

INTEGRATING SUPPORTS FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS INTO A STATE REGULATORY SYSTEM

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Overview

- Multi-lingual learners in Massachusetts
- Early education and care system in Massachusetts
- Role of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)
- Opportunities to integrate supports for effective practices for multi-lingual learners into EEC policies
 - *Strategic Goals*
 - *Current policy levers under development*
 - *Examples of integration*

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Massachusetts¹

- 39% children aged Birth-5 are Dual Language Learners
- Although DLLs comprised slightly more than one-third of children ages 0 to 5 in the state, they represented 57 percent of all young children living in low-income households.
- While Spanish is the most common home language, there is a broad diversity of languages spoken in Massachusetts.

FIGURE 2

Share of Massachusetts Children Ages 0 to 5 Residing in Low-Income Households, by DLL Status, 2015–19

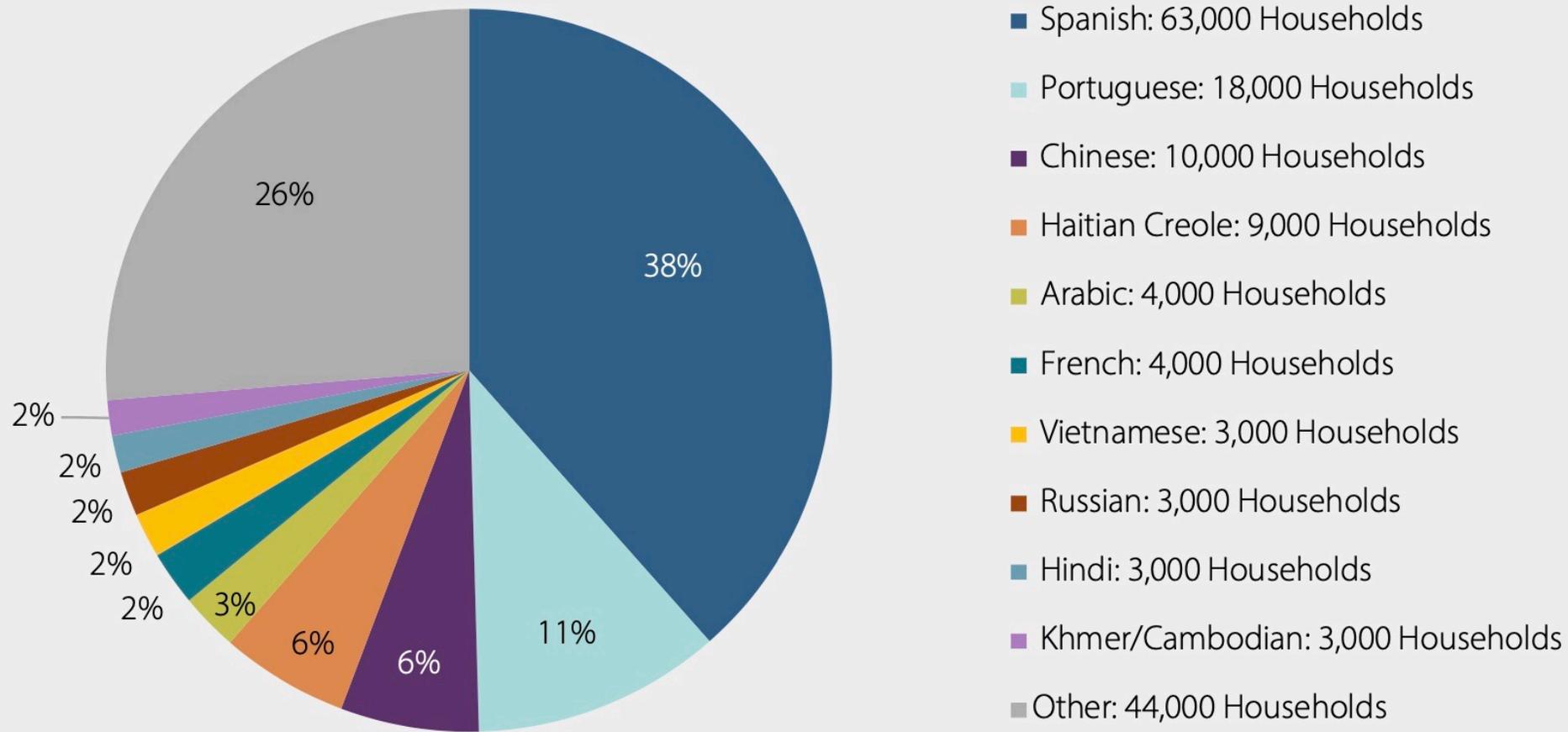


Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015–19 ACS, pooled.

¹ Giang, Ivana Tú Nhi and Maki Park. 2022. *Massachusetts's Dual Language Learners: Key Characteristics and Considerations for Early Childhood Programs*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

FIGURE 1

Top Non-English Languages Spoken in DLLs' Households in Massachusetts, 2015–19

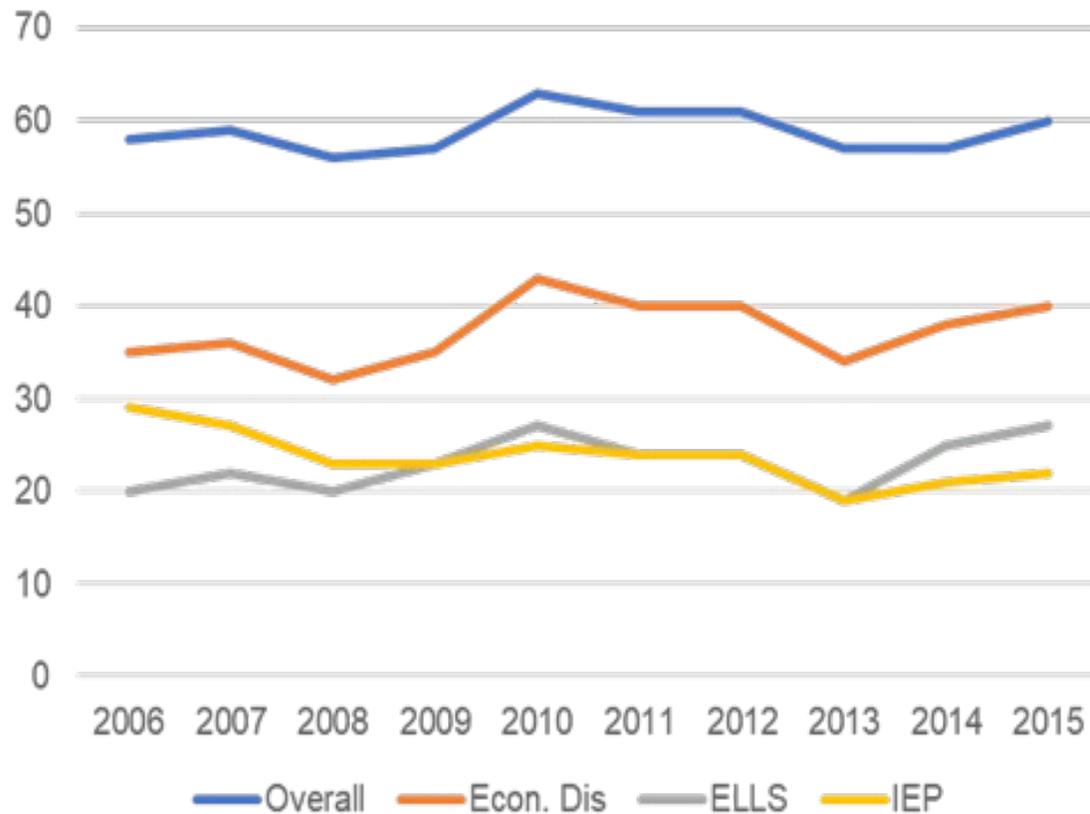


Notes: Languages spoken are self-reported in the American Community Survey (ACS). Shares may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. "Chinese" includes Mandarin, Cantonese, and other Chinese languages. "French" includes French, Patois, and Cajun. "Portuguese" includes Portuguese and Portuguese Creole.

Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015–19 ACS, pooled.

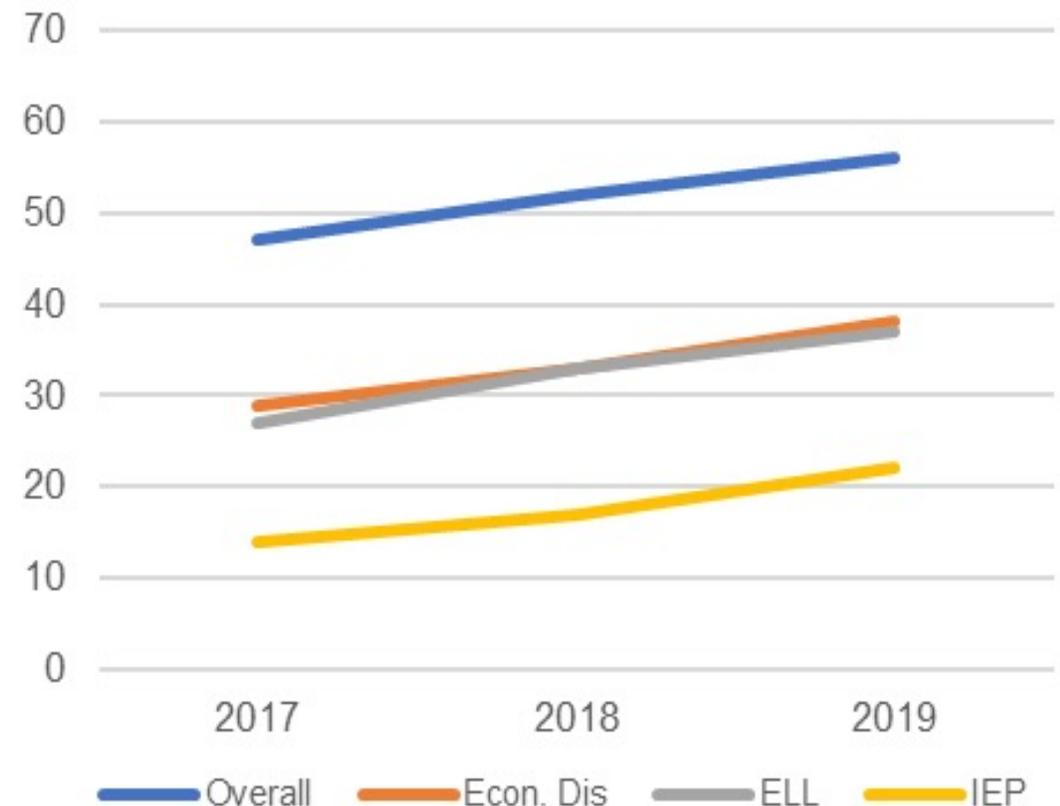
Consistent achievement gaps

**Grade 3 ELA MCAS:
% Proficient or Higher**



Source: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Grade 3 Next Generation ELA MCAS:
% Meeting Expectations or Higher**



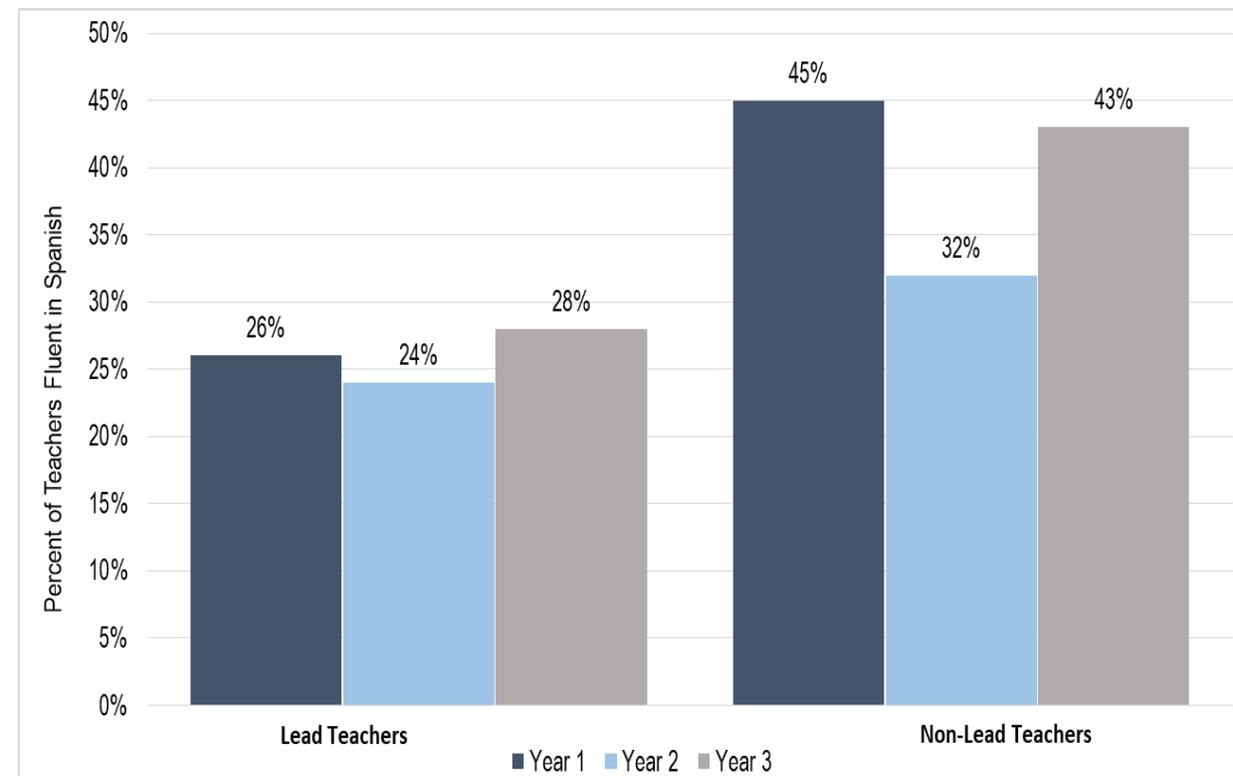
Early Education and Care in MA

- Diverse settings
 - *Family child care (FCC)*
 - *Private centerbased programs*
 - *Out of school and afterschool programs*
 - *Public school preschool programs*
- Diverse workforce noted in survey of early educators ¹
 - *34% of FCCs speak a language other than English as primary language*
 - *32% of educators surveyed identify as people of color (22% state mean)*

¹ Douglass, A., Kelleher, C., Zeng, S., Agarwal, V., Beaugard, B., Reyes, A., & Crandall, S. (2020). *The Massachusetts Early Education and Care Workforce Survey 2019: Key Findings*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Boston.

² Checkoway, A. et al. (2019). *Massachusetts Preschool Expansion Grant: Year 4 Final Report*.

- Snapshot of statewide preschool program across 3 years ²
 - *While 30% of lead teachers fluent in Spanish*
 - *Almost 50% of assistant teachers are*



Opportunity

- Quality early care and education (ECE) can support foundational language and literacy skills
- ECE in Massachusetts has a diverse workforce with strong multi-lingual skills
- Opportunity to imbed best practices in working with multi-lingual learners throughout the system
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care has an important role in building an effective system of supports
 - *Regulate and set standards for private early education and out of school time programs*
 - Program licensing requirements
 - Educator qualifications
 - Quality expectations
 - *Provide funding and incentives*
 - Grants to programs
 - Child care financial assistance

EEC Strategic Action Plan

The Department's 2020-2025 Strategic Action Plan focuses on key constituencies within the early education and care ecosystem.

Children, Youth, Families



Children are on track for success in school and to reach their full potential. Their families are empowered to work, build their skills, and attain economic mobility while supporting their children's education and development.

Educators



The early childhood and out-of-school time workforce is professionally prepared, well supported, adequately compensated, and culturally and linguistically representative of the population it serves.

Programs



Programs will increase their sustainability, engage in continuous quality improvement, and promote high-quality education and healthy development among children and youth.

State System



To efficiently and effectively steward public investments in early education and care with utmost integrity, transparency and accountability to the people of Massachusetts.

Current Policy Levers

- **New Credentialing System that sets practice standards**
 - Define professional skills/ competencies from novice to expert
 - Integrate feasible expectations for practices supportive of multi-lingual learners
 - Build a system of supports with multiple pathways to advancement
 - Include accessible opportunities for learning in multiple languages
 - Working with a team at AIR led by Eboni Howard and Catherine Jacques
- **Re-envisioning of quality system that set standards/ expectations program infrastructure that supports high quality teaching practices**
 - Supports for language access in family engagement practices
 - Use of curriculum that integrates evidence-based practices for working with multi-lingual learners
- **Operational grants provide foundational funding and support family access**
 - More funding directed to communities with higher Social Vulnerability Index - includes measure of community linguistic diversity

Integration into curriculum rubric

- **Building recommendations for high quality curriculum using a comprehensive rubric**
 - Will invest in implementation supports for curricula identified as particularly high quality and suited to MA.
- **Rubric organized around four domains**
 - Domain 1: Developmentally Appropriate and Intellectually Challenging
 - Domain 2: Evidence-Based Approaches, Standards Aligned, and Assessment Tools
 - Anti-bias Education
 - Creative Expression
 - Language and Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Scientific Inquiry
 - Social-Emotional Learning
 - Social Studies
 - Domain 3: Classroom Usability
 - Domain 4: Culturally Responsive and Anti-bias

Domain 2: Evidence-based practices

Language and Literacy

- Varying structures (e.g., small groups, tailored activities) that provide opportunities for dual language learners to actively participate and stimulate social interactions
- Consistent routines and structures to allow dual language learners to feel safe and understand what is happening in the classroom.
- Incorporation and support for children's home languages: dual language learners are supported to use their home languages whenever possible in the classroom, and the curriculum provides opportunities for young dual language learners to share their linguistic expertise
- Supportive modes of communication including visual aids, gestures, repetition of key vocabulary words, and emphasis of important words in a sentence
- Discussions with the whole class to help English-speaking children see bilingualism as an asset and dual language learner children as valuable and capable members of the classroom community

Domain 4: Culturally responsive and anti-bias

- Materials represent and value diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and identities, including depictions of a variety of racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds; gender identities; types of families and living situations; and both able-bodied and disabled individuals.
- The curriculum provides guidance to teachers in creating a classroom environment that reflects the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children.
- The curriculum offers a variety of opportunities for communicating (i.e., electronic, written, oral, in person) in families' home languages to help strengthen the partnership between home and school.
- Attention to the following areas should be an integral part of the curriculum, rather than an add-on or extension:
 - Anti-bias education
 - Support bilingualism as an asset by providing tailored supports for both the home language and English

Integration into educator credential

- Currently developing competency expectations for each level of the credential
- Integrating expectations around working with DLLs at all levels



Adult-Child Interactions

- Warm and trusting relationships
- Foster community
- Conversations
- Foster autonomy and confidence



Curriculum

- Cycles of planning and assessment
- Inclusive practices
- Skill development
- ..



Family Engagement

- Engagement
- Respect
- Collaboration



Learning Environment

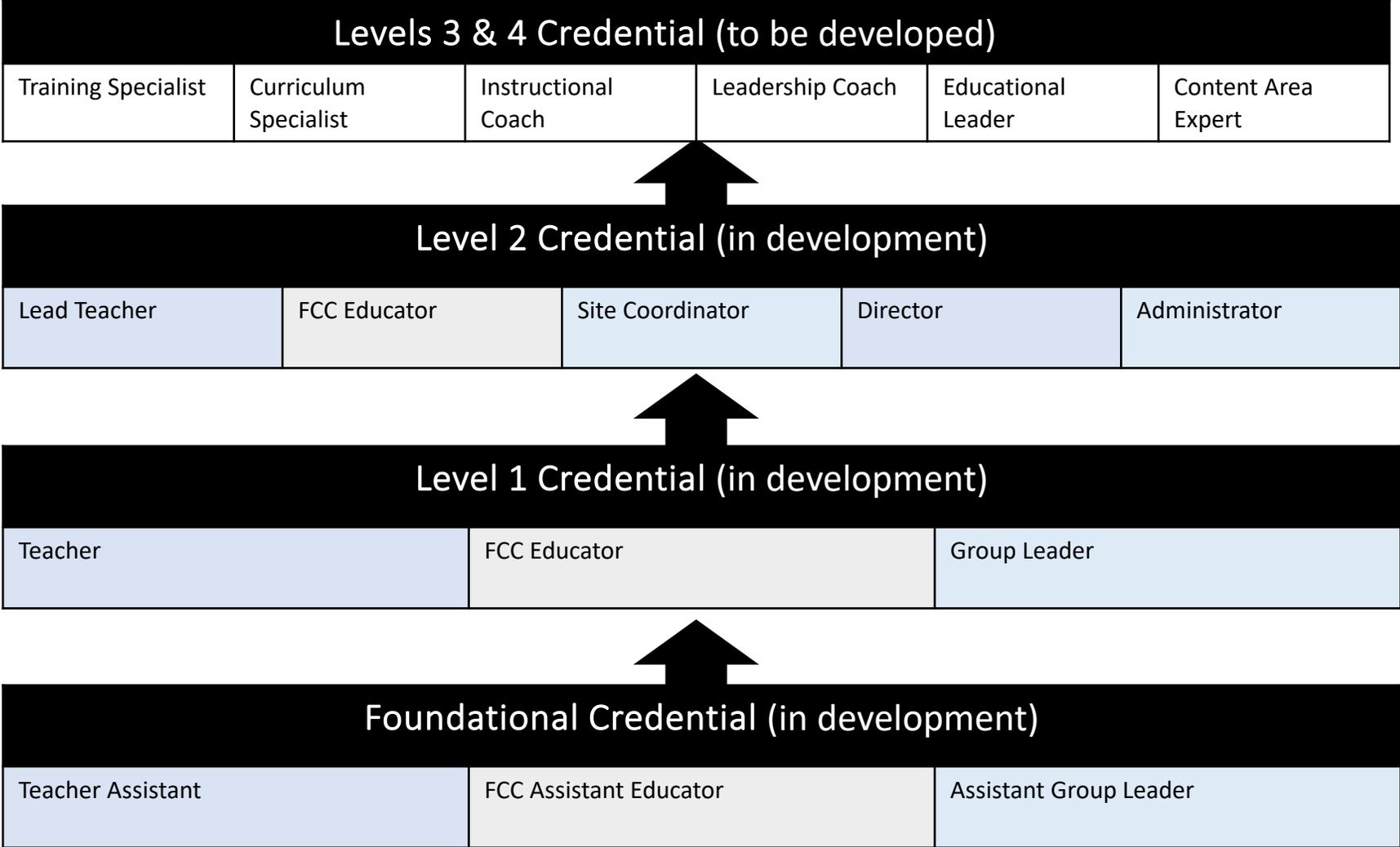
- Physical learning environment
- Consistent routines
- Planned schedules



Professionalism

- Ethics
- Professional growth

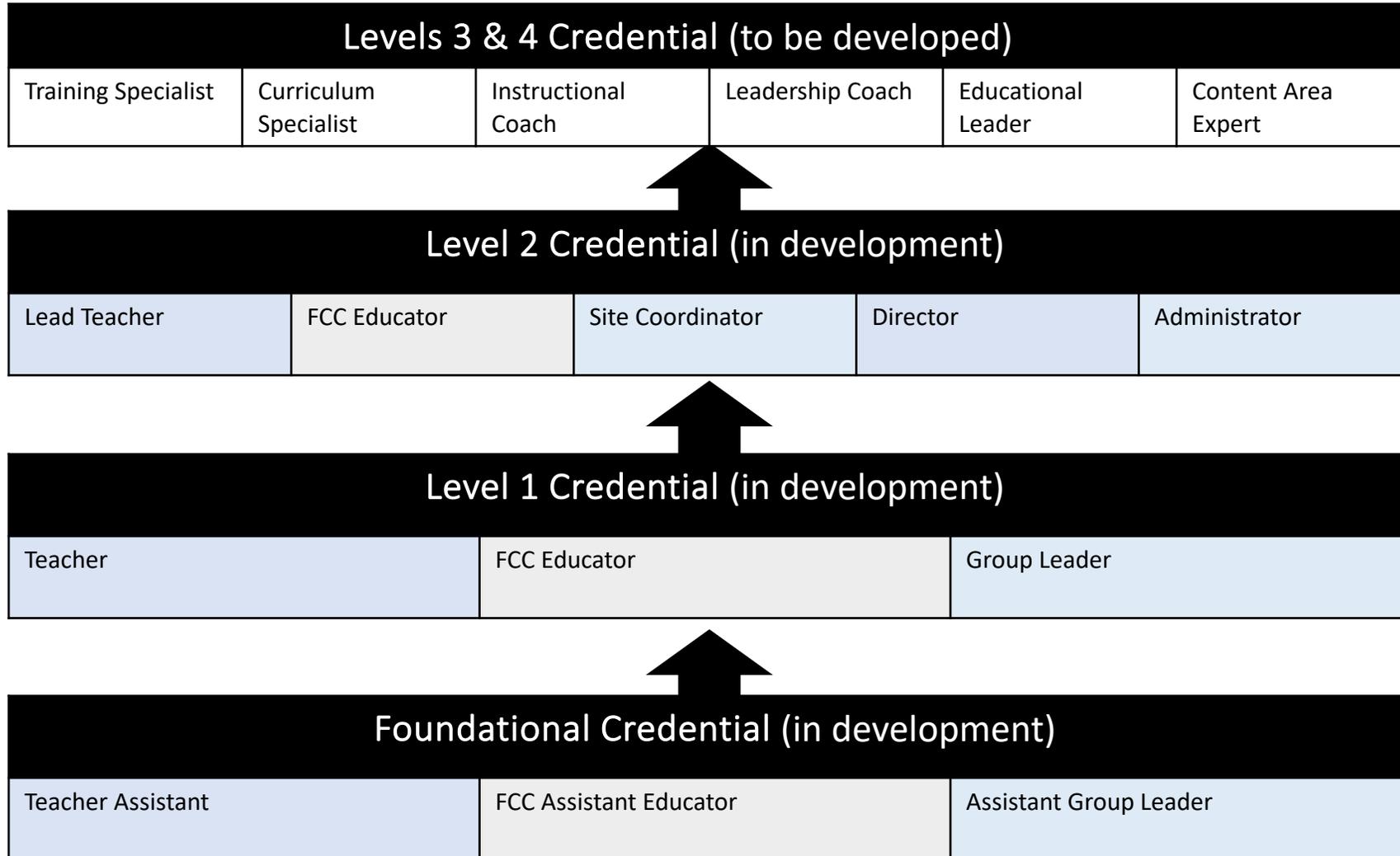
DRAFT: Credential Levels and expectations



Strategic Use of Home Language as possible

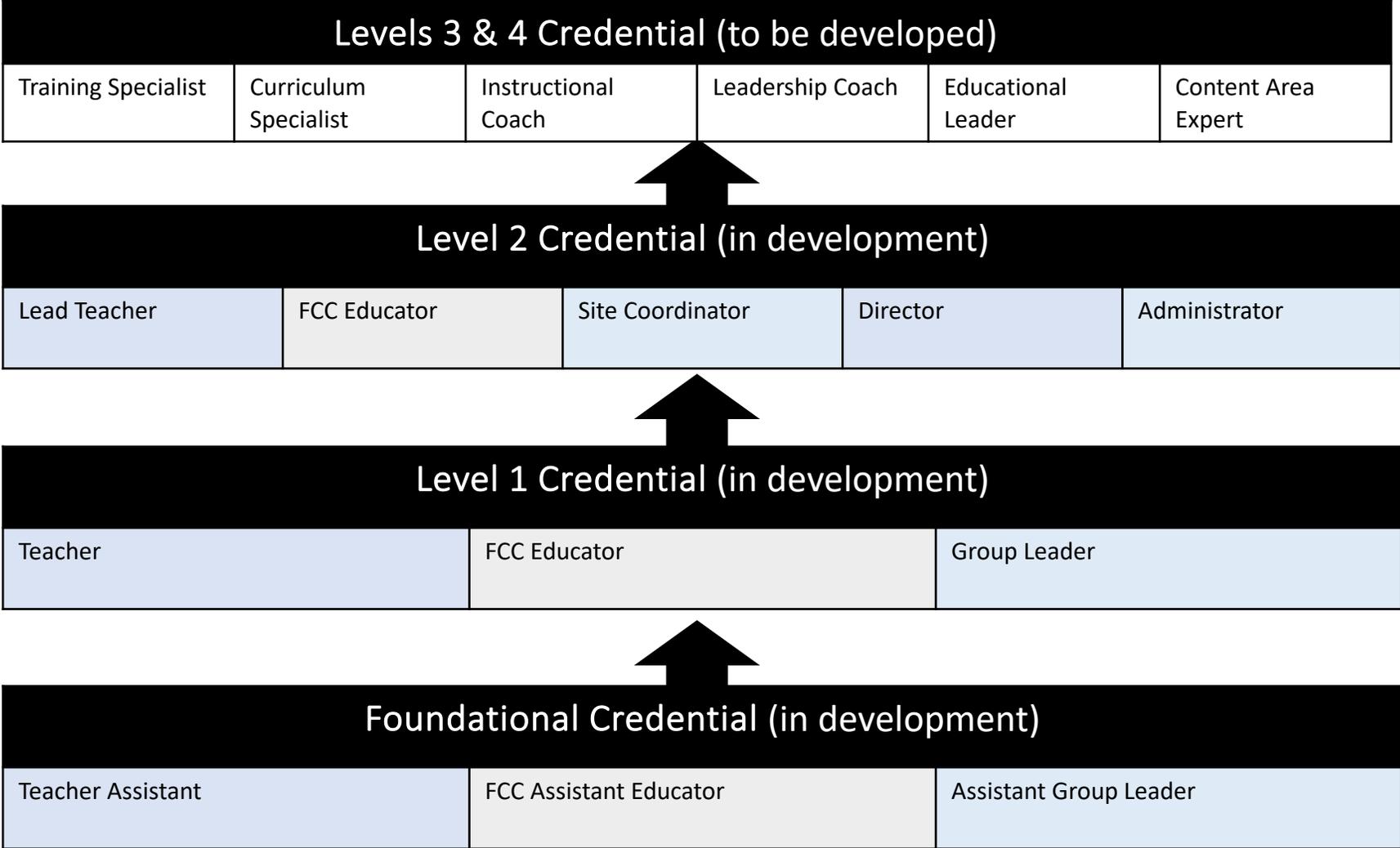
Build in expectations around working with DLLs at each level

DRAFT: Credential Levels and expectations



Recognize importance of encouraging communication through multiple languages and modalities and of fostering positive relationships with all children
Engages comfortably with small groups of children and encourages participation

DRAFT: Credential Levels and expectations

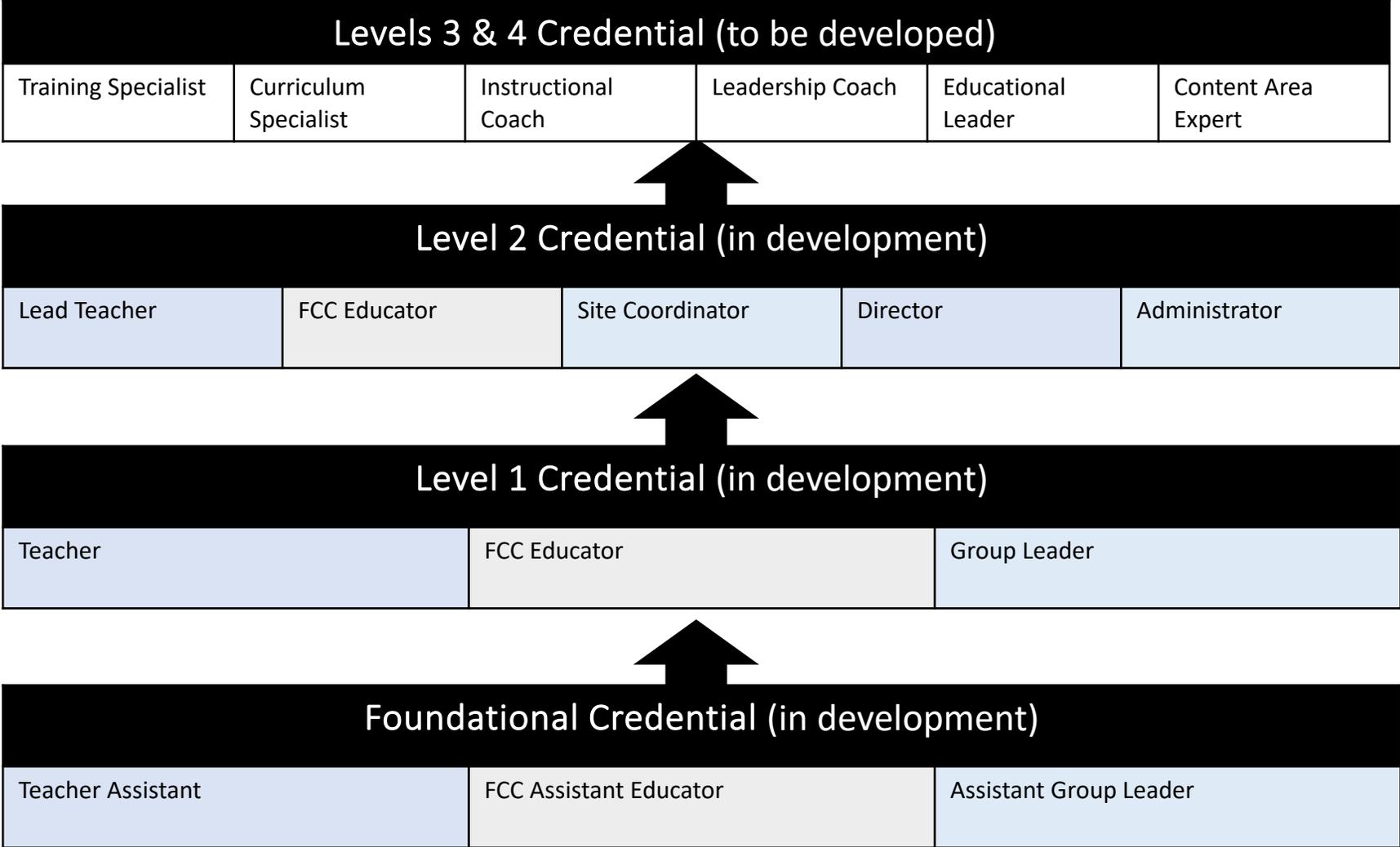


Skilled at engaging with all children, providing varied opportunities for communication, including and supporting children with different language skills.

Plan and implement activities that support language development with clear goals for individual children

Observe and assess individual children's participation

DRAFT: Credential Levels and expectations



Understand stages of second language acquisition. Oversee all classroom educators and ensure effective planning and implementation of individualized learning activities that support developing language skills. Support team reflection on observation and assessment data as part of daily planning.

In summary

- Support professional growth for educators that include expectations for developing competency in teaching multi-lingual children
- Incentivize and support implementation of high quality curriculum supportive of multi-lingual learners
- Ensure sufficient funding is available to programs serving multi-lingual learners to hire and retain qualified staff
- Address language access for both educators engaging with EEC and programs engaging with families.



THANK YOU

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