

TIPS for Supporting Your English Language Learner (ELL)

All children need their families to be engaged in their education. This is especially important for students who are learning English as a second language.

Here are some tips to help your children retain their home language, while learning English and succeeding in school.

Use Your Home Language

Sometimes children start to prefer English as they get older. Talk with your children about the benefits of speaking two languages or being linguistically gifted. Continue using your language, even if your children respond in English so you keep your lines of communication open.

Don't Discourage "Mixing Languages"

Many English language learners mix English and their home language. This is normal and does not mean your child is confused or not learning English properly. If your child uses an English word in place of a word in your home language, for example, simply say the word to them in your home language so they have heard it.



Tell Stories and Share Books Together

Read a book to your child every day - in whatever language you feel most comfortable -beginning at birth. And if you don't feel comfortable reading words, you can point out the pictures in the book and talk with your child about them.

Talk About Your Culture

Visit your child's classroom or childcare provider. Share your language and traditions, including family songs and games. Encourage your child to retell family stories and share your heritage with their teacher, friends, and others.

Continue Using Your Home Language As Your Children Grow Older

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Don't Forget That You Are Key to Maintaining Your Home Language

Parents and other family members are the most influential people in children's lives. What you value, your children will learn to value. Help them learn that your family's language and culture are something to be proud of and to treasure. Remember the benefits of your home language and remain committed to continuing to use it, no matter your child's age.

FACT: *Students who first learn to read in their home language have been shown to be more successful readers in English.*

The Benefits of Being Bilingual (Speaking two languages fluently)

Researchers have found that speaking multiple languages provides a great benefit to young children. Speaking your home language to your children from the time they are born helps build their young minds and prepare them for success in school and beyond. Developing the child's home language provides the foundation for reading and writing.

Thinking Skills

Individuals who are bilingual switch between two different language systems. Their brains are very active and flexible creating opportunities for understanding math concepts, solving word problems, using logic, focusing, remembering, making decisions, and other critical thinking skills.

Learning

School readiness and success for children who are dual language learners are tied directly to mastery of their home language. If a child is strong in ONE language, this will transfer to the second language. So, use your home language every day!

Social-Emotional

Being bilingual helps children maintain strong ties with their family, culture, and community. They make new friends and create strong relationships using their second language-an important personal skill in our increasingly diverse world.

Long-Term Success

Being linguistically gifted allows individuals to speak, explain, and negotiate in another language which makes you more employable, increases your confidence, and can lead to a higher salary.

With your support and guidance, your child is sure to succeed!

You can find more tips like these-as well as videos, information, and more at: www.talkingisteaching.org

For more resources on promoting early learning in young children who are learning more than one language, please visit Head Start at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language>

For questions, or more information about this resource, contact the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC) at 1-866-711-6711 or view our website at www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc



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