Research Summary:
English-Language Development (ELD) Domain in the DRDP-K (2015) and KIDS (2015) Kindergarten Assessment Instruments

The **English-Language Development (ELD)** domain assesses the progress of children who are dual language learners in learning to communicate in English. The developmental progressions described in the four ELD measures are related to the child's experiences with English, not the child's age. It is important to keep in mind that children acquire English in different ways and at different rates. Factors that affect English acquisition include degree of exposure to English, level of support provided in their home/first language, and individual differences such as age of exposure to English or the structure of the child's home/first language.

ELD 1: Comprehension of English (Receptive English)

This measure focuses on the progression of young dual language learners' (DLLs) ability to understand spoken English with increasing proficiency. Listening and comprehension skills during the preschool years have been linked to future academic success and are critical for DLLs during the early period of English language development (Barrueco & Fernandez, 2015). Proficiency in English comprehension progresses in several areas.

(1) The child initially relies heavily on contextual support (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, intonation, picture cues) to understand spoken English, but becomes less reliant on these cues with increasing proficiency. During the early stages of English language comprehension a child will often follow the lead of other more proficient English speakers; for example, when asked to wash his hands, a child may observe other children going to the sink and follow along without understanding exactly what the English word, wash, means (Ervin-Tripp, 1974).

(2) This progression coincides with an increasingly larger receptive vocabulary gained through repeated exposure to a greater variety of words used in various contexts. The child starts by comprehending high-frequency words and words with concrete meanings (e.g., dog, mama, book, run) and moves toward words of lower frequency that may have multiple meanings, refer to a more abstract concept, and occur in specific academic domains (e.g., measure, time, cover, cooperation). Recent research has shown that preschool DLLs are able to process and understand language more rapidly in the language they hear more and know better (Hammer, Hoff, Uchikoshi, Gillanders, Castro, & Sandilos, 2014). Consequently, they will take more time to respond to oral language prompts that are given in their non-dominant language, typically English.

(3) The advance in receptive vocabulary goes hand in hand with the advance in grammatical comprehension. While processing sentences, the child goes from understanding shorter phrases (e.g., simple sentences, *Come here, Time to clean up*) to longer sentences with more complexity (e.g., *After we get home, you are going to need a bath.)* and multiple sentences, and from processing sentences as units to processing sentences as multiple units flexibly combined. This skill reflects the DLL child's increasing mastery of the grammatical features of the English language (Bohman, Bedore, Peña, Mendez-Perez, & Gillam, 2010).

(4) The increasingly larger comprehension vocabulary and more powerful comprehension process move the child from understanding spoken English that is about what is going on here and now, to events in the past and future, events out of the immediate context,

or events that are purely imaginative. Now the young DLL understands what many English words mean when they are used in specific contexts.

(5) All such growth is reflected in the child's handling communication more effectively, such as going from responding to one-step and routine inquiries by others with the support of nonverbal cues to demonstrating understanding of multi-step directions and narratives (Kan & Kohnert, 2008).

(6) The growth in receptive English leads to both the foundation for full English proficiency and an increased motivation and interest in listening to English. The child goes from initially attending to English as a newly discovered language that is necessary for interactions, to actively seeking out and engaging in English language interactions such as singing, dramatic play, and instructional activities. Initially, the DLL will creatively use cues such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation, and knowledge of the home language, then will eventually seek novel opportunities to participate in English interactions across multiple contexts. This progression of English comprehension is highly dependent on repeated opportunities to hear English or frequent and varied verbal input from more proficient English speakers.

ELD 2: Self-Expression in English (Expressive English)

This measure highlights a child who is learning to speak English with increasing proficiency. Expressive English progresses along several pathways.

(1) General process of second language acquisition during the preschool years: As the DLL first speaks a few basic words or very short phrases in English, he or she draws support from nonverbal cues and what he or she knows about language production in the home language. Current research on DLLs' speech production across their two languages shows that they have two separate linguistic systems for processing the sounds and features of each language (Hammer et al., 2014). This may help explain why their language processing often takes longer than monolinguals and why they rarely confuse the two languages. However, there are cross-linguistic influences that have been reported, especially during the early stages of second language acquisition. Initially the child relies on nonverbal cues (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, intonation, picture cues) along with mimicking familiar English sounds (e.g., *come on, let me play*) that he or she may or may not correctly apply. These early expressions have been characterized as *telegraphic* or *formulaic* speech (Ervin-Tripp, 1974). Over time, with sufficient opportunities to hear and use English, the young DLL produces original thoughts and utterances with greater accuracy and complexity. Young DLLs may also employ code-switching or inserting words or phrases from their home language when communicating in English; this is a typical aspect of second language acquisition and reveals linguistic knowledge of two separate languages and how to combine them into one utterance (Hammer et al., 2014).

(2) Vocabulary: This progression is characterized by an increasingly larger and diverse set of vocabulary words the child knows and uses, from high-frequency words and words from a few word classes (e.g., nouns and verbs) to lower-frequency words from more word classes including words that may have multiple meanings, refer to more abstract concepts, and occur in specific academic domains (e.g., measure, space, rise, cooperation) (Marchman, Fernald, & Hurtado, 2010).

(3) Grammar: Advances in vocabulary go hand in hand with advances in grammar. The child goes from producing simple one-word responses to short phrases that typically include subjects and verbs to longer sentences that contain clauses and modifiers; from producing

sentence units as formulaic speech to sentences that are unique thoughts and expressions. The child's English sentences become increasingly grammatically correct, but some grammatical irregularities may persist depending on the specific grammatical rules of each language (Barrueco & Fernandez, 2015).

(4) Content of expression: The child's growth in expressive English is characterized by greater frequency, complexity, and willingness to interact with others in many different situations. His or her questions go from what and why questions, to how, when, and where questions. His or her directions to others go from single and routine ones (e.g., *no, stop it*) to the multi-step ones (e.g., *come here, I want to show you something*). The use of social conventions in English starts with "thank you," "please," and "hi" and progresses to more complicated expressions such as "Are you ok?" or "Please may I go outside now?" The child initially sustains a conversation with simple responses such as "uh-huh," "yes," or nodding, and progresses to being able to sustain back-and-forth conversations with complete sentences and multiple turns. The child goes from commenting on or describing a simple event to demonstrating a procedure (e.g., how to mix water and flour) as well as telling stories. The child goes from talking about what is going on here and now, to talking about past, future, and ongoing events, as well as events out of the immediate context or imagined (Golberg, Paradis, & Crago, 2008).

(5) The growth in expressive English marks a critical aspect of full English proficiency, as well as an increased motivation and interest in participating in English social interactions. The child goes from initially attempting to use English sounds and phrases that have some functional purpose, to actively seeking out and engaging in English language interactions. Initially, the DLL will creatively use cues such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation, and knowledge of the home language to discern how to use English, then will eventually seek novel opportunities to use English with multiple partners and in different contexts. This progression of expressive English is highly dependent on repeated opportunities to hear and practice English for important purposes with more proficient English speakers.

ELD 3: Understanding and Response to English Literacy Activities

This measure highlights DLLs' increasing understanding of and responses to literacy activities in English. As English reading abilities are critical to all school success, and many DLLs enter kindergarten with low English literacy skills, it is imperative that we articulate and understand the progression of early literacy skills in English for DLLs. Understanding and responding to literacy activities conducted in English are clearly related to the DLL child's receptive and expressive English language abilities (Dressler & Kamil, 2006). The stronger a DLL child's oral language abilities in English, the better he or she will understand and engage in early literacy activities such as describing the sequence of events in an English story. The child's growth in understanding and responding to literacy activities progresses in multiple ways.

(1) First, the child shows increasing levels of engagement in English literacy activities such as story book reading and rhyming games. This interest in participating in English literacy activities is essential to the child's emerging literacy skills as well his or her future motivation to learn to read independently in English (Collins, 2005).

(2) The child uses his or her growing English oral language skills to demonstrate comprehension of the content of literacy activities. The child starts with relatively more passive activities such as attending to a storytelling or singing along with peers. This level of engagement tends to match the more limited receptive (ELD 1) and expressive (ELD 2) English

language abilities of the child (see two preceding progressions). With time, the child then progresses to initiating literacy activities such as picking up a book to look at independently or bringing a favorite book to a peer or a teacher to be read to or pretend reading. This level of engagement tends to match the emergent English language abilities of the child that allow understanding and enjoyment of a wide variety of English literacy activities. At a more advanced level, the child comments on a picture, a story, or a book; relates the content of a book to personal events; and re-creates a story through drawing and re-telling. This level of engagement tends to match the child's more advanced English abilities that allow the child to produce sentences and even narratives in English (Bohman et al., 2010). However, even at this stage, a child may produce shorter sentences than English-only peers produce, with some grammatical mistakes or code-switching between the child's two languages. Interest and engagement in literacy activities underlie a reciprocal relationship with long-term growth in English reading abilities: Engagement in literacy activities is necessary for growth in English language competencies and early literacy skills, which then fuel continued interest and participation in literacy activities.

ELD 4: Symbol, Letter, and Print Knowledge in English

This measure highlights the process of early writing development beginning from an awareness that print or symbols in the home language carry meaning to identifying a number of English letters and words. Young DLLs who have exposure to writing opportunities in both their home language and English develop bi-literacy skills and recognize that their two writing systems are separate (Bialystok, McBride-Chang, & Luk, 2005). The emergent writing development of DLL children is similar to the progression for monolingual children. Just as with monolingual children, DLLs learn the form and multiple functions of written language over time (Geva & Siegel, 2000). The process starts with a child understanding that pictures represent real people or things by naming pictures in a book in the home language or identifying objects in real life matching visually represented objects. Then, the child increasingly realizes that symbols and print have meaning by initially identifying the meanings of environmental signs or home language print that is often found in communities (Yaden & Tardibuono, 2004). Subsequently, the child gradually extends such an understanding to English print. Through repeated exposure to English print, the child becomes aware that individual letters represent English sounds and are the basics of English print (Reyes, 2006). This understanding leads to increasing attention to the shapes of individual letters as well as their corresponding sounds. The child may initially pay more attention to letters that are personally meaningful, such as the first letter of a name and whether it is his or her own or that of a good friend or a family member. The knowledge of a few letters allows the child to recognize a few high-frequency words, often starting from his or her own name and familiar objects. Increased exposure to print and literacy activities allows the child to continue to learn more letter names and to read a larger number of high-frequency words.

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