

## Talk to your child in your own language

The best way to help your child learn to talk is to talk to him/her as much as possible in your own language – it doesn't have to be English. That way, your child will learn to talk confidently, and will be ready to learn English when he starts at nursery or school.

- Talk to your child in your own language about what you're doing together – when you're bathing or feeding your child or changing his/her nappy.
- Have fun with rhymes, poems and songs in your own language.
- Tell your child stories in your language. Encourage him/her to join in with the storytelling.
- Try to find books written in your language for your child, or try making your own.
- Encourage your child to play with children who speak the same language as he/she does.
- Don't allow anyone to laugh or tease your child because of his accent or if he/she makes mistakes.
- Talk to your child about what he/she did at playgroup or nursery in your language. If he/she uses English words repeat what he/she said using your language. But do not correct him/her or make him/her use your language.
- Help your child feel proud of your language. If he/she speaks more than one language, teach him/her the names of the languages.

### Bilingualism

#### Facts

- Bilingual speakers are in the majority in the world.
- 60% to 75% of speakers are estimated to be bilingual.
- Learning two or more languages can be beneficial to a child's overall language and learning abilities. The child is able to think more flexibly and creatively.
- Research shows that bilingualism in a child or adult is an advantage.

#### Language development in the second language

- Most children who learn English as a second language will begin to understand English after 3 months.
- Children will begin using 2–3 word phrases in English at 18 months' exposure and be able to hold a conversation after about 2 years.
- When children are first exposed to another language, they often go through a quiet period, which can last up to 7 months.
- It can take 5 to 7 years for children to think in the second language.
- When there are two languages spoken at home there can be different approaches.
  - Both parents speak both languages to the child.
  - One parent/one language. This approach has been found to help the child separate and learn the two languages.