



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?

## Seek Multiple Perspectives

Historically, different perspectives have shaped how we approach second language learning in U.S. schools. Parents and grandparents often share stories of being punished for speaking their home language at school. Some have thought that children will not adequately learn English or will become confused if they are continually spoken to in their home language.

## Try This!

Read each research perspective and compare each of them with other perspectives you have heard. Consider which perspectives keep the current system of power and privilege in place, and which have the potential to bring about more respect and equity.

- *For infants and toddlers, being bilingual in the home language and English allows them to participate in mainstream culture without losing important connections and a critical sense of identity with the home language culture.*
- *Growing consensus in the research community shows that developing children's first language skills in areas that are related to schooling, and literacy in particular, transfers to and supports the acquisition of English as a second language.*
- *Research shows, that despite the fact that simultaneous bilingual learners have half as much exposure to each language as monolingual learners, they exhibit the same basic developmental patterns at approximately the same ages.*
- *Research has shown that children who are fluent in two languages enjoy certain cognitive advantages in comparison to those who speak only one language.*
- *Parents and early childhood educators should persist in using the home language, even if individual children prefer to use English, as this will ensure that, at least, they will acquire comprehension skills.*

Record your observations of children with regard to each point above. Write your responses to each. Reflect on the personal meaning each point has for you.

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