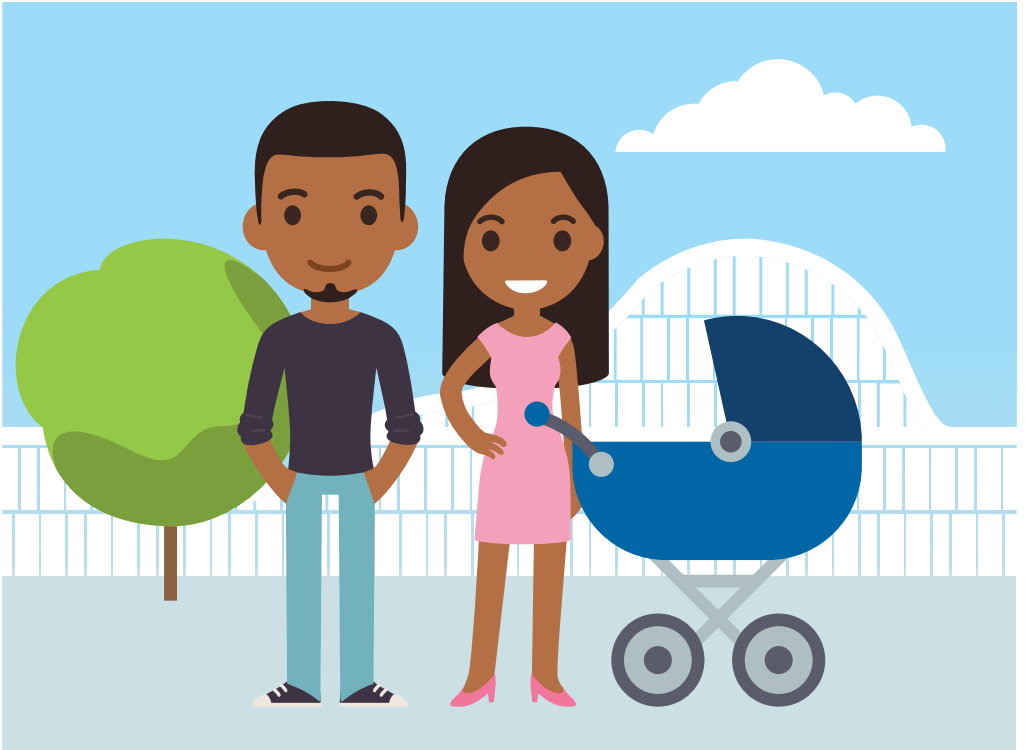


# Do you speak different languages at home? That is good for your child!

Tips to raise a multilingual child





## 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.



## Heb je vragen?

Neem dan contact op met het Expertisecentrum Anderstaligen (ECA).

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