



SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE! CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT FOR FAMILIES

**A Resource for Parents, Grandparents, and Loving Community Members to Support The Bilingual Child
In Your Life**

This toolkit provides a number of additional resources for Families looking to support multilingual children to succeed in schools and beyond. We aim to continuously improve this toolkit. If you have feedback or suggestions about how we can make this resource more valuable to families, please let us know!

EARLY LEARNING

Understand the FACTS About Bilingual Children!

Challenging Common Myths (K-3) This report, by Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D. explores what's true - and false - about dual language learning children. It explains why continuing to support your child with home language conversation is important and actually *helps* them in their English-speaking school.

<https://www.fcd-us.org/assets/2016/04/Challenging-Common-Myths-Update.pdf>

"Systematic, deliberate exposure to English during early childhood combined with ongoing opportunities to learn important concepts in the home language results in the highest achievement in both the home language and English by the end of Third Grade and beyond."

Use Bilingual Parenting Resources: Our friends at MomsRising.org have created a page full of important tools for parents raising bilingual children.

http://action.momsrising.org/survey/bilingual_baby/

Help Your Child Learn in Two Languages

Here, you will find information about how families have helped their children maintain two languages:

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/bilingual.htm>

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Continue speaking your home language!

During this time, your child can benefit from developing self-confidence in their language abilities and their connection to their culture. By continuing to speak your home language with your child, you will help them develop their language skills and confidence. Tell stories, talk together, and laugh together in your home language!

Use the language you're most comfortable with

Your child will learn the most from you if you communicate in the language that comes most naturally to you. Which language do you think in? Which language do you dream in? Which language do you joke in? Use that language for your interactions with your child, so they will naturally learn and maintain your home language.

Expose your child to cultural resources in your home language

Share your favorite books, movies, music, and cultural events and holidays with your child. Many communities offer after school programs, Saturday schools, or other classes or camps to teach home language while introducing kids to other members of their cultural community.

Get to know your child's teacher and stay involved in your child's education

In many cultures, parents are not actively involved in education; it is seen as the realm of respected educators. American schools welcome and encourage parent participation. Parent participation has been linked to academic success! If you have questions about your child's education or performance, please feel comfortable contacting their teacher.

If it is an option, enroll your child in a dual language program starting from kindergarten. If your district doesn't have one, ask why!

HIGH SCHOOL

Help your child receive academic rewards for what they *already* know!

Two important programs are available to your high school student that recognize and reward biliteracy.

- 1) **World Language Credits** - Your student may earn up to 4 credits toward high school graduation, if they are able to test as proficient in a home language other than English. Testing is available whether or not the language is taught at your school!
- 2) **The Seal of Biliteracy** is earned by students who have demonstrated their biliteracy, perhaps through Advanced Placement testing, International Baccalaureate testing, or by qualifying for 4 World Language Competency-Based credits. The Seal of Biliteracy is placed on the graduation diploma itself and is noted on their transcript, and becomes an honor recognized by colleges and future employers.

Sign your students up for these programs!

1. **Contact your school and let them know you are interested in having your student tested for World Language Credits in your home language.**

Speak with their teacher or a guidance counselor at school as soon as possible to find out when testing takes place and how to register. *Remember:* Even if your child doesn't speak your home language completely fluently, they may be able to get partial credit. Also, some schools will assist with the cost of language testing!

If your school is not familiar with the World Language Credit option, please show them our website: SpeakYourLanguage.org and we can help them get started! (Or they can contact OSPI to ask about how to access)

Help your student prepare for the examination by continuing to celebrate your home language at home, through daily practice and interactions.

BECOME A PARENT ADVOCATE & A VOICE IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

Our Home Language Parent Advocacy Program has been an organizing effort that has been advocating to change a deficit perspective English language learners and message the assets of being multilingual, which has resulted in many educational opportunity for students. Please consider becoming a parent advocate and sharing your voice and leadership in your community.

- + Tell other families in your community about the importance of speaking their language and encourage them to share the benefits of speaking their home language with their children in their lives. **EVERY LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT!**
- + Share our website and our Speak Your Language flyer (translated into 25 languages! Visit our website SpeakYourLanguage.org for more information) with your friends, family, church groups, and local organizations, so they learn how to keep their home language alive!
- + Tell school-age students and families about the World Language Credit program and Seal of Biliteracy. If you know high school students, encourage them to test for biliteracy in their home language, it can help them earn the credits necessary to graduate with their high school diploma.
- + Encourage your school to take visible steps to promote bilingualism with School Board Resolutions and Policies that increase dual language programs and support the Seal of Biliteracy and World Language Credits, if they haven't already.
- + Ask your school to celebrate and support bilingual students. Consider creating a parent group for bilingual families in your school to support one another!

**Please visit SpeakYourLanguage.org
to join our mailing list and for updated information!**