

Working Effectively with a Bilingual Instructional Assistant

Purpose

This document describes how to effectively use a Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) assigned to a classroom.

Functions of the BIA in the Classroom

- BIAs may facilitate small groups of 3-4 DLLs in their home language as planned with the classroom teacher. BIAs may also facilitate mixed groups that include DLL children and non-DLL children, as well as work one on one with children.
- BIAs may read to children in their home language and in English. If the teacher is planning to read a book, a BIA may be asked to do a “book overview” in the home language prior to the book being read completely in English by the teachers. BIAs are trained to provide a brief overview, as well as target vocabulary words that the teacher will review.
- BIAs can:
 - Teach vocabulary in home language and in English.
 - Engage DLLs in conversation throughout the day (during meals, outside time, etc.).
 - Participate in free choice time to help develop language throughout the day.
 - Help facilitate conversations between DLLs and adults or children.
 - Gather language documentation data for teachers.
 - Review in home language the materials and concepts that DLLs did not comprehend in English.
 - Meet with teachers during their planning time to exchange information about the DLL children they are working with.

BIA and Teacher Planning

The most effective way to work with your BIA is to meet on a regular basis. BIAs have up to one hour per week to meet with each teaching team. Teachers must meet with BIAs because they are able to present a more complete picture of each child for the teaching teams that do not speak the child’s home language. Weekly planning may be used to:

- Identify children’s language needs throughout the year.
- Review upcoming books, vocabulary, lessons and/or other learning concepts to intentionally plan activities that enhance language development and learning for Dual Language Learners (DLLs).
- Identify needed assessments and how the BIAs will conduct those assessments in the child’s home language and in English when necessary.
- Capture language samples and collect language observations for teachers’ input. Planning time may be used to review these language samples and observations.
- Analyze data, language documentation, and observations that the BIA has collected.

Assist the teaching team in collecting *MyTeachingStrategies GOLD* Objectives 37 and 38. BIAs will receive Professional Development on this documentation data.