



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?

## Examine the Environments

“The range of competencies that dual language learners acquire in each of their two languages depends critically on the quality of the learning environment. Children need long-term, regular, and enriched exposure to both languages if they are to acquire full competence in both and if they are to enjoy the long-term benefits that come from being bilingual.” (Fred Genesee, 2008)

### Try This!

Early childhood program environments must be “additive”, with continually enriched exposure to both languages to encourage dual language.

Examine your program for these elements:

- Ways to get to know each family’s language, traditions, and sources of cultural pride, so as to reflect them in your environment.
- Active encouragement of families to use their home language in the program and at home, adding vocabulary to school learning.
- A language plan with strategies for continuing to honor and develop the home languages of the children, as well as building their English language competence.
- Awareness of the subtle ways children might experience power or powerlessness in your physical and social environments
- Ways that staff take action in behalf of equity.

Choose an area that you want to begin improving in your physical and social-emotional environments for dual language learners. Make one of more small changes and observe the effects for several weeks. Write down your reflections, based on the actions you took and the changes you documented.

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