

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING YOUR CHILD'S HOME LANGUAGE:

Quick Reference Sheet

Keeping your home language is very important to your children and to your family. You may feel pressure for the family to learn English quickly. However, suddenly switching to speaking only English will not allow your children to settle as quickly, and may cause them to speak less, block learning English and lose their cultural identity.

It may be hard to realize, but one year from now, your children will have difficulty communicating in their home language if they do not use it at home.

Keeping the home language is important to your child's language learning and development

- Reduces stress of settling in to the program
- Helps to foster self-identification and pride
- When speaking English at home, you pass along errors in speech
- Language development in their first language needs to continue to advance for fluency in both languages
- All of the brain processing done to learn your home language is useful for learning the new one
- Speaking more than one language increases brain function
- Speaking more than one language increases ability to learn future languages
- Bilingual children are more likely to have higher academic achievement

Keeping the home language is important to your family relationship and culture

- Your bond with your child may weaken when switching between languages
- You can be more expressive and interactive with your child when using your home language
- The home language carries all the cultural traditions, like songs, stories and sayings
- The home language carries a stronger emotional message

Using English at home

- It is unnecessary to use any English at home
- If you do introduce English at home:
 - Television/radio should be switched off
 - English should be used for a specific activity and then you should switch back to their home language
 - English should be made as engaging as possible

Tips to help your children keep their home language

- Share chants, stories, songs and games with your child
- Connect with other parents and families who share your language (children hear their home language used at more advanced levels; social opportunities encourage home language in natural and meaningful ways)
- Attend cultural events to encourage children to connect your home language with your culture and build pride

