Language at Home and in the Community

For Families

Here are eight things you can do every day to help your child learn your family's language and become successful in school!

Use your language at home

The easiest, most important step is to use your home language every day. Many families worry that using their home language will confuse their children. Actually, children can easily learn several languages at the same time. They have an easier time learning English when they have a strong foundation in their first language.

Tell stories and sing songs

Your family has a rich heritage to pass on to your children. Stories, chants, rhymes, poems, sayings, and songs from your childhood are an important part of their heritage. Share these with your children and have fun!

Tell stories and share books together

Reading together is a critical part of your children's early learning. Children learn many skills they will need in school when they listen to stories and look at books with their families. It's also a lot of fun!

Check out materials in your language from the library

Look for books, DVDs, and music in your language. If they don't have what you want, ask the library staff to help you find what you need.

Talk about your traditions and culture

Visit your child's classroom and share your language, culture and traditions. Share family stories and songs and encourage your child to retell family stories and share your family's heritage with others. Share songs and games from your culture with your child's classmates and teachers.

Look for activities in your community

Attend to cultural festivals and concerts and meet other families who speak your home language. Join with other families and organize your own events!

Continue using your language as your children grow older

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

Don't forget that YOU are key to maintaining your home language

Parents and other family members are the most important people in your 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.