

# Let's play and talk together



## Context:

- This project takes place in the nursery cycle of the European School (ES) in Brussels IV, <http://www.eeb4.be/>. The ES are multicultural and multilingual institutions for children from all EU countries. Therefore, there are many different language backgrounds among the children. There are several language sections in the school, where children learn their mother tongue. Teachers and children from different language sections participate in the project.

## Reasons for choosing this activity:

- At the beginning of the school year, the teachers, who work in different language sections of the school, have chosen activities which raise children's awareness of the variety of languages used in the multicultural and multilingual environment of their school (→ relying on existing linguistic repertoires).

## Description:

- Children from all language sections interact with each other using simple expressions like 'welcome', 'hello', 'thank you', 'goodbye', etc. in different languages; they sing simple songs or recite short rhymes; they show each other the flags of their countries of origin.

- They start to distinguish the expressions in different languages and try to use some of them in a chosen language during the week (→ meaningful language learning).
- When the children are able to recognise a new language(s), they play the game *Tell me who I am!* Two children from different classes/language sections are invited to a neighbouring class to talk to each other. The children from the class try to recognise the visitors' language(s). If the visitors are disguised, their colleagues have to listen even more carefully as they are only recognisable by their voice (→ holistic language learning).
- Children listen to simple songs in different languages or audio fragments of the songs in different languages and try to recognise the language(s) used.
- Greeting activities are spread throughout the whole week when children have the chance to greet their colleagues in various languages. Additional simple expressions that children like to use are included in class activities (→ meaningful language learning).
- As a variation, the invited children are disguised so that the others cannot see them, but only hear their voices.



Image: Shutterstock

### Observation:

- Children become sensitive and receptive to listening to the voices in various languages and open themselves to languages different from their own. They are motivated and quickly learn to use expressions in the language they themselves choose. They feel happy to be able to 'communicate' with children having different home languages.
- Moreover, children are soon able to follow simple instructions in a foreign language

### Sources:

Games that are intended to introduce new words in a foreign language to the children focus on different domains, stories, works of different painters, composers etc. These are provided by teachers who work in different linguistic sections of the school.