



THE ULTIMATE BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE

for bilingual families



PART 1

SPANISH-FIRST PEQUES GOING INTO KINDERGARTEN



HOW TO PREPARE THEM (WITHOUT ENGLISH)

The weeks before kindergarten can feel overwhelming for Spanish-first parents, especially if your little one hasn't started speaking English yet.

You might be wondering...

Will they understand the teacher?

Will they be able to make friends?

Should I start speaking English at home now?

HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS:

Your child does not need to learn English before kindergarten to be ready for school.

School will teach English. Your job before kindergarten is to build the language, literacy, and thinking skills that transfer no matter what language they're learning in.

Let's walk through exactly what to focus on.





UNDERSTAND WHAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN

What you'll probably notice during the first few weeks of school:

- They watch more than they talk.
- They may not answer the teacher right away.
- They understand much more than they can say.
- They start bringing home a few English words.
- They may start mixing Spanish and English.
- The teacher might describe them as “shy.”

WHY THIS IS NORMAL

When children are learning a new language, they often go through what's called a silent period.

Their brains are busy listening, observing, and making sense of everything around them before they begin speaking.

Many children understand classroom routines long before they feel comfortable speaking English themselves.

Don't mistake this for...

X Confusion X A delay X Falling behind





EQUIP THEM WITH SKILLS THAT TRANSFER

Instead of spending the summer memorizing English vocabulary, prepare the skills they'll use every single day—in Spanish.

SCHOOL ROUTINES

Practice talking about:

- ✓ Following directions
- ✓ Taking turns
- ✓ Waiting patiently
- ✓ Raising a hand
- ✓ Asking for help
- ✓ Cleaning up
- ✓ Working independently
- ✓ Listening while someone else speaks

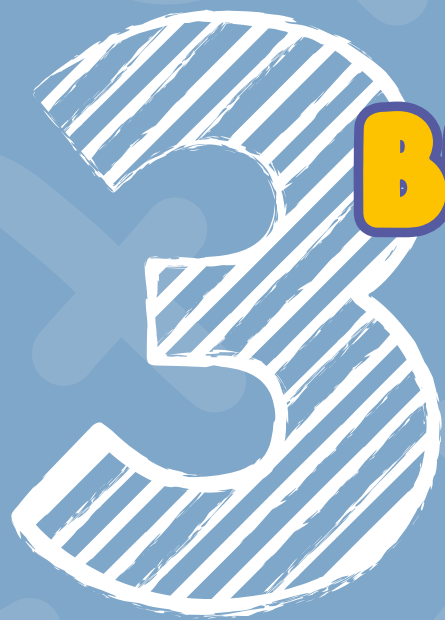
These routines are learned behaviors and can be taught fully in Spanish.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Start practicing these concepts through play:

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| ✓ comparar | ✓ explicar | ✓ resolver |
| ✓ clasificar | ✓ observar | ✓ medir |
| ✓ describir | ✓ predecir | |





BUILD LITERACY IN SPANISH

One of the biggest misconceptions about bilingual kids is that reading has to begin in English. It doesn't.

Strong early literacy skills transfer across languages.

BEFORE KINDERGARTEN, CAN YOUR CHILD...

- ☐ Recognize their name?
- ☐ Hold a book correctly?
- ☐ Understand that print has meaning?
- ☐ Follow text from left to right?
- ☐ Retell a story in their own words?
- ☐ Hear rhyming words?
- ☐ Clap syllables?
- ☐ Recognize beginning sounds?
- ☐ Identify letters?
- ☐ Match Spanish letter sounds to letters?

If you're checking off most of these, your child is building the exact foundation that beginning readers need.

When they begin learning English, they won't be learning those concepts for the first time. They'll simply be applying them to another language.





MEASURE READINESS DIFFERENTLY

It's easy to ask,
"do they know enough English?"

A better question is...

Can they tell a story?

Can they ask questions?

Can they explain what happened?

Can they follow directions?

Can they solve simple problems?

Can they describe what they see?

Can they stay curious?

Those are the skills that make children
successful learners. Language is simply
the tool they'll use to express them.

RESOURCE ALERT!

Grab my complete QUICK GUIDE
to teach reading in Spanish in my
[FREE RESOURCE LIBRARY.](#)





BEFORE THE FIRST DAY

Your kid is about to be immersed in English for hours a day. You'll be the safe base they return to.

Focus on sending them to school with a strong first language. A child who can think, communicate, and build literacy in Spanish isn't starting from zero. They're starting with a foundation that English can grow on.

HAVE ONE CONVERSATION WITH THEIR TEACHER

Tell them these 3 things:

- ✓ My child primarily speaks Spanish at home.
- ✓ They're still learning English, so they may understand much more than they can express at first.
- ✓ If possible, give them a little extra wait time before expecting an answer. They're likely processing the language, even when they don't respond right away.



PART 2

BILINGUAL PEQUES GOING BACK TO SCHOOL



HOW TO KEEP SPANISH GOING AFTER THEY GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Once school starts, English is no longer something you have to worry about. Your child will hear it from teachers, friends, books, morning announcements, classroom discussions, songs, games, homework.

By the time they walk through your front door, they've already spent six or seven hours immersed in it.

THAT MEANS YOUR ROLE CHANGES

You are the lifeline for Spanish. You have become the person protecting the language school isn't teaching.

Let's build a plan.





EXPECT ENGLISH TO COME HOME

During the first few weeks of school, you may notice things like:

- They answer you in English.
- They use English words for school routines.
- They tell stories in English.
- They mix both languages in the same sentence.
- They seem to prefer English right after school.

WHY THIS IS NORMAL

School isn't just teaching English. It's attaching English to every new experience your child is having. Their classroom, best friend, field trips, science experiments, soccer games.

Of course those memories come home in English! This doesn't mean they're losing Spanish, but it means we have work to do.





RECONNECT BEFORE REDIRECTING

After a full day of school, many children simply need a chance to decompress.

Don't make language a battle they fight when they walk through the door.

Instead, reconnect first, listen first. Then gently bring the conversation back to Spanish.

RECASTING

One of the easiest ways to do this is by recasting. Instead of correcting them... model the same idea in Spanish.

Child: "I played tag today."

You: "¡Qué divertido! ¿Con quién jugaste a las atrapadas?"

Child: "My teacher read us a book."

You: "¿De qué trataba el libro que les leyó la maestra?"

The conversation keeps flowing. Spanish stays present. No one feels corrected.

Notice how you're always staying in Spanish, while also allowing them to decompress.





HOLD THE SPANISH LINE

Once you've reconnected and given them a chance to decompress, come back to Spanish and stay there.

You're simply showing them: English coming home doesn't mean home switches to English.

And this matters more as they get older. If switching to English becomes the solution every time Spanish gets difficult, they'll naturally begin relying on English more and more.

Instead, make Spanish easier to access: supply the missing word, rephrase the question, give them choices, finish the sentence together, keep the conversation going.

REMEMBER

School already has six or seven hours every day to grow English. Home is where Spanish continues to grow.

Children don't usually stop speaking Spanish because school teaches English. They stop when English slowly replaces Spanish everywhere else too.





CREATE LANGUAGE EQUITY

One of the biggest reasons children begin choosing English is because all of their new experiences only exist in English.

Every time your child discovers a new interest, give Spanish a place in it too.

LEARNING NEW TERMS

When they learn something new at school, learn those concepts together in Spanish.

When they start a new hobby or sport, teach them how to talk about practices, equipment, teammates, rules, and skills in Spanish.

When they make new friends, give them the language they need to tell those stories in Spanish.

Children will choose the language that lets them talk about their lives. Make sure Spanish keeps growing alongside them.





HELP WITH HOMEWORK IN SPANISH

The worksheet may be in English.
The learning doesn't have to be.

Talk through math strategies in Spanish.
Explain science concepts in Spanish, discuss
stories in Spanish, ask questions in Spanish,
solve problems together in Spanish.

RESOURCE ALERT!

Grab my complete list of
ACADEMIC PODCASTS to help you create
language equity at home in my
[FREE RESOURCE LIBRARY](#).

REMEMBER

Concepts transfer. If your child learns a
concept in Spanish, they're much better
prepared to express it in English, and
viceversa. You just have to give them the
labels for the terms.



BEFORE YOU GO...

Starting school is a big transition.
For your child AND for you.

REMEMBER

School will teach your child English.
You are giving them something school
can't: a language that connects them to
their family, their culture, their roots.

You are not trying to stop English. You're
making sure Spanish has a place to grow
alongside it.

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