

# Celebrating Multilingualism

Learning more than one language has social, cultural, and cognitive benefits. Language is a part of culture, and learning multiple languages helps children build their identities and understand multiple ways of knowing and being. Use these research-based activities to help all children celebrate the power of multilingualism.

## Talk it Out

Language, culture, and identity are intertwined. As children learn language, they build knowledge about how things work and who they are. Help your child develop a strong foundation in the language(s) you speak at home.

To support children, connect the words they are learning to their experiences. Children learn best when what they are learning is meaningful to them.



### Multiplying Words

*When your child starts to say words or make sounds that could be words, connect them to more words. If they say "nose," you can say, "There's your nose and there's mine." If they say "beep, beep," you can say, "The horns on the car go beep, beep." Later you can ask, "What sound do cars make?"*

### Brainy Background

*Children learn to speak by hearing you connect the sounds they make with words. And they learn more words when you add your words to theirs. In this way their brains become more efficient and faster at processing sounds—the building blocks of speech.*

**Suggested Age 12 months - 2 1/2 years**

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### Sort & Clean

*Encourage your child to sort objects during cleanup. Talk about what you're doing: "All of the small lids go into the little bowl and the big lids go into the big bowl." Then mix it up and ask them to put the small objects in the big bowl. You can also sort by shape or color.*

### Brainy Background

*Being able to group things by size or color is an important skill. When you switch the rules of the game, you're helping them learn how to think flexibly, use self-control and not go on autopilot.*

**Suggested Age 18 months - 4 years**

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## Switch it Up

Learning more than one language is linked to improved flexible thinking skills, the ability to switch between tasks and sets of rules. Everyone can improve these skills, but multilingual experience provides natural practice.

As children learn two languages, they often mix them together. Code-mixing is not a sign of confusion, but an indication that children are successfully building two vocabularies.

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