

# ENGLISH LEARNERS



## Special Education

### Language Difference VS. Disability

- Are the difficulties present in both the home language and English?
- Are the concerns in multiple settings (home, childcare, school)?
- How long has the child been speaking and exposed to his or her home language?

### 5 Myths About English Learners and Special Education

**Myth #1:** English speaking proficiency is a measure of intelligence.

**Myth #2:** Students who are silent or rarely speak have a speech delay or auditory processing disorder.

**Myth #3:** Students who don't understand spoken directions have a learning disability.

**Myth #4:** ELs will get the supports they need in a special education classroom without additional ESL/Bilingual support.

**Myth #5:** Schools should wait a certain amount of time before assessing an EL for special education services.

### Indicators That May Characterize a Disability

- Difficulty learning at a normal rate, even with assistance in L1 (first language/home language)
- Lacks vocabulary, particularly in the L1/home language
- Struggles with communication at home and with peers of similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- Family history of disability
- Parents report that the student developed slower than siblings
- Relies heavily on gestures than speech, especially in L1/home language
- During instruction needs a lot of repetition and prompts, especially when instruction is delivered in L1/home language
- Difficulty following directions, even in L1/home language

### Learn more from the sources below:

- Iris Center *Dual Language Learners with Disabilities*
- Colorín Colorado's *5 Myths About English Language Learners and Special Education*
- *California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities*