

Helping Your Children At Home Acquire English

"Read" wordless picture books

Wordless picture books tell stories through pictures. This can be a fun way for parents and children to sit down together with books and talk about stories. Children can learn how stories progress, make predictions, and develop a love for books.

Say rhymes and sing songs

Rhymes, songs, and chants can develop oral language skills such as intonation and word stress.

Read more ideas on how to make word play fun:

Nursery Rhymes: Not Just for Babies!
Playing with Words

Make frequent trips to the public library

You might be surprised at how many parents of ELLs do not understand that public libraries in the United States are free and for everyone. Try coordinating an informal "field trip" to your closest public library with parents (and possibly children) early in the school year.

Get ideas on introducing parents of ELLs to the public library, and more!

Visit Your Local Library!
Rediscover Your Public Library

Engage in meaningful conversation

For oral language development, it is important that parents engage their children in meaningful conversation. Whether at the dinner table or at the grocery store, parents can ask children questions that require more than a simple yes or no answer.

Read more on how to engage your child to help develop oral language (also available in Spanish):

Building Your Child's Vocabulary
Grocery Store Literacy for Preschoolers
Grocery Store Literacy (K-3)
Talking Counts!

Watch educational children's television programs together

There are a number of wonderful children's television programs that promote English language and literacy development. This can be a great way for both parents and children to learn English together.

Learn more ways [television can be used as an educational tool](#).

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/empowering-ell-parents-families-home>

Make sure your child is prepared for school. This means they are getting plenty of rest and assistance on homework assignments. If you are unable to provide your student with homework assistance, communicate with the teacher

Work with your child's teacher. Talk about problems you've noticed, progress that's been made and ask questions about what they think may help your child.

When your child is having difficulty understanding schoolwork in English explain concepts in your home language first. Once they understand then work on the concept in English.

Have fun with language! Play games such as Scrabble and Boggle to help with English spelling. Use [I SPY](#) and [ABC Books](#) to increase vocabulary in a fun way. Read the comics in both languages and play games where you think of words in one language and your child has to think of the same word in the other language.

Help your child to focus on understanding of books as well as pronouncing the words. Encourage your child to read and read again, in your home language and in English.

Primary Language is crucial to increasing an understanding of English. Here are some important tips to support both languages:

Encourage your child to be proud of your heritage. Find ways for them to incorporate their knowledge of this in their classroom (like on class projects). Encourage them to read and write in your home language. Books in different languages can be found on Amazon.com and other online book retailers.

Your child should be reading books for pleasure at an easy independent level. Encourage them to do this by doing so yourself. These can be in either language and any type of reading: magazines, comics, graphic novels, newspapers, and even online articles. Use every sign, billboard, or menu as an example of reading.

You need to find a balance in using both English and your home language in your home. When children never hear their home language after they begin school then they begin to lose that language. Bilingual people have more options in our world so your goal should be that your child know both languages well. You should have books in both languages, and watch television in both languages. There might be certain activities where it is more appropriate to use one language or the other and that won't create problems. Above all don't make your child feel embarrassed or ashamed of either language. No language is better than another but it is important to learn English in order to do well in the United States.