

Make an Informed Choice

There are three main English language learning programs in New York City's Public Schools: English as a New Language (ENL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and Dual Language. Currently, the most common programs are ENL and transitional bilingual education, but dual language programs are becoming increasingly available.

Parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) have a right to choose one of these three programs for their children to learn English. Each program uses different methods to help children learn English. When thinking about which program will be best for your child, remember that a program that is good for one child might not be best for another child. Things like age and personality type can affect your child's success. Also, other factors may have an effect on your child's education such as teacher quality, school support, and how the specific classroom fits your child's needs.

When you enroll your child in school, you must be given an orientation about these three programs and asked to choose which one you prefer. If your school does not have the program you want, they may be obligated to create it. If not, you can transfer your child to another school that does have the program. Parents have the right to choose between an ENL or bilingual program for their children. Schools are required to create bilingual programs when there are:

- 15 or more ELLs of the same language in two contiguous grades from K-8th grade
- 20 or more ELLs of the same language in a single grade from 9th-12th grade.

When you enroll your child, be sure to ask about the programs the school offers. Ask to visit the classrooms and speak with the teachers to help you decide which program is best for your child.

Our Mission

AFC promotes access to the best education New York can provide for all students, especially students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. We use uniquely integrated strategies to advance systemic reform, empower families and communities, and advocate for the educational rights of individual students.

Still have questions?

Please Call The Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline

Monday through Thursday
10AM to 4PM
866-427-6033 (toll free)

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AFC'S

Program Options for English Language Learners

A GUIDE FOR NEW YORK CITY PARENTS

August 2015



Advocates for Children
of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE (ENL)

Characteristics and goals:

- All teaching is in English and should be at a level that matches each student's English ability.
- The teacher is trained to teach English as a New Language.
- ENL can be taught in a separate class, in a content area class (for example: math, science, social studies) with an ENL teacher helping ELL students, or ELL students can be pulled out of their content classes to receive ENL instruction in small groups.
- The focus is on learning content knowledge (math, science, reading, etc.) by using English.
- When they reach a certain level of English proficiency, students exit the program.

Advantages:

- English is used at a level appropriate for the student.
- Students slowly transition to regular (monolingual English) instruction over time.
- Students may feel more comfortable in pull-out ENL classrooms and be more willing to take risks because all students are learning English.
- Students learn academic content in English.

Disadvantages:

- No attention is given to the student's native language.
- There are no native English speakers in an ENL class and classmates may speak different native languages.
- Students do not receive help explaining schoolwork in their native language.
- Students may become frustrated because they have to start over with a new language.
- Going to pull-out ENL classes may require students to miss content instruction.

TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION (TBE)

Characteristics and goals:

- Students learn academic subjects in English and their native language.
- All students in the class speak the same native language.
- The teacher speaks the native language.
- Every transitional bilingual education program must include ENL instruction.
- As students learn more English, less instruction is given in their native language.
- The goal is to use a student's knowledge and skills in their native language to help them master English.
- When they reach a certain level of English proficiency, students exit the program and are transferred to a monolingual English class.

Advantages:

- The classroom teacher knows both languages and will teach in both languages.
- Students use their native language to help them learn the new language.
- Students continue receiving content area instruction at their grade level in their native language.

Disadvantages:

- There are fewer transitional bilingual education programs available than ENL programs but if there are enough ELLs in a school, the school must create a transitional bilingual program. See "Make an Informed Choice."

DUAL LANGUAGE

Characteristics and goals:

- Native English speakers and non-native English speakers (who all speak the same native language) are taught together in the same classroom.
- Half of the instruction is in English and half in the student's native language.
- The goal is for all students to become fluent in both languages.
- Students in Dual Language programs can be instructed in both languages from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Advantages:

- Students spend half of their instructional time with a teacher who uses only the target (non-English) language and the other half with a teacher who instructs only in English.
- Students use their native language to help them learn the new language.
- Students can learn to appreciate multiculturalism and develop cross-cultural understanding.

Disadvantages:

- Dual Language programs are not widely available in all schools, grade levels or languages, but if there are enough ELLs in a school, the school should create one.

For more information, please see *AFC's Guide to the Legal Rights of Immigrant Families in New York City Public Schools*, available at www.advocatesforchildren.org.