

TEN THINGS PARENTS CAN DO AT HOME TO SUPPORT THE LEARNING OF ESL STUDENTS, GRADES K-3

1. Visit the local library on a regular basis. Ensure your child has a library card and is able to use it. Accompany your child for story times at the library.
2. Set aside at least fifteen minutes a day for family reading. Read to your child in English and/or in the language of the home, and listen to your child read. Read both stories and information books about people, places, things, and events. Talk about who is in the pictures, where they are, what is happening, why it is happening, and make predictions about what will happen next.
3. Visit places in the community with your child to encourage new interests. These places can be the beach, the woods, a science center, museums, art galleries, and anything else your community has to offer.
4. Take an interest in writing by having your child draw and talk to you about what he/she has created. Write a description of the drawing for your child in English and/or in the language of the home.
5. Together, explore the print in magazine and newspapers, on signs, and in the community at large.
6. Create a place within the home that is quiet and free from distractions where your child can do school work.
7. Keep a scrapbook of your child's work so he/she knows that you value what is being done. Provide your child with positive feedback about his/her progress in learning.
8. Support your child's developing bilingualism. He/she is not replacing the language of the home with English. Your child is becoming bilingual. Studies show that those with command of both English and the language of the home are, in the long term, more likely to have success as a learner.
9. Attend parent-teacher conferences, and ask for a translator if you need one.
10. Become involved in your child's school, if possible, by helping out with school activities such as field trips and other school events.

TEN THINGS PARENTS CAN DO AT HOME TO SUPPORT THE LEARNING OF ESL STUDENTS, GRADES 4-9

1. With your child, visit the local library on a regular basis. Ensure your child has a library card and is able to use it.
2. Set aside at least twenty minutes a day for family reading. Encourage your child to read novels (in any language) and a variety of information books about people, places, things, and events from the past, present, and future. Read books with geographical maps, drawings and sketches, diagrams, charts, graphs, or photographs.
3. Together, visit places in the community to encourage your child to develop new interests. Some suggestions are the beach, the woods, a science center, museums, and art galleries. Ask your child to tell you what he/she is learning at school.
4. Take an interest in writing by having your child write in a private diary or journal, or by writing to friends and family at home. Encourage your child to experiment with different forms of writing: poems, information, stories, lists, flow charts, letters of persuasion.
5. Create a place within the home that is quiet and free from distractions where your child can do school work.
6. Help your son/daughter to get organized. Set up a daily schedule with a routine work/study time, and monitor homework. Offer positive support and suggestions as needed.
7. Help your child learn strategies for managing the information in textbooks and for note-taking. Find books in the library on study skills, enrol your child in a mini-course, or ask teachers or the teacher-librarian at your child's school for ideas.
8. If you can afford to hire a tutor, ask the tutor to help your child develop note-taking skills, strategies for learning, and study skills. In addition to working on classroom assignments, some of the time with the tutor should be used to "learn how to learn."
9. Monitor the amount of time your son/daughter spends on games on the computer, on chat-lines, and on e-mail.
10. Be positive and supportive. Balance time for study with time for play. Learning should be something that brings pleasure, not a chore that takes away from free time: ensure your child has time for activities other than the formal learning of English. Keep in mind that much language acquisition occurs in social situations.