

Strategy Example IVA: Ensuring the Presence of Each Child's Language / *Asegurar la presencia del idioma de cada alumno*

A child's language is their vehicle for expression, interacting with others, and comprehending the world. Many children come to school with knowledge and language skills encoded in a language other than English. These dual language learners need to learn to function in and across their multiple language worlds. Regardless of the language of instruction in a classroom, and regardless of the language(s) the teachers/adults speak, we want children to be able to access their knowledge and build stronger language and literacy skills as needed for their dual language realities.

All preschool classrooms should be environments that support children as dual language learners. Because young children quickly internalize messages about whether their language is valued or a stigma, it is important that teachers actively work to create a culture in which language diversity is welcomed, children's home languages are viewed as assets, and the development of bilingualism is actively framed as a wonderful thing. They should feel comfortable using their home language and should be able to see that their language is welcomed and has a presence in the program. When they walk into the classroom and see themselves reflected, hear their language, are greeted with kindness and affirmation...., they begin to feel I'm safe here, I'm okay here, I belong here.

A child's home language is a central part of their identity. While bilingualism is a strong value, the reality is that very few children actually have a teacher who speaks their language or attend a school where their home language is part of the daily instruction and interaction. For all children, it is important that their home language be respected and valued and have some visibility and "place" in the world of school. Helping all children see language diversity as a positive thing is a major goal. Attitudinally, there is no difference between a bilingual and an English-run program. For all children, it is also important to learn that bilingualism is an asset and that language diversity is a normal, accepted part of living in a diverse world.

Teachers can impart these values and affirm the languages of the students in the classroom by being explicit about the value of all children's languages, creating ways to incorporate each child's language in the classroom, and proactively imparting information and messages about bilingualism as an asset.

In addition, teachers should:

- Know and learn how to properly pronounce the names of the children, ask families how the names are pronounced at home.
- Incorporate signs and messages throughout the classroom in all of the languages of the children in the program.
- Learn basic phrases and messages in each child's home language and use the phrases regularly (e.g., *good morning, goodbye, and thank you*)
- Learn a few songs in multiple languages that become routines for the class (e.g., *good morning songs*)
- For each thematic unit, select one or two words representing key concepts and learn how to say them in all of the languages of the families in the program. Display them on

the wall and teach them to the class (e.g., *for an Oceans Unit, you may learn how to say the word “ocean” or “fish” in several languages*)

- Engage families as experts and invite them to teach the class a song or compile a few songs to play during free play or as part of your closing circle. Encourage families to create a chant in their home language related to your theme.
- Add books to the classroom library in the languages of the families in the program. Schedule times for families to read books in their home languages to the children.
- Occasionally create small groups for projects of children who share a home language, and encourage them to use their home language as they work collaboratively on the project
- Create “family projects” that encourage families to create books and posters with their children in their home language
- Celebrate the language diversity of the class by regularly mentioning and affirming how many languages are spoken, and the great value of bilingualism, and using the word “bilingualism” as a positive thing.
- To the degree you can, learn something about the languages spoken in children’s homes. Find out what sounds occur in that language that do not occur in English, and vice versa. Find out what features of the language are different from English. What transfers and what does not? This will help you recognize, point out features, and support children in bridging across their language worlds.

Planning for Language Diversity in the Classroom

A child's home language is a central part of their identity. For all children, it is important that their home language be respected and valued and have some visibility and "place" in the world of school. It is important that they learn that bilingualism is an asset and that language diversity is a normal, accepted part of living in a diverse world. This means that teachers need to be explicit about the value of all children's languages, creating ways to incorporate each child's language in the classroom, and proactively imparting information and messages about bilingualism as an asset. This is a natural opportunity to center families and children as language experts and call on them to share their expertise with the class!

Step 1: Talk with families and conduct *Language & Interests Interviews* to determine all of the languages represented in the classroom.

Step 2. Notify families and caregivers that throughout the year you plan to highlight a Language of the Week/ Month (*duration depends on the number of languages that are represented*). Children will learn a song and simple phrases in every language. They will hear stories in those languages and learn about the various cultures associated with those languages. Let families know you will be eliciting both the children’s help and their help when their language(s) come in the calendar.

Step 3. Construct a year-long calendar that assigns one-to-three weeks to each language and share the calendar with families.

Step 4. Announce to the class that you are excited about *ALL* of the languages that are spoken by the children and their families. And that over the course of the year they will learn important words, phrases, and songs in every language, and we will all be becoming "bilingual" - bilingual means being able to speak more than one language! Inform the children of the first language they will learn.

Step 5. In preparation for each Language of the Week/Month, talk to the children who speak that language. Tell them that they are the *Language Experts* for the Week/Month and ask them what they would like to share in their home language with their school friends. Support them by having them practice ahead of time. They may decide to teach the class a few words or phrases such as: *Hello. How are you? Mom. Dad, etc.*, or how to count to 10 in their home language, they may sing their favorite song, etc. Coordinate with families to join the class during this time and ask them to sign up to read a story, teach a song, simple dance, make a connection between language and culture by sharing photos of a place, bringing in artifacts or a traditional snack to share.

The week before:

- Prepare a decorative poster/sign that says, *Language of the week: Polish* and includes names of the Language Experts - children in the class who speak that language. In addition, write a few words on the poster such as *Hello!* or *Good morning!* in the language so children can SEE how words are written in the language.
- Learn a few facts about where in the world the language is spoken (e.g., Spanish is spoken in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Spain and many other countries). Perhaps bring in a map and locate with the children these different regions as you explore each language.
- Ask families to teach a simple song in the language to the class. If possible, have them download a song or record themselves singing the song in a version that can be played over and over to the class. Practice the song yourself. (You may wish to have a single song that you teach each time in the target language - developing a series of versions in different languages, such as the *Good Morning* song.)

Step 6. Have the children who are the Language Experts introduce the language to the class. Children share a few words or phrases and the class repeats the words several times. Use choral response whole class, and then have children turn to their partners and say it. Point to the word(s) written in text. Introduce the song. And have family members come in throughout the week/month to share stories, songs, read books and help make other language / culture connections.

Every day of that week/month, during Circle Time, sing the song, practice counting and saying the words/phrases. Throughout the day, use the phrases to say *Thank you* to children when they have done something kind. Greet them in the morning with *Good morning* or *Hello* in the language.

As you continue with Language Experts throughout the year, occasionally revisit the phrases of a language you have already studied. Periodically, sing the songs of the various languages.

Language Presence in the Classroom

Language:		Dates:	
Books:		Songs & Chants:	
Key Words, Phrases & Concepts:			
Hello:		Family:	
Goodbye:		Mom:	
Thank you:		Dad:	
Let's be friends:		Brother:	
Do you want to play together?:		Sister:	
Numbers 1-10:	Colors:	Shapes:	
Role of the family/families:		Role of the child/children:	
Key Facts/Background Knowledge about Language & Culture(s)			

Phrases in 10 Most Common Home Languages

Arabic

Greeting: **Assalaam Alaykum** - Peace be upon you

Reply: **Wa Alaikum assalaam** - And peace be upon you

Thank you: **Shukran**

Goodbye (person leaving): **Ma'a salama**

Goodbye (person staying): **Alla ysalmak**



One of many online resources:

[LearnArabicwithMaha](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWcglbj5sWM) Video: The Arabic Greetings
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWcglbj5sWM>

Cantonese

Hello: **Néih hóu** – pronounced slightly differently than in Mandarin, more like *neeh hOHW* and *wahy* – is hi on phone

Thank you: **dòjeh** – pronounced **daw-dyeh** for a gift, and **m̀hgòì** - pronounced **mm gai** for a service

In Mandarin thank you is: **xie xie**

Goodbye: **joigin bāaibaai**



One of many online resources:

[CantoneseClass101.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFk_a019M1M) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFk_a019M1M

Farsi

Hi: **Salam**

Thank you: **Mamnoon**

Goodye: **Khoda Hafez** or **Bedrood**

One of many online resources:

Farsi / Persian Lesson: Greeting

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL_9LS0sO1g
 Learn Persian - Persian in Three Minutes - Greetings
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyWaiEHlaCQ>



Hindi

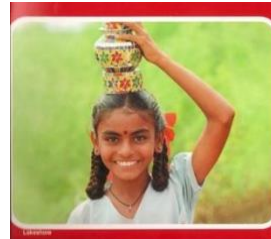
Hello / Goodbye: **Namaste**

Thank you: **Jee** (respectful) or **haan**
See you later: **Fir milenge**

One of many online resources:

Learn Hindi - Hindi in Three Minutes – Greetings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQIQWjr8VxA>



नमस्ते
 (nuh-muss-TAY)
 India

Punjabi

Hello, Greeting: **Sat Sri Akal** – Sikh religious greeting

Namaste – Hindu religious greeting

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Saalam Alaikum – Muslim religious greeting

Thank you: **Meherbani**

Goodbye: **Alvida**

One of many online resources:

Greeting Fluency: Punjabi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U24xeELeyiw>

Korean

Hi or Bye (informal): **Annyeong** (add **Haseyo** for formal)

Thank you: **kam-sa-ham-ni-da** (thank you very much) / **go-map-seum-ni-dah** (thanks)



안녕
 (AHN yong)
 Korea

Russian

Hello: **Zdravstvujte** – formal,

Privet - informal

Allo? - on phone

Thank you: **Spasibo**

Goodbye: **Do svidaniya** – formal, **Poka** - informal



Привет
 (pree-VYET)
 Russia

Samoan

Hello: **Talofa / Malō** (informal)

Thank you: **Fa'afetai**

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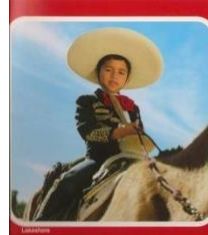
Goodbye: **Tofa soifua**

Spanish

Hello: **Hola**

Thank you: **Gracias**

Goodbye: **Adiós**



Hola

(OHL-la)

Mexico

Tagalog

Hello, how are you?: **Kumusta (informal)**

Thank you: **Salamat**

Bye: **Paalam**



Hello

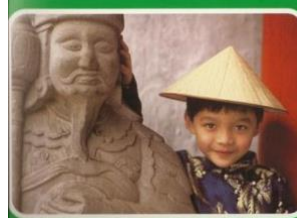
Philippines

Vietnamese

Hello: **Chào anh** (male) **Chào chị** (female)
Á-lô! (on phone)

Thank you: **Cảm ơn ông** (male) **Cảm ơn bà** (female)

Goodbye: **Chào anh** (male) **Chào chị** (female)



Chào

(chow)

Vietnam

One of many online resources:

Learn Vietnamese: Say "Hello" the Correct Way

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZApQ_F_5oTk