

Professional Development Toolbox

Environment and materials

❖ Survey the classroom with the teacher to take note of materials and books that reflect the culture, ways of life, and languages of the children in the group. Together, make a list of counting, sorting, and measuring books and materials to add to the collection that are familiar and relevant to children's life experiences. (PLF, p. 238)

❖ Assist the teacher to identify some key words or phrases to learn in their children's home language(s). Teachers might ask parents, siblings, other staff or community members who speak the child's home language to provide a few key words and phrases for hello, goodbye, thank you, please, and sit down (PCF, p. 198)

❖ With the teacher, watch the "Create a Climate of Belonging" section of the DVD World Full of Language. Using a T-Chart, facilitate a discussion of the ways that teachers already create a linguistically and culturally appropriate environment and enhancements they can make (World Full of Language; PCF, p. 181)

❖ Ask teachers to bring maps of their classrooms. As a small group, review the environmental adaptations suggested for preschool children who are English learners. Discuss the modifications to their current environments that would benefit children who are learning English. Consider having teachers draw maps indicating the modifications they plan to make to their environments. (PCF, pp. 182-183)

❖ With the teacher, walk the classroom and create a list of ways the classroom reflects the children's cultures and languages in each learning center, on walls, windows, and bulletins boards as well as in educational and play materials. For areas where the children's cultures and languages are not strongly reflected, brainstorm ways to enhance the representation of children's cultures and languages (PEL, p. 28)

❖ Work with teachers to create a "Top Ten" list of ways classroom environments and materials can welcome culturally and linguistically diverse families and children (PEL, p. 28; PCF, pp. 181-183)

❖ Have the teachers read *Young Dual Language Learners, Resourceful in the Classroom* (Genishi, 2002). Discuss ways to use the ideas in the article to enhance the dramatic play and other interest areas. (NAEYC, Young Children)

❖ Encourage the teacher to think about and discuss what it is like to enter a new environment where another language is spoken. Use this discussion as a springboard for helping the teacher understand that children need many opportunities to observe the classroom routine and to begin to make sense of how things are done. The child who is learning English will need ample time to watch and become comfortable before speaking (PCF, p. 199)



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