

SPEAK TO YOUR CHILD IN THE LANGUAGE YOU KNOW BEST

You are your child's first and most important educator and children strongly benefit being able to speak, read and write the home language of their parents or main carer: it is important for their sense of identity and belonging, and it will help them to succeed at school.

Beginning to learn English after learning their first language can take time, but your child will not be disadvantaged if they do not speak English at home.

Speak, read and write with your child in the language you know best – your home language.

You are encouraged to speak, read and write with your child as much as you can by:

- singing, chatting, playing number games and reading to your child in your home language;
- speaking your home language during family outings and celebrations;
- speaking to your child in your home language even if your child responds in English as children can hear differences between languages; and
- helping your child with their homework in your home language, because any skills they acquire can be used at school. (*For example, if you teach your child how to multiply in your language, they will understand how to do the same in English*).

Maintain your language; enhance your child's future

By speaking, reading and writing with your child in your home language, you are helping them to become bilingual, which has many benefits:

- **Stimulates brain development** - Speaking more than one language activates growth in a child's brain, helping them to think more creatively and solve problems more easily.
- **Enhances English literacy skills** - Developing literacy in their home language and English helps children to learn how language works and to become better readers, listeners and communicators.
- **Improves memory, concentration and numeracy skills** - Speaking two or more languages strengthens a child's mental 'muscle', improving memory and concentration.
- **Improves overall performance at school** - Children who are strong in both English and their home language tend to score better on standardised tests than children who speak one language, particularly in the areas of mathematics, reading and vocabulary.
- **Strengthens children's sense of identity** - Children who are literate in their home language find it easier to retain strong connections to their family, community and culture throughout life.

It is crucial to keep speaking, reading and writing with your child in your home language. It will put your child on-track to be proficient in two languages, and ready to seize the world of opportunities that this brings.

For more information visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/language