

Common Concerns of Parents/carers of children with English as an Additional Language

I speak another language at home, should I speak to my child in English?

It is important that you speak to your child in the language that you know best.

This helps to lay strong foundations for learning any language and gives your child the best start for talking.

Children are able to learn more than one language quite naturally; it is a real advantage to be able to do this.

It is much easier for your child to learn English when he/she is secure in his/her mother tongue.

How will my child learn English if I don't teach him/her?

To learn any new language well your child needs a strong foundation in the language you speak at home.

This gives them knowledge about how language works, which will help them to learn the new language.

Any language is learned best from a native speaker.

The best thing you can do to help your child speech and language is to spend time talking and playing with your child, speaking your mother tongue.

I am worried that my child won't be able to speak English when he/she starts school

You can give your child a really good start by sending them to a local pre-school or nursery.

Your child will then have a model of English from adults and from other children, which is very important.

However, even if children do not know any English when they start school, they do better in English later on if they have well developed skills in their home language.

Remember, home languages are important; of course you want your child to learn English, and they will, from school and other social situations. They will learn better if they have a strong foundation in their home language. Let them learn English from English speakers and their home language at home with you. If your child has the opportunity to use home language at pre-school or school, that will help them learn even more. It does not mean that your child is not learning, it does mean that your child's carers recognise and value the importance of your home language.