Home Language Guide
Educators

*It is important for all EAL children regardless of where they are in their English acquisition development that home **language skills are maintained**.*

Why is it important for a child to develop their home language(s) skills?

Maintaining a child's home language is vital for their education and it also helps them to retain their own culture and identity as this language has been passed down from one generation to the next.

A child's home language provides a firm foundation on which they can build upon to acquire English language skills. Research proves that children with well-developed home language skills acquire additional languages more quickly. Children who do not continue to develop their home language may have trouble with their English language skills.



What strategies can I suggest to parents/caregivers to help develop their child's home language skills?

There are lots of strategies you can advise parents/caregivers to continue their home language skills. Here are some ideas:

• Read fact and fiction books in their home language.

• Tell parents & caregivers about topics you will be covering soon in your classroom. Encourage them to talk to their child about them in their home language.

• For younger children, remind parents & caregivers to sing songs or rhymes and play counting games in their home language. Encourage them to sing the songs & rhymes they were sung when they were a child.

• Encourage oral storytelling, retell the stories they were told when they were a child.

• After watching films and television remind parents & caregivers to talk about them afterwards in their home language.

Other points to notes:

Children often mix languages; this is common when a child is learning.
two languages at the same time. You do not need to be overly concerned because in time the child will gradually begin to separate the two languages.

If the child's home language uses a different script this will not confuse a child when learning to read and write in English. Learning to read and write in their home language will help the child to learn to read and write in English. With practice, the child should be able to learn to read and write in two completely different languages.