

## Do you speak different languages at home? That is good for your child!

### Tips to raise a multilingual child:

Do you have questions about how to raise your child in a multilingual family?

In this leaflet you'll find some tips.

Enjoy!

**Onderwijscentrum Gent  
(Ghent Education Centre)**





## Talk to your child in the language you know best!

This is:

- the language you speak spontaneously
- the language you understand and speak best
- the language in which you think of your thoughts
- the language in which you dream your dreams
- usually your mother tongue

Think it through well:

- Discuss the matter with your partner before your baby is born.
- Go for a sustainable system.
- One **person** can always use one specific language:  
**for example** daddy speaks Dutch, mummy speaks French.
- You can use a specific language in a specific **situation**:  
we always speak Dutch at school and on the way to school;  
at home and with the family we speak our **home language**.
- Always use a single language throughout a conversation.

## **Talk to your child a lot!**

**This way your child will learn to talk and understand others more easily.**

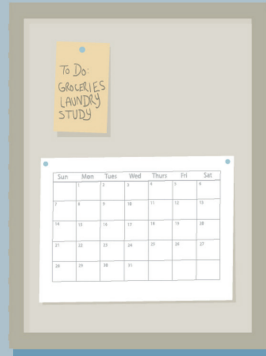
- Talk to your child starting from birth.
- Talk a lot. Name what you see and do:  
getting dressed, eating, washing, shopping, setting the table,...
- Invite your child to speak too. Ask questions:  
'Why do you like this?' 'How could it be that ...?'

## **Play with your child!**

**This way your child will speak earlier.**

- Choose activities that both you and your child like:  
singing a song together, reading, playing football,  
walking in the park, doing jigsaw puzzles, drawing, colouring ,...
- While playing, you can:
  - Name what you see, such as colours, objects, actions, feelings ...
  - Ask questions such as: 'Do the car and the bicycle move at the same speed?'
  - Point out links: 'It is autumn, the sun does not shine so much anymore, the leaves are falling from the tree.'





## **Did your child make an error?**

**Repeat the sentence correctly.**

**Thus your child learns more quickly how to talk properly.**

- Your child says: 'Daddy come home?' You answer:  
'Yes, Daddy comes home.'
- Your child is aged 6 or over? Then you can occasionally point out to your child that it has made an error. Ask questions such as: 'How do you say that?', 'What do you mean?', 'What did you want to say?'
- Tell your child what it is doing correctly.

**Your child sometimes mixes languages when it is talking? This is normal.**

- Set a good example. Use only one language yourself.







## **Teaching your child to speak different languages takes time!**

- Speaking and understanding Dutch at school takes longer to learn than small talk.
- At home, your child will be speaking Dutch more often:
  - Show that you find Dutch important.
  - Explain why you think it is also important to speak your mother tongue.
  - Chat with your child about different languages. Ask your child how it feels about this.

## **Your child may be quieter when learning a new language.**

- Children acquire languages by listening and observing. They are quieter for about 3 months then.
- What can you do?
  - Have your child play with other children who speak the new language.
  - Your child says words in the new language? Show that you are pleased.
  - Show interest in the new language, even if you do not know it.
  - Dare to speak the new language yourself, e.g. with your neighbour or the teacher. Errors are allowed!

## **Does your child understand and speak the home language well? Then it will be easier to learn Dutch.**

- Some examples:
  - Your child knows the colours in the home language?  
Then it will remember them more easily in Dutch.
  - Is your child already using 4 word sentences in the home language?  
Then it will be quicker to produce sentences in Dutch.

## **Show that speaking Dutch is fun!**

- Encourage your child to tell things in Dutch.
- Go to the library together and borrow nice books in Dutch.
- Plan fun activities and invite other children.  
Thus your child will speak Dutch outside school as well.
- Join an activity in the neighbourhood together, enrol your child in a youth movement or sports club ...
- Watch the news or a TV programme in Dutch together.
- Speak Dutch to the teacher, in the shop ...
- Did your child learn something new? Show that you are pleased:  
'You already know all the colours in Dutch? Will you teach them to me?'

## **Does your child have difficulties learning languages (speaking and understanding)? Talk to the school!**

The school will help your child learn the language.



## Do you still have questions on educating your child?

Opvoedingswinkel Gent (Ghent Education Shop)  
Sint-Margrietstraat 4, 9000 Gent  
Phone: 09 233 26 02  
opvoedingswinkel@stad.gent

## You want to learn Dutch too?

In-Gent vzw (In-Ghent NPO)  
Kongostraat 42, 9000 Gent  
Phone: 09 235 26 70  
info@hvnghent.be  
www.in-gent.be

## This brochure was created on the initiative of the Ghent Education Centre Onderwijscentrum Gent (Ghent Education Centre)

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Dit is de Engelse vertaling van "Tips voor meertalig opvoeden" en bevat identiek dezelfde informatie als de Nederlandstalige tekst. Deze vertaling mag enkel verspreid worden samen met het originele document "Tips voor meertalig opvoeden".