

# Learning Two Languages

Being able to speak, read, and write in two languages is a valuable skill. Bilingual children stay connected to their family and bring deep cultural awareness to the communities where they live.

Contrary to popular belief, early language experiences in any language help children build a strong foundation for learning a second language. What matters is having lots of experiences listening and talking with native speakers of both languages. Speak the language you know best with your children and include native speakers of the second language in your child's life as early as possible.



## **Tips to help your child become bilingual:**

- 1- Do not abruptly stop speaking your home language. Children's sense of belonging is associated with the language you've always spoken with them.
- 2- It is not a sign of confusion when children mix languages. It is a sign that they are getting comfortable with both languages.
- 3- It is normal for children learning two languages to have occasional language delays—especially right at the beginning. They will soon catch up.
- 4- It's important for parents and teachers to have a positive attitude towards both languages. Share your language and culture with your child's teachers.
- 5- Use books, phone conversations with relatives, children's videos, and visits to your home country to help your child stay fluent in your home language.
- 6- In order to be able to read and write in standard form, children will eventually need direct instruction in BOTH languages—including their home language.

## **More Resources:**

[www.cal.org/Digest/earlychild.html](http://www.cal.org/Digest/earlychild.html)

*Two or more languages in early childhood: some general points and practical recommendations* by Annick De Houwer

