

PARENT INFORMATION CARD: How can I support my child's language development?

Maintaining mother tongue and fostering home culture:

- Continue to speak with your child in their home language to protect, value and foster it's development. Not only will your child find speaking in another language tiring and need a rest from it sometimes, they will also need to use their home language to further develop their new one.
- Read with your child in their mother tongue regularly.
- Provide reference materials in your home language to support topics covered in school.
- Remember to use the home language in different contexts to expose them to a variety of vocabulary beyond the home. Supporting them with school-work, take them to museums, go to sporting events together, speak about festivals and arrange days out.
- Be proud of your culture. Celebrate things from home and share your culture with the school community and friends.
- Encourage friendships with children who speak the same language.
- Have regular visits to your home country. If this is not possible maintain the connections to family with Skype, phone calls and emails.
- Foster your child's home language by having an interesting collection of fiction and non-fiction books, games, DVD's, cookbooks etc... in the mother tongue.

Learning a new language:

- Foster a balanced and positive attitude to being bilingual. It's not about learning another language at the expense of the first language, it's about developing both.
- Be positive, focus on what your child can do rather than what they can't! Do not overcorrect-grammar.
- Have realistic expectations. Do not expect them to have the same level of English as their monolingual peers.
- Be patient, homework may take longer as it is being completed in another language. If your child is spending too much time doing their homework, speak to their teacher.
- Choose a good time for both of you to review their homework together.
- Language used for real purposes in a social context is meaningful and motivating for children. Engage them in fun family projects using the new language e.g. a scrapbook about their move, a PowerPoint of a holiday, a recording of their favourite story...be creative!
- Enjoy and celebrate the experience! Motivation is the key to success.