

Useful links:

Education Scotland's Parent Zone – advice and tips on how to support literacy at home

<http://bit.ly/Literacy-at-home>

Education Scotland's Parent Zone – information about the Languages curriculum

<http://bit.ly/Langs-PZ>

Bilingualism Matters – information and advice about raising bilingual children

www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/

British Deaf Association – information about British Sign Language

<http://bit.ly/BritishSL>



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Developing literacy
through language
learning:
A guide for parents

Developing literacy through language learning

Literacy is more than the ability to read and write. When we talk about literacy, we mean a range of language skills that help learners participate in all aspects of their lives and learning. Learning new languages can play an important role in helping children and young people to develop their literacy skills, including literacy in their first language, whether this is English or another language.

How does learning languages help my child develop literacy?

Learning languages involves participating in activities that help develop literacy skills. Through languages, learners have opportunities to:

- develop and improve their skills in listening, talking, reading and writing¹
- get a feeling for how languages work
- learn how to communicate ideas and information in their own language as well as in the new languages they study
- become familiar with different texts and media in different languages
- consider new points of view
- use new technologies to communicate in other languages, which boosts their learning and helps them develop literacy skills for the digital age

References are available from

<http://bit.ly/languagesliteracy>

Language learning in Scotland

In Scotland, additional languages have been part of the curriculum from primary through to secondary for a number of years. While this is still the case, local authorities and schools are working towards a new way of learning languages, known as the 1+2 approach to language learning. The new approach entitles every child and young person in Scotland to study two languages at school in addition to their mother tongue language. This develops and strengthens their literacy and language skills in a number of ways:

- Language learning will be part of the everyday life of the classroom from P1. This gives teachers the opportunity to spend more time developing children's language skills and knowledge of language so that the children are likely to have a greater understanding of how languages work as they go through school.
- Learning two additional languages gives learners more opportunities to build on their literacy skills. Being able to use their existing skills to understand new languages can encourage them to try new things, which may improve their confidence. This makes for much better learners all round!
- Schools continue to plan together to make sure that what children do in secondary school builds on what they have done in primary school. This ensures that learning languages remains a suitably challenging and rewarding experience for children as they move into secondary.
- This approach is inclusive and entitles all children and young people to learn new languages. In this way, the lives of all learners may be enhanced from learning about other languages and cultures.

For more detailed information, download 'A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning: Information for parents' (SCILT, 2014)

- <http://bit.ly/1plus2parentleaflet>

¹For children who use British Sign Language (BSL), this can include producing and understanding BSL face to face and on video. For visually impaired children it may include using Braille, large print or computers with speech output.

How can I help improve my child's literacy?

There may be lots of opportunities to help develop literacy at home:

- **A positive attitude towards learning new languages** can help raise your child's motivation, which can improve their language learning. Read more about the benefits of learning languages

http://bit.ly/Benefits_of_Langs

- **Singing songs and rhymes together** can help develop literacy. You could start by asking your child to teach you the songs and rhymes that they learn in school. A range of songs and rhymes from around the world is available on the Mama Lisa's World website

<http://bit.ly/mamalisa>

- **Ask your child to tell you about similarities and/or differences between any of the languages they learn**, including their own language. Share what you know about your own and/or other languages.
- **Gently encourage your child to take advantage of real life opportunities** to use the language(s) they know at home or abroad, e.g. meeting and greeting family members/friends who are fluent in other languages, buying and asking about things in shops, reading newspapers, etc.
- If you or family/friends have some knowledge of the new language your child is learning, **plan an enjoyable activity in which you can use the language together**. For instance, follow a recipe written in the new language, watch a language-specific film, read a story or play a game together. This blog post suggests some language and thinking games that may be adapted to other languages

<http://bit.ly/literacy-games>