



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

# Being Bilingual Is a Superpower!

“[Being Bilingual Is a Superpower!](#)” is an animated video from Colorín Colorado, the nation’s leading website about serving English language learners (ELLs). It highlights how multilingual families can support their child’s literacy and is available in eight languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Somali, and Vietnamese.

You are welcome to share these videos online, via text or messaging apps, or on school social media channels. You can also use them in family engagement events. If you’d like to include these videos in your outreach, here are some activity ideas!

In addition, our [related family literacy tip sheet](#) is available in 16 languages, including the languages above. The videos, guide, and tip sheets are all available at: [www.colorincolorado.org/bilingual-superpower](http://www.colorincolorado.org/bilingual-superpower).

## Planning an event

Before scheduling a family event:

- Ask bilingual staff members or volunteers who speak families’ languages to help.
- Ask family liaisons to brainstorm well-known songs and stories from families’ cultures.
- Find some bilingual books in families’ languages to bring to the session.
- Consider inviting a school librarian or public librarian to the event.
- If the video is not available in all of your families’ languages, plan on having interpreters available who can share the content of the video in other languages.

For additional suggestions on planning events with multilingual families, see our [related guide](#)!

## Sharing the video with families

1. Ask families to sit in small groups. (Group families by language if possible.)
2. Assign a bilingual staff member or parent volunteer to each group to facilitate.
3. Pass out the literacy tip sheet in families’ languages.
4. Show families the videos in their languages.

**Tip:** *You may wish to use laptops in small groups so that you can show the video in multiple languages simultaneously.*





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# Being Bilingual Is a Superpower!: Activities

The following activities are designed to encourage discussion among families. You may wish to try each activity listed below, or go more in-depth on just a few activities. Keep in mind that:

- Families may have varying levels of literacy. The activities below focus on ideas that families can try regardless of literacy level.
- Families may be hesitant to speak about their language and culture, especially if they have faced discrimination. Keep a warm, encouraging tone to build trust and foster engagement!
- You may wish to ask families to share ideas from their small groups with the bigger group after each activity or at the closing of the event.

### ACTIVITY #1 Video Response

Start by asking families their response to the video:

- How it felt to see a video in their home language
- Their reactions to the message of celebrating their culture and language
- Which ideas in the video they've tried

**Going deeper:** Ask families where they might share this video with their own networks.

### ACTIVITY #2 The Home Language

Ask families:

- How their children feel about using their language at home
- Why it's difficult to teach their children their language and what might help

**Going deeper:** Ask families how the school can support families in maintaining their home languages.

### ACTIVITY #3 The Benefits of Being Bilingual

Ask families:

- If they have met anyone at their child's school or in the community who is bilingual
- How that person helped their family
- What the benefits of being bilingual are (e.g., staying connected to family, jobs, travel)
- How to create a positive attitude towards being bilingual at home

**Going deeper:** Talk about the benefits of learning different languages for the brain. For more ideas, see this [related tip sheet](#) series from Head Start (produced with Colorín Colorado).



For more ideas ...  
[ColorinColorado.org/reading](http://ColorinColorado.org/reading)





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### ACTIVITY #4

#### Stories and Songs

- Ask families what songs, rhymes, or games are sung with babies and children in their language.
- Ask your bilingual volunteers for ideas!

For example, in Spanish, you can find well-known songs and rhymes such as “[Los pollitos](#)” in [these books and collections](#).

**Going deeper:** Have families compare the lyrics from the different versions of popular songs. See if there are any differences! Librarian Lucía Gonzalez [notes that](#) families can get pretty animated about which version is the “right” one! And you might see if a brave participant would lead a sing-a-long!

### ACTIVITY #5

#### Sharing Books Together

Share some bilingual books with your families. If possible, look for culturally responsive titles that [reflect families’ cultures and experiences](#).

- Model a read-aloud in families’ home languages.
- Show families how you might talk about the illustrations together.
- Encourage families to listen to their children reading out loud.

**Going deeper:** If a librarian is at the event, ask them to talk about the kinds of books at the library, how to sign up for a library card, and how to download books on phones or tablets.

### ACTIVITY #6

#### Writing at Home

Talk with your families about different opportunities for students to write at home in their home language. These might include:

- Grocery lists
- Text messages
- Letters or thank-you notes
- Labels or signs for things at home

Share some cards, markers, pens, and stickers and invite parents to make some fun drawings, signs, or messages for their children to take home.

### At the end

- Ask families what they have learned from the session and which ideas they might try.
- Let them know that there are many ways they can support their child’s education, even if they are still learning to read and still learning English.
- Encourage them to keep their language and culture strong at home and ask the school for support where needed!



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