

How to support your multilingual learner at home

The most important things you can do cost nothing, and you are already doing it.

Many Languages. One Community.



You are your child's first and most important teacher.

Research shows that students supported at home — in any language — do better in school. You don't need to speak English to help your child succeed. The languages, stories, and traditions you share every day are building the foundation for everything they learn. Here are the most effective things you can do.

At Home Every Day

1

Keep speaking your home language always.

This is the single most important thing you can do. Strong skills in a first language make learning English faster and easier — not harder. When you speak your home language with your child you are building vocabulary, thinking skills, and literacy that transfer directly to English.

2

Read together in any language

Reading aloud in your home language builds listening skills, vocabulary, and a love of stories that carries into English reading. Your local library has multilingual books and they're free to use.

3

Tell stories, sing songs, and talk about your day.

Ask your child about school. Share family stories. Sing songs from your childhood. Cook together and name ingredients in both languages. These everyday conversations build language, memory, and identity.

4

Celebrate your culture and heritage.

When your child sees that their home culture is valued, they feel proud of who they are, and proud students learn better. Celebrate your holidays, share your music, cook traditional foods together.

Supporting English at Home

5

Create a quiet reading time each day.

Even 10–15 minutes of quiet reading time, in any language, builds habits that will serve your child throughout school. Let them choose books they enjoy. Make it a relaxed, special time, not a test.

6

Use everyday moments to practice English together.

Point to things during shopping or cooking and name them in both languages. Watch English TV shows together and talk about what you're watching. Learning together is the goal, not perfection.

7

Ask your child to teach you words from school.

When your child teaches you new English words or explains what they learned, they reinforce their own learning. Ask: "What did you learn today? Can you teach me?" This builds confidence and understanding.

Did you know?

Students who maintain strong skills in their home language typically reach English proficiency faster than students who stop using it. Bilingualism is a cognitive advantage, not a barrier.

Questions? We're here.

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Staying Connected to School

8

Stay in touch with your child's ML teacher.

Your ML teacher is your partner. Don't wait for a problem. Reach out any time you have a question about your child's progress or the ELPA21 assessment. Tracy Garvey can connect you with support in your language. There is always someone here who can help.

9

Attend school events and celebrations.

When families show up, students feel that education matters. You don't need to speak English to attend. Interpreter support is available, just let us know in advance. Your presence sends your child a powerful message: school is important to our family, and we belong here.

10

Share your questions and concerns, we want to hear from you.

You have the right to receive information about your child's education in your home language and to request a meeting at any time. We are here to work with you, not just to inform you. Please always reach out. Your voice matters to us.

A note we want every family to hear.

You do not need to speak English to be a great advocate for your child. You do not need to help with homework in English. You do not need to know what ELPA21 stands for. What you do need to do is what you are already doing, loving your child, speaking your language, sharing your culture, and staying connected to their school. That is enough.

Please don't encourage your child to stop speaking your home language.

Some families believe that stopping the home language will help their child learn English faster. Research shows the opposite is true. Students who lose their home language often struggle in both languages. Your home language is not a barrier, it is a bridge. Please keep building it.

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