

Orientation for Parents of English Learners (in English-medium schools)

1. **Remember that your main job is to *parent* your children.**
 - a. Most parents can parent most effectively in the native language. So, use your native language at home.
 - b. Provide a home environment conducive to your child's learning and growth, including:
 - Enough sleep (sometimes more important than homework!)
 - Enough exercise and breaks from schoolwork and other lessons
 - A quiet space for doing homework
 - Limitations on TV, movies, etc. (Suggested: only on weekends)
 - Most importantly: daily positive family times such as mealtimes and family devotions. Family connectedness lowers stress and increases learning.

2. **Help your child learn English by *not* speaking in English at home! Use your native language at home, and help your children learn it well.**
 - a. Abundant research shows that children who develop their native language well achieve *faster and higher* proficiency in a second language than children who do not learn their native language well.
 - b. The native language is a *tool* for learning a new language and should never be banned.
 - c. If your child is struggling with the English level of his classes, textbooks or assignments, the teacher and school need to know this. Don't "hide" this problem by providing too much homework help, or worse, doing your child's homework for him.
 - d. If your child is struggling with English, do *not* assume that your child is just not trying hard enough. If your child's classes are not at the right English level for him/her, studying longer and harder won't help. Your child needs to be hearing and reading English at a level that he/she can understand.

3. **Help your child with content (subject) learning by talking about concepts in your native language.**
 - a. Many parents can better help their children with content learning (math, science, etc.) by using their native language.
 - b. If your child struggles with content, the teacher and school need to know. Don't "hide" your child's lack of understanding by providing too much assistance, or doing their homework for them.
 - c. Help your child learn *academic* language in your *native* language by having them tell you what they are learning in school, using the native language. You can supply the academic words that your children do not know in their native language. This is especially important if your child will be going to university in your native language, not in English.

4. **Help your child acquire your native culture.**
 - a. Read to your child in your native language. Continue to do this as long as they are at home, even when they are in high school! Choose high-interest, age-appropriate books that will help them grow in learning their native language and culture.
 - b. Remember that if you are not living in your native country/culture, your child will *not* pick up your language and culture effortlessly. You need to be intentional in teaching it!

5. Help your child during periods of online instruction.

- a. Make sure you understand how your child's school is doing online instruction. You need to understand policies, procedures, and the expectations for parents. You can request this information in your native language.
- b. Provide an appropriate study *space* for your child. This space should have:
 - Good internet connectivity
 - Good lighting
 - Table space for books and other resources
 - Few distractions, such as noise, food, etc.
 - Proximity to you, so you can frequently check that your child is engaged and on task.
- c. Use the period of online schooling to help your child to grow in your native language. This does not mean extra classes learning about the native language. It is most effective to just use the native language at home, and to talk through the academic concepts that your child is learning in school, in the native language.
- d. IF you are able, it may also be appropriate to spend some time on English language development while your child is schooling at home. Your child's ESL teacher can help you know what would be appropriate. If you want to help your child with English you can focus on *bilingual* development, utilizing activities that can develop both English and your native language. See the article "5 language-rich activities to support dual language learners at home during COVID-19 school closures" below for some ideas!

RESOURCES:

5 language-rich activities to support dual language learners at home during COVID-19 school closures
<https://www.nwea.org/blog/2020/5-language-rich-activities-support-dual-language-home-learners/>

Distance Learning: 8 Tips to Help Your Child Learn at Home

https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/online-learning-how-to-prepare-child?utm_source=google&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=covid-apr20-fm&gclid=EA1aIQobChMIzaDk4szF6QIVCr3ACh3J9gD3EAMYAiAAEgKdtPD_BwE

A Short Guide to Raising Children Bilingually

<https://www.psych.mcgill.ca/perpg/fac/genesee/A%20Short%20Guide%20to%20Raising%20Children%20Bilingually.pdf>

Homework Tips for Parents of ELLs

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/homework-tips-parents-ells>