



Reflect on your own experiences with children, families, and colleagues. If you are an supervisor, administrator, or adult educator, how might you use these questions and activities to help other adults reflect on their experiences?

Consider the Child's Point of View

Culture and language are closely linked. In young children's minds, culture and language are synonymous with family. Children may not have the words, but they recognize where power and privilege live. Imagine a child entering an early childhood program where no one speaks his or her language, or looks or does things like their family does them. Imagine the sense of confusion, the isolation, and the fear that might exist in the child.

Try This!

Consider this story about Keej. How might you help him feel like a member of the program's community, yet connected to and proud of his culture?

At home, Keej lives with his siblings, parents, and grandparents, all of whom speak Hmong. When he was four years old, Keej's family moved to a European- American suburb. His parents enrolled him in an ECE program with all English speakers. Keej's father was eager for him to learn English, so that he would be successful in school, and be able to translate for family members in other English-speaking settings, such as the doctor's office.

Before the end of the school year, Keej was fully fluent in English and no longer wanted to speak Hmong at home. He began to feel a bit embarrassed by how different his family was from all of his new friends.

Reflect on Keej's story. Use this [template](#) to record your observations, your responses, and your reflections. Share them with a colleague to start a dialogue.

What do you think is the source of Keej's feelings and refusal to speak Hmong?

What might be the positive and negative effects on his relationship with his family and his cultural identity?

As an early childhood educator, what could you do to foster pride in the cultures and home languages of children like Keej?
