

## **Centering the other: A community engaged approach to language and literacy development**

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Typically developing children acquire language as a function of their daily interaction with parents, caregivers, and other child language learners. The children will receive input that faithfully follows the linguistic constraints of sound sequence, word formation, phrase formation and message content. For children from diverse linguistic backgrounds such as African American English the linguistic constraints can vary slightly to substantially from those of standardized American English. These differences present learning opportunities for the child and the educational establishment; however, historically these learning opportunities have often been presented as deficits in the child's language and challenges to the educational establishment. A current counter to this narrative is culturally responsive practice in education and speech-language pathology, unfortunately many professionals lack, the training, strategies, and confidence to implement culturally responsive strategies in their practice. This presentation will share one approach to implementing a community engaged participatory strategy to support diverse linguistic development concomitant with literacy acquisition with pre-school and primary grades children in a standardized American English-speaking classroom. Strategies to develop community engaged relationships with educators and families will also be discussed. This work was supported in part by funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.