

Can I support my child's language development, even if I don't speak perfect German myself?

Yes, even if you do not speak perfect German, you can support your child. Your child needs many situations in both/all languages in which the languages can be experienced. Create lots of situations that give your child the opportunity to come into contact with the German language. These could be clubs (e.g. sports clubs), German-speaking friendships or regular attendance at nursery school.

Show your child that you also support the surrounding language. You can read to him or her from German books or sing songs together. Even imperfect German is a help to your child

There are situations in kindergarten or on the playground that the child experiences 'in German'.

My child sometimes mixes up the languages. Does this mean that language acquisition is not going well?

No. The fact that children mix the languages is not unusual. They often 'borrow' words from the language in which they use the word more often. They also mix up the grammar.

This will decrease as soon as they have a better command of both languages. As soon as your child has a good command of the languages, you should also refrain from mixing languages. However, there will still be words that are only known in one language, as they are only used there for various reasons.

Can my child learn a second language through digital media?

Digital media are not enough to learn a new language. The child is not actively addressed or asked to react. The television also does not react when the child speaks to it. However, it can be used as a supplement. Example: You can watch a programme with your child - in your mother tongue or in the language of the environment - and then talk together about what happened in the programme. This is best done in the language in which you watched the programme. Radio plays can also support language acquisition if your child already generally understands and speaks the language well.

Example:

Mother:
Turkish/
German

Mother: Turkish
Father: Russian
Family language:
German

Ambient
Language:
German

Father:
Russian/
German

When the mother is alone with the child, she speaks Turkish.

- When the father is alone with the child he speaks Russian.
- When the family is together, they all speak German.
- The child speaks German in kindergarten.
- When the child tells the mother something about the kindergarten, they speak German.
- When they are alone in the playground, they speak Russian,
- If there are siblings, they switch languages depending on the situation.



Our contact

Der Kreisausschuss des Kreises Groß-Gerau

Wilhelm-Seipp-Str. 9
64521 Groß-Gerau
Zimmer 0-20

Fachbereich Gesundheit

Fachdienst Kinder-und Jugendärztlicher Dienst

Logopädischer Dienst

Christina Schmidt und Mona Krätschmer

Telefon: +49 6152 989-84015

oder +49 6152 989-84247

Fax: +49 6152 989-187

E-Mail: logopaedischerdienst@kreisgg.de

Fotos: AdobeStock@SukjaiPhoto (Titelbild),
AdobeStock@Pixel-Shot (Seite 2)



Multilingualism

Frequently asked questions from parents,
answers from the speech therapy service



Tips from the speech therapy service

An appropriate approach to the different languages is essential for the success of multilingualism. Parents often do not feel sufficiently informed or are unsure.

If you are raising your child multilingually and have questions about this, these tips are just what you need. We have collected frequently asked questions from parents and answered them for you.

If you would like further advice, please feel free to contact us.

We also offer a free workshop on multilingualism. Please contact us for more information.

Does a child learn more slowly if they learn two languages at the same time?

No. In principle, children learn their language(s) neither slower nor worse than children growing up monolingually. Example: an 18-month-old child speaks approx. 50 words. A monolingual child would therefore speak 50 German words, for example. A bilingual child, on the other hand, would also speak 50 words, but the vocabulary would be divided between both/all languages. It knows most of the words in the language with which it has the most contact.

Does it have negative consequences for language acquisition if my child only learns German in kindergarten?

No. Children are able to learn more than one language from birth. However, it is assumed that the optimum time window for acquiring a language slowly decreases between the ages of 4 and 7. The child therefore only acquires language without problems if it is given sufficient (!) access to both languages in good time. It is important that a child growing up multilingual is able to communicate in German by the time they start kindergarten (saying their name, hunger, toilet).

My child has a language development disorder; will this be exacerbated by the acquisition of another language?

Multilingualism does not exacerbate a language development disorder. In principle, children can learn two or more languages at the same time or one after the other. The earlier a child learns a new language, the easier it is for them to succeed. However, if your child has a language development disorder, they will need more support in both languages. It therefore needs to come into contact with a great deal of targeted language input.

What language should we speak with our child?

There is a rule of thumb: 'one person - one language'. This means that, as a rule, one person should stick to one language. This can also be the different mother tongues of both parents. Example: the mother could speak Polish with the child, while the father only speaks Turkish with the child. The common family language could be German.

In principle, however, you should speak to your child in the language in which you feel most comfortable. After all, this is also the best way to verbalise emotions and explain things to your child. Language and identity are closely linked.

My husband speaks a different language to me. Can the child learn both languages and German?

Yes, the child has the need to communicate with both parents. They will learn both languages and can also learn the language of the environment (German) at the same time. Important: the language offer must be sufficient in all languages - in terms of quantity and quality.

In which language should my child speak with his or her siblings?

Our children will find their common language on their own. It is often the case that they switch languages often, depending on the event they are talking about or the situation they are in. That is fine.

My child only answers me in German - Do I have to accept that? Do I have to answer in German? Can I ask him to answer in our mother tongue?

Children change this behaviour quickly if the situation requires it. Your child may not answer you in their mother tongue because they know that you understand them well in German. However, if the Russian-speaking grandmother, who does not understand German, speaks to the child, it will certainly respond in Russian. Create situations that make it normal for the child to respond in their mother tongue. But also respect the child's decision as to which language they would like to use and talk about the reasons for this if necessary.

The kindergarten/pediatrician claims that my child does not speak German well enough because we speak in our mother tongue at home. Does my child need speech therapy?

Not necessarily. There are disorder-related and acquisition-related symptoms. Problems must occur in all spoken languages. Your child may need speech therapy if

- They cannot maintain eye contact when speaking
- He/she does not start a conversation on his/her own
- Starts speaking late
- He/she understands poorly
- Has difficulty recalling words
- Lack the ability to switch languages
- Exhibits pronunciation errors that are not typical of advertising
- Has problems with attention and concentration

Talk to your paediatrician and ask for a speech therapy diagnosis.

