

**TALK
& PLAY**

**EVERY
DAY**

Keep your language alive
A helpful guide to early language development



Keep your language alive



TALK & PLAY EVERY DAY

Did you know?



- Children all over the world learn more than one language without developing speech or language problems. Bilingual children develop language skills just as other children do.
- Learning more than one language is good for general language skills.
- Helping your child's home language develop first, provides the foundations for learning other languages like English.
- There is considerable evidence that learning to speak and use more than one language can benefit children's overall academic and intellectual progress.
- Learning more than one language helps children develop a strong cultural identity and communicate with other members of the community who speak their home language.
- When a second language is introduced (e.g. learning English at nursery), some children may not talk much for a while. This 'silent period' can sometimes last several months. This is normal and will go away.
- It is normal for bilingual speakers to mix up their languages.



What to do...

Your home language is important. It is part of you and your children's identity. So keep this alive:

- Talk to your child in your strongest language(s). This will provide a solid foundation upon which additional languages can be learnt.
- Try to let your child have times when he/she can play with other children who speak your language.
- Don't be frightened to use your language in public.
- Help your child to feel proud of their languages. This will help them develop a strong cultural identity.
- It is ok to use more than one language if you speak more than one confidently.
- Make sure your child knows the names of the languages he/she speaks.
- If your child prefers to use English words, you can still respond and repeat back what they have said in your own language.
- Sing nursery rhymes and songs in your home language. This helps to develop children's early language skills.
- Talk about books with your child and make up stories. Your local library will be able to help you find books in different languages.
- Have 'special time' for you and your child. Get rid of any distractions e.g. TV, radio, phone etc. Watch your child and talk about what they are doing with the toys. This will help them learn the words.



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TOP TIPS

- Talk to your child in your strongest language(s). This will provide a solid foundation upon which additional languages can be learnt.
- Learning more than one language is good for general language skills.
- Enjoy your language, it is important for your social and cultural identity.



Further advice and information is available from your local speech and language therapist, health visitor or Children's Centre.

'Talk and Play Every Day' are a series of leaflets written and developed by Guy's & St Thomas' Children & Young People's Community Speech & Language Therapy Service