GROWING WITH LANGUAGE (0-4 YEARS)

INFORMATION AND TIPS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT



Taal & Contact Overvecht | Samen voor Overvecht | Bibliotheek Utrecht | Taal Doet Meer

INTRODUCTION

Every child can learn to talk. Children learn language from the people around them. They learn by listening to what you say. And by copying your words, sounds and actions. The more you talk with your child, the faster they learn a language.

Speak in the language you know best. This is the language you can use best to share your thoughts and feelings. We call this the language of your heart. It does not have to be Dutch. Children can learn more than one language at the same time. If children know many words in their home language, it becomes easier for them to learn Dutch too.

Don't wait until your child starts school to help them learn a language. The first years of life are very important for language development. If your child starts learning language at home, they will have a good foundation when they begin school. In this booklet, you'll learn how children develop language skills and how you, as a parent or caregiver, can support them.

We will share tips. You'll also find information about where you can go if you have questions, and a list of activities you can enjoy together with your child.



DURING PREGNANCY

Making contact and learning language starts before your baby is born. At around 21 weeks of pregnancy, your baby can already hear voices. Talk to your baby in the language you know best. This helps your baby learn the sounds of your language and recognise your voice after birth.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Tip: Sing a song to your baby during pregnancy.
- Tip: Say "Good morning" to your baby every morning. Encourage older brothers and sisters to join in too.

0-12 MONTHS

Babies communicate by crying and making sounds, such as 'eh' and 'uh.' At around 7 months, they start to babble. 'wa-wa' 'da-da' 'ga-ga' 'guh-guh'

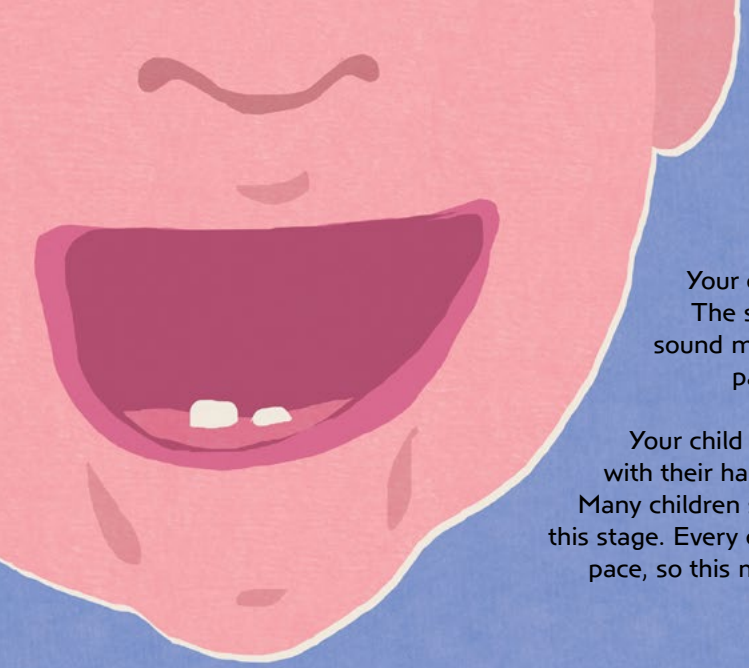
Talk to your baby every day in the language of your heart. Point to things your baby can see and hear. For example: 'There's Mummy.' Or: 'This is a flower.' From around 9 months, babies begin to understand simple sentences, such as: 'Give it to Daddy'

They respond by looking, pointing or making sounds. They learn by copying you. They listen to your words and watch how your mouth moves when you speak.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Make eye contact with your baby. Smile and respond to the sounds your baby makes.
- Let your baby explore touch-and-feel books and look at picture books together.
- Join 'Ukkie Uur' or 'Muzikale Verhaaltjes' at the library
- Visit places where your child can meet other children and where Dutch is spoken, such as the library or parent-and-baby groups.



12-18 MONTHS

Your child starts babbling more. The sounds they make begin to sound more like the language their parents or caregivers speak.

Your child also starts communicating with their hands by waving or clapping. Many children say their first words during this stage. Every child develops at their own pace, so this may happen earlier or later.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Talk to your child while you are doing things together. For example, at mealtime: 'We're going to eat now. Are you hungry? Here's your spoon. Yum!'
- Repeat words slowly and clearly.
- When your child is babbling, let them finish and look at them while they are communicating.
- After you say something to your child, give them time to respond. Wait for about 20 seconds before speaking again.





18-24 MONTHS

Most children can now say around 20 words. It doesn't matter whether these words are in Dutch or in another language spoken at home. Your child may not pronounce all the words correctly yet. This is normal. They learn new words every day.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Don't copy your child's baby talk. Instead, use short, complete sentences in your own language.
- Instead of saying: 'Bath time?' Say: 'We're going to take a bath. The water is nice and warm.'
- Let your child play with other children as much as possible. For example, visit a playground in your neighbourhood or join De KidsClub.
- Play together and talk about what you see. For example: 'What a big tower you've built!' Or: 'Look, this ball is yellow.'



Overview of Activities

Mother & Baby Groups and Pregnancy Groups (Free programme)

Mother & Baby Group - De Watertoren Playground
Wednesday: 9:30 am - 11:00 am
Location: Neckardreef 30

Mother & Baby Group - Overvecht Library
Tuesday: 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Location: Gloriantdreef 1

Pregnancy Group - Mattheusschool
Monday: 10:00 am – 11:30 am
Location: Nigerdreef 8

Mother & Baby Group - Studio Loevenhout
Thursday: 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Location: Pretoriadreef 49

General information

- For mothers and their babies aged 0–18 months.
- Childcare is available for older children.
- Weekly sessions (except during school holidays).
- Each group is led by a facilitator and a volunteering host.

Language Play Groups Taal Doet Meer (Free programme)

De Boog Community Centre
Thursday: 9:30 am - 11:00 am
Location: Gambiadreef 60

De Gagel Primary School
Wednesday: 8:30 am - 10:00 am
Location: Ibisdreef 401

General information

- For mothers with children aged 0–4 years.
- Each group is led by two facilitators.
- Ideal for mothers who would like to improve their Dutch language skills.
- Weekly sessions (except during school holidays). Find a Taalplezier group near you at: www.taaldoetmeer.nl/locaties.

Play Sessions
(Free programme)

Burezina
Monday: 9:30 am - 11:30 am
Location: Jeanne d'Arcdreef 1

Younity
(Winkelcentrum Overvecht)
Thursday & Friday: 9:30 am - 11:30 am
On Fridays there is additional support for inclusive play for children with additional support needs.
Location: Jonkvrouw Sanderijndreef 35

Information:
Kathelyn@oke-overvecht.nl
+31 6 46 66 27 16

General information

- For parents, carers and children aged 0–6 years.
- Come and play, move and explore together with your child.
- Weekly sessions (except during school holidays).
- Drop in, everyone is welcome.

De Kidsclub

De Watertoren
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday:
9:00 am - 11:30 am
Location: Neckardreef 30

De Gagelsteede
Monday, Wednesday & Friday:
9:00 am - 11:30 am
Location: Gangesdreef 7A

General information

De Kidsclub is for children aged 15 months to 3 years and their parent(s) or carer(s). It is ideal if you:

- Would like support in preparing your toddler for the next stage of development;
- Have questions about caring for or raising your child;
- Would like to improve your Dutch together with your child;
- Want to meet and share experiences with other parents;
- Would like to play and learn together with your child.





2-3 YEARS

By the age of 2, most children start making short sentences, such as: “Daddy book.” It doesn’t matter if the words are not pronounced correctly yet. They learn their own name and begin to understand words like ‘I’ and ‘you.’

By the age of 3, children can say many more words. They start making sentences with three to five words. Sometimes the words are in the wrong order, for example: ‘Hamid soup eat.’ Repeat the sentence correctly: ‘That’s right, Hamid is eating soup.’

Your child will also start telling short stories. Sometimes these stories can be difficult to understand. Show that you are listening and ask questions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Ask your child clear questions when they tell you something. For example, if your child says: ‘Ball gone’ you can ask: ‘Where is the ball?’
- Go to Story Time at the library. Story Time is also available in languages other than Dutch.
- Read a book with your child every day. A picture book without words is also a great choice. Reading together in your own language is just as valuable.
- Register your child for de Voor-school (preschool programme). In Overvecht, children can attend for free from the age of 2½ years.



3-4 YEARS

Children learn more and more words and start making longer sentences with three to five words. They tell short stories and often ask, “Why?” They also begin to understand more difficult questions and instructions, such as: “Get your jumper and put it on.” They can also recognise colours and shapes.

Sometimes your child wants to tell you a lot but can’t find the right words. They may say “uh...” while they are thinking. This is completely normal. Some sounds, such as the “r” and other speech sounds, may not be pronounced correctly yet. This is also normal.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Play sorting games. For example, ask your child to put all the red balls together.
- Fill a box or bag with different objects. Let your child take one out and tell you what it is.
- Repeat words, nursery rhymes and songs.
- Talk about feelings, such as happy, sad, angry and scared.



PLEASE NOTE:

Can other people often not understand what your child is saying? Does your child find it difficult to make contact with you or with other people? Or are you worried about your child’s development?
If so, talk to the Child Health Clinic (Consultatiebureau).

De Bibliotheek

The library is not only a place where you can read and borrow books. You are also welcome to come and play with your child. Stories are read aloud in different languages, and every week there are activities for children and their parents or caregivers.

Families with babies are welcome too. There are touch-and-feel books for babies, and Ukkie Uur, with stories and music for young children (0-2,5 years.) If you have questions about language development, your child's development, parenting, or anything else, you can visit the Oké Punt at the library.

BoekStart

BoekStart helps you discover how much fun reading together can be. When your baby is three months old, you will receive a letter from the municipality explaining why reading aloud is so important.

You can also collect a BoekStart bag, which includes two books for your baby. Your child can become a member of the library free of charge straight away.

Taal Doet Meer

Besides the Taalplezier groups in your neighbourhood, there is also Taalplezier at Home. A volunteer language coach visits you at home to play language games, sing songs and read books together with you and your child. You can sign up through Taal Doet Meer or at Oké Overvecht in the library.

OKé informatiepunt en OKé Café

At OKé, (expectant) parents and carers of children aged 0 to 6 years can get support with questions about parenting and raising children. We provide information, advice and guidance on topics such as language development, child development, health, parenting and your own personal development.

You are welcome to visit the OKé Information Point at Overvecht Library (Gloriantdreef 1) from Monday to Friday, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm, and on Thursdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Every Friday from 9:30 am to 11:30 am (excluding school holidays), you are also welcome to join the OKé Café at the library, where you can meet other parents and carers and their children in an informal and welcoming environment.

Gemeente Utrecht · de Bibliotheek Utrecht · BoekStart · Taal Doet Meer · OKé Informatie voor Ouder en Kind

IN OVERVECHT

De Kidsclub

The Kidsclub is a friendly and playful meeting place for toddlers aged 15 months to 3 years and their parents or carers. Together we sing songs, do arts and crafts, play, enjoy fruit, read stories and go on outings. Through play, we support children's overall development. Children are introduced to the Dutch language in a fun and natural way, while parents and carers can share experiences and ask questions about parenting and family life. For more information, please email dekidsclub@gmail.com, call +31 6 81 87 01 46, or visit one of our locations.

Al Amal

As part of the First 1,000 Days approach, Al Amal places a strong focus on language development from pregnancy onwards. We read stories together, support parents and carers in learning how to read aloud, and encourage talking, singing and storytelling in their home language. If parents or carers are unable to read, we show them how to use picture cards to stimulate language development and strengthen communication and interaction with their child.

Preschool

The preschool helps children prepare for primary school, giving them the best possible start. Children learn through play and enjoyable activities such as language games, story time, drawing, listening, singing and movement. There is a strong focus on each child's development. Children aged 2½ to 4 years can attend preschool free of charge. Registration takes place through the Child Health Clinic (Consultatiebureau).

Every Thursday from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, you can visit the drop-in session at Amazonedreef 43 for help with the registration process.

Echt Overvecht

Visit www.echtovervecht.nl for more information about activities and services for young children and their families in Overvecht.

Wijkaanpak Samen voor Overvecht

Wijkaanpak Samen voor Overvecht is committed to improving opportunities for children, young people, parents, carers and families. It is a partnership between a range of organisations working together to strengthen the community in Overvecht.

de kidsclub · al Amal · Echt Overvecht · Samen voor Overvecht

Growing with Language (0-4 years)

What can you do?

- Speak the language you feel most comfortable with, your language of the heart, even if both parents/ caretakers speak a different language.
- Avoid mixing different languages within the same sentence.
- From the age of 2, watch simple Dutch programmes together, such as Miffy (Nijntje). Limit screen time to 30 minutes and talk together about what you have watched.
- Play with your child every day. Keep it simple. Playing is about spending time together. For example, build a tower with blocks together or count out loud.
- Talk about the things around you. Name the colours of the furniture in your living room, or look out of the window together and point to the things you can see.

Tips and General Information

In the past, parents and carers were often advised to speak only Dutch with their children. We now know this is no longer considered the best approach.

Children learn language best when parents and carers speak the language they know and feel most confident using even if their child already uses some Dutch words.

It is, however, important that children also hear Dutch in everyday life, for example at the playground, nursery, preschool or the library.

For you

For more tips and language activities in different languages, visit www.taalbegintthuis.nl or scan the QR code.