

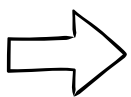


Raising your child in multiple languages? Great idea!

TIPS & TRICKS

There is no right or wrong choice.

1 Which language(s) are you most comfortable speaking with your child?



Choose one or more languages you feel comfortable with and know well. There is no right or wrong choice.

In which languages do you want to raise your child? And how are you going to do that? Think about this before your child is born.

- **1 parent, 1 language**

Each parent always speaks the same language with the child.

- **1 situation or place, 1 language**

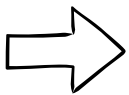
For example, you speak a different language at home than on the way to school.

- **1 topic, 1 language**

For example, you speak about homework in a different language than when you talk about what you are going to eat that evening.

You can always adjust your system or make different choices.

2 How can you strengthen your child's language skills?



Talk to your child a lot

This will help your child learn to speak more easily and understand what others are saying. Talk to your child from birth. Not sure what you should talk about? A few examples:

Describe what you are doing and seeing:

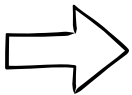
- 'We're going to wash, get dressed, ...'
- 'We're going to cook, set the table, eat, go shopping, ...'
- 'Look: there's a dog walking, the sun is shining, ...'

Encourage your child to speak too. Ask open questions such as:

- ‘Why do you like that?’
- ‘How would you do that?’

Make connections:

‘Look, the leaves are turning brown and falling from the trees. It’s autumn.’

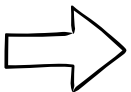


Play with your child

Choose activities that you and your child enjoy. Say aloud what you are doing and describe what you see. This will help your child learn new words quickly.

What can you do together, for example?

- Sing, play football, do puzzles, draw, etc. together.
- Go to the library and choose books together.
- Read to your child in the languages you know.
- Go for a walk in the park and ask open questions.
For example, ‘Does the car go as fast as the bicycle?’

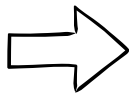


Do not rush your child

If your child is growing up speaking multiple languages, they will need more time. Children who are learning a new language spend a lot of time listening and watching at first. And if they are learning several languages at the same time, this process takes a little longer. Your child may therefore be a little quieter than others. This silent period can last a few weeks or months. Also bear in mind that your child will learn everyday words more quickly than more difficult (school) words.

How you can help your child:

- Ask your child what it is like to learn and speak different languages. And how they feel about it.
- Tell your child why you think it is important to know and speak several languages. For example, to be able to talk to family, to read books in several languages, etc.



Tell your child that making mistakes is normal

Making mistakes or mixing languages is normal. Young children often don't notice the difference between languages. It's also normal for your child to know some words in one language but not in another. For example, words from school, such as atlas. How to respond to mistakes:

- **Is your child younger than 6?**

Then repeat the sentence yourself in the correct way.

For example: your child says, 'Mummy come home?' and you reply 'Yes, mummy will be home soon'.

- **Is your child 6 years or older?**

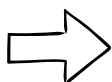
Then you can point out that they have made a mistake.
You can also ask your child to say it differently or better.



And be sure to
tell your child
what they are
doing right!

3

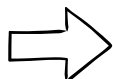
How can you strengthen your child's Dutch?



Help your child with their home language

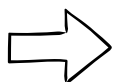
If your child understands and speaks their home language well, they will learn Dutch more easily!

For example, does your child already know the colours in their home language? Then they will also learn the colours in Dutch more quickly. Can your child already form longer sentences in their home language? Then they will also be able to do this more quickly in Dutch.



Give your child some time to learn Dutch

Every child needs time to learn a language. It will pick up everyday words more quickly than difficult concepts. And short conversations will go more smoothly than longer ones.



Give your child the opportunity to practise Dutch

- Encourage your child to play with children who already speak Dutch.
- Show interest in Dutch, even if you don't speak it well yourself yet.
- Respond positively to every new word your child learns.
- Let your child teach you words in Dutch.
- Watch a television programme or the children's news in Dutch together and talk about it.
- Go to the library and read books together. Read in the languages you know. Or choose picture books without text, where you can make up your own story. You can do this in Dutch and in the different languages spoken in your family.
- Enrol your child in a sports club or youth movement. This will help your child learn Dutch through play.
- Take part in activities in the neighbourhood.
- Try to speak Dutch yourself, for example with your neighbours or the teacher. It's OK to make mistakes! This shows your child that it's OK for them to make mistakes too.

4

Where can you find more information and help?

- **Do you have any questions or concerns? Or does your child struggle with language?**

Talk to their **teacher**. The school will help you.



- **Would you like to learn Dutch yourself?**

Please contact **Amal**. A member of staff will be happy to help you.

09 265 78 40

info@amal.gent

www.amal.gent

- **Do you have questions about raising your child?**

The **Groeiteam** (Growth Team) can help you.

You can find the Groeiteam in your neighbourhood or at the Stads Kantoor (City Office)

09 323 59 99

www.stad.gent/groeiteam

Discover how Kasia and Emad speak multiple languages with their daughters Ava and Emilia. Scan the QR-code and watch the video from Kind & Gezin (Child & Family)



Onderwijs
centrum.gent