**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.

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| Use environmental print (labels, signs, posters) in the children’s home languages, as well as in English, as appropriate. | • 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. | • 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 |
| Use photographs, pictures, graphics, and other visuals to support English labels and signs. | • 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.” | • 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 |
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| Bring materials from the children's home cultures into the classroom. | • 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.  
  ○ 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. | • 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 |