



# Embracing Diversity Through Language and Culture

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# About Us



**Maira  
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Illinois Hands & Voices  
Guide By Your Side

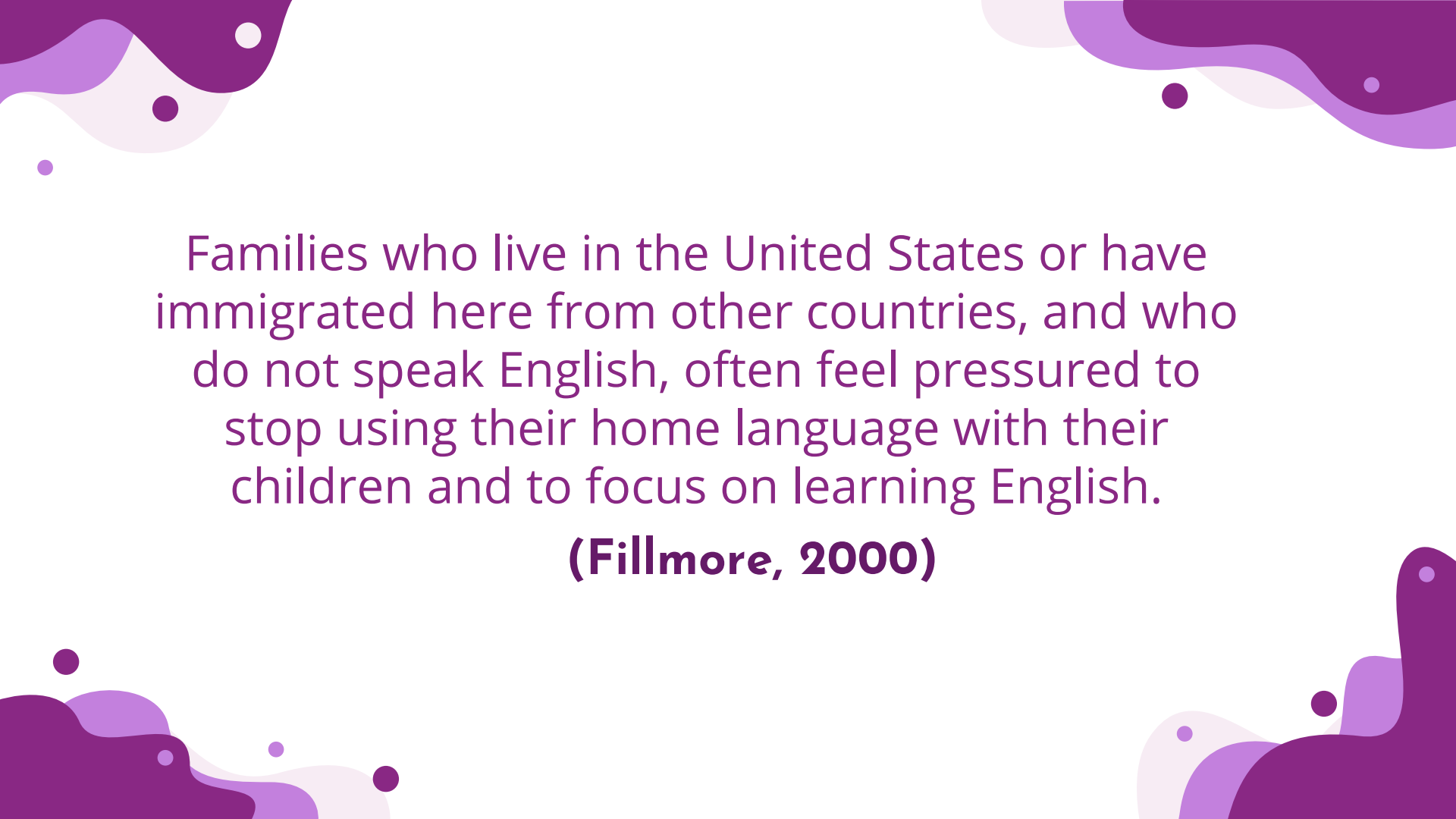


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# Presentation Objectives

- Identify at least two advantages of having a child be multilingual vs monolingual
- Be able to list three ways Early Intervention (EI) providers can support parents of diverse cultural/language backgrounds and recognize the importance of integrating family, language and culture into services.
- Understand the importance multiculturalism plays into self identity and how a person feels they fit into the world around them. (Home culture, Deaf culture, American culture)



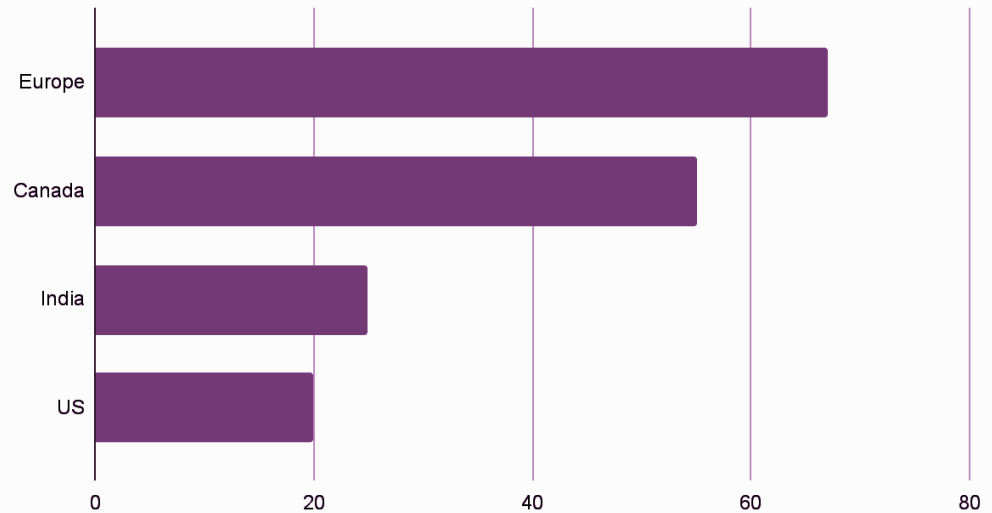
Families who live in the United States or have immigrated here from other countries, and who do not speak English, often feel pressured to stop using their home language with their children and to focus on learning English.

**(Fillmore, 2000)**

# Statistics

Approximately 7,000 languages are spoken worldwide in only 196 countries.

Percentage of People Who Are Multilingual



# Monolingual vs Multilingual

## Monolingual

- Disconnect between child and family
- Loss of cultural knowledge
- Loss of identity for the child

## Multilingual

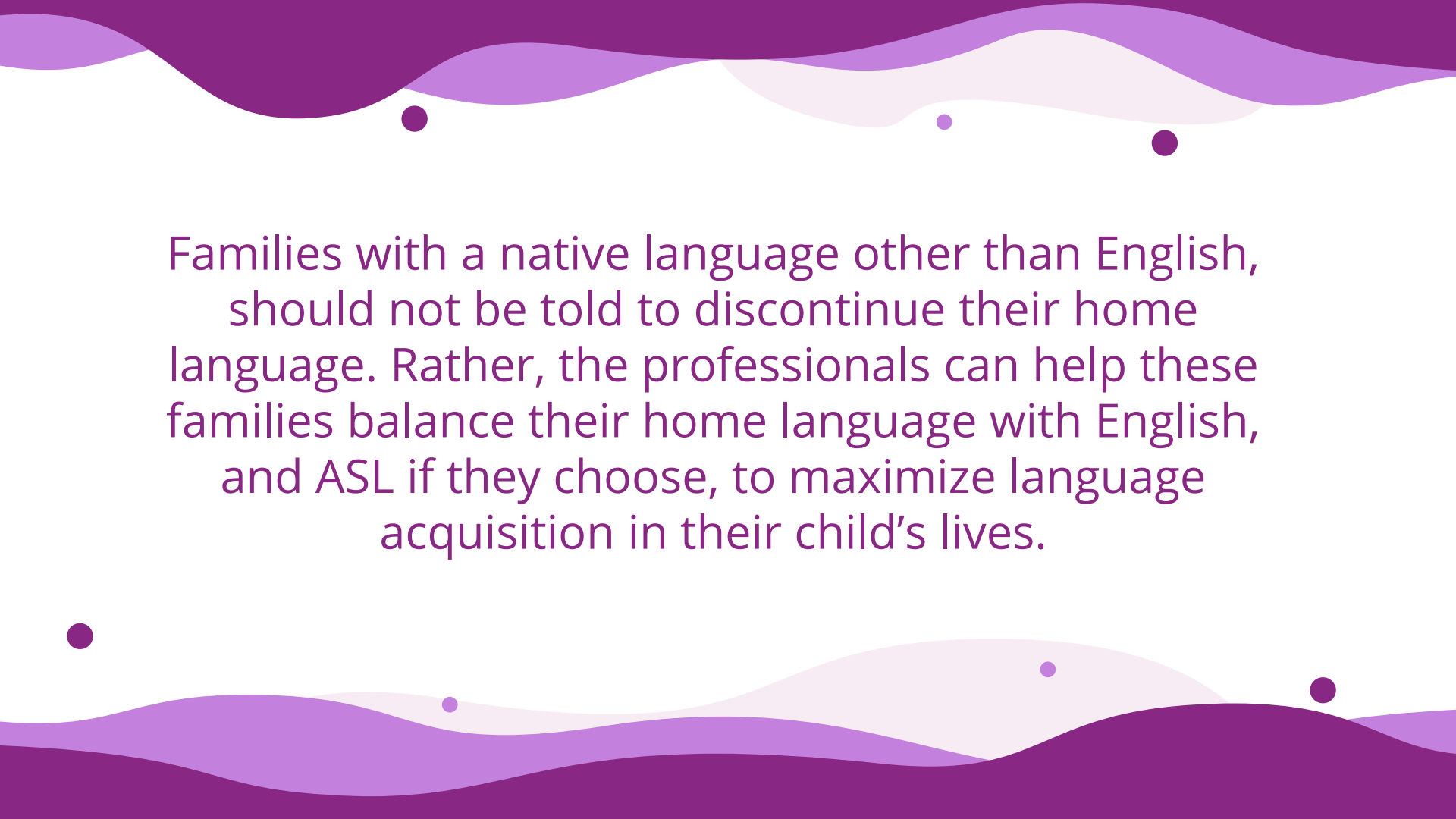
- Able to navigate more than one culture
- Better prepared to live in a multicultural society
- Feel at ease with a diverse group of friends
- Builds curiosity and eagerness to learn about more cultures.



In the US, children in a multilingual home are likely to have parents without a highschool education, are likely to be growing up with financial challenges, and are likely being raised in a different cultural setting than the majority of society.

**(Winsler et. al., 2014) ?**





Families with a native language other than English, should not be told to discontinue their home language. Rather, the professionals can help these families balance their home language with English, and ASL if they choose, to maximize language acquisition in their child's lives.





# **How Can Providers Support Multilingual/Multicultural Families**

# • Get a Better Understanding of Provider Demographics



- Limited bilingual service providers.
- ALL providers can benefit from education and training to better work with the bilingual/multilingual population.

# • Spend Time Learning About The Family's Language



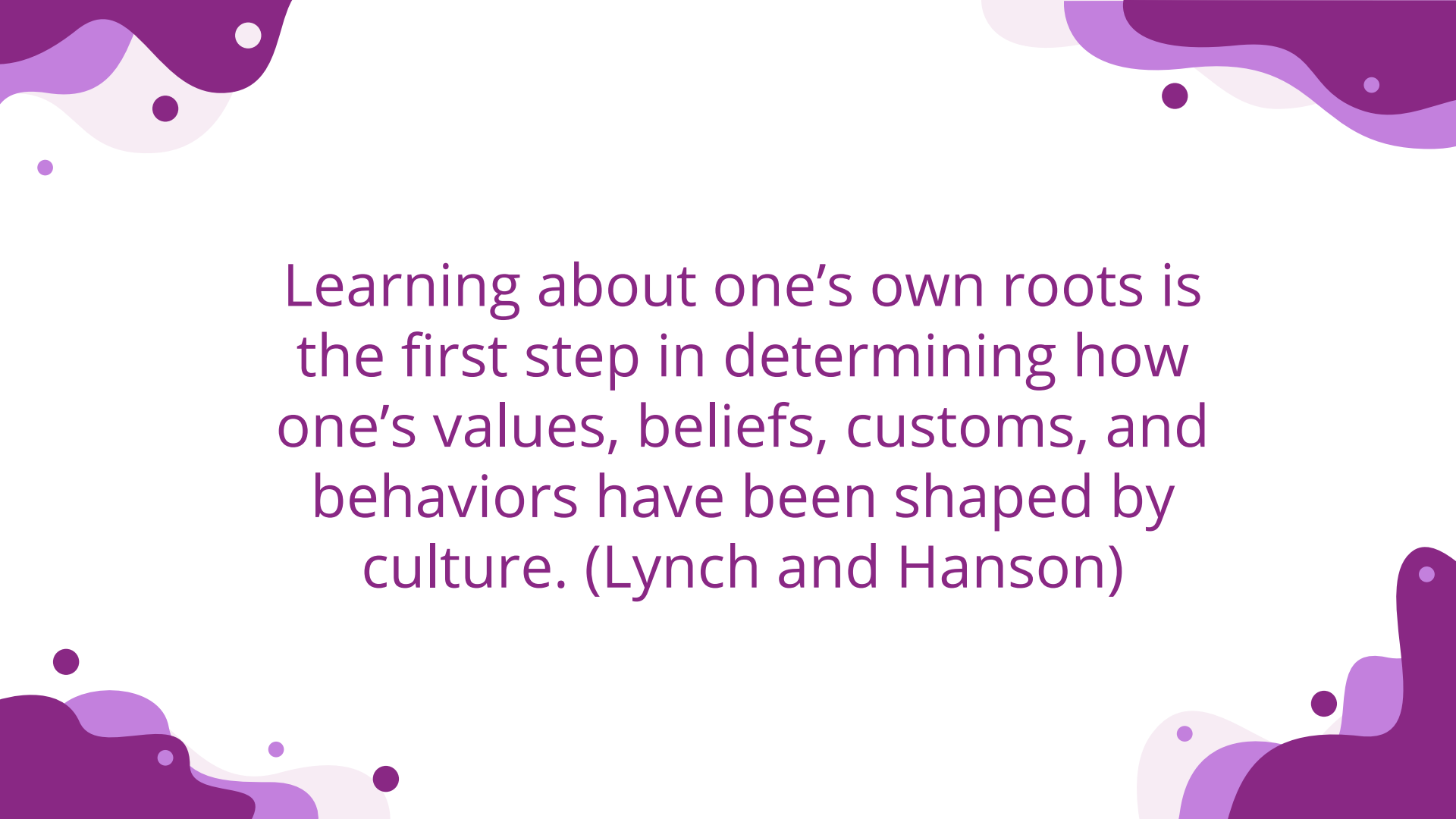
- History
- Language Usage
- Language Background
- Utilize Resources
  - Language Surveys
  - Asking questions the right way

# Reflect on Linguistic Biases



- The U.S. tends to be English centered.
- Everyone has linguistic biases
  - Unconscious and Conscious
- More training needed





Learning about one's own roots is the first step in determining how one's values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors have been shaped by culture. (Lynch and Hanson)



**Including a family's  
culture and language  
into  
sessions/assessments**

# Sense of Identity





**No matter what culture a person comes from, a goal should be to develop a person-to-person relationship. Treating people with respect solves many cross-cultural problems.**

**(Gonzales-Mena 2001)**

# Questions



# Resources

- Lynch, Eleanor, and Marci J. Hanson. 2011. *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing
- Kids count data center, 2019
- American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States by Gary Althen 1988
- 7 Benefits of Raising Multicultural Children by Dania Santana 2017
- Deaf Minority Students: Communication Development in Trilingual/Tricultural Children by Rara Jane Schoop
- Demographics of Multilingual Children by Todd LaMarr
- Fillmore, L.W. (2000) Loss of family languages: Should educators be concerned? *Theory into Practice*, 39(4), 203-210.
- Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2018). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (21st ed.). Dallas, TX: SIL International.
- Gonzalez-Mena J. (2001) *Multicultural Issues in Child Care*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield