Keeping your child speaking between classes

Ten minutes a day, any language. From the webinar of 14 November 2026.

Your child probably understands more than they say. That is normal. Understanding comes from listening; answering only comes from practice. A weekly class gives each child only a few minutes of speaking. The other six days are where you can help.

ONE PATTERN TO TRY

Ask. Wait. Say it back. Do not translate.

1. **Ask about what your child did today.** Then wait: count to five in your head. The child does the speaking.
2. **If they did not understand,** say it again slowly in your language, or act it out. Do not translate the question into English.
3. **If they say it wrong,** say the full sentence back naturally in your language, as a question, and carry on, rather than saying "No, that's wrong".
4. **If they answer in English or mix languages,** answer what they meant, in your language ("You played football? Who won?"). Say nothing about the English.
5. **If they answer in one word,** ask about that word ("Pasta? Who cooked it?"). Stay on their topic, and ask what they did, not what they know.
6. **When your child wants to keep going, let them.**

MAKE ROOM FOR IT

- **Pick one moment of the day for the language:** dinner, the car ride or bedtime. At that moment you speak only your language. Routine matters more than length.
- **Give grandparent calls time.** Before the call, agree on one thing your child will find out or tell them in the language. Afterwards, praise the telling.
- **One game a week.** While you cook, your child is the commentator, like a match on TV: what goes in the pan, what colour it turns, what comes next.
- **If your child is stuck,** give them the word and one sentence that uses it, then hand the turn back. If they have very few words yet, offer a choice ("Tea or milk?"), so the words are in the question.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Stopping your child mid-sentence to fix grammar.
- Making them repeat a corrected sentence in front of others.
- Switching to English the moment they hesitate.
- Translating the question into English for them.

A REASON TO SPEAK

- **Give a role, not a question.** Your child is the shopkeeper and you are the customer.
- **Come back to what they told you.** Ask today about the thing they told you yesterday.

SEE THE CHANGE

Record a one-minute voice note of your child talking about their day. Do it again in three months and play both.

If you want daily practice support. Speak with Kiki is a speaking-practice partner for children aged 5 to 16 in Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati and Telugu: ten minutes of speaking a day at home and a weekly report for parents. More languages are being added. www.speakwithkiki.com

Use freely in your school. Shubham Gupta, Speak with Kiki, with thanks to Andrea Katic Bruno (Croatian Schools USA), Dr. Joy Kreeft Peyton and Tommy Lu.