

Tips for Parents

Providing opportunities for your child to practise the target language (the language that he or she is learning) and interact with other speakers, through play or just talking, can enhance language learning. When you give your children opportunities to read, write and express their thoughts, you encourage learning. Choose activities appropriate to the grade level and language proficiency of your children. Here are some suggestions.

If you speak this language, what can you do at home for your child in grades 4, 5 or 6?

- ★ Serve as a role model for reading and writing:
 - sing songs and rhymes with your child, emphasizing similarities and differences in sounds
 - use flash cards to review and practise vocabulary with your child; make a game out of it
 - create fun projects, such as illustrating cards, scrap-booking (the family, vacation fun, summer activities), family shows (puppetry, plays)
 - use the language to create posters, placemats, etc.
- ★ Find something familiar, such as a translation of a favourite book, to capture your child's interest.
- ★ Listen to your child read to you, and ask questions about what he or she has read.
- ★ Consider having your child label items in your home in the target language.
- ★ Play video games, computer games or board games in the target language.
- ★ Listen to your child with interest. Ask questions about his or her learning and be generous with your praise.
- ★ Have your child tape his or her voice reading in the target language and then listen to the recording together.
- ★ Consider having your child train the family pet in the target language.
- ★ Watch a television program or movie in the target language.
- ★ Switch the language setting on your favourite DVD.

If you don't speak this language, what can you do at home for your child in grades 4, 5 or 6?

- ★ Encourage your child to tell you each day, in his or her home language, what he or she learned in the language.
- ★ Borrow books, comics, music, videotapes and DVDs in the target language from the library.
- ★ Look for interesting Web sites in the target language that you can view with your child.
- ★ Listen to a cultural radio show or CD.
- ★ Reinforce topics learned in class, such as food names or rooms of the house, by asking your child to identify familiar objects.
- ★ Encourage your child to tell stories in the target language.
- ★ Have your child write the grocery list by copying in the target language names from labels.
- ★ Have your child list in the target language the foods of the evening meal.
- ★ Encourage friends and relatives to support your child's language learning with gifts of music or books.
- ★ Adopt a friend/grandparent in the neighbourhood who could read and speak with your child in this language.
- ★ Investigate after-school care with someone who could reinforce this language learning.
- ★ Have a bilingual picture dictionary at hand.

For all parents

- ★ Ask your teacher's advice regarding:
 - good quality reference materials (e.g., dictionary) you could provide
 - age-appropriate magazines in the language to which you could subscribe.
- ★ Consider “two-for-one reading,” where your child reads one target language book after every two English language books.
- ★ Encourage your child to create games (board games, puzzles) and to “publish stories” in the language, which could be shared at school.
- ★ Share learning resources and great ideas with other parents.

Environments that engage children in real-life activities that require them to use the target language can promote language learning. Grandparents, friends, cultural organizations and the community can provide various language experiences that help extend language learning.

The following list provides ideas for enhancing community opportunities for your children to speak the target language and improve their communication skills.

If you speak this language, what can you do to support language learning in the community?

Grades 4, 5 or 6

- ★ Arrange for your child to speak or correspond with a relative who speaks the target language.
- ★ Build partnerships with other parents to provide positive interactions for children.

If you don't speak this language, what can you do to support language learning in the community?

Grades 4, 5 or 6

- ★ Visit first language speakers of your child's target language.
- ★ Take a language course to help support and reinforce your child's learning.

Whether you speak this language or not, what can you do to support language learning in the community?

Grades 4, 5 or 6

- ★ Participate in and/or attend social, educational, community, artistic and cultural events, such as museum exhibits, plays, concerts or dance performances.
- ★ As a family, visit cultural sites in the community.
- ★ Take your child to a restaurant that features the food and culture related to the language, and talk about the different foods as you eat.
- ★ Take part in story classes in the target language at the local library or cultural resource centre.
- ★ Make real-life connections to language learning by pointing out words in the target language that you see in advertisements or menus.
- ★ Access available resources, such as Internet sites, to support your child's learning.

- ★ Arrange for your child to speak or correspond with a peer or community member in the target language.
- ★ Investigate the possibility of enrolling in activities (e.g., art classes, sports and recreation programs or summer camps) in your community that use the target language.
- ★ Talk to the teacher about a possible buddy class, school twinning, e-mail exchanges and participation in community cultural events. (Twinning is a long-term formal relationship between an Alberta school and a school in another country.)

Grades 7–9

- ★ Encourage journaling or writing a diary in the target language.
- ★ Enroll your child in art classes, sports activities, recreation programs or summer camps that use the target language.
- ★ Encourage your child to volunteer in settings which allow language use with community members; e.g., after school reading to/conversation with elderly folks, child care helpers for children of new Canadians who speak the target language.
- ★ Encourage students to present songs/skits/dances at language community celebrations.

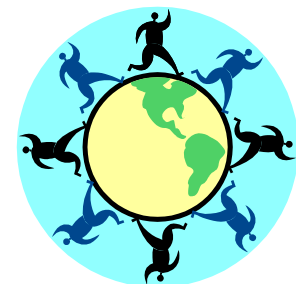
- ★ Talk to your teacher about possible:
 - class visits/field trips
 - participation in community cultural events
 - class/school twinning
 - short-term group exchanges.

Grades 10–12

- ★ Create opportunities for your child to take part in work and volunteer experiences in the target language.
 - Talk to the teacher about helping/volunteering with elementary grade activities.
 - Encourage peer tutoring or perhaps volunteering with students or classes in junior high school.
 - Encourage students to become involved in local cultural festivals/activities; e.g., Edmonton Heritage Days Festival.
 - Encourage able and interested students to help with sports programs, art, dance and recreation activities, and summer camp activities that language community associations coordinate for, and deliver to, younger children.
- ★ Encourage participation in school trips and longer-term individual exchange opportunities.
- ★ Investigate study/immersion experiences and potential work experience in the target language.

For more information

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