

I learn to talk ... from YOU!

## Tips for you as a family

Discover and take advantage of everyday situations to start conversations with your children.

### Examples:

- > Name and describe pieces of clothing while getting dressed.
- > On your way to the kindergarten, speak to your children about what they can see, hear, or feel.
- > Talk to your children about the different goods in the shops while going shopping.
- > On your way home, ask your children to talk about what they have experienced during the day and talk about your day.
- > Ask your children to help with everyday chores and describe what you and/or your children are doing.
- > Take advantage of mealtimes to have meaningful conversations.
- > Name and talk about your and your children's emotions.
- > Do not answer every question immediately. Invite your children to think and ask questions back: What do you think?
- > Encourage your children to talk about their day before going to bed.

### CHILDREN AND THEIR LANGUAGE(S)

Language learning in the family

#### 1. How do children acquire their language(s)?

Further leaflets from this series and its translations into various languages are available at:



### Kindergarten

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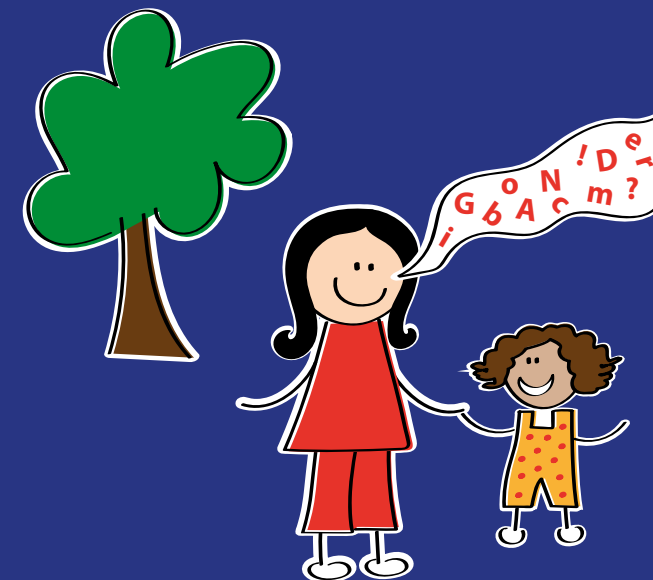
## How do children acquire their language(s)?

Our everyday life is full of language(s):  
Children learn their language(s) through  
multiple stimuli in their surroundings,  
especially through the people who care  
for and look after them every day.

# 1

### CHILDREN AND THEIR LANGUAGE(S)

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ENGLISH  
ENGLISH

AUTONOME PROVINZ  
BOZEN - SÜDTIROL



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA  
DI BOLZANO - ALTO ADIGE

## A brief definition of language

The term "language" includes spoken language as well as non-verbal language.

Right from the beginning children communicate through several channels: non-verbally through facial expressions, gestures, sounds, movements, through their play and handicraft products, and verbally while developing their spoken language(s).

For children growing up with one or more languages, there is one common underlying principle for the phase of their language acquisition:

"One person – one language", i.e. each person in the family speaks the language he/she speaks best. (See leaflet 2 – How do children successfully learn a new language?)

## Speaking to children in everyday situations

Children acquire their language(s) mostly through relationships and conversations with others. They need interlocutors as models who can sensitively react to their language attempts and expressions, rephrase them, and create incentives and occasions for speaking.

Hearing a language in everyday situations, relating a language to actions and their senses while sharing experiences and ideas with others help children develop their linguistic skills.



## Attentive caregivers help children develop their language(s) in their everyday lives

Children acquire languages most successfully if they experience attentive care, if their needs and interests are met, and if their attention is drawn to a common object.

### Through their language(s) children can

- draw attention to themselves, communicate, express their needs, desires, and interests.
- define their emotions and talk about them.
- initiate something.
- get in touch with fellow human beings and experience social relationships.
- find solutions and develop creativity.
- develop an understanding of and discover the world around them.
- continue learning new vocabulary.
- practice syntax, word order and grammar structures.
- familiarize with conversational rules, e.g. with turn-taking and alternating questions and answers.
- solve conflicts verbally, negotiate social rules and shape community.

## You are your children's role model

- Make conscious use of your relationship with your children to develop their language skills.
- Make eye contact and speak to your children directly.
- Cherish your children's verbal and non-verbal expressions.
- Listen to your children actively.
- Name objects and draw your and your children's attention to them.
- Describe what you or your children are doing.
- Pay attention to the language you use; choose different verbs, adjectives and varying grammatical structures.
- Sing with your children! Rhythm, repetition, and melodies help your children in their language acquisition.
- Combine movement with language.
- Play with your children and be an active interlocutor. Ask questions, repeat, and motivate your children to use language.
- Tell your children stories and read books to them (See leaflet 3 – How do children playfully develop their love for language and literacy?).
- Do not answer your children's questions immediately. Invite them to think and express themselves: "What do you think?"
- Give your children the time to answer your questions.
- Ask your children open questions which give them a chance to answer by saying more than YES or NO and to elaborate.
- Correct mistakes by simply repeating your children's sentences correctly: "I seed a fire engine." "You saw a fire engine ..."
- Encourage your children to talk about their day before going to bed.