

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES OF DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Families are your greatest resource for getting to know the children in your classroom! They can be partner with you to bring their language and cultural assets to your learning environment. Every family is different. Here are some ideas that will strengthen your partnerships with families of dual language learners:

Families as resources to bring in first language supports and culture into the classroom

Ask families to complete the Family Language and Culture Survey to help you gather information from families on their language, culture and expectations.



- Request that families to send in cultural items to include in the classroom or create an “All About Me” book with their child.
- Invite them into your classroom (or to join virtually) to share stories, songs, and games in their language or from their culture.
- Delegate one or more family members to serve as classroom helper(s); they can help you with the language, communication with other families, and ideas for including culture and language in the classroom.
- Ask families to complete the “Sharing My Language With You” document in the Cox Campus Resource Library and/or record themselves saying key words in their first language and send you the audio file.

Families as collaborators in children’s assessment of their skills and abilities in their first language

Keep in mind that you may want to write down or record (audio or video) children speaking in their first languages and ask families to help you understand what they are saying to inform your ongoing observations and progress monitoring. Remember that observing a child only in English does not give an accurate picture of all a children knows and can do.

Families as partners to extend language and literacy in the home

Create newsletters (paper or digital) and bulletin boards in families’ first languages, as these are great tools to keep families informed of all the activities happening in the classroom so they can extend them at home.



Build a lending library for families in the various languages represented in your classroom. If it proves challenging to find books, work with your local library or share wordless picture books and encourage families to enjoy talking through these books in their first language. Family made books are meaningful additions! Mostly, encourage families to talk, read, and sing with their child in their first language!

Consider a variety of ways to connect with families—written communication, in person, over the phone, by e-mail, or through text message. Be sure to prioritize translation.

