

How to help your child become bilingual



ACT Bilingual
Education Alliance

If you speak the target language well

- The more time you interact with your child in that language, the more skilled they will become
- Strategies to keep your child interested and motivated include:
 - expanding vocabulary through reading to/with your child
 - exploring online and other resources
 - seeking out ways for your child to have 'authentic' language experiences and reasons for using the language

If you do not speak the target language well

- Explore all possible opportunities to expose your child to the language since you yourself cannot be much of a model. Here are some ideas:

Playgroups

- Check with ACT Playgroups <http://playgroupact.org.au/>
- See 'Language Playgroups' page on ACTBEA website <https://actbilingual.weebly.com/>. Contact leaders to see if they welcome non-fluent parents/carers
- Advantage – you learn along with the child

Language Programs

- See 'Language Programs for Children' page on ACTBEA website
- Some Community Language Schools specifically cater for kids from other backgrounds

Networking with other families

- Playdates, do you know families who speak the language?
- Contact 'Canberra Bilingual Families' through their Facebook page:
- Join the ACTBEA mailing list for our free Updates (email canberrabilingual@gmail.com) and/or follow ACTBEA Facebook page for news of networking events

Babysitters

- Contact networks above plus colleges and universities to seek out possible babysitters/carers who speak the target language

Music

- Kids' songs for the young ones, pop music as they get older
- Listen to CDs or MP3s and sing along with them, including in the car

Reading

- Reading is key to broadening vocabulary, deepening understanding and strengthening your child's grasp of grammar, in all languages.
- If you don't read the target language, look for books with CDs, eBooks, online videos with writing, and online versions of stories/books you know in English
- Don't forget the local library!

YouTube and other online resources

- Search for things in the target language. Another chance to learn together – or have lots of fun guessing together. Share information on useful links with others

Radio and television, movies and DVDs

- Explore for target language listening and watching opportunities
- Watch with other families. Share information and resources

Your local Library

- Ask about bilingual story times and other language events/resources

Exposure to the language and its culture

- Attend cultural events in Canberra related to the target language
- Look out for local businesses with staff who can speak the target language
- Travel overseas to a country where the target language is spoken