

Enhancing Interactions with Young Dual Language Learners: *Scaffolding Dual Language Learning*

SCAFFOLDING IN KEISHA'S FAMILY CHILD CARE

Consider an example from Keisha's family child care. Keisha plans to read Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Before reading the book, Keisha identifies some key vocabulary words she will teach to scaffold children's understanding and development of language:

- Fruit and food names
- Days of the week
- Number words
- Verbs like "pop out" or "pushed"
- Stages in the butterfly life cycle: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis

How might Keisha enhance this learning experience for dual language learners?

Here are five scaffolds that you can use to intentionally support dual language learners' understanding and development of language.

- 1. Connect English words to words in the home language.** In small groups, Keisha provides key phrases in children's home language(s) before introducing them in English. For example, she introduces the actions in the story in Spanish, such as "pop out of the egg," "look for some food," "built a small house," and "pushed his way out."
- 2. Use nonverbal communication.** Keisha uses her voice and facial expressions while reading, to emphasize key words. She also gestures and points at pictures while reading.
- 3. Use concrete objects.** Keisha gives each child a flannel cutout of a fruit to put on the board as they count the fruits the caterpillar eats in the story.
- 4. Facilitate extended conversations in English and the home language.** Keisha makes the story interactive by asking open-ended questions while reading and by encouraging children to respond in their home language(s), in English, or with gestures. She might invite older children to answer the questions in pairs, either in English or in their home languages.
- 5. Repeat key vocabulary.** Keisha repeats vocabulary from the story and encourages children to use it throughout the day—discussing foods at mealtime, referring to the day of the week at circle time, and using number words during other activities.

How do you think these scaffolds support the dual language learners' ability to participate and learn?
