



Maintain your family language – Enhance your child's future

It is important to encourage your children to speak and write in your home language, from as early as possible

Building your children's language and literacy skills in your language will help them

- Stay connected to family
- Develop a sense of identity and belonging
- Become better readers, listeners and communicators
- Succeed at school
- Have increased options for study, employment and travel in the future

Learning English after learning the family language, or learning English and the family language at the same time, can take longer, but your child will not be disadvantaged.

Research has shown that children who are proficient in two or more languages

- Are more creative, can think laterally, and are good problem solvers
- Have improved memory and concentration skills

TWO LANGUAGES ARE BETTER THAN ONE!!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Children need quantity and quality language input to develop strong language skills. As the main provider of input for the family language, you can help provide both.

- Speak the family language as much as possible – in everyday conversation, family routines and during family outings and celebrations.
- Encourage everyone in your family or social circle who speaks the language to use it as much as possible.
- Sing songs, tell stories, traditional sayings and rhymes in the family language.
- Read together every day. Talk about what you are reading.
- Explore all types of writing: magazines, newspapers as well as books: picture books, comics, stories or non-fiction. Don't forget online materials, including eBooks or apps that combine print, sound and pictures.
- Read bilingual books, or use the family language to talk about stories and articles written in English.
- Use the family language when helping with homework or projects from school.
- Watch programs and movies in the family language on DVDs, television or online. You can choose ones with English subtitles.
- Have fun. Play music and games in the family languages.

It is OK to sometimes talk about how what is said or written in the family language compares to English. This helps develop mental flexibility and vocabulary and grammar in both languages.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO CONTACT OTHER BILINGUAL FAMILIES IN THE ACT

- Visit ACT Bilingual Education Alliance at <https://actbilingual.weebly.com/> or on [Facebook](#)
- Join the Facebook group: Canberra Bilingual families

Some References

UK National Literacy Trust: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/understanding-multilingualism-early-years/>

What the research shows: <https://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows>

Place of first language: <https://tesol.org.au/advocacy/#advocacy-7>

This leaflet is also available in **ARABIC, CHINESE, HINDI, INDONESIAN, SPANISH** and **TELEGU**. See 'Practical Tips and Research Findings' page on the ACTBEA website

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