

# Fall Family Literacy Learning Series: Recap of Session 3

On Tuesday, October 24, we held our third session with a focus on “**Unlocking Potential: Nurturing reading skills and biliteracy in English Learners.**” ([video](#), [slides](#)) We were joined by a phenomenal panel of English Learner experts:

- **Amelia Herrera-Nakamura, CSU Stanislaus**
- **Eduardo Muñoz-Muñoz, San Jose State University**
- **Erica Piedra, Fresno Unified School District**
- **Gerri Swift, Making Waves Academy**
- **Martha Martinez, SEAL**
- **Priya Mariana Driscoll, Mills College at Northeastern University**

## Discussion Highlights

### How can families support English Learners?

- **Read to your children.** Start when they are infants, and continue even as kids get older. It doesn't matter what language you're reading in. Read in your home language. Things they will learn (story structure, background knowledge) will transfer from one language to the other.
- **Review ELPAC scores:** Each year (in summer or early fall) ELPAC scores should be sent home or made available on the student information system (e.g., Powerschool or Aeries). The ELPAC covers 4 domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Review the score, including how it compares to previous years. Ideally, students should go up in ELPAC scores about 1 level per year, so they can reclassify in a timely manner. If they are not showing this progress, ask your school for a meeting, a student study team (SST), or some kind of intervention to support them.
- **Ask your teachers:** What is the designated ELD instruction that my child is receiving? When is it? (Students should start receiving designated ELD in TK or kindergarten and throughout all of the years until the student reclassifies). Is my child on track to reclassify this year? If not, what is the plan to help them make progress toward this?
- **Get involved with ELAC or DELAC** in your school or district, to give input on and hold the school or district accountable to making steady progress with EL reclassification and other outcomes.

### What should schools or districts do?

- Utilize the existing [ELA/ELD Framework](#) and [EL Roadmap](#) to guide instruction and programming. Audit curriculum for alignment and EL supports.
- Ensure that school schedules include **protected time for designated ELD** in all grades.
- Commit to **reclassifying students by the end of elementary school**, or within 5 years of starting school.

### What should instruction for ELs include?

- Simultaneously support both “**word recognition**” (decoding/phonics) AND “**language comprehension**” (making meaning) from the start.
- Explicitly teach **academic language**, vocabulary, and build background knowledge.
- Include **oral language** (speaking and listening) practice.
- Leverage and honor students **home languages**.

### Bilingualism and Biliteracy

- There are many different types of bilingual, dual immersion, two-way immersion, and English immersion programs. Ask questions about the goals of the school, how they support English language development and how they nurture bi-literacy, so that students leave school literate in two (or more!) languages.

### Resources

- **Colorín Colorado** ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)) - Resources for families and educators about supporting ELs
- **GO Resource: Supporting English Learners with literacy and reading** ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
- **SEAL: P-3 Framework for Centering English Learners**

