

More than one language in your family?

More and more children are growing up in a multilingual family. Young children can acquire several languages at the same time. But, just as a seed needs a lot to grow into a tree, every language will also need a good and rich environment. How to achieve this?

Start early

The first year of a child's life is important for language acquisition and so, it is vital to start thinking early about your family's language plan. A plan with which everyone feels comfortable. Ask yourself: which languages are important to me? Then, consider what it takes to achieve the language goals you wish to set for your child. Explain your plan to people who play an important role in your child's development. Keep in mind that the plan can change as your child gets older, so be flexible.

Be yourself

Speak to your child in the language you know best and feel most comfortable with. It is important that you communicate with your child in a natural way about the small and big things in life, not only now, but also when your child gets older.

Stay positive

A positive attitude towards multilingualism is important for a good multilingual development. This positive attitude needs to be displayed not only by parents, but also by the people who are close to your child, such as family, childcare workers, teachers, doctors and language consultants. Some people still think that multilingualism confuses children or causes language delay, but there are plenty of advantages to being multilingual.

Embrace differences

Your child's languages may develop in different ways and at different rates. This also holds for monolingual children. Some children start talking earlier, others a bit later. Every child is different and every family is different. The language spoken in the child's social environment (childcare, school, sports clubs, friends) may become the dominant language of the child. It is therefore very important to pay attention to the language(s) that are less frequently spoken (the home language/minority language). It also happens that children mix languages. This is a common phenomenon in multilingual development.



Support your child

Ensure adequate contact with other adults and children who speak the target languages; for example through childcare, attending group meetings with other parents and sports activities. Talk to your child about what you see and do, read books every day, sing songs. And, above all, enjoy the journey!



Need more help?

"Planting Languages. Seeds of Success" is a project focused on supporting parents in developing a Family Language Policy to obtain optimal language development and wellbeing from the start. Do you have any questions or would you like to discuss your approach with an expert from Planting Languages? Please contact:



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Start planning

On www.plantinglanguages.com you can find more information and supporting tools:

- Reflection booklet: Eight steps that will help you with the initial planning.
- Videos: Parents sharing experiences about their multilingual journey.
- Portraits: Parents talking about challenges in multilingual parenting.
- Reminders: Worksheets that help you monitor your planning and the language development of your child.
- Language card: A card to explain your family language approach to others.