

CHILDREN'S NURSERIES

# Supporting Multilingual Children in the Early Years



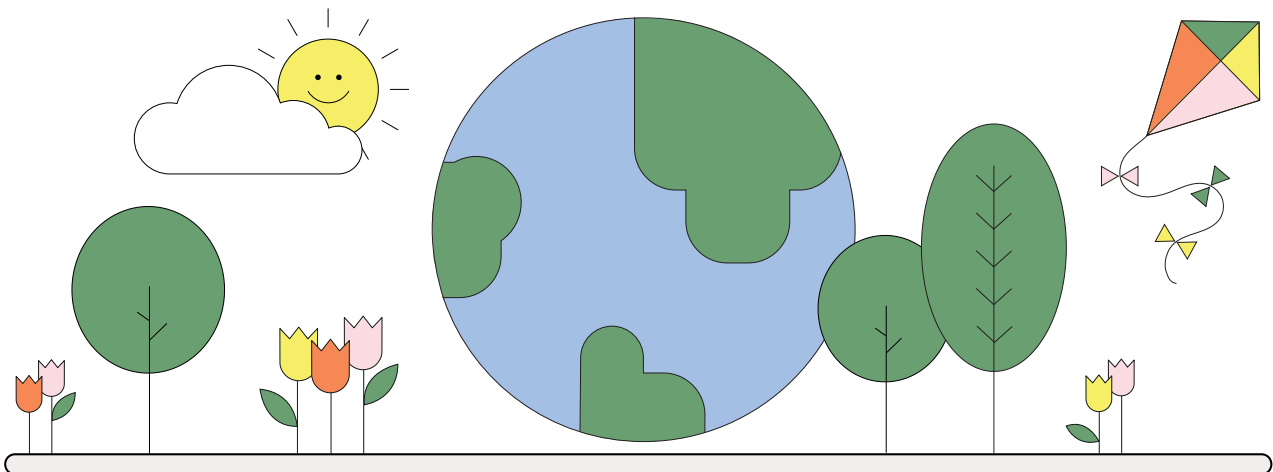
# What We Will Do:

Language is an instrument which allows us to communicate our basic needs, convey our feelings and exchange with others our experiences.

Raising a child to be multilingual is a challenging task that requires much creativity, continuity and dedication. At Hopscotch Nurseries we are committed to providing children with the support necessary to facilitate multi-language acquisition. This short leaflet explains our strategic, evidence based approach, which is designed to provide you and your child with the greatest support in their important early years.

## Child's Name:

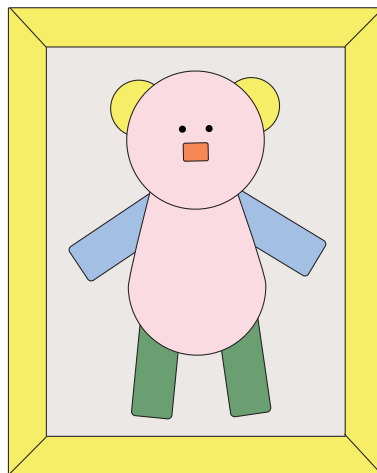
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# Learning English as a Second or Additional Language

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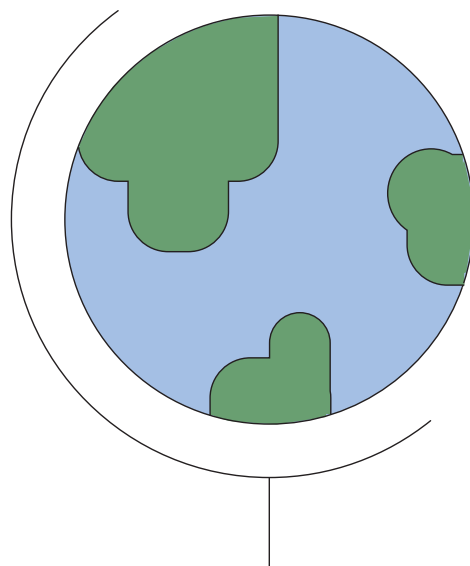
When babies, toddlers and young children from language backgrounds other than English start in an early years setting, they begin the process of learning a second or additional language. From birth they will have started to acquire their first language. This first language is learnt through contact with family members and others in early communication that includes talking, singing, cooing and engaging in non-verbal communication. Unlike adults, children learn language unconsciously, primarily through hearing, seeing and play.



# The Importance of Maintaining the First or Home Language

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The first language, learned in the home, is extremely important and forms the foundation for all later language development. Parents and family members are the most significant influences on the development and maintenance of the first language.

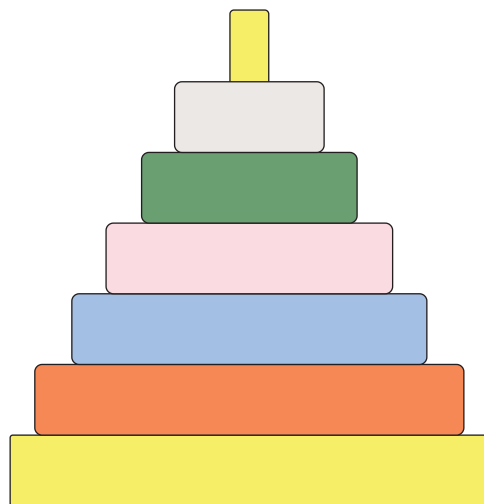


# The Importance of Maintaining the First or Home Language

The most important guidance issued regarding multilingualism is to always remain consistent with the language in which one speaks to a child. This way, a child learns to distinguish between the language spoken at home and other settings. Your child is likely to select the right language to use in the home and elsewhere. This is called “code-switching” and is perfectly natural. You are likely to have some words which will always be spoken using one language if there is not an obvious translation. However, as a general rule, experts advise that you speak to your child in only your own mother tongue or first language and allow the child to learn and practice English only with English speakers. This is crucial in helping a child learn each language well.

# The Importance of Maintaining the First or Home Language

At Hopscotch Nurseries, we recognise that it is vital to promote the continued use of the home language and so we encourage families to spend as much time as they can talking with their young children, for when English is added as a second language, much of the opportunity for many young children to hear and practice their first language may be diminished.





# Strategies for Supporting Children

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At Hopscotch, we make every effort to help children settle into their new routine and form new attachments. We find that providing responsive care in a supportive, predictable environment helps children settle into their new environment much more quickly. We follow a daily routine and although the activities will change day to day, meal times, garden times, and group times are always at the same time which provides consistency and predictability throughout the day. In addition to this, we have found that visual timetables of daily routines and sequences of everyday activities can be used very effectively to support language learning alongside concept development. These visual timetables are used extensively throughout the nursery. We also offer the opportunity to take copies home to share with families which can reassure the child about what is happening, support language learning and extend home to setting links.

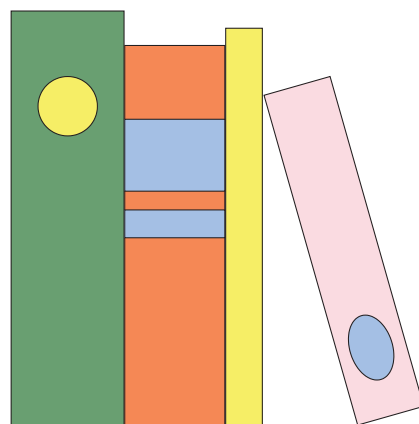
# Strategies for Supporting Children

Stories and books constitute a vital part of worldwide cultural and linguistic heritage. The well-planned use of stories, read and told, traditional and new, contributes greatly to children's understanding and developing use of language. Illustrated sequences, photographs, puppetry and wordless picture sequences give children the opportunity to formulate ideas in their home language which can then be translated into English with appropriate support. Each month we have a story of the month. These are usually popular stories or rhymes with a clear story line, written or told in simple direct language. We often chose books with repetitive texts, as these give children the opportunity to hear language sequences. At the beginning of each month we will share the book on Tapestry alongside a video of a member of staff reading the book so that it is accessible to all children. We highly encourage parents to watch these videos with their children and read the book to them too if they have it.

# Using Makaton at our Nurseries

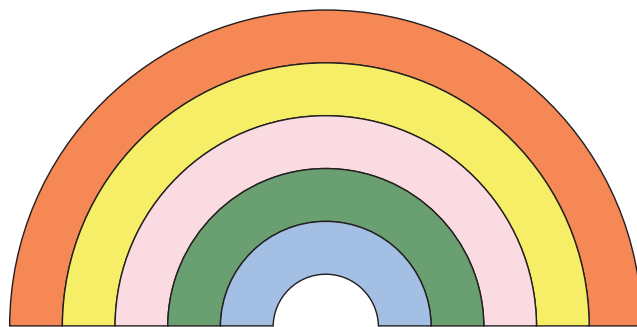
# Using Makaton at our Nurseries

In some circumstances, the nursery may feel it appropriate to engage an outside agency to offer support in home languages from staff with appropriate Early Years qualifications who are able to work effectively with young children and their families. These teams are part of Ethnic Minority Achievement Services (EMAS). For children who speak little or no English at home this can be a very valuable resource. If you feel it is something your child would benefit from, please speak to your child's key person or the nursery SENCO who will be able to provide you with more detailed information.



# Using Makaton at our Nurseries

Alongside these strategies, the Early Years Practitioners will make every effort to help your child understand what is being said at nursery through demonstration, photographs, pictures, gestures and signing. We regularly use Makaton at nursery and for children with little English this can be a valuable tool. If you would like to learn more about the Makaton used at nursery, please ask any of our Early Years Practitioners.



# Key Words:

Here are some important words that your child will benefit from understanding while they are at nursery.



hello



Snack



Toilet



Please



Goodbye



thank you



Home



Daddy



More



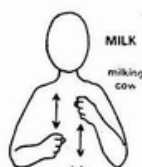
Finished



yes/no



Mummy



Milk

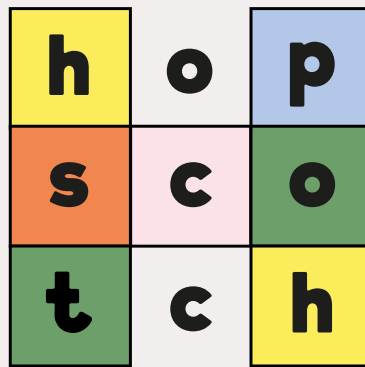


Water

## Popular Songs at Nursery :

Baa, Baa Black Sheep  
I Had A Little Turtle  
Wheels on the Bus

Wind the Bobbin Up  
Old Macdonald  
Hickory-Dickory Dock



## Have some questions?

You can speak to your nursery manager, or email our Head Office at [office@hopscotchmail.com](mailto:office@hopscotchmail.com)

