

## English Learners with Disabilities: Supporting Young Children in the Classroom

Est. Time: 30 Minutes

### Objective

Understand the importance of supporting a child's development in his or her home language as well as in English.

### DEC Recommended Practices

This activity addresses the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices topic areas outlined below. (DEC is a division of the Council for Exceptional Children.)

#### Family

**F1.** Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity.

**F8.** Practitioners provide the family of a young child who has or is at risk for developmental delay/disability, and who is a dual language learner, with information about the benefits of learning in multiple languages for the child's growth and development.

#### Instruction

**INS11.** Practitioners provide instructional support for young children with disabilities who are dual language learners to assist them in learning English and in continuing to develop skills through the use of their home language.

**INS12.** Practitioners use and adapt specific instructional strategies that are effective for dual language learners when teaching English to children with disabilities.

### Overview

Chances are you will have many children in your classroom who are English learners (ELs)—children who are learning two or more languages, either simultaneously or sequentially. The DEC Recommended Practices note the importance and benefits of maintaining children's home language as they learn English as a way to promote the children's learning in both.

### Activity

Read the handouts below from Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center and then answer the following questions.

- [Dual Language Learners: Primed and Ready to Learn](#)
- [The Gift of Language](#)
- [Language at Home and in the Community: For Teachers](#)

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### Questions/Discussion Topics

1. Why is it important to maintain young children's home language?
2. There are a number of things that teachers and programs working with young English learners can do to promote the children's home language. Select the option below that best describes your current situation and answer the question.

**Option 1: I am currently working with young ELs.** Reflect on your current practices. What can you improve upon or do differently regarding maintaining their language? Briefly discuss.

**Option 2: I plan to work with young ELs in the future.** Reflect on what you just learned. Is there anything you had not previously thought about but would like to ensure you do regarding maintaining home language? Briefly discuss.