

Professional Development Toolbox

Home Language



Home language as a foundation for learning

❖ Ask teachers to identify occasions when they might use the child's home language (start with what the child knows) to allow for low level communication in supporting children in the home language and observational/listening stages. As a group develop a list of words in English and the equivalents in the children's home language(s) (PEL, p. 54; PCF, p. 180)

❖ With a bilingual teacher, read the vignette at the bottom of page 115 in *Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1*. Practice using the technique by play acting the part of the child and having the teacher practice the strategy. Encourage the teacher to try the strategy over the next week. Discuss the experience at your next session. (PLF, p. 115)

❖ After reviewing "Key Concepts from Theory on Second Language Acquisition" handout (4A), ask teachers to think about ways they can make this information meaningful for parents and families to ensure they understand the importance of fostering the home language (PLF, p. 104; PEL, p. 43, *Preschool English Learners Training Manual--handout*)

❖ With the teacher, review the section on "More word games" on page 119 of *Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1*. Brainstorm with the teacher one or more word games to add to the following week's lesson plan. At the next visit, discuss how the game(s) worked out. (PLF, p. 119)

❖ Have teachers read about language loss (PEL, pp. 60-62). Discuss the consequences of language loss and ways to impart this information to families (PEL, pp. 43, 60-62)

❖ When working with multilingual teachers, ask them to consider the advantages (communication, cultural, cognitive, character, curriculum and financial) they have because they are bilingual. Together review the Research Highlights on page 35 of the PEL Guide. Brainstorm ways to impart this information to families (PEL, p. 35)

❖ Provide time for teachers to reflect on and discuss ways they can provide opportunities for the children in their class to practice their new language or use their home language when they are playing outside the classroom, in the dramatic play or other activity centers (PEL, p. 56)

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- ❖ With the teachers, identify the ways they currently encourage families to use their home language with their children; after reviewing the list, assist teachers in identifying ways to enhance the list to ensure that families understand the value of the home language. For example, the teacher might add the following practice “reading to each other literature that is valued in their home, including stories of their culture (e.g., parent to child, sibling to sibling, child to parents, grandparent to child)” (PEL, p. 43; PCF, p.180)
- ❖ Encourage teachers to find ways to provide opportunities for children to use their home language to react to, predict, and review parts of a story or a passage when they are not yet at a level in their English-language development at which they can contribute in other ways. This approach increases English learners experiences of inclusion and promotes other areas of cognitive and social development (PEL, p. 40)
- ❖ Refer teachers to the section “Include preschool children’s home language in counting activities, whenever possible” in the Preschool Learning Foundations. Work together to identify at least one time a day to include home language counting in the daily routine. Ask the teacher to integrate these counting activities into the following week’s lesson plan (PLF, p. 244)

