Supporting Multilingual Learners in the Early Years: Many Languages - Many Children

As centers and schools serve more and more children who speak little or no English at home and as we recognize the many benefits of children retaining their home languages and cultures, teachers often ask us, “What are the specific strategies I should use to support my dual language learners?” POLL answers this question with three types of assistance: (1) family engagement, (2) environmental supports, and (3) conversation and interaction. In this issue of TYC, we address the first two strategies. Teachers can work with librarians to select books in the children’s languages that relate to curricular themes and can adapt puzzles to include writing in all the children’s languages. Sandra’s other books available from Routledge are A Guide to Early Years Practice (third edition, 2007); The Developing Child in the Twenty-First Century; and Observing, Assessing and Planning for Children in The Early Years: A Reader. Good book that covers how practitioners can help support bilingual learners talks about Chomsky theory as well as Bruner and Vygotsky good for foundation degree students. Read more. Report abuse. Early Childhood Education. Supporting Multilingual Students in the Early Grades. Five ways teachers can celebrate and extend the linguistic expertise of young students who speak two or more languages. All multilingual children are experts in their home language practices and come with a wealth of knowledge that should be respected. Provide space and time for multilingual children to use all of their languages to think and express themselves. For example, during partner work, invite children to use their home languages to share what they know. All multilingual learners, whether they’re new to English or completely fluent, will benefit from talking with a partner who speaks the same home language. Thinking and sharing in both of their languages solidifies their learning. Contexts supporting optimal multilingualism involve early exposure to high quality conversation in each language, along with continued support for speaking both languages. Many of these children fail to develop sufficient English skills to keep pace with their peers. For others, L1 competence is neglected and gradually replaced with English. Among immigrant parents of children under 6 years old in the United States, the largest percentage comes from Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean countries (64%), and smaller percentages come from countries in Asia (23%), Europe and Canada (7%), and Africa and the Middle East (6%) (Capps et al., 2005).