

Collaborating to Promote Best Practice in World Language Education, preK-8

## Language Learning as an Adult

Dear Parents,

For many parents, their child's education in a new language sparks or renews their interest in language learning. In this issue of *Parent Connections to Early Language Learning*, we will explore how to support your child's language learning through your own.

### Be a role model

Not knowing the language your child is learning at school presents both challenges and opportunities. It may be difficult to help your child practice that language at home if you do not know how to pronounce the words. Your child may say things to you that you do not understand. Turn those frustrations into opportunities by learning the language with your child. Your child will follow the example you set. If you are enthusiastic about learning a new language, your child will be also. Learning with your child is a very powerful tool and gives you another way to connect.

### Getting started

First, identify your learning styles or preferences. Do you need to see new words written down to remember them? Do you prefer to hear the words first? Does it help you to put the words to music? Determining your learning preferences will help you choose the right products and strategies for language learning.

The next step is to carve out time from your schedule to practice the language. Start small and build the amount of time you practice. If language practice is part of your daily routine, your child will see it as something you value.

### Practicing on your own

Once you identify your learning preferences and create a practice schedule, choose the tools that will be effective for you. Most public libraries have resources for learning a second language. These include the traditional books, DVDs, CDs, and CD-ROMs. Many libraries are beginning to offer their patrons online language resources. These programs allow you to log in using your library card number and track your progress through the language lessons.

Every day more technology is available to help with language learning. Here are resources that are just a click or a tap away:

- Download apps to your phone to help you learn another language.
- Search You Tube and watch videos in the language you are learning.
- Use gadgets and widgets that have a word of the day feature for other languages.
- Search for podcasts to download in the language you are learning.
- Read online books or periodicals in the second language.

## Practicing with your child

Look for new and fun ways to practice the language both within and outside of your home with your child. When language learning is fun, you and your child will be more motivated to continue practicing and learning together. Here are a few activities to improve your language skills together:

- Find restaurants in your community where the staff speaks the language you and your child are learning. Try new foods while practicing the language.
- Watch your child's favorite movies together and change the language track or add subtitles.
- Read to and with your child in the new language. Libraries often carry books in different languages. The internet provides access to electronic books. If you are still a novice, find books online with voice tracks.
- Create a word or phrase wall in your home, combining the words you and your child are learning. Quiz each other on the new words and use the phrases in conversation.
- Turn mealtime into language practice. Try to speak only in the language being studied.
- Make word/phrase flashcards and quiz each other on the new vocabulary.
- Have a game night when the games are played only in the new language. Look for games that are unique to the language you are learning.

## Choosing a different language

You may already fluently speak the language your child is learning at school. Choose a language that is very different from the languages you already speak. This will allow you to once again be a novice language learner, creating a similar experience to that of your child.

Talk about your progress and the challenges related to learning a new language with your child. Teach each other new words and discuss how the two languages compare. Swap ideas about effective learning strategies and discuss the benefits you both gain by learning a new language.

## Conclusion

Today there are more and more resources available for adults interested in learning a language. Once again becoming a language learner will allow you to be a good role model for your child as s/he learns a new language. These experiences help you both be better global citizens. It is never too late and you are never too old to learn a new language, so start today!

NNELL 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 *Parent Connection to Early Language Learning* was written by Tammy Dann. It is full of tips and resources that can be found at [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org). Teachers may reproduce it and send it home in their students' backpacks. Send suggestions/comments to Tammy Dann, NNELL's Early Language Learning Advocate: [tdann@nnell.org](mailto:tdann@nnell.org)