

Tips for parents of children growing up with more than one language

All languages are equally valuable as each one has a whole culture behind it.

Therefore, all languages should be respected.

The following are important factors for you to help your child to learn one or more languages successfully:

- ▶ Have a good relationship with/a genuine interest in the child
- ▶ Be a good language role model (in the language/languages which you speak best)
- ▶ Talk a lot (as a way of giving your child as much and as varied linguistic stimulation as possible)
- ▶ The best way to achieve this: Play with, talk to and read to your child, sing to him/her, tell him/her nursery rhymes, listen to stories on radio/audio, go out, visit other people
- ▶ Don't lecture; correct mistakes by simply repeating what was said, but as it should be

The following are some important things to know about learning to speak additional languages:

- ▶ Learn the first language as well as possible (This takes around 5 years)
- ▶ It is perfectly possible to learn several languages at the same time
- ▶ There is no perfect method for doing so
- ▶ With good stimulation and plenty of practice, learning a further language takes about 3 years
- ▶ You should not necessarily expect your child to be able to speak two or more languages perfectly
- ▶ Language mix-ups are normal, as are mistakes in the use of genders, articles and sentence structure

- ▶ Children should also learn to write the new language in order to consolidate their knowledge (e.g. through HSU courses),
https://www.dortmund.de/de/leben_in_dortmund/bildungswissenschaft/schule/herkunftssprachlicher_unterricht/index.html)
- ▶ You should view media critically (no TV, mobile phone or PC below the age of 3; living language models are much better, radio/audio plays are good)

Make sure your child understands that German is just as important
as his/her first or family language.

The advantages of being able to speak more than one language may include:

- ▶ Greater socio-emotional capabilities (including empathy/sympathy)
- ▶ Enhanced conflict management abilities
- ▶ Better memory performance
- ▶ Enhanced attentiveness
- ▶ Ability to learn other languages more easily
- ▶ Greater cultural experience
- ▶ More potential dialogue partners
- ▶ More professional opportunities

„As many languages you
speak, as many times
you are a human being.”

(Johann Wolfgang Goethe,
German writer)