

Understanding the Impact of Language Differences on Classroom Behavior

HANDOUT



Points to Remember

The time it takes to learn a new language may vary from child to child depending on the child's age, motivation, knowledge of the first language, personality, and exposure to the new language.

The developmental period for learning English is fairly consistent across young children and includes: the continued use of the home language, the silent or nonverbal period, sound experimentation and use of telegraphic speech in the new language, and productive use of the new language.

Families can teach us about their children and about the families' cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

Teachers and other caregivers will want to individualize instruction, because even two children from the same culture might show different patterns in learning English as a second language based on factors such as experience and personality.



Things to Do

Early childhood settings should be supportive and safe environments in which children can use their home language and learn a new language.

Have a plan to promote meaningful participation and the inclusion of second-language learners in classroom routines and activities.

Build upon what children know and engage them in situations that at the beginning may not require them to give specific responses (e.g., low-demand situations).

Use language strategies such as pairing new words with gestures, pictures, and cues; commenting; expanding; and extending upon children's words; and using repetition to support young children's acquisition of a new language.