

GETTING STARTED · AGES 3-8

How to Teach Your Child English at Home, Without a Tutor

PRINTABLE ARTICLE

Every parent I've tutored has asked some version of the same question in the first five minutes: "Am I doing enough?" The honest answer is that most kids don't need a curriculum. They need fifteen consistent minutes and an adult who isn't stressed about it.

Here's the routine I actually recommend, built from a year of watching what works in real sessions with real kids.

Start with talking, not writing

Parents default to worksheets because worksheets feel like progress you can see. But for kids under eight, spoken English builds the foundation that writing later sits on top of. If your child can describe their day out loud, even messily, that's worth more than a perfectly filled workbook page.

Try this: at dinner, ask one question in English and let them answer however they can, mixing in Bengali if they need to. Don't correct every mistake. Just keep the conversation moving.

The 15-minute structure that sticks

- **5 minutes — read aloud together.** You read, they follow along or repeat a line. Picture books work better than "learning" books.
- **5 minutes — one new word, used three times.** Pick a word from the book. Use it in three different sentences across the day, out loud.
- **5 minutes — free talk.** No correction, no worksheet. Just let them narrate something — a game, a cartoon, their day.

The mistake most parents make isn't doing too little — it's making the 15 minutes feel like a test. Kids disengage from anything that feels evaluated. Keep it closer to play than to homework.

What to do when they mix languages

This is the question I get most often — but the short version: mixing English and Bengali mid-sentence is a normal stage of bilingual development, not a sign something's wrong. Gently model the English word

back to them instead of correcting.

When it's time to bring in outside help

If your child is consistently anxious about English, avoiding it altogether, or clearly behind classroom expectations despite a steady home routine, that's a reasonable point to bring in a tutor for a few sessions — not because you've failed, but because a second voice and a bit of structure can unstick things quickly.

The one thing that matters more than method

Consistency beats intensity. Fifteen calm minutes a day, most days, will outperform an hour-long session once a week that both of you dread. Pick a time that already exists in your routine — after dinner, before bed — and attach it there instead of trying to create a new slot.