

SPEAK TO THEM IN ENGLISH

keep your
language
alive

The importance of speaking several languages

Multilingualism, the ability to communicate in various languages, is highly valuable, and most children are capable of mastering one or more mother tongues at the same time as Spanish.

It is important that your children do not forget their native languages. Speaking well in their own language will help them to learn Spanish, which is the language they will learn in school or by talking with their friends.

Additionally, speaking more than one language is good for learning in general; it broadens their view of the world and offers many advantages in education and throughout their working life.

Children who use and master their native language in addition to another:

- Have better results at school.
- Have a good basis for learning to read and write in any language and will also read and write well in Spanish.
- Have good reasoning skills and are good at maths.

It is normal for one language to become dominant. This will usually be Spanish, since this is the language with which they have the most contact: in school, in the street, with their friends, on the television, and so on. If your child prefers to speak Spanish, try not to stop them, but at the same time remember to keep using your mother tongue when speaking to them, even if they answer in Spanish.



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ENGLISH

S P E A K T O T H E M I N E N G L I S H

The mother tongue

The mother tongue is very important and forms part of your personal, social and cultural identity. Maintaining it and encouraging it are fundamental to a child's development.

Speaking to your children in their mother tongue will give them a richer cultural background and will help to keep your language alive.

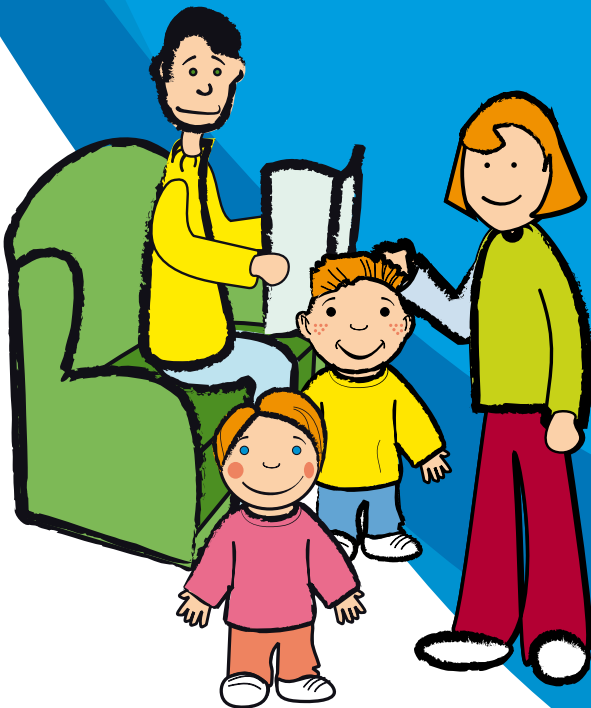
- Use and make the most of your language; it is important for your cultural and social identity.
- Speak to your children in your language. This will give them a good basis for learning other languages.
- Avoid constantly correcting them if they make mistakes. Just repeat the word or phrase correctly and they will learn by listening to you.

Use your language for:

- Talking with your children about their interests, about what they are doing at school, about daily activities, and so on. Begin when they are babies, even if they are too small to understand or respond to what you tell them.
- Singing with them and telling them stories. This will help to develop their linguistic abilities.
- Reading with them in your language. Children who already know how to read in their mother tongue quickly learn to read and write well in Spanish.
- Writing letters to their grandparents, relatives or friends in your country.
- Watching original-language films or television in your language.
- Playing with other children who speak your language.

If you think that your child has language difficulties, bear in mind that:

- Children who learn more than one language sometimes begin speaking later than those who learn just one, but they soon catch up.
- It is normal to mix the two languages. This does not mean that the child is having difficulties but rather that they are beginning to master the two.
- You can discuss your concerns at nursery or school. There are experts there who can guide you.



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