



Treasure **box** filled **with** inspiring practices



... We hope they may support you in creating an inspiring language learning environment for both you and your children ...

The importance of caring

Ask parents or the children themselves about comforting or soothing words they use at home; rituals, favourite words or “family words”; ways of expressing needs; daily routines. **Caring about what children care about** puts the focus on the person rather than on his social role as a pupil. While this is particularly relevant during Early Childhood Care and Education, there is no age limit to the ‘care’ aspect.



A “Me” book!

“Me” books can be started at whatever age, but ideally when children first enter a new class or school. This work should be done in collaboration with parents. A “Me” book accompanies a child on his/her learning pathways; it informs about **interests, talents, important learning steps** and also about **personal preferences, family rituals, words, everyday communication** in the family, etc. It may turn out to be a **multilingual** book, giving room to the languages of schooling as well as the home languages of the children, allocating different sections to specific languages, allowing for comparisons between languages, etc.

Setting up a Language Corner

A Language Corner can be set up in an individual classroom or a corridor used by various class/groups. The Language Corner has a poster inviting all the children who would like to write a poem or story in any language they wish to make a contribution. Children put their work, written in their language of choice, into a decorated box on the language table. They do the writing/decorating themselves. **Children are invited to write their own self-directed work and leave it in the box for others to read. This can be a very effective way to encourage children to talk about/to write on topics that are of interest to them.** It is very important that teachers encourage and affirm all children's efforts sensitively.

A „tête-à-tête” in the children’s café

Open a **children’s “café”** inviting children from one or several classes to meet, move around, interact and discuss interesting subjects in pairs or small groups, to look at picture books, etc. Invite parents to tell stories in different languages, sing songs, etc.



Working on projects

Projects on different countries/historical events/sporting and cultural events, etc. generate a **specific vocabulary**.

Teachers and educators can suggest and encourage children to include the language(s) spoken, foreign language(s), etc. Vocabulary lists in different languages can be included on aspects of the topic, e.g., names of the countries being explored; name of a piece of music; sports terminology; etc. This presents further opportunities for children to explore their own interests in relation to the topics concerned.



Events engaging the whole school community

Whole school events, e.g., concerts, art exhibitions, historical occasions, etc. can be used **to support all the languages in the school** (including foreign languages and children's home languages) orally and in writing. Children can announce the various acts to be performed in a variety of languages present in the school. This creates an awareness among children that the same announcement can be made in a variety of languages; the same information may be conveyed in writing in different languages using scripts that are both familiar and different. All this helps to **create interest and normality around using more than one language**. It also shows that everybody's language is valued.

Songs and poems

Songs and poems are really good for multilingual/plurilingual use as they may involve the same theme and lots of repetition. Each country/culture will have simple tunes for children's songs that are easily adapted to a range of languages. Children may be taught a song in the language of schooling/modern language(s) and then encouraged to translate the meaning and sing it in their home language(s). This helps with **language learning**, **language awareness**, and **content learning** as well.

Sources

- 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27: *Scoil Bride* Primary School, Dublin, Ireland
- 8, 13, 15: Primary school, 3rd and 4th grade in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
- 15: Polish primary school
- 21: Hola Barnehage – Ulna AS, Oslo, Norway
- 6, 11: Framework for multilingual education in the Luxembourgish preschool sector <http://www.men.public.lu/catalogue-publications/fondamental/apprentissages/enseignement-langues/c1-sprooch-bildung-3/lu.pdf>
- 5, 19, 22, 23: Ministry of Education, Children and Youth, Luxembourg (2010): *Ouverture aux langues à l'école Vers des compétences plurilingues et pluriculturelles* <http://www.men.public.lu/catalogue-publications/themes-pedagogiques/enseignement-langues/langues-ecole/fr.pdf>
- 3, 4, 24: *Sprach-Kitas*, a federal programme developed by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth <https://sprach-kitas.fruehe-chancen.de/>