

**The Home/School Connection:
Collaborating to Promote Best Practice in World Language Education, K-8
Issue 18**

Creating a Resource Library for Parents, Part 1

Dear Parents,

You are hearing over and over that learning a second language is necessary for your child to one day compete in the world of the 21st century. You probably have many questions about why your child should learn a second language, what the benefits are and how you can support your child's language learning, but you do not know where to find the answers to your questions.

This issue of *Home/School Connection* will focus on bringing together resources to answer questions about second language learning. It will provide tips for creating a parent resource library that can be housed in your child's school library or at home.

Books

Early language educators around the nation have turned to Languages and Children, Making the Match: New Languages for Young Learners, Grades K-8 by Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Dahlberg since its first edition was printed in 1988. This book is a collection of best practices in teaching a second language to children in K-8. Though written for educators, it is a valuable resource for parents wanting to learn more about how language is taught in the early years.

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century was written and developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The standards for foreign language are communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Detailed explanations for each standard are given along with sample progress

indicators and learning scenarios for different languages. This book is another resource many teachers use that parents can benefit from reading.

The Bilingual Edge: Why, When and How to Teach Your Child a Second Language by Kendall King and Alison Mackey is a combination of research and personal experiences about raising children to speak more than one language. The authors answer many questions in their book regarding early language learning. Some questions include:

- Why Are Two Languages Better Than One?
- Which Language is Right for Your Child?
- When Should Your Child Start Learning Another Language
- How Can You Best Promote Language Learning at Home?

Journals

As an institutional member of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), your school would receive 3 copies of the journal, *Learning Languages*. This journal is published in the fall and spring and each edition focuses on a particular theme. Past issues of the journal are available to members and the themes include: International Education & Culture, Assessment, Content-Related Instruction, Literacy and Foreign Language, Best Practices, Professional Growth, Heritage Language Learners, and Less Commonly Taught Languages. These journals give parents ample resources about early language learning. To order past issues, visit the NNELL website, www.nnell.org.

ACTFL is another organization that provides journals to its membership. The *Language Educator* is published 6 times a year and includes updates on research, articles related to language learning, summaries of language related legislation, and information on the latest language technologies. Past copies of this journal are available for both members and nonmembers. These journals focus on language learning preK-16. For more information, go to www.actfl.org.

Binders of Information

On the NELL website, www.nell.org, past issues of *Home/School Connection* are available to be downloaded for free. This resource is published five times each year. The focus of *Home/School Connection* is to inform parents on early language learning. Each issue addresses a different theme. They can be printed and stored in a binder for quick access and easy copying by parents. Past themes include:

- 21st Century Skills and Global Education
- Finding Time for Language Learning
- “Critical Languages” in the United States
- Using the Target Language in the Second Language Classroom
- Thematic Units
- 4 issues focusing on the National Foreign Language Standards
- Assessments
- What Language Should my Child Learn?
- Are Children “Language Sponges”?
- Common Misunderstandings about Early Second Language Learning

- Parent Involvement and School Models

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) website, www.cal.org, also has resources to download and print regarding early language learning. These resources include:

- Informational brochures about language learning
- Digests: bilingual children, model foreign language programs, information for parents
- Ñandutí: multiple articles under “Early Learning Benefits”
- *Foreign Language Teaching in U.S. Schools: Results of a National Survey, Executive Summary* by Nancy C. Rhodes and Ingrid Pufahl

Language Materials

There are CDs, DVDs, computer games, workbooks and books available in many different languages. Talk with your child’s teacher or other language teachers about what materials they would recommend buying. Including these tools and materials in a parent resource library would help you and other parents reinforce at home the language your children are learning.

Conclusion

Creating a parent resource library and investing in some of the materials listed in this issue of *Home/School* will benefit many parents. Make it your goal to learn more about early language learning and help your child master a second language.

NELL can assist teachers, parents and administrators with learning and advocacy efforts. Contact your State Representative today. We would love to hear from you!

This issue of Home/School Connection was written by Tammy Dann. It is full of tips and resources that can be found at www.nell.org. Teachers may reproduce it and send it home in their students’ backpacks. Send suggestions/comments to Tammy Dann, NELL’s Early Language Advocate: trdann@q.com