

## How can I help my child develop home language?

It is important to talk with your child in your most fluent languages.

### **Early Years**

- ⇒ Talk and play with your child.
- ⇒ Sing nursery rhymes and songs.
- ⇒ Talk about books in your home language.
- ⇒ Talk about what you are doing e.g. at mealtimes, after school.

### **Older children**

- ⇒ Read fact and fiction books in home language and English.
- ⇒ Encourage children to keep in touch with extended family.
- ⇒ Listen to the radio and watch television in your home language.
- ⇒ Use home language websites to find information. Children can look up information in home languages and English.
- ⇒ Encourage your child to use a dictionary. This will extend vocabulary and help to compare languages.

### **Bookstart**

Bookstart gives three free gifts of books to children under four. Dual language titles are available.

<http://www.bookstart.org.uk/>

## Learning English for adults

If English is not your first language and you would like to learn, Solihull College run ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses.

Please contact Laura Shepherd  
☎ Tel 0121 678 7294

### EAL Service contact details

Please contact the Service Manager if you would like more information:

✉ EAL Service  
The Council House  
Manor Square  
Solihull  
B91 3QB

☎ Tel: 0121 704 8613

✉ Email: [ealservice@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:ealservice@solihull.gov.uk)

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/parentsnetwork>

**If you would like information in another language or format, please ask us.**



**E**nglish

as an

**A**dditional

**L**anguage

**Information for  
parents  
and carers**



**Bilingualism**

## Questions and concerns

### Bilingualism

The majority of children all over the world grow up using more than one language. 'Bilingual' or 'multilingual' mean that a person uses more than one language in their everyday lives. It does not mean that a person has the same skills in all his or her languages.

### Advantages

It is an advantage to be bilingual or multilingual.

- ⇒ Using two or more languages gives a child different ways of thinking.
- ⇒ It develops self confidence and confidence in learning.
- ⇒ It increases pride in identity and culture.
- ⇒ A child who uses home language well is more likely to develop good English.
- ⇒ Using home language is important for maintaining family relationships.
- ⇒ It is the easiest way to express emotions.
- ⇒ Many employers look for people who can speak, read and write other languages

### **Will it be difficult for my child to learn more than one language?**

No; the majority of people in the world speak more than one language. Children can start from birth.

### **In my family we speak more than one language. Which one should we use when talking to our child?**

Each family member should use their strongest and most natural language. It is important that children have a strong home language. This will help them to learn English quickly.

### **My child mixes both languages. What should I do?**

Mixing languages is a natural stage when learning two languages. Your child will work out the different vocabulary and rules and separate them eventually.

### **My child has started school and wants to use English instead of home language.**

Children speak the languages they hear most. They want to fit in with their friends. This rejection may be short, but it is not advisable to try to force children to change the language they want to use.

### **My English is not very good. How can I help my child?**

Speak your home language with your child because you will provide a good model of language. You can discuss homework and books in any language.

### **Is it all right for me to use my home language when my child talks to me in English?**

Yes; this will help your child to develop skills in both languages.

### **How can I help my child to read and write?**

It is important to share books with your child and to read for pleasure. You may want your child to attend supplementary school to learn to read and write in home language.

### **My home language uses a different script. Will this be confusing?**

Children can learn to write successfully in different scripts.

### **My child finds it hard to read and write in home language. Will it be difficult in English too?**

Literacy difficulties can transfer across languages. Talk to your child's school and EAL teacher and tell them about any difficulties in home language. This will help the school to support your child.