



N GUIDE TO:

Raising multilingual children

There are many ways N can support your child's multilingualism and English acquisition. With our diverse, multilingual community, our skilled educators support children who are learning multiple languages.

This support starts with celebrating and fostering a sense of pride in home languages. Your child's key person will work with you to discern their understanding and use of English (if any) and of their development in their other language/s. Our educators may ask you for some useful keywords or phrases in your home language, such as "eat/drink," "toilet," or "nappy." These will then be used by our educators to support your child's sense of belonging through familiarity. Your child's favourite stories and songs in their home language can also support this sense of belonging.

Top tips for parents raising multilingual children

Remain calm, and don't worry

If your child doesn't speak English, it can add an extra concern to starting a nursery, but it needn't be so. Young children have an amazing ability to absorb the language around them, as well as being able to forge relationships, without language being a barrier. The language of play is universal!

Our educators will nurture and support your child to be sure their needs are met, assisting your child's communication through visual resources, books, signing, and use of recording devices in your child's home language, and expose your child to a rich vocabulary as part of our N Curriculum.

Always speak your home language

Don't feel you need to speak English at home in order for your child to catch up. Our educators will focus on giving your child the best opportunities to understand and speak English, leaving you able to focus on your home language/s.

As your child progresses in learning English at nursery, they may start to speak English more at home and may even respond to you in English, but do stay consistent in the language you usually speak to them. A child will quickly learn, for example, that one parent speaks Mandarin to them, one parent speaks Spanish to them, and at nursery, English is spoken, and this should be the consistent pattern.

Keep language fun

Whether it's special songs you sing to your child, a set of storybooks, or a particular game that is always played in your language, enjoy having fun whilst reinforcing this language with your child.

Be patient

If your child is learning English for the first time at nursery or is in a multilingual home, remember that it takes time. Many multilingual children will go through a 'silent period' where they will not speak a language at all but clearly understand much of what is being said to them. This is totally normal and not a reason to worry.

Likewise, your child may start to mix their languages, or say something incorrectly. Avoid asking them to try again or pointing out their mistakes. Instead, repeat it back to them correctly, being a good language role model.

Focus on social language

If you want to support your child further, either in their acquisition of English or any other language, developing this in a natural context and acquiring it socially is highly effective. Arranging playdates with other English-speaking children, going to a local park, or attending group events are all great ways to support your child's English.

Be proud

Be proud of your home language and of your child's development as a multilingual learner. There are well-documented cognitive benefits to being multilingual, and the best time to learn languages is when you are young.