

Inviting and Supporting Cultural Guides and Home Language Models



Cultural guides and home language models are individuals who can help to make children and families feel accepted and welcome as they adjust to new environments.

Cultural guides

- ▶ share a cultural heritage with one or more children,
- ▶ have origins in the same region as one or more children, and
- ▶ feel comfortable sharing their cultural knowledge with teachers and children.

Home language models

- ▶ speak the same home language and regional dialect as one or more children,
- ▶ are usually native speakers of the language, and
- ▶ have training in how to model their home language for children.



How cultural guides and home language models can help

- ▶ A cultural guide can help you learn about the culture of the children in your class.
- ▶ A home language model can interact directly with children and use their home language to help them feel more comfortable and to support their home language development.



Identifying potential cultural guides and home language models

Individuals related to the Head Start/Early Head Start program or within the local community may serve as cultural guides or home language models. They may be:

- ▶ Family members of the children
- ▶ Staff members
- ▶ Community members from:
 - ▶ Community action organizations
 - ▶ Houses of worship
 - ▶ Local colleges or universities
 - ▶ Other community connections



Screening potential cultural guides and home language models

In addition to the regular background checks and screening procedures used by your program, you will want to ask other questions before engaging a potential cultural guide or home language model:

- ▶ Does the person's knowledge and skills closely match your needs?
 - ▶ Are cultural guides knowledgeable about the culture of one or more children in the class?
 - ▶ Do home language models speak the same language as one or more of the children in the class?
 - ▶ Does the person have experience working with children? If not, can you provide support and training?
- ▶ Is the person able to make a commitment to your class?
 - ▶ Is he or she available at the times needed?
 - ▶ If you need the person to make a long-term commitment, is he or she able to?
- ▶ What kind of training and support will the person need? Can you meet these needs?
 - ▶ Does the person have training and experience working with children?
 - ▶ Do home language models have training in language modeling? (See *Tip Sheet: Language Modeling with Dual Language Learning Infants* and *Tip Sheet: Language Modeling with Dual Language Learning Toddlers*.)
 - ▶ Does the person have training in your curriculum so that he or she can understand how to support you?

Supporting home language models

- ▶ Train home language models on language modeling practices. (See *Tip Sheet: Language Modeling with Dual Language Learning Infants* and *Tip Sheet: Language Modeling with Dual Language Learning Toddlers*.)
- ▶ Provide home language models with opportunities to model the home language with individual children or with small groups of children by:
 - ▶ Previewing, in the home language, activities or lessons that the children will later do or learn in English
 - ▶ Reviewing, in the home language, activities or lessons that the children did or learned previously in English
 - ▶ Engaging in short classroom activities in the home language
- ▶ Observe home language models as they interact in the home language with children, and provide specific feedback on their language-modeling practices.
 - ▶ Notice when home language models are engaging children in the home language and supporting children in using the language.
 - ▶ Ask someone who speaks the language to consider the content of what the home language model says.



NOTE: Home language models are not interpreters and should not engage in word-by-word interpretation of classroom activities.

