



Office of English Language Acquisition

Dual Language Learners in Early Care and Education

Early care and education impact children’s transition to school, as well as their long-term social and cognitive growth (Belsky et al., 2007; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).¹ Access to quality early care and education is particularly important for dual language learners (DLLs), as these years represent an important window for exposure and initial development of both English and their home languages (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017).² This fact sheet presents information about children under the age of 6 growing up speaking a language other than English at home. Disparities between DLL households and English language households in accessing high-quality, affordable, early care and education options are highlighted.³

Early Care and Education Arrangement for Children by Language Spoken at Home in 2016

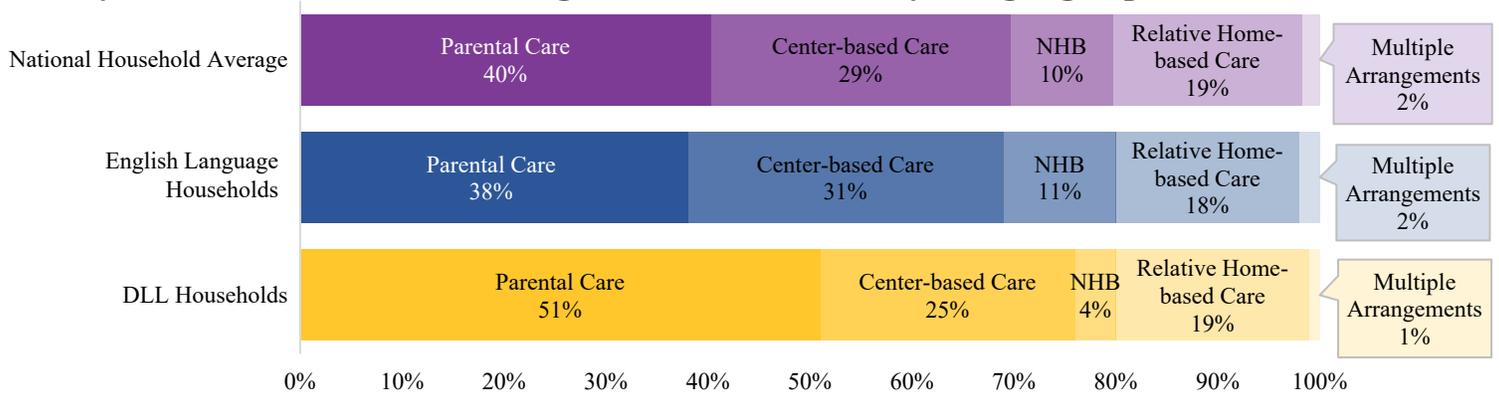


Figure note: NHB = Non-relative home-based care

DLL households were less likely than English language families to enroll in center-based early care and education (25%, compared to 31%) and more likely than English language families to rely on parental care only (51%, compared to 38%).

Did Parents Feel That They Had Good Choices for Early Care and Education or Early Childhood Programs in 2016?

English language families showed a higher level of satisfaction with the early care and education options available to them compared to the national average. By contrast, DLL families were equally likely to report that they were happy with their choices or that they did not know if there were satisfying options where they lived. Nearly half (43%) of the DLL families said they did not know how they felt about their early care and education options for children under 6. In comparison, only 26% of English language families gave this answer.

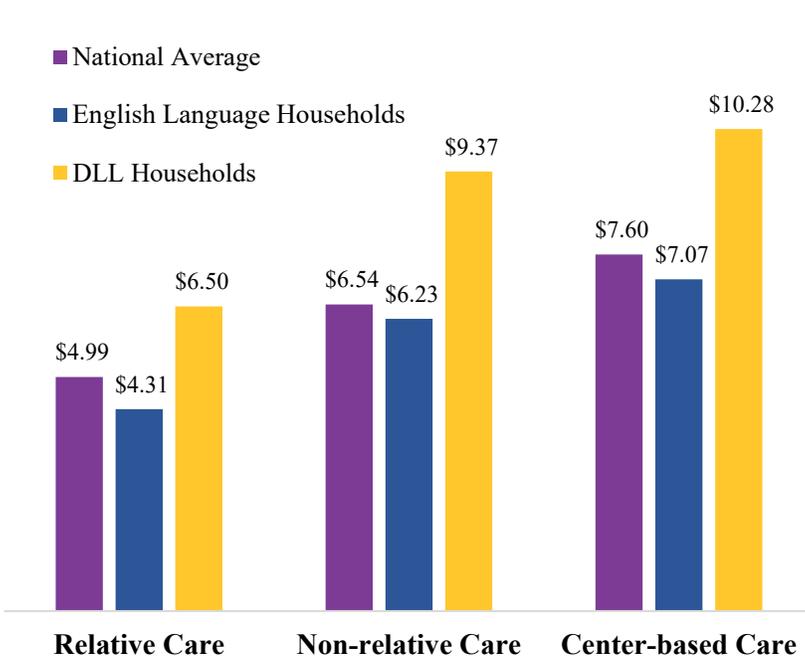


¹ Sources: Belsky, J., Vandell, D. L., Burchinal, M., Clarke-Stewart, K. A., McCartney, K., & Owen, M. T. (2007). Are there long-term effects of early child care? *Child Development*, 78(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01021.x>. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018). *Transforming the financing of early care and education*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/24984>.

² Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24677>.

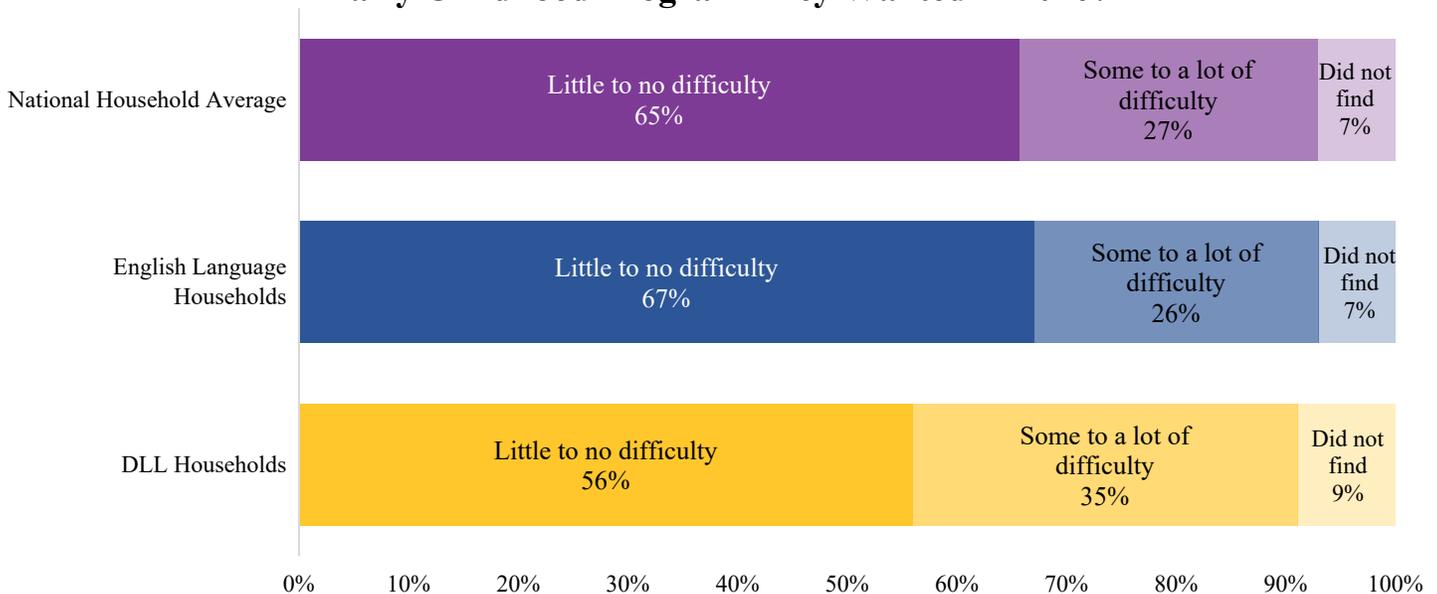
³ Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Program Participation Survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program (ECPN-NHES:2016). Note: the original survey used phrasing of “non-English” and “English and another language equally” to describe home languages. The current fact sheet combines the two into “dual language learners’ households.”

Average Hourly Out-Of-Pocket Early Care and Education Expense by Type of Early Care and Education Arrangement in 2016⁴



Costs varied depending on the type of care arrangement, with center-based care being the most expensive compared to the two types of home-based arrangements. In addition, across all categories of early care and education arrangements, DLL families paid 48% more than English language families and 37% above the national average, on average. The higher costs reported by DLL households in all categories may partially explain the finding above that shows they were more likely than other groups to rely on parental or relative care and less likely to send their children to non-relative home-based or center-based care.

How Difficult Was it for Parents to Find the Type of Early Care and Education or Early Childhood Program They Wanted in 2016?



Among families who searched for early care and education, two-thirds (67%) of English language families had little to no difficulty finding what they wanted. A larger proportion of DLL families did not find the care they wanted compared to the national average and English language families.

⁴ Note: Only English language and non-English households are shown here to compare with the national average due to unmet reporting standards for families who speak English and another language equally.