounds. There is no other investment that has been proven to deliver as consistent an impact on students or as high as a return on investment as those made in support of high quality early childhood programs.² Many districts have recognized this value and have included early childhood strategies in their LCAPs, while others have not. Here's a closer look at what the research has found.

Language & Literacy

Third grade reading proficiency has been shown to be a strong predictor of high school graduation.³ Yet, if current trends persist, California will continue to see a large portion of its students falling behind. A 2007 report found that nearly 85% of dual language learners fail to achieve proficiency in English Language Arts by third grade.⁴ This is nearly 25 percentage points higher than their English speaking White (63%) and Asian (68%) peers. This gap impacts the ability for non-proficient students to catch up to their grade-level peers and therefore end up falling behind and increase their chances of dropping out.

The Scale

Dual language learners make up a significant portion of the student population in California.

- Nearly 1 in 5 students (1.4 million) in California are classified as dual language learners
- Almost 75% of California's dual language learner population is concentrated within the primary grades (kindergarten through sixth grade)
- Spanish speakers make up over 80% of the dual language learner population, followed by Vietnamese at 2.3% and Filipino at 1.4%

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Now What

Early childhood advocates can take an active role in urging their districts to include early childhood in their LCAP's. Here are three steps you can take:

- 1 Identify specific investments that your district could make to improve dual language learner outcomes
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- 2 Bring your ideas forward to school officials through the LCAP Community Input sessions
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- 3 Get to know your school board members and find your early childhood champions



Contact

For additional information on how you can get involved, contact:
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1. School districts that are responsible for improving outcomes for low-income, dual language learner and foster youth students are those receiving additional Supplemental and Concentration funds through the Local Control Funding Formula.
2. J.J. Heckman (2012) Invest in early childhood development-reduce deficits, strengthen the economy
3. http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early_Warning_Full_Report-2010.pdf
4. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2007/RAND_TR537.pdf