

# Learning A Second Language

---

Creating a welcoming, literacy-rich environment is the ideal foundation for a child learning English as a second language. This can be accomplished by:

- Reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of all children in such things as posters, pictures, props, tabletop toys, games, storybooks, media resources, musical instruments and foods served in the classroom.
- Creating opportunities for family and community members to share experiences with children in their home language, as well as in English.
- Going on field trips and other outings where children and families can learn about the culture and history of themselves and others.

## What Can Parents Do?

- Maintaining the home language is key to your child's success in school. Both languages build on each other, so the stronger the proficiency in your home language, the stronger her English skills will be. Provide plenty of opportunity to hear and use the language at home and in the community.
- Make or find a book in your home language. You can also use pictures in any book to make up stories with your child while speaking in your home language.

## It Takes Time...

- Experts say three or four years may pass before a young child learning English accumulates a vocabulary comparable to peers who have spoken English since birth.
- It can take from five to seven years in school for young children learning English to master complex academic English skills, both spoken and written, that are the same as their peers who speak English as their first language.

## References

Dachyshyn, Darcey. Kirova, Anna. Paradis, Johanne (2009) Working with Young Children who are Learning English as a New Language. Alberta Education Early Learning Branch. Edmonton, Alberta.  
(<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/esl/resources.aspx>)

Government  
of Alberta

Alberta

 galileo.org  
educational network

The material on this page is from <http://galileo.org/earlylearning>, an Early Learning website and a joint venture of the Government of Alberta and Galileo Educational Network. For copyright information, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

