

How can I promote my child's language acquisition?

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1. Language acquisition is a complex process. Not every child learns without difficulty the language(s) of the parents and the language spoken in the local community.
2. Children who have intensive contact with language outside school have fewer problems.
3. The contact persons (i.e. the parents, brothers and sisters, relatives, the carers in the crèche or the day nursery, for example), can help the child to develop understanding and speaking skills by talking a lot to the child. The foundation for a good language acquisition is an intensive language environment.

0 to 2 years - infant

1. The contact persons talk to the baby a lot. They describe what they are doing, what is going on, who is there, what the baby is doing, and so on.
2. The contact persons all speak their own language. As a matter of principle: one person - one language
3. As far as possible, they avoid mixing languages.

2 to 4 years -pre-school

1. The contact persons keep to the principle of "one language - one person".
2. They talk a lot to the child about everyday matters (What is the world? What has happened? What are we doing?).
3. They answer the children's questions patiently.
4. They tell stories with picture books.
5. They describe pictures out of picture books.
6. They comment on the children's drawings.
7. The contact persons enable the children to have contact with other children (playground, playgroup, day nursery and so on) and let the children play together.

4 to 7 years

1. The contact persons still adopt the principle of "one language - one person", deviations being possible, for example, when there is someone present who does not understand the language.
2. They explain to the children who speaks in what way, and why they do so.
3. They talk a lot to the child about everyday matters (What has happened? How does that work? Why is that so? Who is who? Who is doing what?)
4. They talk to the child about their own childhood, about relatives and so on.
5. They tell stories with picture books, comics and so on.
6. They read to them from children's books.

7. The children watch video films several times (e.g. Walt Disney). The contact persons read the corresponding books to the children again and again, or tell the story that goes with the pictures in the book.
8. The children listen to stories several times on audio cassettes or audio CD (preferably with the corresponding book).

7 to 9 years

1. The choice of language depends on the situation (i.e. on the persons present or on the subject). The contact persons are aware, however, that the first language of the adult family members must be cultivated.
2. The contact persons talk to the child a lot about everyday matters (school, work, food, visits, plans for the weekend, sport and so on).
3. They tell stories with picture books.
4. They read to them from children's books and comics (with books in German leave some parts - e.g. the end - for the child to read alone).
5. The children watch video films several times (e.g. Walt Disney). The contact persons read the corresponding Walt Disney books to the children (with books in German, leave some parts for the child to read alone).
6. The children listen to stories on audio cassettes or audio CDs with the corresponding book.
7. The children get reading material from the library. Whenever possible, they are accompanied by contact persons.
8. The contact persons read non-fiction books with the children about subjects in which the children are currently interested (and also carry out experiments described in non-fiction books, for example preparing meals from recipe books).

10 to 12 years

1. The contact persons talk to the child a lot about everyday matters (school, work, relationships, behaviour, current events, the importance of reading, and so on).
2. The contact persons agree with the child on a reading time (e.g. 20 minutes every day, or every Saturday and Sunday from 17.00 to 17.45).
3. The child may request books it would like to read (comics as well) and the contact persons provide them (library, www.amazon.com, bookshops).
4. The contact persons take out a subscription for a magazine, either at the request of the child or maybe for a trial period, and the child undertakes to read it.
5. The contact persons look for ways of setting up a computer at home. The child learns how to use the computer by means of computer games.