I’m learning English as an additional language. Here’s how you can support me.

Top Tip 2: Be patient. Learning 2 or more languages usually takes longer than learning one language, but it’s really worth it in the end and with the right support, I’ll be using both languages to my full potential when I’m a little older. It may take me a little longer to start talking and using language but that’s okay.

Top Tip 1: Encourage my parents to keep using the language they speak best with me. This will most likely be their home/native language. This will help me hear good models of language structure and vocabulary which will help me learn my home language and also learn English better later on. It also means I can learn to understand and talk to family and friends who live in my parents’ home country.

Note: Research shows no harm will come to me from learning 2 or more languages, even if I have a language impairment or difficulty talking.



Top Tip 5: If you talk to me in my home language and I answer only in English, don’t worry! It’s very common for children who are learning English as an additional language to talk only in the language they hear most people talking in outside the home – English. I’m still showing you I understand and am learning my home language and I’ll start speaking it when I’m ready.

Top Tip 4: If I seem to be having a lot of difficulty developing both my home language and English, ask to speak to or contact a speech & language therapist. It will be important to assess my language skills in both/all my languages to see if I need extra support.

Top Tip 3: Help me to get lots of quality exposure to both/all my languages. For example, sharing story books with me is a great way for me to learn new words. My parents can be encouraged to share books with me at home each day in my home language and my nursery or school staff can share books with me in English.

For more information see the following links on supporting EAL children:

<https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/parents/speaking-your-home-language>

<https://www.york.ac.uk/psychology/research/groups/bilingual-project/tipsforealclassroom/>