

Creating Environments That Include Children's Home Languages and Cultures



Physical environments in early childhood settings should reflect and include all children's home languages and cultures.

What can I do?	What are some examples of this?	Why should I do it? It ...
<p>Use environmental print (labels, signs, posters) in the children's home languages, as well as in English, as appropriate.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add labels to enhance the print environment of the classroom, but make sure they do not overwhelm it. • If the children speak several languages, carefully use environmental print in home languages. For example, use a different color for each language. Place phonetic spellings (hints about how to pronounce the language) next to labels so teachers can pronounce the words correctly. • Translate such words as "welcome" into all languages, but be selective about how many languages you use for each label. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates respect for children's and families' home languages • Helps children make connections between English and their home languages • Helps children and families understand what is happening in the classroom
<p>Use photographs, pictures, graphics, and other visuals to support English labels and signs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include visuals with labels alongside words. For example, place a picture of crayons next to the label "crayons." • Post classroom schedules, routines, and signs around the room and include on them visual representations of the activities. For example, add a graphic of an open book to the place on the classroom schedule that lists "read-aloud time." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows children and families to make use of the labels and signs, even if they do not speak or read the language • Provides visual support to understanding the print

What can I do?	What are some examples of this?	Why should I do it? It . . .
<p>Bring materials from the children's home cultures into the classroom.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask families for suggestions of toys and objects that babies or toddlers enjoy. • Ask families to help you gather familiar magazines, photos, menus, props, music, plants, clean and empty boxes of food, and other objects to include in the classroom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrate these materials into your centers and dramatic play areas. ○ Use these materials during classroom activities, including playing music, looking at pictures as visual examples of new words, dressing up, using them as conversation starters, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates respect for children's and families' cultures and traditions • Helps children who are dual language learners to feel more included in the classroom • Supports language and literacy learning by building on children's background knowledge 