

# Course Description:

## Language Rich Environments

This Language Rich Environments online workshop was designed to help you recognize the importance of a child's first language...not only to their own self esteem, but to acquiring a new language.

You will find out how children learn language and learn various ways to work with them to improve their fluency—as well as how to deal with any language issues that arise. Finally, you will develop the knowledge and skills to implement language building opportunities in your program, from the set up to activity plans.

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to create a professional and supportive environment where every child's language development is appreciated and nurtured by co-workers and families.

### Course objectives:

- Understand the importance of children keeping their home language—and learn strategies support this in your program
- Identify strategies to educate families on the importance of keeping their home language, so parents can support their children's learning at home
- Understand, identify and respond to the different stages of language learning
- Understand what goes into creating a language rich environment and develop strategies to build your own

- Understand, identify and respond to language learning difficulties

### Learner outcomes:

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Effectively communicate to newcomer parents the importance of keeping the home language and provide supportive strategies for home and program use
- Effectively identify and respond to different stages of language learning in newcomer children
- Create a language rich environment through setting up proper space, activities and learning strategies
- Effectively handle any language learning difficulties of newcomer children

### Resources:

- The Importance of Keeping Your Child's Home Language: Quick Reference Sheet
- Stages and Strategies for Language Learning: Quick Reference Sheet
- 10 Tips for Encouraging Language in Children: Quick Reference Sheet
- Language Rich Space & Activity: Quick Reference Sheet
- Signs and Strategies for Language Learning Issues: Quick Reference Sheet



Newcomer children and their families have experienced the difficult transition of leaving friends and family behind and are learning to adapt to their new country. Many have left behind their network of support. The special needs of a child may have been a non-issue in their home culture or may have been perceived in a different way. Your team's support is vital to establishing successful communication. Provide your staff with resources and support to welcome a newcomer child with special needs into your program. Make certain your staff treats the child with special needs the way they would any child—by assessing him or her on an individual basis.

### The Facts

Identify the child's strengths and challenges and develop an individual education plan. This will establish simple, achievable goals with outcomes that enable the child to feel both successful and capable.

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that the education of the individual be directed to the development of the individual's full potential. In December, the United Nations observes the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. As a UN signatory, Canada observes this day to promote an understanding of persons with disability issues.

### Assess your program's ability to accommodate a child with special needs.

- Check for physical space and equipment that can be adapted or modified.
- Establish policies and procedures that provide positive outcomes for children who need individual support.
- Ensure that the health and safety standards of your program are maintained.
- Provide additional support for child care workers to train, ask for assistance and meet the physical demands of the child.
- Welcome input from staff about how administration can help them to do a better job.

### Good communication starts at registration. Encourage your team to:

- Schedule a meeting with a translator to assist with the conversation, if necessary.
- Participate in the conversation as an active listener and recognize when it is a good time to continue.
- Inform families of your program's curriculum, activities, routines, classroom procedures and policies.
- Provide the family with your handbook of policies and procedures along with arrival and departure information translated into different languages.
- Ask questions to determine how best to support the child.
- Use open-ended questions that avoid assumptions and encourage dialogue.
- Provide the parents with an opportunity to disclose information.

Introduce parents to other parents with children enrolled in the program.

