

TIPS ON RAISING MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN by *Vincent Berraud*

In a multilingual context, it is very important to spend enough time practising each of your languages. Practice is the key to developing a language and we must create opportunities to use written and oral languages in a playful manner. There are different ways you can create these opportunities:

- Conversing with your children.
- Listening to your children and giving them enough time to speak their minds.
- Singing with your children.
- Playing with your children and introducing word games.
- Performing your daily routines in the target language - giving explanations and asking your children questions.
- Encouraging your children to ask questions, you do not need to have all the answers at the top of your head, but you can find possible answers with them, for example by using an encyclopaedia (online or printed).
- Start reading with your children as soon as possible. Do not explain all the words as this would ruin the fun. Explain the words that they need to know or the ones that may be inspire interesting ideas or memories.
- Take the time to look at the pictures in the books and discuss them together. Let your children speak about the content of the pictures.

/!\ These activities are a lot more efficient when performed while you are calm and relaxed. Repetition is important for a successful learning process, but mistakes are also constructive. Errors and unexpected use of language are necessary and productive. This shows the development and above all, it is very creative.

Speaking and interacting with your children in the language you want them to learn is always the best approach. As a teacher, you are at your best when you are being yourself. Raising kids with more than one language is one of the best gifts you can give them.

More activities you can do together:

- Taking the time to watch TV shows and all kinds of media, and discussing the content together. Be aware of age recommendations and discuss the choice and duration with your children.
- Supporting your children when they explain what they see or think.
- Telling your children stories in your language(s), even if they are different to those in your books.
- Children like repetition. If your child wants you to sing the same songs or read the same stories in the target language, it is fine. Letting them choose their favorite activities is a great way to keep them engaged.
- Playful interaction is great and it helps avoid boredom - you can use the waiting periods of everyday life by singing a song, playing rhyming games, playing the “No yes or no” game (where you lose if you say “yes” or “no”), “who am I / what am I” or reading a favorite book that you may keep with you.
- You can stimulate your children's curiosity about languages by practising - many children become interested when they hear their parents or other people speak other languages.
- For the little ones, you can prepare them for reading and writing by moving your finger along the lines as you read. This will encourage your children to try to decipher the words themselves.

As always, taking your time and staying relaxed and tolerant will promote a constructive and positive experience. The learning process needs repetition and mistakes