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Objectives

Examine

Examine challenging behaviors multilingual learners exhibit in early childhood settings and identify ways to support these children and meet their social-emotional and learning needs.

Discuss

Discuss culturally responsive teaching strategies to help educators better support young multilingual learners with challenging behaviors.

Explore

Explore sign language as a second language that facilitates and encourages language development for all children.

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Supporting Diversity and Inclusion In Early Childhood Classrooms

Educators should value all children and their individual differences and create an inclusive environment.

Differences include:

Life experiences	Race	Ethnicity
Learning styles	Socio-economic status	Cognitive ability
Personality	Gender	Physical ability

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What is Challenging Behavior?

Repeated patterns of behavior that interfere with a child's ability to learn and be engaged in pro-social interactions with other children and adults

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Common Challenging Behaviors In Early Childhood Classrooms

Acting out, aggression, frustration, anger, or resentment

Self-directed signs of stress, such as refusing to eat, having toileting accidents, biting themselves, or pulling their own hair

Withdrawal, sadness, isolation, depression, or being mute

Ignoring directions, being rude or defiant, or not listening or participating

Spotlight on Young Children: Supporting Dual Language Learners, National Association for the Education of Young Children (2019).

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Negative Effects of Challenging Behaviors In Early Childhood Classrooms

Is harmful to and threatens the safety of the child, the other children, and even the adults

Interferes with teachers' ability to teach

Affects children's opportunities to learn

Weakens communication with peers

Puts children at high-risk for later social problems or school failure

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Possible Reasons for Challenging Behaviors

Each multilingual learner comes with his or her own unique background:

Personality traits	Learning delay
Learning style	Special needs
Poverty	Language differences
Homelessness	Culture
Stress	Immigration
Health issues	Trauma

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Characteristics of Children with Special Needs
Learning Delays

Delays in social and communication development might occur when children are learning two or more languages.

A child's developmental delay or disability will be observable in both languages and across multiple settings.

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Characteristics of Children with Special Needs
Learning Delays

Teachers attempting to distinguish between a disability and a language difference should begin by addressing a few key questions:

1. How long has the child been speaking and exposed to their native language in comparison to English? Keep in mind that a child learning a second language typically has a quiet period.

2. Are the difficulties present in both the child's home language and the new language?

3. Are the concerns evident in multiple settings (e.g., home, childcare)?

4. Have developmentally appropriate strategies been delivered systematically?

5. Have these strategies produced any significant differences in the child's learning and development?

Developmentally appropriate strategies will likely produce noticeable gains for typically developing DLLs but not necessarily for those with disabilities. At this time, a child should be screened for a possible disability.

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10 Strategies to Prevent Challenging Behaviors
with Multilingual Learners

1. Provide materials that reflect the child's culture and/or are written in the child's home language.
2. Learn about the children and families in your program.
3. Prepare a list of about 10 to 20 "survival" words or phrases that will help the child feel welcome, safe, and comfortable on his or her first day.
4. Establish a positive relationship with each child.
5. Teach all of the children effective ways to communicate with their classmates who use different languages and have different abilities.

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10 Strategies to Prevent Challenging Behaviors
with Multilingual-Learners

6. Use a communication board with pictures and symbols to help children communicate more effectively.
7. Speak slowly, avoid using slang, simplify sentences, and repeat keywords often.
8. Use lots of nonverbal cues—gestures, sign language, facial expression, and changes in voice tone to enhance communication.
9. Use lots of music and movement.
10. Maintain a predictable schedule.

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10 Strategies to Address Challenging Behaviors
in an Early Childhood Classroom serving Multilingual-Learners

1. Remain calm.
2. Try to look at the situation from the child's perspective.
3. Show the child how to ask for what they need.
4. Develop strategies to calm the child when he or she feels scared, angry, or frustrated.
5. Develop and teach expectations.

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10 Strategies to Address Challenging Behaviors
in an Early Childhood Classroom serving Multilingual-Learners

6. Teach and model empathy.
7. Use group times to discuss conflicts.
8. Accept and accommodate regression.
9. Become trauma-informed.
10. Focus on positive behaviors.

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Sign Language in | **Early Childhood** | **Education**

A system of communication using visual gestures and signs used most commonly by deaf people, but also used by people who are not deaf.

| There is no universal sign language | Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions | Is considered a second language |

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Sign Language in | **Early Childhood** | **Education**

American Sign Language (ASL)

| Is a language completely **separate and distinct** from English | Has its **own rules** for pronunciation, word formation, and word order | Has **regional variations** in the rhythm of signing, pronunciation, slang, and signs used | Has a **fingerspelled alphabet** in which each letter corresponds to a distinct handshape | **Fingerspelling** is **often used** for proper names or to indicate the English word for something |

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Sign Language in | **Early Childhood** | **Education**

Benefits

1 Facilitates and encourages language development for all children, including DLLs and children with Downs Syndrome and autism

2 Enhances the development of verbal and nonverbal language skills

3 Provides a bridge between the native language and English

| Increased vocabulary | Elimination of temper tantrums caused by frustration | Increased confidence and self-esteem | Increased social skills | Comprehension of language | Improvement of IQ |

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Communicating with Parents

About Challenging Behaviors or Learning Delays in a Culturally Sensitive Way

Educators need:

| To understand the unique perspectives or communication styles common to the cultures represented in their learning environment | To understand that people deal with feelings differently — especially disappointment, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and anger | To be sensitive to the different values, experiences, and beliefs that may be held by members of various cultural and ethnic groups toward special education |

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Examples of Different Cultural Styles

Sharing Space	Touching	Eye Contact	Time Ordering of Interactions
People from different cultures use, value, and share space differently.	Rules for touching others vary from culture to culture.	There are different meanings for eye contact in different cultures.	Ideas about when it's time for business and pleasure may differ in cultures.

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Conclusion Conclusion Conclusion

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