



Building Skills in Two Languages

Learning Activity

One Scenario

Objective

To emphasize the importance of communicating regularly with the parents of children who are dual language learners

Instructions

1. Read this imaginary report from an early childhood teacher after a meeting with a family of a child learning more than one language:

A Pakistani child whose family spoke Urdu also was learning to speak English at our childcare program. The boy was indicating that he was developing basic English comprehension by following directions and responding to simple questions with basic words.

At a parent-teacher conference, other staff and I learned that he was almost toilet trained at home. At the childcare, he only used diapers. We discovered that the child knew how to say that he needed to use the bathroom at home in his native language. However, our staff was not aware of this, and the boy did not have the skill to express this need in English.

After this meeting with the family, the staff learned the words in Urdu to help him use the toilet at our early childhood program too.

2. Discuss the following questions:
 - What did the staff learn and how did they learn it?
 - What could the staff do to avoid this situation in the future?
 - What kinds of questions could they ask families?
 - How did the staff solve the problem?
 - What else could they do?
3. You might want to write down your answers and be prepared to share with the larger group.