



Gathering Information: Become an Ethnographer

Become an ethnographer to observe and learn more about how, where, and why multilingual children play. We invite you to choose one or both of these activities to expand your knowledge about play in your context and inform your teaching practices.

1. Observe and record joyful learning occurring in your school or program
2. Observe and record joyful learning occurring in the community of the multilingual children you serve

Activity 1: Joyful Learning in Your School or Program

Observe moments of joyful or purposeful play in your school or program. What is play? Is play in your setting responsive linguistically and culturally to the multilingual children you serve? Record your observations with photos and captions.

Observing and documenting:

- What captures your attention through your senses? What do you see or hear that seems joyful in your setting?
- Are there instances of free play, dramatic play, or guided play in classrooms?
- What is happening on the playground? What do you see and hear? How are students using language? Do students create their own games?
- Are the cultures and languages of the multilingual children you serve represented in the play spaces within the school or program? Are information and play activities provided in languages other than English?
- Does the outside environment have a special setting that would be ideal for play for learning? A wooded area? A school garden?
- Consider inviting the children you teach to join in the observations.

Informing your practice:

- What do you notice about the joyful learning in your school or program?
- How will this inform your teaching practices?
- How might you and the children you serve co-create joyful learning spaces?

Activity 2: Joyful Learning in the Community

Explore the community where your multilingual children live and record what you notice. What is play? How are they playing? Are play spaces in the community responsive linguistically and culturally to the multilingual children you serve? Record your observations with photos and captions.

Observing and documenting:

- What joyful examples do you see and hear?
- What would capture the attention of a child? Consider exploring at the level of a child... Do you see different things?
- What are some unique, joyful features of the community? Colorful murals? Beautiful mountains? A community garden?
- Are the cultures and languages of the multilingual children you serve represented in the play spaces within the community? Are information and play activities provided in languages other than English?
- Consider engaging in this community ethnography with your students, or students and families. Take a community walk to observe and record your observations.

Informing your practice:

- How might you use the information you gather in your joyful learning?
- Can you incorporate play examples and places from the community into your classroom projects and activities?
- Are there family and/or community members you would like to engage with around a certain project or learning activity?
- How might you and the children you serve co-create joyful learning spaces with examples from the community?

