



## HELLO PARENTS,

Language plays an important role in human development. It allows us to communicate with others, establish relationships, and root ourselves in our culture. We all have at least one mother language, a language that has been passed on to us since birth. It is the first language we have learned to express ourselves and gained experiences and knowledge. Research indicates that children with a strong mother language foundation learn a second language more easily. Children learn best from people who speak a language well and you are the best role model for your child when you use the language you know best. Mother language helps children better appreciate their cultural background, understand who they are and provides a link to family and community members. Additionally, there are many benefits of speaking more than one language: improved memory, better brain function, well-developed critical thinking skills, and enhanced focus. In this newsletter, we encourage you to cherish your mother language, and provide ideas on how you and your family can maintain and cultivate this important part of your cultural heritage.

## ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

### CALL ME

#### MATERIALS:

- Two toy phones or old phones

#### DIRECTIONS:

- When your family gathers together, use old phones or toy phones to "call" each other.
- Everyone must only use your family's mother language.
- The first person chooses one family member and makes a pretend phone call.
- The person who is being called answers the phone.
- Talk about everything (weather, books, family members, food) in your mother language.

[Click here](#) for ideas to improve your child's vocabulary.

### VOCABULARY BALL TOSS

#### MATERIALS:

- Ball

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Have everyone stand in a circle.
- Choose a vocabulary category. For example: food, animals, jobs, etc.
- The first player throws the ball to another player and says a word from the chosen category in mother language.
- The player who catches the ball has to say another word in mother language from that category, and throws the ball to the next player.
- If a player repeats a word, takes too long or the word does not belong to the chosen category, they must sing a song in mother language, do a dance, etc.
- After the player finishes their performance, they choose a different vocabulary category, and the game continues.
- During the game, all family members are required to use their mother language to communicate.

[Click here](#) to read books in different languages.

### HELP ME FIND IT

#### MATERIALS:

- Box
- Random objects from around the house

#### DIRECTIONS:

- One family member holds the box with objects and describes one item from the box in the family's mother language.
- The first player is to locate the correct item from the box in the shortest time possible.
- A designated family member can make a chart and record names of the found objects and the search time for each family member.
- You can also play this game describing and locating various objects around the room.

[Click here](#) for more ideas.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- International Mother Language Day has been observed annually on February 21 since 2000, to promote linguistic culture and diversity.
- There are estimated 7,097 languages in the world.
- Estimated 33% of languages spoken in the world are endangered.
- Every two weeks a language disappears taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage.
- 40% of the global population does not have access to education in their mother languages.
- Half of the world's population speaks only 23 of all the languages in the world (0.3% of all languages). These languages include: Mandarin, Spanish, English and Arabic.
- English and French are Canada's two official languages but 20% of Canadian residents speak languages other than English or French at home.
- The most common languages used in Canada (besides English and French) are: Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog and Arabic.
- There are 67 indigenous languages alive in Canada which are spoken by 0.6% of the Canadian population.



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and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
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### A TIP FOR TODAY

- [Speak your mother language with your family at home during everyday activities.](#)
- [Read books in your mother language with your child.](#)
- [Sing songs that you remember from your own childhood. Songs are a great way for children to memorize words and language structures.](#)
- [Share with your child family stories and anecdotes.](#)
- [Meet with others who speak the same language to provide your child with opportunities to speak the language outside your home.](#)
- [Participate with your child in cultural events in your community to maintain their link to their cultural background.](#)
- [Click here](#) to read more about the importance of teaching your child your mother language.