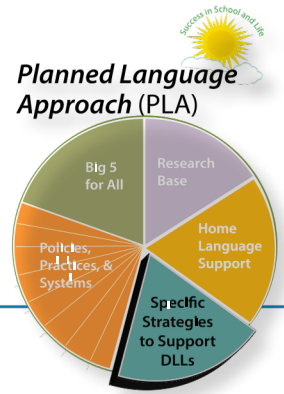


# Creating Environments That Include Children's Home Languages and Cultures



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"> <li>• Add labels to enhance the print environment of the classroom, but make sure they do not overwhelm it.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Translate such words as "welcome" into all languages, but be selective about how many languages you use for each label.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates respect for children's and families' home languages</li> <li>• Helps children make connections between English and their home languages</li> <li>• Helps children and families understand what is happening in the classroom</li> </ul>
<p>Use photographs, pictures, graphics, and other visuals to support English labels and signs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include visuals with labels alongside words. For example, place a picture of crayons next to the label "crayons."</li> <li>• 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."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows children and families to make use of the labels and signs, even if they do not speak or read the language</li> <li>• Provides visual support to understanding the print</li> </ul>

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"> <li>• Ask families for suggestions of toys and objects that babies or toddlers enjoy.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>Integrate these materials into your centers and dramatic play areas.</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates respect for children's and families' cultures and traditions</li> <li>• Helps children who are dual language learners to feel more included in the classroom</li> <li>• Supports language and literacy learning by building on children's background knowledge</li> </ul> 