

How will my child be assessed?

Families may worry that their children's knowledge or skills cannot be assessed if they do not know English. This is an important concern. In New York State, Prekindergarten programs invest in multilingual resources to help assess the children. These resources include translated assessments and interpretation services.

Prekindergarten teachers are also able to assess children through classroom observation. They can see what children have mastered and what they are still learning through their behaviors and use of materials. Telling the teacher what children can do at home also allows the teacher to better understand them.

Will my child get confused?

No. Bilingual and multilingual individuals, even children, can use words in multiple languages to express themselves. Sometimes they will combine languages as they speak but this is not a sign of confusion. It is not necessary to force the child to separate languages. Instead, adults at home can use the home language with the child to continue building vocabulary and other language skills. The child will also combine languages in school, the teacher will also allow the child to use the home language as they are learning English.

When your child brings home projects or assignments to do together, it is helpful to complete them using your home language. In this way, your child does not have to be limited to using the words they know in English. You can reinforce what they learn in English at school by using your own language at home.

How can I help?

Continue using your home language with your child, maintaining your own traditions. Find opportunities to use your home language, such as speaking with your child about what they are learning in school. Continue all those things you do with your child — telling stories, singing, counting, reading — all in your home language.

Look for opportunities to help the teacher use your home language in the classroom so that you child hears their home language in school.

Remember, it is great to know more than one language. The school needs your participation in order to make the classroom an inviting multilingual place where children can use all the language skills they know as they grow and learn.

Insert School PK
Program
Information Here



Welcome Families of Emergent Multilingual Learners to Prekindergarten in New York State



WELCOME!

Entering Prekindergarten is an exciting time for children. In the Prekindergarten classroom, your children will begin their educational journey. They will meet new friends, hear stories, play, sing, dance, and learn. All these activities are part of how children learn and build important academic and language skills. You, teachers, and other family members can work together to help your children learn. It is important for you to build a strong connection between the school and the home. As a team, we can support children's learning. We are excited to build that connection with your family to be a part of your school community.

In Prekindergarten, we honor the ways families love and support their children. We want to work together to serve your children. To do so, we want to learn about your family, your traditions, your culture, and the language you speak.



BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN

Knowing more than one language is an advantage. Many families in New York speak more than one language at home. Sometimes young children start Prekindergarten speaking their home languages and very little English. We encourage your young children to continue learning more than one language and be bilingual or multilingual when they grow up.

Your bilingual or multilingual children may need a period of adjustment while they are learning English. They will need time to develop vocabulary and express themselves in more than one language. Your children will continue to learn important skills and concepts as they are learning English. This adjustment period may be fearful and raise multiple questions. To help you, we have responded to a few common questions in this brochure.



Should we speak English at home?

The language you use at home is a treasure for your child. Even as your child learns more and more words in English, it is good to continue speaking, reading, and interacting with them using your home language. This helps them to become bilingual or multilingual, and it helps their language skills grow and build on their learning. All the activities and projects children do in school, can be continued at home using your home language. Research shows that using the home language does not interfere with learning to speak, read, or write in English or learning a new language. Using your home language helps with learning to read and write. Being bilingual or multilingual has multiple advantages and is good for the brain.

Sometimes families sacrifice the home language because they think it is better for their children to focus on English. Your child can learn English without losing your home language. It does not have to be a choice between languages. Your home language is a precious part of your heritage and identity. Being bilingual or multilingual will enrich your children's life. Being able to use the language of your heritage is an asset for your child and your family.

In bilingual families, sometimes the children speak to each other in English, but they speak to adults in the home language. Children are aware of the languages people speak around them. If they know the language, they will select when to use it. Your home language will always be important to your children. You can maintain your bilingualism or multilingualism when you continue to use your language at home.

