

## **Head Start Community Program of Morris County, Inc.**

### **Home Language Policy – Planned Language Approach**

The vast majority of children enrolled at Head Start Community Program of Morris County, Inc. come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. It is important that all staff understand that children's home language is fundamental to their learning—it is critical that dual language learners (DLLs) continue to learn their home language as they learn English. Research shows that when children have uninterrupted social and cognitive development in their home language as they learn English, they are more likely to be ready for school, to be able to read in English, and to have long-term success in school and life. As such, Head Start's home language policy is centered around a Planned Language Approach (PLA) that supports the home language development of all young children.

The PLA is a comprehensive, systemic, research-based process by which Head Start and Early Head Start programs are guided to ensure optimal language and literacy services for children who speak English and for those who are dual language learners (DLLs).

The key components of PLA include:

- Research-based approaches to ensure that children close the achievement gap at an early age.
- Early language and literacy environments and activities that are known to support children's long-term academic success. All children receive high-quality experiences, even as their teachers individualize for each child's unique needs.
- Consistent and responsive family engagement in children's educational and social growth, incorporating strategies to support DLLs to thrive in their home languages and English. Families are welcomed and respected, with information and resources available to them in their home language whenever possible.
- Careful and intentional decisions about program policies, curriculum and instruction throughout all aspects of the program are based on key language development research, prenatal to adult, leading to school readiness and success.