



## Supporting Dual Language Students at Home

### HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY STUDENT IN THE DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM?

- Support the continued development of your student's first language by creating a rich language environment at home in your family's native language. This will stimulate your student's cognitive, linguistic, and social development, and will enforce early literacy skills. You can do this by:
  - Reading books or listening to audiobooks in your family's native language on a daily basis. Children who are read to in their first language have an easier time learning to read in their second language.
    - [Why Reading to Your Kids in Your Home language Will Help Them Become Better Readers](#)
  - Using your family's native language/student's first language to:
    - Talk about the stories you have read/listened to
    - Play rhyming games and sing songs together
    - Tell stories and write
    - Play games, talk as you put puzzles together, listen to music, etc.
  - Expanding your student's vocabulary by teaching them new words, pointing out and naming objects, and helping him/her improve pronunciation
  - Visiting the public library regularly to check out books and audiobooks
- Understand that it takes time to learn a second language. Be patient, and encourage your student to persist. Promote bilingualism as a "superpower."
- Express interest in what your student is learning and doing.
- Ensure your student attends school regularly and for the whole school day. Although this is important for all students, it is critical for dual language students who are expected to learn in two languages; one language is used in the AM and the other is used in the PM. Missing as few as two days a month (10% of the school year) increases a student's risk of academic and social-emotional struggles.

- Develop a positive working relationship with your student's teacher by communicating if/when your student is struggling, asking questions, attending conferences, etc.
- Provide a quiet work space for your student so that they can work without outside interruptions.
- Some parents/guardians may be interested in learning the second language. This is great, and shows your student that you value language learning. However, parents/guardians are not expected to model the other language if they are not yet proficient in it. Students will benefit more when their parents/guardians talk to them in their stronger language. This will develop a strong foundation in the home language, thereby preparing students to acquire their second language.

### **WHAT ABOUT HOMEWORK?**

If teachers assign homework, it should be a review of what they taught during the school day, and given in the language of instruction. Students should attempt to complete the assignment independently to the best of their ability. Parents/guardians are discouraged from translating homework. When a student is experiencing difficulty with homework assignments, parents/guardians should communicate difficulties directly to the teacher. Remember, your job as a parent is to continue to build and foster concepts and vocabulary in your home language. Once students learn a concept in one language, it is easy to transfer to the second language. Reading every night is a great way to build your students home language skills!

### **WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT DUAL LANGUAGE AND SUPPORTING MY STUDENT?**

- [Colorín Colorado](#) - A bilingual site for educators and families
- [Bilingual Kids Rock](#) - Newsletter, advice and resources for raising bilingual children