



Université Laurentienne
Laurentian University



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Bilinguisme en Ontario:
cas de trouble ou de
développement typique chez
les enfants

Bilingualism in Ontario:
Communication disOrders
and Typical development

It's back to school and we all know what that means....

Mounds of paperwork coming home every day and meeting new teachers!

If you have kids with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or if your kids have difficulties at school, it is important to ask your child's teacher for a brief meeting to discuss some of these issues.

The formal parent-teacher meeting usually takes place in October or November, but I find that too late to talk about my kids' quirks and perks. As parents, we know our kids best!

Teacher's have the wonderful feat of having to get to know 25 + kids all at once, so giving them an overview of what works and doesn't work for your child in under 20 minutes can be very helpful.

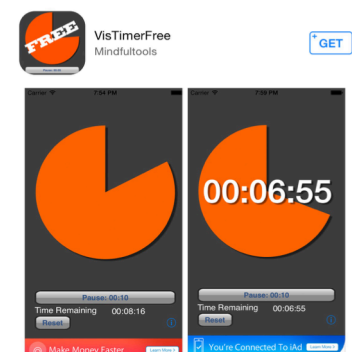
Helpful tips:

- 1) **Ask for a meeting** before the end of September.
 - a. This meeting shouldn't take more than 20-30 minutes.
- 2) **Come prepared.** List the specifics. Share with the teacher what worked for your child in previous years.
 - a. **For example:** fastening the child's glasses case on her desk with Velcro is a great way to remind her to put them on after recess/gym!

- 3) **Bring useful tools with you.** For example, my son uses a special dictionary called *Eurêka* for spelling in French. Many teachers haven't heard about it so I make a point of bringing it with me to this meeting.



- 4) Talk to your child about his or her new teacher. Let them know that they will need to be their own advocate. Your child needs to understand his or her strengths and weaknesses.
- 5) **Encourage your child to ask for help.** All too often, kids are afraid to ask for help or for clarification.
- 6) Talk to your child's teacher about your plan for your child; up-coming interventions, assessments, etc. **Open communication is key.**
- 7) If you feel comfortable doing so, give the teacher permission to share information with outside professionals who may be working with your child, be it a tutor, a speech and language pathologist or any other professional.
- 8) **Be creative with homework.** Investing in chalkboard paint is worth the money if your child isn't too keen on paper and pencil tasks. I ask my kids to spell words on our chalkboard and they love it.
- 9) **Establish a routine** for homework and stick to it! Kids like routines. That way, they know what to expect.
- 10) Use a timer to show your child when homework will be done.
a. There are many apps out there that allow kids to see the time passing by. Ex.:



IF YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE DON'T SPEAK THE SCHOOL LANGUAGE...

- 1) Let the teacher know.
- 2) You can also talk to your child's teacher about your bilingual plan. *What is your long-term goal for your child's language acquisition? Who speaks what language with your child? How much exposure does your child get in the school language?*
- 3) Ask your child's teacher ahead of time if there are specific books that will be used. Some books can be found in more than one language.
 - a. If that's the case, you and your child can read the book in the home language, making it easier when it comes time to read the book in the school language.
- 4) For younger kids, many skills can be practiced in the home language and can easily transfer into the school language such as counting the syllables or sounds in words, counting objects, adding numbers, etc.
- 5) Try to **set some time for reading** every day. Most kids will want to take part in reading if you are there with them. It's great bonding time that often gives rise to some interesting discussions.
 - a. For this, you can find books available in both the school and the home language. Your child can read the book in French and you can ask questions in your language about the book.
- 6) If your schedule allows it, try to volunteer at your child's school to get a better sense of how he or she is communicating with his or her peers. There are usually many opportunities for volunteering even if you don't speak the school language.
- 7) Make sure your child knows you value the school language and culture. If your child senses that the school language and culture are important to you, he or she is more likely to value that language as well.
- 8) Ensure the school language is not only used for homework. Set some time aside for fun activities in the school language as well!

By Chantal Mayer-Crittenden, 2015