



where great stories begin™

LEYENDO JUNTOS READING TOGETHER

BILINGUALISM GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Should I continue to speak to my child in my language? Yes! English is going to become your child's stronger language because it will be the language of school. Nevertheless, if you continue to speak to your child in your native language, she will continue to understand you. Tell her why it is important for you that she understand and speak your language.

My son understands me, but he does not reply in my language. That is okay—keep speaking to him in your language! Being able to understand your family's language is a wonderful gift. Once a child understands a language, it is easier for him to learn to speak it later if he wants to; for instance, if he travels to your native country.

Are there advantages if my child speaks two languages? Yes. Children who speak two languages well actually know more words. Their brains are also better at figuring out new information.

Can all children learn two languages? Most children can learn two languages, but it takes work and time. Even though kids learn faster than adults, it can still take kids years to master a second language. However, if your child has problems with your native language, he may also have problems learning English. Talk to your doctor and your child's teacher if you have concerns about the way your child speaks.

Should I switch to English as my child starts school? No. Switching to English will not help your child learn faster. You should keep speaking in your language.

How can I help my child get ready for school?

1. Speak to your child in the language you speak best. The more words he knows in your native language, the easier it will be for him to learn English.
2. Read together as much as possible. Talk about the stories. Relate them to everyday life.
3. Get your child into Head Start or preschool if possible.
4. Make sure that your child spends less than 2 hours per day in front of the screen (TV/computer). He may learn some English words from the TV, but children learn best from PEOPLE. It is better if you spend time together, reading, talking, singing, or playing.

For older kids:

5. Find a high-quality afterschool program where your child can do his homework.
6. Find a summer program where your child continues to read and speak in English.
7. Talk to your child's teacher. You don't have to wait for the report card to find out how he is doing and what extra help he might need.

**READ TO
YOUR CHILD
20 MINUTES
EVERY DAY**

**LEAN
JUNTOS
20 MINUTOS
CADA DÍA**

www.reachoutandread.org

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I see that my child is mixing English with my native language—should I be concerned? No. This is normal. Your child is not confused; he is just trying hard to speak. If you keep the languages separate (continue to speak only your language, and not to mix in English) it will make it easier for him to learn.

Is it a good idea for me to read to my child in my native language? Yes. The more your child reads or is read to, the more he will learn. Time spent reading in your language will also help him learn to speak and read in English.

How can I help my child become a good reader?

1. Speak and read to her in your language.
2. Make sure that there are books at home in your language. They can be from the library, school, or friends.
3. Go to the library. Have a library card.
4. Get a list from the library with activities offered there or in your community.
6. Teach your child that reading is very important, and that it is fun!
7. Make sure your child reads over the summer, too.

What do good child readers do?

1. Good readers' parents start sharing books with them early on.
2. Good readers have books at home.
3. Good readers use one language to help them understand the other language. When they listen to you reading or when they read on their own, they go back and forth in their head from one language to another.
4. Good readers try to guess what the story is about, and discuss it with others.
5. Good readers read a lot. This helps them improve their vocabulary.

What should I do when I am reading to my child? Or when my child is reading?

1. At the beginning of the story, ask her what she thinks is going to happen.
2. Talk about the story with your child.
3. Ask your child questions about the story—and give him time to answer.
4. Each time you read with your child, choose one or two new words to talk about.
5. Encourage your child to read in your language with you, and in English at school.
6. Ask librarians for help to find books at your child's level. They are there to help!
7. Even if you have not read the book, try to talk about each book your child reads with him.
This will help him think about what he is reading!

What else can I do that is important for my child at school?

1. Volunteer in your child's school.
2. It is very important to go to the school and speak with the teachers. You can see what your child is learning and show her that learning is important for you. Also, when your child's teacher knows you, it is easier for her to call you if there are any problems.

So, reading is also learned at home? Yes. As a parent you can help your child become a good reader and a successful student.