

Integrating Spanish in the Classroom

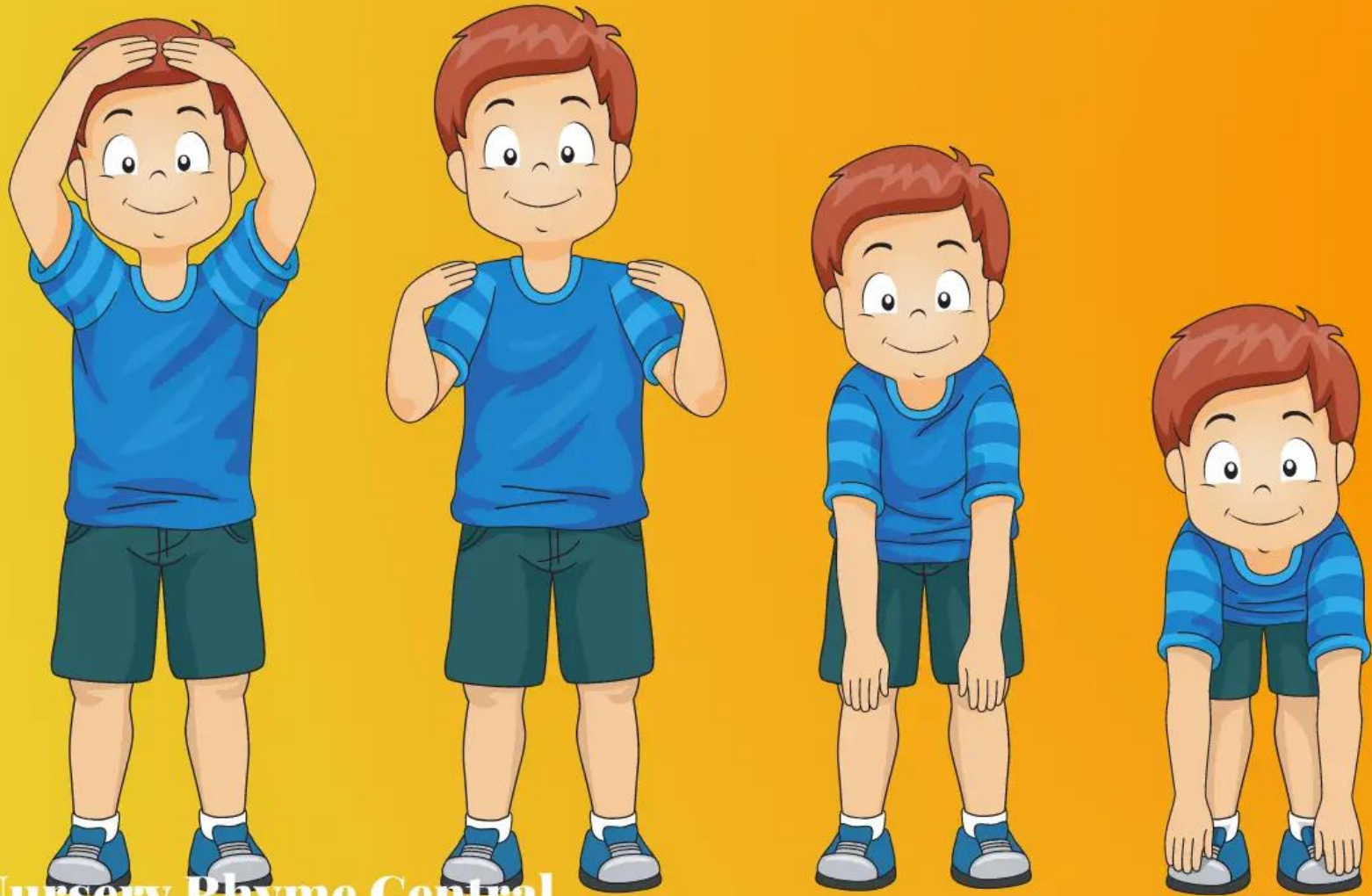
Luisa Olivo-Wolf, MA

Director, Bureau of Early Learning
Policy and Professional
Development

OCDEL Conference 2025







Nursery Rhyme Central

Defining Dual/Multi-Language Learners

A dual language learner is a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language. The term "dual language learner" may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms frequently used, such as **bilingual, English language learner (ELL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), English learner, and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE).**

Review: In Research

- **Different Developmental Pathways**
 - DLL children might learn concepts in one language versus another.
 - Developmental screenings.
- **Code Switching**
 - Typical in children who are dual language learners.
 - Going between home language and English.

Review: In Research

- **Greater Demands on Memory, Higher Executive Function in the Brain**
 - Two (or more)
 - Sets of sounds
 - Grammar rules
 - Vocabulary and definitions
 - Leads to increased ability to focus, remember, and make decisions
- **Development within two (or more) cultures**
 - Cultural behaviors
 - Manners
 - Customs
 - Leads to improved ability to adapt to different situations and expectations
 - Example: Greetings

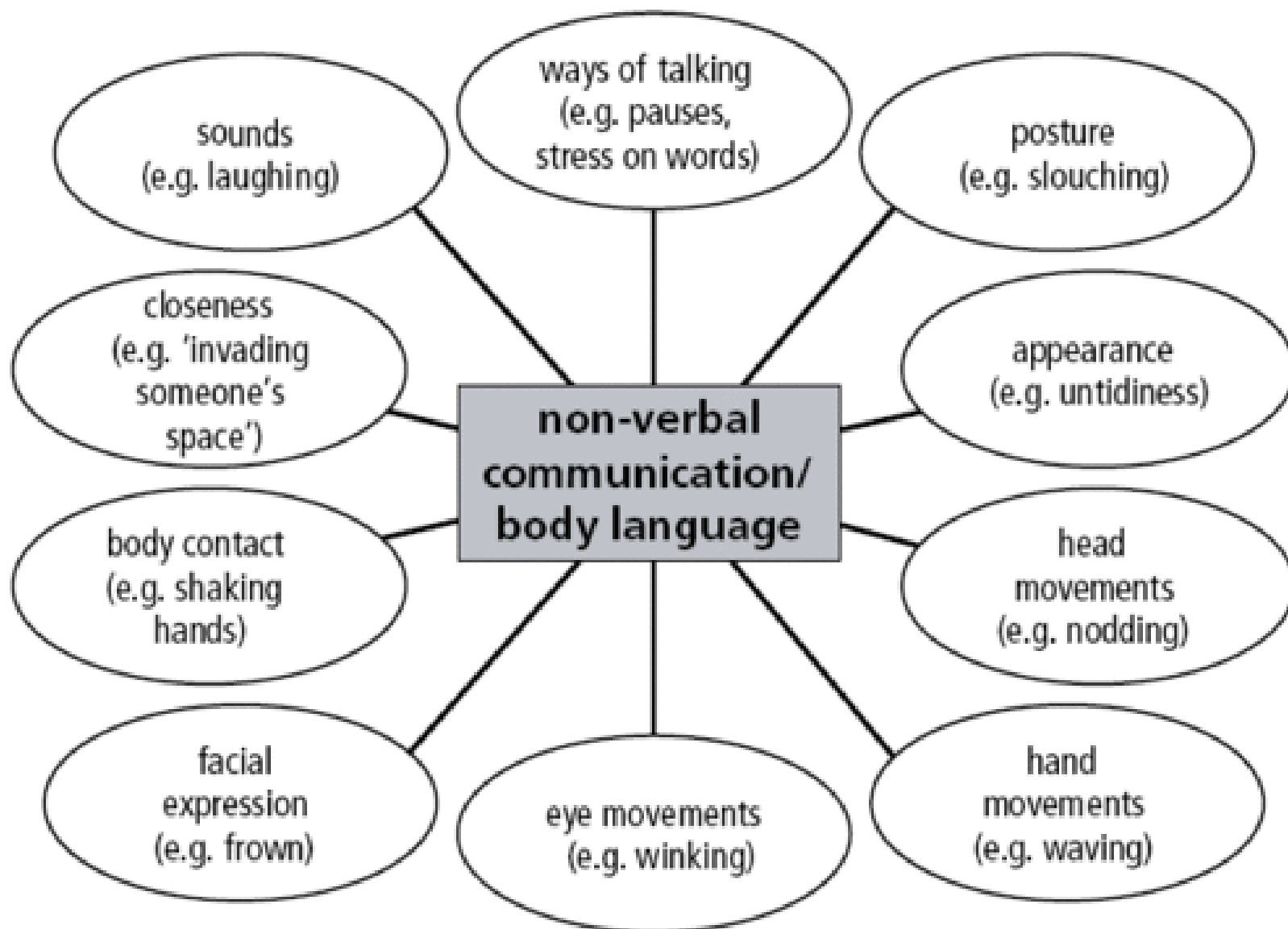
NOTICE:

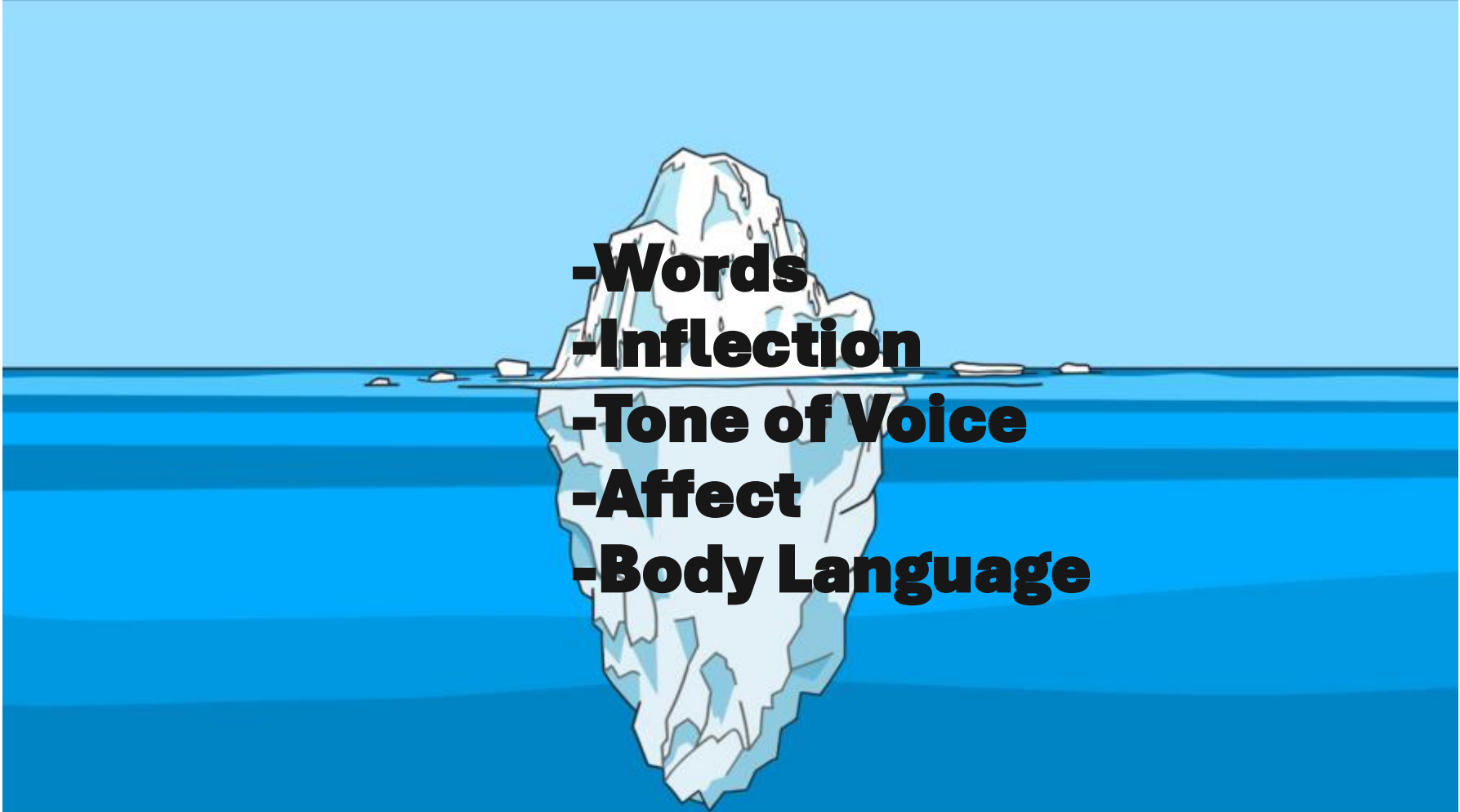
- Code Switching: “Tapa” (lid) for the water
- Developmental Pathway: “Huevo” instead of “Egg”
Learned “Papa” before “Potato”
- Understanding of Spanish as a different language



What We Know About Language





An illustration of an iceberg floating in a blue ocean. The tip of the iceberg is above the water line, while the much larger base is submerged. The text is overlaid on the iceberg, with the visible parts above the water and the submerged parts below.

-Words
-Inflection
-Tone of Voice
-Affect
-Body Language

Considerations for Interactions

- Speaking
 - SLOW DOWN!
 - Try to find a few words to incorporate in the other language
 - Body Language
 - Affect and Inflection
 - Descriptive Language
- Writing
 - Try to find resources that have information in multiple languages
 - The internet is your friend!
- Reading
 - Look for books that have versions in other languages
 - Share books that are culturally diverse

Dual/Multi Language Spectrum

- English exposure
- Home language
- Dialects
- Culture
- Time of exposure to a second (or more) language
 - Simultaneous, sequential
- Brain Development
 - Increased executive function



José Gallardo, Artist

Special Considerations for Dual/Multi Language Learners

- May not understand instructions right away
- Takes longer to process
- May be scared
- May be experiencing an educational setting for the first time, AND learning a new language
 - All the same experiences of children new to ECE, with the addition of language acquisition
- Have different exposure to the world
- Can be mistaken as having a speech delay
- Are prone to code-switching and mimicking

Supporting Language Acquisition

- Expose children to words in a variety of ways
 - Label everything in multiple languages
 - Try to say the words in their language
 - Ask parents to share words with you
- Provide prompts for language to DLL children
 - Narrate the activity
 - Shorten sentences when children seem confused
- Connect DLL children to classroom buddies who speak the same language and children who have strong English skills
 - Support simultaneous language learning
- Maintain schedules and routines, as much as possible
- Keep culture in mind when individualizing for a child
- Be literal

Supporting Language Acquisition

- Hearing Language is Learning Language
 - Exposure is important
 - Narrate your actions to babies and toddlers
 - Read to children in multiple languages (points for trying!)
- Use the environment
 - Display words from other languages in the classroom
 - Home Visiting
 - Have multilingual books available
 - Listen to diverse music with different languages
 - Value what children say and how they help each other

Use environmental print (labels, signs, posters) in the children's home languages, as well as in English, as appropriate.

Good Morning
Furph LNLU
Dobroe utro
Buenos Dias
صبح بخير
Magandang Umaga

- Add labels to enhance the print environment of the classroom, but make sure they do not overwhelm it.
- If the children speak several languages, carefully use environmental print in home languages. For example, use a different color for each language. Place phonetic spellings (hints about how to pronounce the language) next to labels so teachers can pronounce the words correctly.
- Translate such words as "welcome" into all languages, but be selective about how many languages you use for each label.
- Demonstrates respect for children's and families' home languages
- Helps children make connections between English and their home languages
- Helps children and families understand what is happening in the classroom

Use photographs, pictures, graphics, and other visuals to support English labels and signs.



- Include visuals with labels alongside words. For example, place a picture of crayons next to the label "crayons."
- Post classroom schedules, routines, and signs around the room and include on them visual representations of the activities. For example, add a graphic of an open book to the place on the classroom schedule that lists "read-aloud time."
- Allows children and families to make use of the labels and signs, even if they do not speak or read the language
- Provides visual support to understanding the print

What can I do?

Bring materials from the children's home cultures into the classroom.



What are some examples of this?

- Ask families for suggestions of toys and objects that babies or toddlers enjoy.
- Ask families to help you gather familiar magazines, photos, menus, props, music, plants, clean and empty boxes of food, and other objects to include in the classroom.
 - Integrate these materials into your centers and dramatic play areas.
 - Use these materials during classroom activities, including playing music, looking at pictures as visual examples of new words, dressing up, using them as conversation starters, etc.

Why should I do it? It ...

- Demonstrates respect for children's and families' cultures and traditions
- Helps children who are dual language learners to feel more included in the classroom
- Supports language and literacy learning by building on children's background knowledge



Resources

- Ready DLL
- www.duolingo.com/
- ECLKC- Dual Language Learners Toolkit
 - eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/dual-language-learners-toolkit
- WIDA
- Colorin Colorado
- Tablet- Speak and Translate
- iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/mcontent/young-dual-language-learners-working-with-families-instructors-guide/

Resources

- [Spanish Playground](#)
- [Super Simple Songs- Español](#)
- [Super Simple Songs](#)
- [Super Simple Songs- Japanese](#)
- [Scholastic Books in Spanish](#)
- [Real World Spanish](#)



Español for Early Childhood

quick reference guide

*Pronunciations are built using phonetic spelling combined with English words

DAILY ROUTINE

- Buenos días/Good morning
 - Boo-en-nos di-ahs
- ¿Cuál es el tiempo hoy? /
What's the like weather today?
 - Coo-all es el tee-emp-oh oy
- Siéntate por favor/Please sit
 - Ci-en-tah-teh pour fah-vor
- Párate por favor/Please stand
 - Pah-ra-teh pour fah-vor
- Camina en el pasillo por favor/
Please walk in the hall
 - Cah-mi-nah en el pah-si-yo pour-fah-vor
- Tiempo de limpiar/Time to clean-up
 - Tea-ehm-po deh leem-pee-ar
- Vamos a leer/Let's read
 - Vah-mos ah leh-err
- Cantemos juntos/Let's sing together
 - Kahn-teh-mos hoon-toes
- Toma mi mano/Hold my hand
 - Tee-mah mee mah-noh
- ¿Qué crees que pasará? /
What do you think will happen?
 - Keh crees ke pah-sa-rah
- Tratemos algo nuevo/Let's try something new
 - Trah-teh-mos all-go noo-ev-ho
- Tiempo de ir a casa/Time to go home
 - Tea-ehm-po de ir a cah-sa

NUMBERS

- uno (ooo-noh)
- dos (dose)
- tres (trehs)
- cuatro (qua-tro)
- cinco (sin-coe)
- seis (seh-ise)
- siete (si-eh-teh)
- ocho (oh-cho)
- nueve (noo-eh-veh)
- diez (di-es)



SHAPES



Estrella
es-trey-ya



Oval
oh-vahl



Cuadro
quad dro



Triángulo
tree-on goo-low



Corazón
cora-zone



Círculo
seer-coo-low



Rectángulo
rec-tan-goo-low

POSITIVE PHRASES

- Bien hecho /Well done
 - Bee-en eh-cho
- Gracias por ayudar/Thanks for helping
 - Grah-si-ahs pour ah-jew-dar
- Heres un buen amigo/a./You're a good friend
 - Air-ess un boo-en ah-mee-go/a
- Muy bien/Very good
 - Mooy bee-en
- Muy interesante/Very interesting
 - Moo-ee in-teh-res-san-teh
- Lo lograste/You did it
 - Low low-grass-tay
- Gracias por venir/Thanks for coming
 - Grah-si-ahs pour veh-neer
- Me gusta tu sonrisa/I like your smile
 - Meh goo-sta two son-ree-sah
- Creo en ti/I believe in you
 - Creh-oh en tea



INTEREST CENTERS

- Centro de Bloques / Blocks Center
 - Zen-tro day blow-case
- Centro de Juego Dramático/
Dramatic Play Center
 - Zen-tro de who-eh-go drah-mah-ti-go
- Centro Sensorial / Sensory Center
 - Zen-tro zen-zoe-ree-all
- Centro de Arte / Art Center
 - Zen-tro day arr-teh
- Library Center/ Centro de Biblioteca
 - Zen-tro day beeb-leo-tech-ahh
- Writing Center / Centro de Escritura
 - Zen-tro day es-cree-too-rah
- Literacy Center / Centro de Lectura
 - Zen-tro day lect-too-rah
- Math Center / Centro de Matemáticas
 - Zen-tro day maw-teh-mah-tee-cause
- Science Center / Centro de Ciencias
 - Zen-tro day See-en-see-ahs
- Autobús/Bus
 - Ow-toe-boose

COLORS

Rojo (row-ho)
Anaranjado (ah-nah-ran-ha-doe)
Amarillo (ah-mah-ri-yoe)
Verde (vehr-deh)
Azul (ah-zool)
Morado (moe-rah-doe)

FEELINGS



Feliz/Happy
(feh-lease)



Gracioso/Silly
(grah-sio-so)



Enojado/Angry
(eh-moe-ha-doe)



Con Miedo/Scared
(Cone mee-eh-doe)



Triste/Sad
(tree-stay)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Como te sientes?
 - How are you feeling?
 - Comb-o teh see-en-tehs
- Tienes que ir al baño?
 - Do you have to use the bathroom?
 - Tea-en-es ke ear al bah-nio
- Algo te duele?
 - Does something hurt?
 - All-go teh doo-ay-leh
- Estas enfermo?
 - Are you sick?
 - Ehh-stas en-firm-oh
- Cepíllate los dientes
 - Brush your teeth
 - Sh-pee-ya-te los dee-en-tehs



Dolor de Cabeza
Doe-lore deh
Cah-bey-zah
HEADACHE



Dolor de Estomago
Doe-lore deh
Es-toe-mah-go
STOMACH ACHE



Dolor de Garganta
Doe-lore deh
gar-ghan-tah
THROAT ACHE



Fiebre
Fee-ehh-breh
FEVER



Tos
Toes
COUGH