

## Tips & tricks for multilingual families.

### How to reinforce language development?

At your child's school teachers work hard to stimulate your child's language development. You as a parent can reinforce that by providing a rich language environment for your child at home. A child needs a rich language environment both at school and at home. To reinforce Dutch language learning your native language is an essential foundation.

**Therefore we encourage you to speak your native language at home with your children.** The brain programs language in a pattern, when the spoken language is spoken by a non-native speaker, the brain programs that languages incorrectly.

- Engage in conversations with your child.
- Read books with your children.
- Arrange playdates, sports clubs and cultural events where your child can have interaction in Dutch.
- Listen to Dutch songs with your child.

### Interacting with school

- Ask your child's teacher what topics they are learning about on a regular basis. Discuss these topics in your native language to make sure your child becomes familiar with the concepts before engaging in class in Dutch.
- Ask the classroom teacher for copies of books or a list of words used during the lessons.
- Read with your child in your native language and ask reflective questions about the story in your native language, hereby you practice listening and reading comprehension strategies your child will encounter at school in Dutch.
- Take the time to ask your child about his/her school day. What did they learn? With whom did they play? What was their favorite part of the day?
- Develop a deeper understanding of the Dutch educational system in order to understand how you as parents can support your child's needs.
- Dialogue with the classroom teacher about tips & tricks on how you can make your home language visible and heard at school.

### Interaction via social contacts & media

- Try to find a sports or cultural activity where your child will meet Dutch speaking children.
- Invite for contact with your neighbors and arrange play-dates. Ask them to show you around in the neighborhood and let your child get familiar with all the nice outdoor parks around your home.
- Ask your child's teacher which Dutch television programs are appropriate for your child's age. Watch these programs together and ask them to reflect in their home language.
- Become a member of the library and make it your regular weekly trips to go to the library. Look for Dutch books about subjects your child is interested in, and also ask the librarian for books in your home language(s).
- Make sure your child has regular opportunities for interaction with his/her extended family or other members of your cultural community (via the phone, email, Skype etc.).
- Try to speak to your child about what they experience, see, feel and dream about.

### Extra information

- Examples of Dutch children's websites: [schooltv.nl](http://schooltv.nl), [schooltv.nl/film-in-de-klas/](http://schooltv.nl/film-in-de-klas/) and [jeugdjournaal.nl](http://jeugdjournaal.nl).
- For more tips and advice on how to raise your child multilingually visit: <http://www.taalbeginthuis.nl/english/>
- <http://www.nethelp.no/cindy/biling-fam.html> This website provides background information and answers to questions of bilingual families.
- On <https://www.langaroo.org/> you can engage with many different languages with your child.
- On this website you can find books in many different languages: [www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SimpleSearchCategory?ilang=English](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SimpleSearchCategory?ilang=English)

