

## READING IN THE HOME LANGUAGE

Parents whose first language is not English are often concerned that their children won't learn English if they talk or read to them in their home language. But research shows that the opposite is true.\* Helping your children develop their first language is an important first step to helping them learn these skills in English.

- Talk with your children in their home language to help them build a large vocabulary.
- Read to them daily in their home language. This will help them become familiar with print, how books work, and the logical order of a story.
- Encourage them to draw and write stories in their home language. The better developed these skills are, the easier it is to learn these skills in another language.
- Talk to the teachers at school and let them know what you are doing at home to strengthen your child's reading and speaking in their first language. Explain that it is important to you that your child be fluent in both languages.

Children who can switch back and forth between two (or more!) languages have accomplished something special. Be sure to praise and encourage this wonderful ability!

*\*Helping your child become a reader, January 2000, NPIN Virtual Library, Eric Clearinghouse.*

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