

5. What is a family language policy?

A family language policy is a set of rules developed by a family to help maintain their home language. Our research shows that Vietnamese-Australian families who have a family language policy are more likely to be successful in maintaining home language.

Remember that children living in English dominant countries hear and use a lot of English outside the home, so your home language (Vietnamese) can be the main focus for use in the home. It is also important for children to see adults talking in your home language to get a good model of what Vietnamese conversations look and sound like.

Things to include are:

1. The goal of the policy (e.g., do you want your children to be *proficient* in both languages (Vietnamese and English) or *functional* in Vietnamese when speaking with family members etc.?)
2. What languages will you speak at home?
3. Who will speak each language?
4. Who will each person speak the language with? (e.g., parents with parents, parents with children, children with children)
5. When will you speak each language? (e.g., Vietnamese at mealtimes)
6. Where will you speak each language? (e.g., Vietnamese at home and outside when with Vietnamese-speaking people are present, English at school and when English-speaking people are present)



Activity: Design/refine your own family language policy

1. What is our goal? (e.g., For our children to be <i>proficient</i> in both languages (Vietnamese and English). For our children to be <i>functional</i> in Vietnamese when speaking with family members).	
2. What languages will we speak at home?	
3. Who will speak each language?	
4. Who will each person speak the language with? (e.g., parents with parents, parents with children, children with children)	
5. When will we speak Vietnamese? When will we speak English? When will we speak both languages?	
6. Where will we speak Vietnamese? Where will we speak English? Where will we speak both languages?	