

Learning Objectives



Participants develop a greater understanding of cultural beliefs related to language and child rearing practices.



Participants become aware of the consequences of children preserving or losing their home language.



Participants gain a greater understanding of the link between language, culture and identity.



Participants develop a deeper understanding of the different ways children become bilingual.



Participants articulate research findings related to bilingualism.



Participants learn new activities to foster oral and written languages in family child care and at home (in the home language as well as in English).



Participants have a deeper understanding of the provider-parent partnership and the role it plays in children's success in school and life.

Raising Bilingual Children



Raising bilingual children

For many years, parents in the United States were discouraged from keeping their home language if it was different from English. They were told that their children would have difficulty learning English if they continued speaking the home language. Now we know that young children have the ability to learn more than one language. They have the brain capacity to develop bilingualism. Keeping their home language does *NOT* interfere with the children's ability to learn English. On the contrary, fluency and language skills in the home language can be transferred to English.

Research shows that bilingual children tend to be more creative, achieve higher levels at solving complex problems and obtain higher scores on standardized tests. In many parts of the world, bilingualism is the norm. In fact, more than 50% of the world's population speaks more than one language.

What you can tell others about the process of becoming bilingual:

1. Children become bilingual in different ways.
2. Some children need time to feel confident before they start using a second language. They go through a silent period that is perfectly normal.
3. Some children might refuse to use the first language while learning a second language.
4. Mixing languages is a normal part of bilingual language development.
5. One reason behind mixing languages is lack of vocabulary.
6. Children with strong communication skills in the home language learn English faster (even if they have an English-only teacher in family child care, preschool or kindergarten).

The Family's Fund of Knowledge

- The term “Fund of Knowledge” means recognizing the valuable wealth of experience, knowledge and skills that parents have.
- When parents share their skills and knowledge with the early childhood program, children develop pride in their families and their heritage. At the same time, parents are empowered when they are able to share their expertise and knowledge in their child's classroom.
- Children have culturally meaningful learning experiences when they are related to their families' lives.
- Valuing the families' interests and histories, while at the same time incorporating these themes into the classroom curriculum, expresses teachers' recognition and validation of parents as partners.
- Parental occupations that could be incorporated into your program's activities may include: gardener, construction worker, painter, seamstress, beautician, store/retail clerk, housekeeping, car wash employee, nurse, realtor, teacher, florist, etc.

