

# Tips for Parents: What You Say Is Important!

## Quick tips on how to maintain your home language when your child is learning English

- ▶ Only speak your native language in your home.
  - ▶ Continue to talk, read and sing songs to your child in your home language.
  - ▶ Look for bookstores that carry children's books in your home languages or use the Internet to find books, music and children's software in your home language.
  - ▶ Ask at the library or your child's early care or education program to borrow books in your language.
  - ▶ Have storytelling time at home using your home language. Share family history and describe what it was like for you growing up. For example, remember a special event from your childhood and describe who was there, what happened, and what you remember thinking and feeling.
  - ▶ Create your own resources. Record your own stories and songs for your children. Share fairy tales and songs that you heard as a child.
- ▶ If you can't find your child's favorite picture book in your home language, maybe you can translate it yourself. Write the translation right on the page of the book for a bilingual edition. Or write on a label and cover up the English.
  - ▶ Share your own resources with the early childhood service for educators to play or read during the days your child is there.
  - ▶ Volunteer to write labels of objects and areas in the classroom in your home language.
  - ▶ If you have a flexible work schedule, perhaps you could join in the activities and tell stories, read books or sing songs in your home language.
  - ▶ Ask educators in the program to help you connect with other families who speak your language.
  - ▶ Get together with families who speak your language on a regular basis. Only speak your home language while you are together.
- ▶ Meet with other parents to talk about strategies, share materials, and resources for helping children maintain their home language.
  - ▶ Participate in community activities such as religious or social events or other celebrations and gatherings where your home language is spoken.
  - ▶ Be patient! Learning and practicing two languages takes time. Your child might mix up words or mix languages together. Some confusion is to be expected.

Adapted from 'Special Education . . . a service, not a place Evaluation and Assessment in Early Childhood Special Education: *Children Who Are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse*' by Dr. Terry Bergeson, B.J. Wise, Douglas H. Gill, Anne Shureen, January 1997 from Pulido-Tobiassen, D., & Gonzalez-Mena, J. (1999). *A place to begin: Working with parents on issues of diversity, Chapter four: Language and bilingualism* (pp. 93). Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow.

## Tip Sheet 5A

### Things to remember



- You are your child's first teacher.
- Being able to speak two or more languages is a strength and an advantage.
- Children generally have a higher capacity to acquire and adopt a new language than their parents.
- Children need to develop their home language along with English so that they can maintain communication and relationships with their parents, extended family members and community.
- Your home language and English are both important to your child's growing up and supports the transition to school process.
- Early Childhood Service educators can assist with supporting the maintenance of the home language
- Other parents and your community can work with you too.
- If you also have limited English proficiency, consider building your own language skills.

### Helpful resources

#### Book Garden

Online catalogue including multicultural children's books, early childhood curriculum and other resources.

[www.thebookgarden.com.au](http://www.thebookgarden.com.au)

#### Connect Child and Family Services Inc (Possum Toy Library)

Operates Possum Toy Library and Parents and Educators Resource Library, includes multicultural resources.

Phone: 02 4758 9966

[www.connect.asn.au](http://www.connect.asn.au)

#### Global Language Books

Resources including mono and bilingual children's books in over 70 languages, music, games, puzzles, resources for refugees, multicultural posters, and much more. You can filter by language, cultural group, by age or resource type.

[www.globallanguage.com.au](http://www.globallanguage.com.au)

#### Leave it to Leslie

Multicultural and Indigenous products including musical instruments, games, puzzles, dolls and puppets, and baby goods.

[www.leaveittoleslie.com.au](http://www.leaveittoleslie.com.au)

#### Little Big Book Club

*New Arrivals Family Reading Pack* provides age appropriate reading materials in multilingual formats designed for the needs of migrant and refugee families with children aged five years and under. The aim of the resources is to encourage parents to talk and participate in early language and literacy activities with their children in both English and their first language.

[www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au](http://www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au)

#### Local Library Services

Check your local library catalogue for bilingual books or you can request books in over 40 community languages from the State Library of NSW free of charge.

#### My Language

Provide access to search engines, web directories and news in over 60 languages; translated training courses for the public.

[www.mylanguage.gov.au](http://www.mylanguage.gov.au)

#### Resourcing Parents Network

Provide parenting information and resources in community languages about child development, health, feeding and nutrition, mental health, parenting, parent education, and safety/child protection. Go to *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Resources* page.

[www.resourcingparents.com:80/cald.html](http://www.resourcingparents.com:80/cald.html)

### English Language Support for Adults

#### Learn English Online

Learn in class, by distance learning or with a home tutor. Course information for rural programs contact the Department of Foundation Studies at your local TAFE.

Phone: 02 9205 3466 or 02 9205 4367

[www.englishatames.com.au](http://www.englishatames.com.au)

#### NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES)

Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is only available to eligible migrants and refugees settling in Australia who have been granted a permanent visa. Information on childcare in AMEP is available to download in English and 24 community languages.

[www.nsw.ames.edu.au](http://www.nsw.ames.edu.au)

#### TAFE NSW Multicultural Education – Kingswood Campus

Provide bi-lingual services, support and referral to interpreting and translating services, advice on overseas skills and qualifications recognition, advocacy and courses and tutorial support for students from non-English speaking backgrounds from Blue Mountains to Mount Drutt.

Phone: 02 9208 9595

#### TAFE NSW Western Sydney Region Outreach Unit, Mount Drutt

Offer free courses for Australian citizens and permanent residents that are designed to assist people from non-English speaking backgrounds to improve literacy, job seeking and computers skills.

Phone: 02 9208 6384

[www.wsi.tafensw.edu.au](http://www.wsi.tafensw.edu.au)