

# Early Childhood Literacy (ECL) Intervention / Code-Switching and Bilingual Education Methods: Key Policy and Literature Highlights

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# preface

## Early Childhood Literacy (ECL) Intervention – Clinical Highlights:

- Early childhood literacy (ECL) and education efforts retain broad macro and political support in an increasingly competitive economic and policy environment.
- Experts are increasingly embracing “emergent literacy” outlooks for future program formulation.
  - Views the literacy acquisition process as a spectrum of continuous development through the early elementary school years, rather than distinct “pre” and “post” age range periods prior to formal schooling.
  - Prior focuses on “zero to three” as a crucial time in development are no longer viewed as expansive enough to encompass full ECL potential.
- Consistent and frequent reading to children during ages 3-7 has been shown to significantly correlate with accelerated literacy acquisition (up to one year ahead of peers), regardless of socioeconomic status and home environment.
  - Yet, evidence does not support static reading with minimal child interaction as adequate for effectively promoting ECL acquisition.
- Evidence-based studies consistently affirm that **relational, dyadic (paired), and dialogic (question-and-answer oriented)** reading approaches are most effective in facilitating ECL acquisition.
- Experts have coalesced around several frameworks for maximizing success:
  - **PEER** Dialogic Reading Structure:
    - Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, Repeat.
  - **CROWD** Dialogic Reading Prompts:
    - Completion, Recall, Open-Ended Questions, “Wh” Questions, and Distancing.
  - Clinical studies also suggest that maintaining a positive emotional atmosphere utilizing “**Scaffolding Dialogue**” (Queries, followed by repeated Feedback and Labels) within dyadic pairs is similarly useful.
- ECL intervention approaches ***should not*** attempt to emulate classroom-like instructions prevalent in schools.
- Activities should ideally be structured **around rhyming, songs, and feedback-conducive interactions** – with each “segment” lasting **~10-15 minutes**.
- ECL success can be generally assessed through measurement of four qualitative components:
  - **Oral Fluency** (i.e. Picture Naming).
  - **Phonological Awareness** (i.e. Rhyming, Alliteration)
  - **Sound Identification** (i.e. Alphabet Knowledge)
  - **Text and Story Comprehension** (i.e. Dialogic Exercises).
- Parental education on best-practices and promoting at-home environmental supports are also vital for sustaining program-initiated gains

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## Code-Switching and Bilingual Education – Clinical Highlights:

- The traditional policy viewpoint that sees English-only education as most effective for American competitive success is less relevant in an increasingly interconnected world
  - In fact, utilizing the native foreign language proficiencies of America's immigrant population is gaining new traction in the global marketplace
  - Multilingualism is increasingly viewed as an asset – not a burden / stigma
- America's rich population diversity presents ample opportunities to study sociolinguistic mechanisms, i.e.:
  - **Code-switching** (alternating between languages / dialects based on social situations)
  - **Translanguaging** (interspersing vocabulary and idioms of other languages without formal indications of differentiation)
- The **maintenance approach** to bilingual education (maintaining the non-English language while encouraging development of English for use in formal societal and educational settings) has proven to be most effective in encouraging multilingual fluency
  - An additive – rather than subtractive (i.e. English or nothing) – model is best, especially in early childhood settings
- Bilingual education, when applicable, is beneficial for both “**L1**” (native / non-English language) and “**L2**” (English) acquisition
  - Middle school children who received either maintenance or immersive bilingual early education were more fluent in both their L1 **and** English, relative to their English-only peers
- Peer-teaching (youth-to-youth) is viewed as the most effective dyadic method for bilingual education
  - Installs confidence in both mentor and mentee
  - Validates the linguistic and cultural experiences of both participants while building cognitive pattern recognition and positive outlooks
- Emphasizing grammatical patterns across both languages is an optimal way to help child concretize linguistic concepts / patterns
- PEER and CROWD dialogic reading concepts are universal and apply across languages
- Effective pedagogical strategies include:
  - Organization of lessons around themes stemming from student interests and everyday situations (i.e. at-home L1 roleplay)
  - Creative hands-on techniques (active engagement is preferable to instructional detachment)
  - Engagement of students in cooperative group work