

Adopting a Language-Focused Approach to Play

WHAT

Educators who adopt a language-focused approach to play strive to provide equitable, joyful, play-based learning opportunities for multilingual children that affirm and promote their dynamic language and cultural practices and the development of their identities.

WHY

A growing body of research recommends that children in PreK-3 settings need more opportunities to engage in joyful, play-based learning to support their development and learning. Multilingual children have the right to equitable play-based learning opportunities that allow them to use their language as a tool to play, learn, grow, and flourish as valued and unique individuals in a learning community.

HOW

Reflect On

- Your teaching beliefs and practices around languaging, learning, and joyful, play-based learning
- Your knowledge about joyful, play-based learning for all children in PreK-3 settings and specifically for multilingual children
- Your knowledge about the multilingual children you serve and how they play at home and in their communities
- Your observations of children playing. How are they learning and languaging during play?
- Your partnerships with the families and community members of the multilingual children you serve

Consider

- How will you engage in professional development around the topic of joyful, play-based learning in PreK-3 settings?
- How will you address any resistance to embedding more joyful, play-based learning into your practices?
- How will you be intentional about affirming, and providing space for, multilingual children's dynamic language practices during play-based learning (for example, affirming and encouraging translanguaging)?
- How will you a) embed observations of multilingual children playing to inform your instruction and b) embed more joyful, play-based learning for multilingual children into your practices?

Take Action

- Plan for and engage in a variety of guided play-based learning throughout the day (for example, guided play, exploratory play)
- Be intentional about considering multilingual children's identities, interests, language development, language use, culture, and learning in play-based activities
- Partner with families and community members to provide equitable play opportunities
- Collaborate with colleagues to learn more about and embed joyful, play-based learning into your practices

