Fact Sheet

Dual Language Learners
A Demographic and Policy
Profile for Maryland

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DLL FACTS

This fact sheet provides demographic information for the young Dual Language Learner (DLL) population in Maryland, based on Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data pooled over the 2011–15 period. DLLs, defined as children ages 8 and under with at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home, are less likely than their peers to access high-quality early childhood programs, although they stand to benefit disproportionately from such services. The fact sheet also provides information regarding English Learner (EL)[1] and non-EL academic outcomes at the fourth-grade level as a means of estimating potential lags in achievement experienced by DLLs later in their academic trajectories that may be due in part to gaps in services as well as other risk factors outlined in this sociodemographic profile.

Analysis of these data offers a snapshot of young DLLs in Maryland and some of the risks to their academic success. This is followed by a checklist of state policies that can support DLLs in early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs in an effort to provide equitable services and close later gaps in achievement. Taken together, this analysis aims to provide a basic understanding of the characteristics of the substantial DLL population in Maryland and the responsiveness of the state's policies to their needs. This fact sheet, part of a series available for 30 states, is accompanied by a national analysis of trends and key policies affecting DLLs across the United States.[2]

I. Demographic Overview of DLLs in Maryland

DLLs comprise 28 percent of the young child population (ages 0 to 8) in Maryland. Since 2000, Maryland has experienced a 63 percent growth in its young DLL population, as compared to a 24 percent increase nationally. As shown in Table 1, 41 percent of DLLs in Maryland live in low-income families,[3] as compared with 32 percent of non-DLLs. Of parents of DLL children, 19 percent have less than a high school education, compared with 5 percent of parents of non-DLLs, indicating significant risk factors for this population. The tables in this section provide information about the substantial number and share of young DLLs in Maryland, and other key demographic characteristics for this population and their non-DLL peers.

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1   English Learners (ELs) are defined as elementary and secondary students whose first language is not English and who have not yet attained English proficiency.
2   Maki Park, Anna O'Toole, and Caitlin Katsiaficas, *Dual Language Learners: A National Demographic Profile* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/dual-language-learners-national-demographic-and-policy-profile.
3   Families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level are considered low-income.

Table 1. Key Characteristics of DLLs, Non-DLLs, and their Parents in Maryland, 2011–15

	Dual Language Learners in Maryland		Non-DLL Population in Maryland	
	Number	Share (%)	Number	Share (%)
Total young child population (ages 0–8)	**187,000**	**100.0**	**480,000**	**100.0**
Age				
0–2	61,000	32.7	149,000	31.1
3–4	44,000	23.6	111,000	23.1
5–8	82,000	43.7	220,000	45.8
Race/Ethnicity				
Hispanic	76,000	40.4	23,000	4.9
Black	39,000	20.9	190,000	39.6
Asian	38,000	20.5	13,000	2.7
White/other	34,000	18.0	252,000	52.6
American Indian	-	-	2,000	0.3
Income and Poverty				
Below 100% of FPL	30,000	15.8	78,000	16.3
100–199% of FPL	47,000	24.8	76,000	15.8
At or above 200% of FPL	111,000	59.4	326,000	67.9
Parental English Proficiency				
Total parent population	218,000	100.0	516,000	100.0
LEP	78,000	35.7	N/A	N/A
Parental Educational Attainment				
Total parent population (ages 25 and older)	209,000	100.0	479,000	100.0
Less than high school	40,000	18.7	24,000	5.0
High school diploma or equivalent	36,000	17.3	98,000	20.5
Some college	41,000	19.7	139,000	29.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	92,000	44.3	218,000	45.5

FPL = Federal poverty level; LEP = Limited English Proficient.
Notes: Poverty level refers to the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau to measure the share of the population living in poverty. English proficiency is self-reported. LEP refers to American Community Survey (ACS) respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "very well." "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate result.
Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Table 2 lists the top five home languages spoken by parents of DLLs in Maryland, indicating significant linguistic diversity within this population. Families with speakers of lower-incidence minority languages may face particular difficulties in gaining access to early childhood and other social services.

Extensive research has demonstrated the importance of high-quality early learning op-

Table 2. Top Five Home Languages Spoken by Parents of DLLs in Maryland, 2011–15

	Spanish	French	Chinese	Kru	Tagalog
Number of DLL parents	85,000	11,000	10,000	9,000	6,000
Share of DLL parents (%)	39.3	5.1	4.7	4.2	2.8

Notes: The table excludes parents of DLLs who speak English only. French includes French and Patois. Chinese includes Cantonese, Mandarin, and other Chinese languages.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Table 3. Pre-K Enrollment of Children (ages 3 to 4) in Maryland, by DLL Status, 2011–15

	DLL Number	DLL Share (%)	Non-DLL Number	Non-DLL Share (%)
Total population	43,000	100.0	108,000	100.0
Enrolled in pre-K	18,000	42.6	54,000	50.4

Note: These numbers exclude children ages 3 to 4 who were enrolled in kindergarten.
*Source*: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

portunities in building a foundation for future success and healthy development. DLLs especially stand to benefit from participation in high-quality pre-K. However, DLLs in Maryland are enrolling in pre-K programs at lower rates than their non-DLL peers (see Table 3), which may contribute to lags in kindergarten readiness for this population.

II. Looking Beyond Early Childhood: Achievement Gaps Between ELs and Non-ELs in Maryland

The achievement gaps young DLLs may experience later in their academic trajectories can be seen in the discrepancy between the academic outcomes of ELs and non-ELs in Maryland. As children are expected to be relatively competent in written language by the time they reach third grade, academic success beyond this point is highly dependent on students having developed foundational language skills prior to this period, underscoring the critical importance of the early years to future academic success. Fourth grade reading and math scores, taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), provide the earliest available indication of cross-state student performance and are widely used as a national report card to demonstrate how students are performing academically across the United States. In Maryland, ELs have substantially lower scores in both reading and math compared with their native peers in fourth grade (see Figure 1). This disparity in outcomes points to the importance of early childhood interventions that seek to place all young children on equal footing academically.

Figure 1. Fourth Grade Reading and Math NAEP Scores in Maryland, by EL Status, 2015
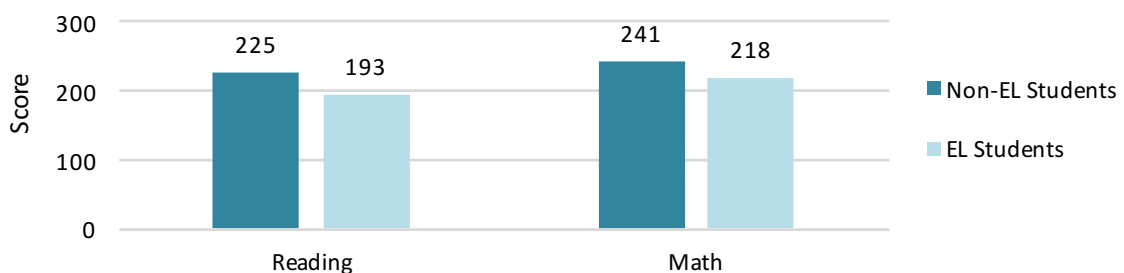
NAEP = National Assessment of Educational Progress.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, "NAEP Data Explorer—Math and Reading Assessments, 2015," accessed March 8, 2017, https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/.

Table 4. System-Level DLL-Related Policies in Maryland, 2017

Bilingual education (mandatory, prohibited, or no law)	No law
State Quality Rating and Improvement System (if any) includes criteria specific to supporting DLLs	✓
State has specific policies or guidelines pertaining to DLLs/ELs for the administration of Kindergarten Entry or Readiness Assessments (if any)	✓

Source: Survey of state early learning agencies administered by MPI researchers in April 2017.

III. Early Childhood Education and Care Policies Affecting DLLs in Maryland

The checklists of ECEC policies in this section show many—though not all—of the resources, supports, and information that can be made available at the state level to provide equitable, high-quality ECEC services and programs for DLLs and their families. In the tables, a check mark indicates the presence of a policy.

A. System-Level Policies

While state ECEC systems across the United States are highly complex, with disparate programs often working in relative isolation from one another, a few system-level policies can affect services and outcomes for DLLs and their families by influencing multiple aspects of the field. For example, while most states do not have laws governing bilingual approaches to education in early childhood classrooms, some explicitly prohibit bilingual education, which can undermine support for DLLs across state ECEC systems. On the other end of the spectrum, several states have laws mandating bilingual education in schools that enroll a substantial number of DLLs, promoting awareness of DLLs' learning strengths and needs. Similarly, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), which states increasingly use to create an overarching definition of quality for all early childhood programs, can determine whether diverse linguistic and cultural needs are valued across ECEC programs. The list in Table 4, while not intended to be exhaustive, includes some of the key policies in Maryland that have system-level implications for DLLs in early childhood.

B. Child Care and Development Fund Usage in Maryland

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) resources are allocated by the federal government

Table 5. Maryland Services for LEP Families Seeking Child-Care Assistance, 2016

Application in non-English languages	✓
Informational materials in non-English languages	No
Training and technical assistance in non-English languages	✓
Website in non-English languages	✓
Lead agency accepts applications at community-based locations	No
Bilingual caseworkers or translators	✓
Bilingual outreach workers	No
Partnerships with community-based organizations	✓

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, "Maryland Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Plan with Conditional Approval Letter for FY 2016-2018," June 27, 2016, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/Maryland_stplan_pdf_2016.pdf.

Table 6. Maryland Services for LEP Child-Care Providers, 2016

Informational materials in non-English languages	✓
Training and technical assistance in non-English languages	✓
CCDF health and safety requirements in non-English languages	✓
Provider contracts in non-English languages	✓
Website in non-English languages	✓
Bilingual caseworkers or translators	✓

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, "Maryland Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Plan with Conditional Approval Letter for FY 2016-2018."

to states with the intention of improving access to high-quality child-care services for low-income families. Each state's CCDF plan includes information regarding supports for Limited English Proficient (LEP) families and child-care providers. Strong language access and outreach policies are critical supports that enable LEP parents to access high-quality child care (see Table 5).

Beyond seeking to reach LEP families, states can also use CCDF funds to offer linguistic and cultural support and targeted technical assistance for LEP child-care providers (see Table 6). By providing these services, states can increase their supply of culturally and linguistically responsive care and bolster diversity in the child-care workforce.

C.   *Home Visiting in Maryland*

The federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program supports grants to all 50 states and the District of Columbia, offering crucial assistance to low-income families with young children through regular home visits and access to health, social

service, and child development professionals. These supports can be particularly effective for immigrant and LEP parents of young children who are relatively isolated and are not accessing other public services. Collecting state-level data on the participation of different subgroups in the MIECHV program is critical in order to understand potential gaps in services and barriers to access for minority populations, including young DLLs and their families (see Table 7). Data collection at the state level makes it possible to identify disparities in participation and to improve programs in order to promote equitable access.

D.   *Pre-K and Early Learning in Maryland*

Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have publicly funded preschool programs. Research has consistently shown that DLLs stand to benefit disproportionately from attending high-quality preschool. As such, it is important to understand how state policies might support or impede DLLs' access to high-quality pre-K (see Table 8).

Table 7. Maryland Home Visiting Data Collection, 2016

Maryland MIECHV program collects the following information about participating families:	
Race/ethnicity	✓
Home language spoken	✓
Limited English Proficient (LEP) status	No

MIECHV = Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting.
Source: Survey of state home visiting agencies administered by MPI researchers in April 2017.

Table 8. Early Learning Policies that Support DLLs in Maryland, 2015

The state:		Number of States* that follow this policy
Uses home language as eligibility criteria for publicly funded pre-K	✓	12 out of 51
Tracks enrollment of DLLs in state pre-K program	No	22 out of 51
Can report DLL enrollment by home language	No	14 out of 51
Provides recruitment and enrollment materials in non-English languages	No	17 out of 51
Requires DLLs in state pre-K program to be assessed in their home language	No	6 out of 51
Requires pre-K teachers to have qualifications related to DLLs	No	5 out of 51
Allocates extra state pre-K program resources to serve DLLs	No	9 out of 51

* Data in this column include the District of Columbia.
Source: W. Steven Barnett et al., *The State of Preschool 2015: State Preschool Yearbook* (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2016), http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Yearbook_2015_rev1.pdf.

Dual Language Learners now comprise a substantial proportion of the young child population in most states, including Maryland. As the population of young children who speak a language other than English at home and are learning English as a second or third language continues to grow, early childhood policies that support cultural and linguistic diversity and meet the unique learning needs of DLLs are crucial to ensuring equal access to high-quality programs for all.

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