



## Tips to Help Your Child With Language Learning

Bilingualism is a process, it doesn't simply happen... But you can work at it.

To enable your child to speak a language well, you have to communicate as much as you can. The more opportunities your child has to practice a language the faster this language will be learnt.

Here is what counts in successful language learning:

### Set your goal

Decide what bilingualism suits your child and your family situation. Do you like to have your children just understand the family language or enable them to speak, read and/or write it as well?

Only when the child grows into an adult, who is fully functional in the family language, he/she might be able to teach it to his/her own children.

### Your commitment

If you speak in a language other than your partner, stick to it! Be persistent, perseverant and patient.

### Lots of encouragement

Encourage the child to speak in the other language.

### Frequent repetition

Repeat the child's words in the correct form.

### Different means

Follow up with music, books, stories, tapes and computer software in your language. Create language games according to your child's development. Make your own collection of rhymes and riddles that you can use over and over again.

### Language routines

Invent a language routine. For instance, when you go to the shops or on a walk, when travelling in the car or brushing teeth, use the family language to tell certain stories or speak about certain topics.



## Speak your language properly

Parents and other adults are role models for their children's language behaviour. Talk about your life, about what you see, feel, want, like and share your thoughts.

Speak your language well. Use the appropriate names and make whole, short sentences. Develop your own language skills by reading, talking and writing in your language.

And please, don't mix your languages!

## Broad range of Conversation Partners

Show the child that other people speak your language, too.

The child needs to hear the language from many different speakers (old, young, male and female voices, various accents and dialects, different media like phone, radio, tape). Enlist the help of family members of your language, like grandparents.

Mix with other people who speak your language in different situations and environment. The child learns how adults communicate while listening to communication between same language speakers.

## Make it Fun

Support the child at its own pace. Focus on the fun involved and avoid stress. Try to give your child incentives that work.

Enjoy every little progress and focus on small success.

## Take your language to school

Let teachers, other parents and children in your child's school know, what languages your family speak.

In Finland the second language lessons are organized in different ways in different municipalities, both during the school day and outside school hours. As a general rule, a child has an opportunity to have language instruction in his/her second language two hours per week. Language instruction is not necessarily given at the pupil's own school.