



Materials for Language Support

Approaches to Multilingualism

The following points provide advice for parents on how to support their children's language acquisition. You may also use them to advise parents, e.g., at a parent's evening.

- **Speak to your child in the language that you yourself know the best**, i.e., in your native language(s). This way you can be the best language role model for your child.
- You can support your child in his/her language development in many everyday situations – **talk to him/her about what you are doing while doing it**, ask your child about it or let him/her talk by him-/herself.
- If you **read or look at picture books together**, you may talk to your child in your native language.
- Some children go through periods in which they want to speak only one language – e.g., only German. In this case, the children will respond in German even though the parent addresses them in the family language. Such periods are quite normal and are no cause for concern. On the contrary: **When children play with language(s), they have fun, which encourages further learning!**
- **If your child shows some delay in his/her language acquisition process compared to other children, you should not worry too much:** If your child went through the first steps in the acquisition of his/her native language without any major problems, he/she will acquire a second language in early childhood given sufficient language input.
- **Recognize the kindergarten as an easily given opportunity for your child.** Here, he/she can learn German at an age where language learning happens in a playful way – for example, through contact with other German-speaking children. The educators foster your child's language development by playing with him/her, singing songs, telling stories, looking at picture books or during joint activities. Look at it this way: In turn, they can also learn about language from your child!

You can find more information on how to deal with multilingualism in the 2006 adopted **“Mannheim Declaration on Early Multilingualism”**.