

Supporting the language development of a multilingual child

englanti

Bilingualism or multilingualism



- Bilingualism or multilingualism is more common than speaking one language only.
- Being multilingual does not make it more difficult to learn a language and to speak.
- The process of becoming multilingual may call for more time and effort from the parents than upbringing a child with one language only.
- It is advisable for the parents to make the choice of a child's language in advance.
- Speak to your child in the language you know best (often your mother tongue).
- Your child will learn Finnish at daycare and/or at school.
 - There is no need to speak Finnish at home.



Reading books together



- Reading a book together with your child strengthens his/her interaction skills and extends vocabulary.
- Choose books with pictures that your child will like.
- Tell a story in your own language using the pictures (it doesn't matter if the text is not in your own language).
- Name and describe the pictures.
- Discuss the pictures and what is happening in the book with your child.
- Ask your child what they thought about the story.
- A bedtime story can be a good way to get your child to settle down and get ready for sleep.
- Visit library together with your child.



Everyday life and being a role model

- Be a role model for your child.
 - Repeat your child's answers in your home language and continue doing so even if they answer you in a different language.
- Children learn a language through everyday situations.
 - Do household chores together with your child (such as cooking, cleaning).
- Talk to your child.
- Tell them what you are doing and what they are doing.
 - "I'm setting the table and putting the knives and forks by the plates."
 - "You're doing a good job of putting your shoes on yourself."
- Name things accurately.
 - Instead of saying "please take these over there", try to say, "please take these socks to the basket in the wardrobe."
- Ask your child about their day every day. Encourage your child to tell you about their day at daycare or school.
 - You can help your child share by asking more specific questions (who, what, where).
- Children learn things through play.
 - Play with your child face to face.
- Songs and nursery rhymes support a child's speech and language development.



Screen time

- Children learn to use language by interacting with other people, not through screens.
- Screens: television, phone, tablet and computer
- Recommended screen time:
 - 0–2-year-old: no screen time at all
 - 3–5-year-old: 1 hour a day maximum
 - Over 6-years-old: 2 hours a day maximum
- A child may learn different things through screen, but not without the participation of an adult.
- Do NOT choose English for screen language if it is not the home language you use in your family
- Pay attention to your own screen time too.



More information

- Maternity and child health clinic
- Hyvä kysymys website by Väestöliitto (the Family Federation of Finland), the Lapsi oppii series
 - <https://www.hyvakysymys.fi/video/lapsi-oppii-monikielinen-perhe-vuorovaikutus-ja-kielen-oppiminen/>



**Kanta-Häme
Wellbeing Services
County**

Rehabilitation Services
for Children and
Adolescents, Speech
and Language Therapy