

ECE Cheatsheet:

Supporting ESL Children's Education



Early Childhood Educators often interact with students for whom English is a second language. While rewarding, this poses unique challenges in communication and assessment.

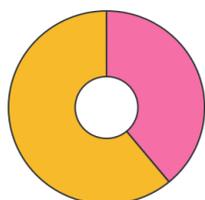


This infographic was developed by collecting evidence-based answers to real ECEs most valued questions. Two ECEs were interviewed in order to develop the context for this tool.

It is meant to help early childhood educators expand their knowledge of early bilingualism and provide a tool for helping ESL children succeed

39%

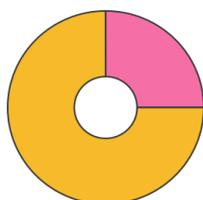
OF EDMONTONIANS SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH OR FRENCH:



(2016 Census; EPL, 2020)

25%

OF CHILDREN IN EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOL ARE ESL STUDENTS



1

Must A Child Be Fluent in Both Languages to be Considered Bilingual?

No, most bilinguals have a different level of proficiency in each of their languages, even as adults

2

How Can I Support A Child Whose Language I Don't Speak?

Gestures, pictures, props and examples can help a child understand topics in the classroom

Learning a few phrases in the child's language can reassure them and help them bond with staff

Physical comfort (e.x., hugs) can help soothe an anxious child

MAJOR PROMOTERS OF YOUNG ESL CHILDREN'S SUCCESS:

- **cultural sensitivity in the classroom**
- **positive instructor interactions**
- **encouraging peer play**
- **strategic use of the first language**

(Castro, Espinosa, & Páez, 2011)



(Tabors, 2008)

3

What Can I Expect To See as Children Develop English Skills?

It has been shown that early ESL students generally show four stages of progress

- speaking only the first language
- nonverbal observation phase -- using other methods to communicate
- telegraphic phase -- using labels and unvarying phrases in English
- creating original sentences in English

4

Should I Encourage Children to Only Use English in the Classroom?

Research shows that allowing children to incorporate some of their first language in the classroom supports positive outcomes in both languages

For example, playing multilingual audio or labels for picture books promotes vocabulary expansion in both languages

teddy bear

osito

泰迪熊



(Tabors, 2008)

DISCONTINUING THE FIRST LANGUAGE AT HOME IS OFTEN THE

#1

PREDICTOR OF FIRST LANGUAGE LOSS IN CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS

5

Should I Encourage Parents to Speak English at Home?

No, research shows that speaking the mother tongue at home does not have any negative impact on children's English development

But, speaking only English at home can cause the child to lose skills in their native language

6

Does Bilingualism Give Students a Mental Advantage in the Long Term?

It depends.

IF bilinguals receive support in both languages (including valuing the home culture), bilingualism can lead to improved linguistic awareness, attention span, memory, empathy, and mental flexibility

There is evidence that suggests bilingualism can protect against Alzheimer's disease



(Bialystok, 2017; Lambert, 1981; Woumans et al., 2015)