

Your first language: A Precious Gift to Your Child

Your child benefits when you speak your first language. How?

- It is easier for children who speak their first language well to learn English.
- Children with strong language skills do better at school.
- Your child will be able to communicate with family members and others who speak your first language.
- Both your child's self-esteem and sense of cultural identity will be enhanced.

You help your child's language development most when you speak in your first language. Why?

- You can better explain ideas, concepts and thoughts to your child.
- You can challenge your child by using more advanced vocabulary.
- You can share jokes and other word play.

Talk, talk, talk! Talking together in your first language is one of the best ways to help your child get ready to read.

- Talk about activities and surroundings throughout the day. Ask your child questions.
- Tell stories about your family and culture. Discuss special family events, photos, recipes or traditional clothing.
- Sing songs and rhymes.
- Encourage your child to retell a favourite story or make up a new one.



Read and play with your child in your first language.

- Share books with your child.
- Read the same stories over and over. Children enjoy and learn from repetition.
- Make your own first language dictionary using pictures from old magazines.
- Ask questions which encourage your child's participation in stories, such as "Why is that happening?", "What do you think will happen next?" or "What does this picture show?"
- Keep reading time fun so you'll both want more.

Be a good role model!

- Let your child see you enjoying reading and writing in your first language.

Should I use English with my children?

There may be times when you both want to practice English. But the most important thing is to talk and read a lot, in whichever language is most comfortable for you.

