



**TAP, CLICK,  
READ**

## **How to Use Digital Media to Support Children's Home Language**

*Young children who are immersed in environments where caregivers are speaking and listening to them in any language are far more likely to excel in literacy in those languages and become strong readers than those who come from language-poor environments.*

### **Why it is important to support the home language**

- Use of the home language does not interfere with learning English.
- Strong speaking, reading, and listening skills in the home language support children's acquisition of English.<sup>1</sup>
- Bilingualism is an advantage. Children who learn two languages at an early age have stronger executive function skills, such as maintaining attention or switching between tasks.
- Children who have learning opportunities in their home languages early on tend to have higher academic achievement in middle school and high school compared to those who learn only in English.
- Language and culture are interconnected. Support of the home language allows children to maintain cultural connections and to see that their culture is valued.

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*“ Children's home languages . . .  
are assets to be tapped,  
not problems to be fixed. ”*

*– Lisa Guernsey &  
Michael H. Levine,  
Tap, Click, Read*

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Scheffner Hammer, Erika Hoff, Yuuko Uchikoshi, Cristina Gillanders, Dina Castro, and Lia E. Sandilos. “The Language and Literacy Development of Young Dual Language Learners: A Critical Review.” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 29 (2014): 715-733.



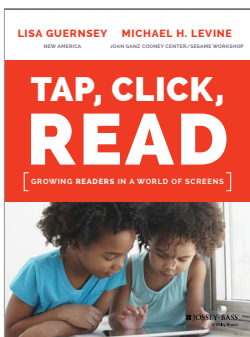
- Linguistic diversity in a classroom can be a tremendous asset. Dual language programs that provide instruction in English and a second language, such as Spanish, Chinese, or Arabic, allow children who are native speakers of the partner language to serve as language models and experts with their peers.

## How Media Mentors Can Help

- Media mentors can model the smart use of media with young children and match it to a child's needs. They can lend their expertise to help parents to identify e-books or apps in their native language, and teach parents how to encourage their children's home language development using digital media tools.
- For more on media mentors and their work with families, see the forthcoming books:

*Family Engagement in the Digital Age: Early Childhood Educators as Media Mentors*, edited by Chip Donohue (Teachers College Press, fall 2016)

*Becoming a Media Mentor: A Guide for Working with Children and Families*, by Claudia Haines, Cen Campbell, and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALA Editions, summer 2016)



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