

Ten top tips for parents to help children learn their home language as well as English

It is very important for your child to learn their home language as well as English. If children speak their mother tongue well, they will learn English quickly. With two languages, they will have many advantages

– communicating with the family, feeling confident about their identity, learning new languages and working in different countries in the future. And, bilingualism gives more brain power!

1 Talk to your child every day in your home language about the things that you are doing together, such as shopping, cooking, watching television.

2 Share stories, songs, rhymes and games in your home language and encourage your child to join in.

3 Find books and magazines to read together in your home language, or make your own storybooks.

4 Find DVDs and television programmes in your home language to watch and talk about together.

5 Search on the internet for games and stories for children in different languages.

6 Take your child to family and community events where your home language is spoken.

7 Talk to your child about what they have been doing at school in your home language as well as English. This will help their learning because they can think about their ideas in both languages.

8 Arrange for your child to go to mother-tongue classes after school or at weekends. Visit www.ourlanguages.org.uk to find a class in your area.

9 Even if your child replies to you in English, this shows that they understand what you are saying, so keep speaking your home language and they will keep learning it.

10 Help your child to feel proud of their language. Make sure that they know the name of their language by explaining that it is part of their family heritage.

Useful websites

- www.ourlanguages.org.uk
- www.bilingualism-matters.org.uk
- www.mantralingua.com
- <http://opol-family.blogspot.com/>
- www.bilingualfamilynewsletter.com

Useful books

- *A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism* by Colin Baker (Multilingual Matters).
- *Becoming Biliterate: Young Children Learning Different Writing Systems* by Charmian Kenner (Trentham Books).