

CLD Corner: Q&A for the CLD Experts

The CLD Corner is a regular column written by members of the TSHA Task Force on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

We are very pleased to have a guest columnist this month, **Criselda Alvarado, Ed.D.**, who is an educational diagnostician, test author and consultant to school districts, departments of education, and educational service centers across the country. She frequently presents on topics regarding best practices and legal issues in the assessment of students from CLD backgrounds. **Dr. Alvarado** is co-author of the *Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test*.

What language do I provide services in when the home language is Spanish and the language of instruction is English? The parents have denied bilingual services, and my director says for that reason, speech must be provided in English. This student is Spanish dominant, however.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) have denied bilingual education services, not bilingual services in special education. When parents sign that denial, it does not apply to special education, although it has implications to the language of instruction in special education. The ARD/IEP committee together will make the determination of the language of intervention/services, not the parent(s)/guardian(s) on their own. Unlike the denial for bilingual education services which is purely the decision of the parents, language of intervention/services in special education is the responsibility of the whole ARD/IEP committee.

[Note from CLD Task Force: The decision about language of intervention should be made based on the child's language profile as determined by the assessment, which should indicate the language(s) most likely to provide a therapeutic effect.]

Several unique issues come up when there is a denial of bilingual education services. For example, when there is a

denial of bilingual education on file, it means that the school district recommended bilingual education that parents denied and now the child is having difficulty. Speech/language pathologists will need to proceed very carefully; any language difficulties very well could be due to linguistic difference issues that were not addressed because the parents denied the programming recommended by the school. Of course, if the student is experiencing difficulties in areas such as articulation or voice quality, that is another matter.

Another issue is that the school district is supposed to explain to the parent why denial of bilingual education services can inhibit their child's academic development. TEA recommends that parents who have denied bilingual education be given the opportunity to rethink their decision every year, especially during those first few years. Some school districts' denial form is for bilingual education only, whereas for others the denial is for bilingual education and ESL. According to research, denial of both bilingual education and ESL has an incredible detrimental impact on the child's academic performance, especially in the long term.

Questions about cultural and linguistic diversity and their impact on speech, language and hearing assessment and intervention may be sent to slaustin@cebridge.net.

*Current task force members are **Becky Gonzalez, M.S., Lynette Austin, M.A., Jennifer Watson, Ph.D., Gina Glover, M.S., Gail Goodrich-Totten, M.A., Dolores Castor, M.A., Cynthia Garcia, M.A., Marie Belgodere, M.S., Michelle Leos, M.A., and Diana Gonzales, Ph.D.***

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month



Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM) began in 1927 as a way for audiologists and speech-language pathologists to raise public awareness of hearing, speech and language disorders that affect people across the country.

This annual event provides opportunities for you to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote intervention that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding, or hearing. Remember, there are over 42 million Americans with speech, voice, language, and/or hearing impairments.

TSHA has many resources to help you celebrate BHSM everyday. Visit the TSHA website, www.txsha.org/products/shoppe_txsha.asp. After you check out the wonderful products that TSHA has to offer, please visit the ASHA resources as well, at www.asha.org/members/issues/marketing/bhsm/BHSM-06.

Visit www.txsha.org and start celebrating now!