Adopting children from another country? Raise them bilingually!
Tips on how to keep their language alive

Quadrilingualism alive and well

CULTURE FOR KIDS
Raising global citizens

LIVING LANGUAGES AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Parents tell us HOW & WHY they raise children bilingually

Wedding ceremonies around the world

TWO languages at the same time: Is that ok?

Summertime reading tips for you

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CONGRATULATIONS to our May-June 2008 WINNER:
Mai, The Hague, the Netherlands

Go to: www.biculturalfamily.org/drawing.html for more information!
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It is easy to get lazy in the summer months. For many of us, the kids are out of school, the weather is hot and all we want to think about is stretching out on the grass with a good book. Language support at home? Who cares! Just let me relax a bit! On some level this is a good thing. If you tend to be a “type-A” personality (always on the go, wanting to stick to your plans and worry about the consequences of falling out of your rhythm) then it may be especially hard for you to just let language issues fall to the wayside for a bit – even though it may be just the ticket to keep you motivated down the road! Taking a break from our busy routines, including our focus on how to keep language and culture alive at home, is often what we need to find our groove again and we may even discover a new way of doing things!

Luckily, summer is often full of community cultural and linguistic opportunities! Is there a cultural festival in town? Maybe an ethnic music and dance ensemble somewhere nearby? If so, this is a great way to douse you and your children in some global exposure. If there aren’t any such festivals or events in your neck of the woods, perhaps you can search out some as part of your summer vacation plans? Aside from the language and cultural benefits we provide our children in our homes, sharing in community cultural events can have a strong impact on us and our children. Perhaps it is group dynamics, but whatever it may be, there is something about a gathering of people celebrating traditions from another ethnic or linguistic culture which can really go to the heart and inspire our human souls. Don’t miss out on such opportunities while your children are still young!

In this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine, we are delighted to have the opportunity to share Violeta Garcia-Mendoza’s article and tips on raising adopted bilingual/bicultural children. Many of our readers have asked us to provide just such an article and Violeta took on this task with flair and expertise. Whether you are raising an adopted bilingual/bicultural child or not, you will delight in her family’s personal story as well as her thorough language tips.

With bilingualism already being a momentous feat, it is a delight to learn about how Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf, a native of Indonesia, is making quadrilingualism work in her home! Her article reminds us of how easily we learn languages when we have the magical mix of exposure and need! As experts continually tell us: exposure and need are the most important keys for us in learning one, two or more languages.

We have finally taken some time to collate your wonderful answers to our past drawing questions. For one drawing, you answered the question of why you are raising your children in more than one language and culture. In another drawing, you shared with us how your family is going about providing your children with language exposure. Alice and I would like to thank each and every one of you for all of the answers you have provided to all of our drawing questions as well as emails sent to us directly. Often we become teary-eyed as we share in your comments, questions, personal dilemmas and euphoric triumphs. Please keep your emails and answers to our drawing questions coming!

We also want each of you to know that we understand that raising children bilingually/multilingually can take a lot out of us. Success is difficult (if not impossible) to measure and can only be based on what we can handle as a parent (and as a family) at any given time. Try not to compare your family’s language progress with anyone else’s and remember that just taking it one day at a time is enough – try not to look too far ahead.

Happy Summertime Fun!

Corey & Alice
Tips of the Month
MULTILINGUAL MUSINGS
BLOGGING BILINGUALS AND DANCING DERVISHES!

Multi-Culti Mami

“Some language experts believe that your dominant language and culture is the one you love in. Like so many other theories or rules when it comes to this sort of thing, it only almost works.” So begins Violeta Garcia-Mendoza’s Multi-Culti Mami column titled, “Languages of Love.” Raised bilingually and biculturally, Violeta knows what the world looks like from the vantage point of more than one language and culture. Now with three children of her own (adopted from Guatemala), she shares insights into the world of bilingual/bicultural parenting in her new column for Literary Mama. You can find Violeta’s Multi-Culti Mami column at: www.literarymama.com/columns/multicultimami/

And don’t miss Violeta’s fabulous article on raising adopted bilingual/bicultural children in this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine!

Where the Hell is Matt?

You remember Matt, right? The international dancing delight who won the hearts and souls of the world! Matt has continued his global dancing adventures and has a 2008 video out - again set to fabulous music. This time his fans come out in droves to join him for the dancing fun. As you watch these videos, be prepared to be touched by the beauty, unity and joy of humanity and ask yourself: Is it not the simplest things (such as dancing and music) which bring us together?

Dancing video #1: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNF_P281Uu4
Dancing video #2: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlfKdbWwruY

If you haven’t had enough of Matt, here are some more enjoyable footage of our favorite globetrotter:

Matt’s Outtakes: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tT8jA_pps3o
Google Earth World Tour: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJbNuKvp0dY
Matt’s main website: wherethehellismatt.com
I realize that this is a back-issue of the digital magazine “Multilingual Living Magazine” but I wanted to point out that on page 42 of the July-August, 2007 issue, in the small side-box on etymology there was a problem with the Arabic. It was written backwards -- from right to left rather than vice-versa and it was segmented.

I hope that this helps in some small way to improve upon the wonderful idea upon which this digital magazine is based.
Thanks for my free, sample issue!
Megan Cartier

Innovative trilingual master’s programme “Learning and Development in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts” at the University of Luxembourg

Registration is now open for the second time.

The study programme gives students a unique opportunity to develop their own profile as learner, actor and innovator in complex, multifaceted development processes. The four pillars of the study programme combine and contrast case-based analyses with regard to media and socio-cultural shaped learning and communication processes, information brokering and information design, multilingualism and its integration into the educational landscape, multimodality and knowledge transfer.

Experts from Luxembourg and abroad hold seminars and thus allow students to gain broad knowledge about current research trends and debates in the discussed fields. Furthermore, the academic programme that can be studies in two (full-time) or four years (part-time) includes international master classes jointly organised with complementary study programmes in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Switzerland as well as workshops with business partners and educational institutions. Each student also receives an academic mentor for the duration of the study programme.

Please refer to the web site of the Master “Learning and Development in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts” www.uni.lu/formations/flshase/master_academique_multi_learn for more information on the application procedure, application deadlines, the study programme as well as public events organised by the programme and informational sessions during the next weeks.

You can also contact the programme coordinator Emilie Mutombo (emilie.mutombo@uni.lu) or the programme director, Assistant-Prof. Dr. Gudrun Ziegler (gudrun.ziegler@uni.lu), if you have further questions.

Renaissance mom builds bridges with Italiakids.com

Santa Barbara, CA - Italiakids.com was launched in spring 2008 by Shannon Venable, an academic editor specializing in Europe. As a busy mother with strong ties to Italy, Venable developed www.italiakids.com as an online reference publication that centralizes resources and information for international families abroad, with a particular view to fostering channels of bicultural support.

In addition to articles of interest for families, Italiakids.com provides a wide variety of listings by city and region, including events, childcare, English-speaking medical practitioners, family-friendly hotels and restaurants, parks and playgrounds, and extracurricular activities, among many others. The site also includes a parent forum for sharing ideas or making inquiries.

As the global community increasingly expands, carefully-edited online resources like Italiakids.com will prove to be a valuable tool for establishing the informal networks and friendships so essential to family life.!

Shannon Venable, Publisher
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shannon@italiakids.com
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As a bilingual parent (Spanish/English) making every effort to raise my children trilingual (my husband speaks Czech/English) I was thrilled to stumble upon your magazine on an internet search. I find it filled with wonderful tips, anecdotes and resources. I especially enjoy the Language Activities section and tips and advice both from experts in the field as well as other parents. Keep up the great work!

I also wanted to make you and your readers aware of our innovative Spanish language program. **Viva el Español** is located in the San Francisco/Oakland area. It is a non-profit organization that I started three years ago as I found a need to supplement the bilingual teaching I was doing at home with a curriculum that was more structured and richer that what I was able to pull together at home (not to mention that my children responded much better to being taught by someone who wasn’t their mother :-) ). **Viva el Español** has grown tremendously over the past three years and now offers Spanish immersion programs for toddlers on up to adults, including music classes, art & culture classes, fieldtrips, teen internships, travel-abroad opportunities and summer camps. Children learn Spanish through storytelling, music, games, imaginative play, cooking projects and more!

Happy to say that my children are well on their way toward the goal of trilingualism. To all the parents out there with the same goal: don’t give up! It is such a wonderful gift your children will have for the rest of their lives.

For more information on **Viva el Español** please visit [www.vivaelespanol.org](http://www.vivaelespanol.org) or email us at info@vivaelespanol.org. Gracias!

Margaret Grover-Roos

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**Literary Mama Magazine attracts Hispanic/Latino readers with Multi-Culti Mami column debut**


**Multi-Culti Mami**, by Violeta Garcia-Mendoza, will revisit the author’s tangled loyalties from a bilingual and bicultural childhood and motherhood. Born to an American mother and a Spanish father and raised between Spain and the US, Violeta went on to marry an American, English-speaking man and settle in Pennsylvania, where she and her husband are raising three Guatemalan-born children in a multi-cultural American family. **Multi-Culti Mami** will offer the perspective of one member of the growing bilingual, bicultural presence in this county, and give a behind-the-scenes look at how one family, particularly, is making that work in their home. It will speak to any mother who struggles with what it’s like to come to terms with her own history and difference as the head of a family.

The new column marks an appreciation of multicultural motherhood in narrative form, and is essential reading for Hispanic-American mothers and daughters, and for any members of a multi-cultural family in the U.S. It is contracted for 13 installments, running once every four weeks, and will debut on May 11, 2008.

Ms. Garcia-Mendoza’s work has appeared in a variety of publications, among them: The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Soleado: revista de literatura y cultura, Mamazine, and the anthology The Maternal is Political: Women Writers at the Intersection of Motherhood and Social Change (Seal Press, May 2008), alongside Barbara Kingsolver, Nanci Pelosi, Benazir Bhutto, and others. In addition to her column, she is also at work on a novel. Violeta Garcia-Mendoza, Poet, Writer, Teacher violeta724@earthlink.net [www.turnpeoplepurple.com](http://www.turnpeoplepurple.com)

Litery Reflections Co-Editor, Literary Mama “Multi-Culti Mami” Columnist, Literary Mama [www.literarymama.com](http://www.literarymama.com)

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We want to know what you think! Which articles do you enjoy the most? Did any impact you positively or negatively? Let us know! Email us at [info@multilingualliving.com](mailto:info@multilingualliving.com) and tell us your thoughts!

*Note that we reserve the right to edit your message for grammar and length if we include it in Multilingual Living Magazine.*
Die besten Kinderklassiker

This beautiful collection contains the most famous and loved classical children's tales Max and Moritz, Struwwelpeter, Kleiner Häwelmann, Pinocchio and Peterchens Mondfahrt. Not only children will love the stories, but parents will feel like going back in time when they are reading these German classics. A must for every Kinderzimmer!

Wort für Wort

How do you write "Pirat"? Name the first letter in "Insel"!

This game allows children to learn German words in a fun way and several different play levels help to keep it interesting and challenging for older children. You have to place the right letter next to the picture and spell the word. The parrot on the spinning wheel will tell you how many letters you are allowed to take and you can self-correct your spelling by looking at the picture's backside.

The game contains 45 picture cards, 90 letter cards, 1 spinning wheel featuring a parrot, 4 sticker, German instructions

Mein Quiz-O-Fant

Learning is fun with this game from the popular series Wieso?Weshalb?Warum? aimed at children aged 4-7 years. 10 different topics like animals, vehicles, farm, food, dinosaur etc. can be explored and a magnetic elephant will help you find the answer if you need some help or want to confirm it. The game encourages children to discover and ask questions beyond the obvious and with its three different game levels it is attractive for older kids as well. The game contains 12 playing cards (printed on both sides), 1 magnetic elephant, 24 play chips, German instructions.
**Wieso?Weshalb? Warum? Am Meer**

This book is the newest of the series Wieso?Weshalb?Warum? Junior which is for children aged 2+ years. Life in, around and along the ocean is shown in different scenes and explained to the children on their level. The book helps to understand, for example, which animal is living in the ocean or in the dunes, how weather is changing the coast line and what you can do at the beach. There are many lift-a-flaps that reveal more details and are fun to find.

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**Felix bei den Kindern der Welt**

Sophie's rabbit has been to many places and this time he visits the children from different parts of the world. The musical story CD includes 6 songs and takes you to the Sami in the North, the Tourag in the Sahara, the Maori in New Zealand, South Africa, San Francisco and Israel. Felix gets to know different cultures and shares his experiences with Sophie in his letters that he sends home.

---

**Kinder brauchen Träume**

A nice collection of 12 songs, including a picture booklet with 160 pages! Rolf Zuckowski and his friends are singing about stories that happen around the year like "Immer wieder kommt ein neuer Frühling", "Stups, der kleine Osterhase" or "In der Weihnachtsbäckerei". A nice CD to listen to in the car or at home!

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Do you need a special book or other German product? Contact us and we will do our best to find it!
Did you know...

… that before the year 1000, the word “she” did not exist in the English language? The singular female reference was the word “heo,” which also was the plural of all genders. The word “she” appeared only in the 12th century, about 400 years after English began to take form. “She” probably derived from the Old English feminine “seo,” the Viking word for feminine reference.

… that there are more than 600 million telephone lines today, yet almost half the world’s population has never made a phone call?

… that the word “encyclopaedia” is derived from two Greek words meaning “a circle of learning”?

… that English, the second most spoken language in the world (Mandarin being the most spoken), has more words than any other language? But English speakers generally use only about 1% of the language.

… that Italian is the official language of Italy and San Marino, and is an official language in the Ticino and Grigioni cantons or regions of Switzerland? It is also the second official language in Vatican City and in some areas of Istria in Slovenia and Croatia with an Italian minority.

… that in 1861, Paul Broca, a French physician, anatomist and anthropologist, located the area of the brain responsible for speech production? After a patient named Tan (because he could only say the word “tan”) had died, Broca examined his brain and found that there was damage to part of the left frontal cortex. This part of the brain has come to be known as “Broca’s Area.”

… that American Sign Language is a very different language with its own grammar rules and structure? It is the primary language of Deaf people in the United States, and it is growing in popularity with hearing children every year.

Qi Xi, sometimes called Chinese Valentine’s Day, Magpie Festival, or the Double Seventh Festival is a traditional romantic festival in China. It takes place on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month and often goes into August. In late summer, two bright stars can be seen on opposite sides of the Milky Way. These stars are Altair (“the cowherd”, Niulang) and Vega (“the weaver girl”, Zhinü). The following story is told about the two:

Long, long ago, there was an honest and kind-hearted fellow named Niulang (Cowherd). His parents died when he was a child. Later, he was driven out of his home by his sister-in-law. So he lived by himself herding cattle and farming. One day, a fairy from heaven named Zhinü (Weaver Girl) fell in love with him. She secretly came down to earth and married him. Niulang farmed in the field and Zhinü wove at home. They lived a happy life and gave birth to a boy and a girl. Unfortunately, the God of Heaven soon found this out and ordered the Queen Mother of the Western Heavens to bring Zhinü back. With the help of celestial cattle, Niulang flew to heaven with his son and daughter. When he was about to catch up with his wife, the Queen Mother took off one of her gold hairpins and scratched a river in the sky to separate the lovers. Niulang and Zhinü have been separated on the two banks ever since. Once a year all of the magpies in the world come to build a bridge for Niulang and Zhinü to meet each other. This meeting happens on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month. Because of this, their meeting is called “Qi Xi” (Double Seventh). Source: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qi_Xi Photo: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Perseid_Meteor.jpg
Multilingual Bollywood

Did you know that Bollywood is one of the largest film producers in the world? Bollywood is the nickname popularly used for the Mumbai-based film industry. The term is coined from Bombay (now called Mumbai) and Hollywood. The language spoken in Bollywood movies are Hindi, Urdu, Indian English and English.

Bollywood is commonly referred to as Hindi cinema, even though Hindustani, understood as the colloquial base common to both Hindi and Urdu, might be more accurate. The use of poetic Urdu words is fairly common. There has been a growing presence of Indian English in dialogue and songs as well. There is a growing number of films made entirely in English.

Some great Bollywood movies to check out:

**OM SHANTI OM** (2007): One of the biggest Bollywood movies in 2007. Starring the charismatic Shah Rukh Khan, Arjun Rampal. Murdered actor Om is reincarnated and sets out to discover the mystery of his demise and to find Shanti, the love of his previous life.

**DHOOM 2** (2006): Fun action film in which elusive master thief “A” baffles police while he falls in love with double agent Sunehri, whose goal is to uncover his identity. Hrithik Roshan, Abhishek Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai, Uday Chopra and Bipasha Basu.


Language Myths 101

We are all expert users of language but how much do we really know about language?

Test your knowledge at the fun “Language Myths” online quiz at aplng.la.psu.edu/ling001/myths/intro/index.php and find answers to questions such as...

- Since language processing occurs on the left side of the brain, are right-handed people better at language than left-handed people?
- Is it true or false that because Americans watch so much TV, they will eventually all have the same flat newscaster accent?
- Is language deteriorating over time?

The Language Myths website was designed by Jon Reinhardt for “Linguistics 001: The Study of Language” at Penn State University.
Humor is Not About Comedy

Humour is more than just WHAT we laugh AT. Researchers are focusing on Pattern Recognition Theory to explain why an individual finds something funny. “Effectively it explains that humour occurs when the brain recognizes a pattern that surprises it, and that this recognition is rewarded with the experience of the humorous response,” says Alastair Clarke, author of The Pattern Recognition Theory of Humour. Humour is not about comedy, it is about a fundamental cognitive function. Clarke explains: “An ability to recognize patterns instantly and unconsciously has proved a fundamental weapon in the cognitive arsenal of human beings.” Recognising patterns enables us to quickly understand our environment and function effectively within it: language, which is unique to humans, is based on patterns. Alastair Clarke explains: “The development of pattern recognition as displayed in humour could form the basis of humankind’s instinctive linguistic ability. Syntax and grammar function in fundamental patterns for which a child has an innate facility. All that differs from one individual to the next is the content of those patterns in terms of vocabulary.” Pattern Recognition Theory identifies further correlation between the development of humour and the development of cognitive ability in infants. Previous research has shown that children respond to humour long before they can comprehend language or develop long-term memory. Humour is present as one of the early fundamental cognitive processes. Alastair Clarke explains: “Amusing childish games such as peek-a-boo and clap hands all exhibit the precise mechanism of humour as it appears in any adult form. Peek-a-boo can elicit a humorous response in infants as young as four months, and is, effectively, a simple process of surprise repetition, forming a clear, basic pattern. As the infant develops, the patterns in childish humour become more complex and compounded and attain spatial as well as temporal elements until, finally, the child begins to grapple with the patterns involved in linguistic humour.”

Source: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080612150144.htm

Language = Intelligence?

It is said that Albert Einstein, one of the world’s greatest minds, didn’t start speaking until he was three years old – and to top it off, he was multilingual! Does this mean that delayed speech and multilingualism are the keys to higher intelligence? Ah, if only life were this simple! Studies have not confirmed any such direct links. However, this stands as a reminder that every child develops differently on her or his own language timeline, regardless of overall intelligence. As with Albert Einstein’s parents, consult an expert if you are concerned about your child’s language development, but don’t be surprised if her language skills do help her grasp concepts and complexities just a little bit better than her monolingual friends.

Source: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080625140632.htm

Different Language, Different Person?

New research once again supports the notion that bilinguals change their personalities when switching to another language. The new element in this research is the difference between bilingual-biculturals and bilingual-monoculturals. The authors of the study focused on groups of bilingual Hispanic women who had varying degrees of cultural identification. “They found significant levels of ‘frame-shifting’ (changes in self perception) in bicultural participants – those who participate in both Latino and Anglo culture.” The new research found that biculturals switched frames more quickly and easily than bilingual monoculturals.

In one of the studies, a group of bilingual U.S. Hispanic women viewed ads that featured women in different scenarios. The participants saw the ads in one language (English or Spanish) and then, six months later, they viewed the same ads in the other language. Their perceptions of themselves and the women in the ads shifted depending on the language. ‘One respondent, for example, saw an ad’s main character as a risk-taking, independent woman in the Spanish version of the ad, but as a hopeless, lonely, confused woman in the English version,’ write the authors.” Be careful, though, since this information will certainly be used to target you, the bilingual consumer!

Source: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080625140632.htm
Slow the Mind’s Aging Process with Languages

Looking for yet another benefit to raising your children to speak more than one language? How about this one: Knowing and speaking many languages may protect the brain against the effects of aging. Dr. Gitit Kavé, a clinical neuro-psychologist from the Herczeg Institute on Aging at Tel Aviv University, together with her colleagues Nitza Eyal, Aviva Shorek, and Jiska Cohen-Manfield, discovered recently that senior citizens who speak more languages test for better cognitive functioning. With the ongoing discussions about how to keep the brain “exercised” as a person ages, could it be that bilinguals have a built-in advantage? “Kavé says that one should approach these findings with caution. ‘There is no sure-fire recipe for avoiding the pitfalls of mental aging. But using a second or third language may help prolong the good years,’ she advises. However, a person who speaks more languages is likely to be more clear-minded at an older age, she says. Languages may create new links in the brain, contributing to this strengthening effect.”

A survey was taken in 1989 on people between the ages of 75 and 95. Each person was asked how many languages he or she knew, what his or her mother tongue was, and which language he or she spoke best. The researchers compared bilingual speakers to tri- and multilingual speakers.

Analyzing the results, the researchers found that the more languages a person spoke, the better his or her cognitive state was. A person’s level of education was also strongly associated with cognitive state, but the number of languages contributed to the prediction of cognitive fitness beyond the effect of education alone.

While the controversy continues in some circles as to whether or not parents should introduce their young children to a second language, Kavé thinks that learning a new language is only a good thing, even if it isn’t intended to stave off mental decline in old age. “In my professional opinion, learning a new language can only do good things,” she believes. “Other languages are good for you at any age. They allow for a flexibility of thought and a channel for understanding another culture better, as well as your own,” says Kavé. Could there be any better long-term benefits than that?

Source: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080507152419.htm

New Accent After Stroke

A woman in Ontario Canada spoke with a different accent after recovering from a stroke, according to McMaster University researchers in the July issue of the Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences. “The woman was recovering from a stroke two years ago, when her family noticed a change in her speech. They asked medical personnel at the Integrated Stroke Unit of Hamilton General Hospital why their mother was suddenly speaking with what sounded like a Newfoundland accent. It was at that point that the medical team joined forces with researchers in McMaster’s Cognitive Science of Language program to study the case.”

“It is a fascinating case because this woman has never visited the Maritimes, nor has she been exposed to anyone with an East Coast accent,” says one of the study’s authors, Alexandre Sévigny, associate professor of cognitive science in the Department of Communication Studies & Multimedia at McMaster University. “Her family lineage is Irish and Danish, and neither of her parents ever lived anywhere but in southern Ontario.” The puzzling medical phenomenon known as foreign-accent syndrome (FAS) arises from neurological damage, and results in vocal distortions that typically sound like the speaker has a new, “foreign” accent. This particular case, however, is even more unusual because the English-speaking woman did not acquire an accent that sounds foreign but one that instead sounds like Maritime Canadian English. Source: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/07/080703101320.htm
The author with her two quadrilingual daughters
I grew up in a family that spoke three languages at home. The languages didn’t all come at once, but were added one at a time during my growing years.

We are from Banda Aceh, Indonesia, where Acehnese is the mother tongue of the Acehnese people. It was the first language that my sister and I acquired during our infant years. When I entered kindergarten, Bahasa Indonesia was officially introduced to me by my teachers.

When I was five, my father got a scholarship for a Master’s degree and later continued for a Ph.D at Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, USA. We left for the States in 1985 and were there for six years altogether. During those years, we spoke mostly Acehnese (with my mother) and English (with my father and of course in school with my American teachers and friends). I don’t remember having any difficulties learning English because everyone around me was speaking it! No sweat!

There were also other Indonesian students who studied in OSU. They were from various cities in different provinces, so they spoke in their own native languages. When we gathered, Bahasa Indonesia was used. However, we Indonesian children always spoke English to each other since we were used to doing so in school. But we would switch to Bahasa Indonesia when we talked to the adults and to our native language when we faced our parents. It wasn’t very hard to do; my brain just knew when to switch and match it! No sweat!

My second sister was born when I was nine. During our years in the States, my sister and I spoke so much English that we didn’t even use Acehnese that much anymore with our mother. But she was very persistent with her Acehnese! So my baby sister acquired Acehnese and English during her infant years.

The real challenge started when we returned back to Banda Aceh in 1992. I entered middle school and made new friends. English was only learned in school for four hours a week. Outside of that

INDONESIA...

There are 742 languages spoken in Indonesia, whose population is estimated to be approximately 238 million (2008 est.), with over 300 ethnic groups. The languages that have the largest number of speakers are Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Minangkabau, Buginese, Malay, Balinese, Acehnese, Banjarese, Sasak, Toba Batak, Makassarese, Lampung, Torajan, Dairi Batak, Banjarese, Ambonese, Ceramese, Dayak, Halmahera, Minahasa, Tetum and Rejang. Some 2 million inhabitants also speak one of several dialects of Chinese. The official language is Indonesian (locally known as Bahasa Indonesia), a modified version of Malay, which is used in commerce, administration, education and the media, but most Indonesians speak their local languages.

class, no one used English. So my sisters and I felt embarrassed speaking a language that other people rarely used! We used English ONLY at home. As we had been using it for the past six years, it was hard and strange to change. Fighting and quarreling had always been in English! There were always words, phrases and jokes that were funnier or appropriate in one of the languages. We also mixed a lot when we talked; sometimes we chatted so fast even our parents didn’t understand! It was fun!

However, our father always spoke English to us not just at home but even in public! How embarrassing! So we would answer him in Acehnese or Bahasa Indonesia (it depended on who was near us). But he never gave up and didn’t care in what language we answered him! He would always remind us, “Don’t forget English or you will regret it one day…” But we never minded his words because people would always stare and smile, sometimes even whisper behind our backs. Whatever they were saying, we ultimately assumed it was something negative!

As time passed, the more we understood why the three languages were important for us. We were Acehnese; we should know how to speak our native language as it was our identity. Bahasa Indonesia is the national language of our country, how can we be citizens there if we are not good at speaking it? On the other hand, English is used extensively throughout the world; it is required in certain fields, professions, and occupations and over a billion people speak English at least at a basic level, so how could we not want to be fluent in it?

Now I am married with two children. I am a lecturer in a university in Banda Aceh. My husband and I are currently pursuing our Ph. D. My first sister completed her Bachelor’s degree, is married and has a son. She is going to pursue her Master’s degree overseas this year. My second sister just completed high school and plans to apply to a university overseas, too, as her recent TOEFL score is 607.

My first sister and I are also raising our young children to become multilinguals, in Acehnese, Bahasa Indonesia and English. As my husband, children and I are currently staying in Malaysia, my daughters are also speaking Bahasa Malayu! It takes a lot of effort and a lot of patience. But we know it will all be worth it. We consult our parents whenever we face problems; they encourage us when we feel tired.

What is my parents’ secret to success in raising bilingual children? PATIENCE and PERSISTENCE! We thank our parents for being very tolerant and patient in raising us to become multilinguals!
Why are you raising your child in more than one language?

Thank you to everyone who answered our January-February 2008 drawing question asking why you raise your children in more than one language! Here is what some of you told us...

To open the world for my daughter. The more our children know about their world, the more they will care for it and for all its people.
— Emily, Switzerland

I want my child to be bilingual because it is essential in becoming an agent of change.
— Nancy, USA

Our main goal is that our children become great world citizens and are open to other people and cultures.
— Kerstin, Germany

Mainly to offer my kid the incredible opportunities that open up with bilingualism in terms of friendships, relationships, travelling, working and living abroad and developing a tolerant multicultural identity. I see it as my duty and contribution to build a peaceful world.
— Fabiola in Italy

Because in our hearts we want to share our love with our kids in as many ways and with as many words as possible.
— JoWanda, USA

It's not a reason really, more of a beneficial side-effect, but I think it's fun to raise a child in more than one language!
— Ellen, The Netherlands

Being bilingual is a part of me, and I wanted to share that with my son.
— Maurice, USA

My goal is to give them a part of me, to share my "home" with them.
— Rebecca, France

My main reason is that I want my son to know the real me!
— Claire, France

Because we think it's an important part of education and will bring future benefits in college, and job opportunities.
— Barbara, USA

I also hope that they would be interested to study abroad at some point.
— Judith, USA

Because I think in this global economy it's a necessity!
— Laura, USA

To make it easier for my daughter to learn languages in the future, as well as to sharpen her mind for other endeavors.
— Alicia in MA, USA

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Multicultural Wedding Traditions

How does the world celebrate this special occasion?
Indian weddings are traditionally multi-day affairs, and involve many intricate ceremonies, such as the painting of the hands and feet of the bride called a “mehndi” (see photo to the left). Garlands are presented to guests of honor instead of corsages, and lots and lots of flower petals are thrown for good luck. It is tradition for the closest male relative to sprinkle flower or rose petals on the married couple to fend off evil spirits.

The Dutch have a wonderful wedding custom of creating a wedding “wish tree.” At the reception a beautiful tree branch is placed next to the bride and groom’s table, and paper leaves attached to pieces of colorful ribbon are placed at each guest’s place setting. Guests write their special wish for the happy couple on their leaves, which the bride and groom can then read and hang on the tree.

Before the actual German marriage ceremony, dishes, pots, or anything that will break are smashed into pieces and then cleaned up together by the bride and groom. It is said to bring good luck to the happy couple just before the wedding. Another version of the popular custom is for friends to bring over all manner of junk they can gather for the couple to clean up. The idea is to prepare the bride and groom for facing life’s trials together.

The Chinese perform a traditional tea ceremony where the bride serves tea to her parents and her new in-laws as a symbol of respect. An updated version of the tradition is where the groom can serve tea together with his new bride. The color red represents celebration and prosperity, and the Chinese character “xi” or double happiness bestows the wish of a happy life for the couple. Chinese weddings are festive celebrations through and through. The bride and groom are required by etiquette to make the rounds and toast each table individually to the loud cheers of each group visited.

Many Africans “jump the broom” as part of their wedding traditions. It is a symbol for the start of the couple making a home together. Cowrie shells are often used to accent table decorations as the shells represent the hoped for purity and beauty for the happy couple and their marriage.

The traditional Irish wedding ring is called a claddagh, and depicts two hands holding a heart bearing a crown. The hands represent faith, the heart love, and the crown honor. Another accessory for the bride is a lucky horseshoe which is tied to her bouquet with a ribbon for that walk down the aisle. But make sure to hang it with the points up so that it will catch and hold good luck. A popular Celtic design is the love knot. It is a pattern created by using continuous, unending lines that intertwine. The design represents eternity, unity, and fidelity. A lucky four leaf clover is said to symbolize, “One leaf for Hope, the second for Faith, the third for Love, and the fourth for Luck!” The national symbol of Ireland is the heraldic harp since ancient Ireland honored the harpist above all other musicians, and it was they who played for the highest officials. Instead of clinking glasses to get the couples to kiss, another tradition in Ireland is for a guest to stand up and sing a song, or recite a poem with the word “love” in it.
1. You have recently published a new book called Living Languages: Multilingualism across the Lifespan (Praeger). What is its focus and how is it different from your book Raising Multilingual Children?

There are three basic angles to the new book, Living Languages. First, eight years have gone by since the publication of Raising Multilingual Children, and a lot has changed in the field. In one respect, the Ten Key Factors that were explored as a theory in RMC are now completely validated in Living Languages, primarily through new linguistic and neuroscience studies. The new evidence for the Ten Key Factors is shared in Living Languages.

Second, Living Languages goes beyond the premises of Raising Multiple Children and considers languages throughout childhood and into adulthood. There is a large section in Living Languages devoted to teaching methodologies and parental support activities based on how people learn languages best at different times of their life.

Third, from a personal angle, I wanted to continue with my own children’s story. My oldest is now 15, my middle child is 13 and my youngest is 11. They have each had very different experiences with their four languages, and their stories are very reflective of the problems many multilingual children face. I wanted to share our family story in order to show the challenges that can face people raising multilingual children, but also to celebrate the wonderful benefits of doing so.

2. In your book, you dedicated a whole chapter to your family’s story and your adventure with multilingualism, which makes some really fascinating reading. Would you care to share with our readers your basic family background? How are your kids doing today in their 3-4 languages?

I am half Japanese-American, half Irish-Native American and grew up in California. My husband is an Ecuadorian diplomat. We met at university and since then have lived in Japan, the USA, Switzerland, Ecuador, and Peru. My oldest was “made in Japan” and born in Ecuador, as was my sec-
second child. Our third was born in Boston. I speak to our children in English, my husband speaks to them in Spanish and they have always attended German schools (which has English as a second language and French as a third language starting in secondary school). Natalie is now 15, Gabriel is 13 and Mateo is 11. They all speak fluent English, Spanish and German, and some French, which was their primary language when we lived in Switzerland for five-and-a-half years. Luckily, Natalie now has French in school as well and is at the top of her class. As far as writing is concerned, they are all proficient, albeit struggle with spelling, especially in English! They speak all of their languages at a native level, with native accents.

3. Do most multilingual children go through an “initial error-making stage”?

Kids are smart. In fact they are so smart they know how to look for patterns in their world to learn new things. This pattern seeking is very prevalent in language acquisition, not only for multilingual children, by for all children. For example, all children will generalzie upon the rules they learn for language. This can be seen when kids presume all verbs in the English past tense should end in “ed” so they say things like “I goed to the school.” For children with two or more languages this initial error-making stage can often be prolonged. Why? This happens with younger children (1-4 year olds) because they often do not even know they are speaking more than one language, so all of the patterns they find lump into a single group. Until children’s languages are sorted (e.g., “Mommy speaks English and Daddy speaks Spanish”), then errors will occur with frequency. Error-making also happens with older children because of the way language systems are organized in the brain; kids draw from the patterns they are learning in all of their languages.

4. If, as you write on p. 111, the “quality of mother tongue or native language fluency impacts the quality of subsequent languages,” does it mean that it is better for the child to learn languages consecutively? What is better, in other words: consecutive or simultaneous bilingualism?

This does not mean that it is necessarily better for a child to learn languages consecutively. It simply means that a child needs to learn his or her native language fluently, which can occur concurrently with a second (or third) language. In fact, simultaneous bilingualism has a great many benefits (including no accents). In some family cases, these benefits extend to equal participation of both parents in a child’s “first” language acquisition. I can say from experience having watched my children first learn English and Spanish simultaneously, then German and French in school, that both work.

A point of clarification is needed here related to terms. In my own family case you can ask, “What was my children’s native language?” Both my husband and I were responsible for the quality input of each of our languages. Having said that, while my own children learned both English and Spanish from birth, they had more time in English, as I was the primary caregiver. This means that the development of English skills was slightly ahead of Spanish skills, and remained so until the children began attending the German school in Ecuador, where they also received Spanish as a subject and were surrounded by it in the environment. So while they had two “first” languages, their proficiency was developed in English before Spanish.

5. Most bilingual families know about the main language strategies such as One-Parent-One-Language and Minority-Language-At-Home. But are some language strategies better than others in raising multilingual (vs. bilingual) children?

Strategy is extremely important in foreign language learning, and it is one of the ten key factors in raising multilingual children. What is vital to remember related to strategy is that it is only as good as the consistency that accompanies it. It is clear that
no strategy is superior to any other. The reason most bilingual families have heard about One-Parent-One-Language (OPOL) is because it is the strategy that is easiest to be consistent with, not because it is any better than other strategies. OPOL is easy to be consistent with because it is easy to observe when one parent is not speaking the correct language. Other strategies, such as only speaking the native language at home (Minority-Language-At-Home) and letting the environment and school teach the other language is also effective, but it is far more difficult to be consistent with as internal home monitoring is rare.

6. How can a multilingual family know if their child is exposed to “enough” of each language? Is there a gauge which parents can use to determine this?

Comparing a child’s language development with “age-appropriate language levels” is one way to measure a child’s exposure to “enough” language input. The Child Development Institute offers a very good guide (see www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/language_development.shtml).

It may come as a surprise to learn that the average three-year old has nearly 1000 words in his native language, and most five-year olds can hold a conversation on par with adults in terms of grammar. A multilingual child may only have this number of words in a combined sense, though it is far more likely that once the child learns a word in one language, he/she seeks out the word in the other language.

“Enough” also implies quantity. It is important to remember that it is not only quantity, but also quality of language. Thus the term “age-appropriate”—knowing lots of “baby” words as a secondary student is not the same as knowing the vocabulary of a sophisticated high school student.

7. You dedicate a chapter to asking the question, “How Long Does It Take a Non-Native Speaker to Become Fluent?” Can you give us a quick overview of this chapter and some insights into your answers?

The quick overview is that research shows that it takes a child roughly two years to become fluent orally (speak the language) and approximately five to seven to gain literacy skills at the level of a native speaker. There are, of course, many individual variances for these parameters. Among some of the things that influence the speed with which a child learns his second or subsequent languages are motivation, the typology of the languages being motivated, the relationship between the child’s native language and the new language, and the type of school system the child studies in.

8. What do you think multilingualism will look like in the future? Is the world becoming more multilingual and how will we utilize our multiple languages in our global environment decades and generations from now?

The world is more multilingual than ever and this is a global trend that will only persist in the foreseeable future. To quote myself:

“Never before in the history of the world have multilinguals been prized more than they are today. In businesses, government, world politics, cultural domains, communications, media, and international relations as a whole, there is a deficit of qualified professionals who can speak, read, and write in more than one language. The Economist and Business Week recently acknowledged that the characteristic most valued and lead available in new business recruits was the ability to speak more than one language, and other studies go as far as saying that the future of some fields can be jeopardized by the lack of foreign language skills, (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008, p.15).

The growing global demand for multilinguals should make each of the parents reading this article feel secure that by giving the gift of languages they are opening doors of opportunity for their children.
Sapir said something [...] about language and reality. It is the part that often gets left behind in the dot-dot-dots of quotations: “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.”

When I first read this, I thought, Here at last is validity for the dilemmas I felt growing up in a bicultural, bilingual family! As any child of immigrant parents knows, there’s a special kind of double bind attached to knowing two languages. My parents, for example, spoke to me in both Chinese and English; I spoke back to them in English.

“Amy-ah!” they’d call to me. “What?” I’d mumble back. “Do not question us when we call,” they’d scold in Chinese. “It is not respectful.” “What do you mean?” “Ai! Didn’t we just tell you not to question?”

To this day, I wonder which parts of my behavior were shaped by Chinese, which by English. I am tempted to think that if I am of two minds on some matter, it is due to the richness of my linguistic experiences, not to any personal tendencies toward wishy-washiness. But which mind says what?

From: *The Opposite of Fate*, by Amy Tan, pp 283-284
What Led Us To These Doors:
Our Family's Journey of Bilingualism and International Adoption

BY VIOLETA GARCIA-MENDOZA
The thing about life and love is the way they have of leading you in perfect, and yet surprising, directions. Your life experiences, paired with the pulls of love, prepare you for a choice before you know of its existence. At least, in retrospect, that’s the way it was for my husband’s and my parenthood.

For years I imagined my many future children, knowing that a chronic medical condition would keep me from putting my body through pregnancy. My husband’s upbringing taught him that parenthood is a privilege of action, rather than of title. We talked about being open to adoption as a way of making our family before even getting engaged. Around this time, we also talked about bilingualism. I had been born into a bicultural marriage and grown up a simultaneous bilingual - speaking English and Spanish - in Spain; my husband had grown up monolingual in the U.S. After my parents’ divorce and my mother moved the two of us back to her home state, English became the language of most of my relationships.

When my future husband and I met, it was in English, and English was the language in which we continued to conduct our relationship. But I had been shaped by my two countries and two languages so much that I felt that, difficult as they might be to balance at times, they were a gift any future children of mine should have. Even as I mumbled about raising a brood of bilingual, bicultural kids, in truth, I felt dubious about actually being able to pull it off.

Soon after we married though, dreams of children took the shape of plans for them. A few months after our wedding, we could be found evaluating various international adoption programs around the world, investigating agencies, and reading anything even tangentially related to our new adventure. Of all the programs open to us, we chose to adopt from Guatemala due to the common link of language and culture between Guatemala and my own country of birth. After months of preliminary preparations and paperwork, we were approved by the US government and our adoption agency to adopt up to three Guatemalan-born children.

Both our older daughter and our son were born in 2006. The age difference between them is 7 weeks, making them “virtual twins.” Our daughter, Maya, came home in late 2006, and our son, Joaquin, came home in early 2007. Less than 2 months after Joaquin’s arrival home, we received the unexpected referral of Joaquin’s biological sister, Maria, who had just been born days before. We joyfully accepted, though most people around us thought we were crazy, and, in late 2007, our family was complete with Maria’s homecoming.

While at the beginning of the adoption process we marveled at how our health and familial circumstances seemed to have prepared us for the experience of adoption, once our children came home, we marveled at how well our international, intercultural marriage prepared us to head a bilingual and bicultural home. I, in particular, was able to draw from my own growing-up experience in determining what to foster and what to avoid when fostering bilingualism. The first years living in the US - the very time of my life that had been the hardest for me in terms of owning my bilingualism - had the most to teach me. In other words, the experience of being different, of coming from somewhere else, and feeling loyalty towards a second culture and language – what I wished away for my entire teenage years – was exactly what provided me with empathy and resources in my adoptive motherhood.

In our home, we’ve taken the approach that bilingualism and biculturalism are more about the journey than the destination. Our choice is all about our family living and loving in various languages, inspired by our various histories, not about measuring up to some gold standard. In practice, because I feel Spanish and English are both important...
Violeta’s Five Favorite Family Resources for Promoting Bilingualism:

**Brain Quest Hispanic America:** [www.workman.com/products/9780761139973/](http://www.workman.com/products/9780761139973/)

We bought these for the kids but since they’re too little still, I use them to teach my American husband more about Spanish language and culture.

**Plaza Sésamo:** [www.sesameworkshop.org/international/mx/spa/home.php](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/international/mx/spa/home.php)

Although we could find Sesame Street in Spanish, we often opt for Plaza Sésamo instead. It’s originally filmed in Spanish, in Monterey, Mexico, and has its own line-up of colorful characters.

**The Barco de Vapor books:** [www.elbarcodevapor.com/ver_seccionFija.aspx?id=2](http://www.elbarcodevapor.com/ver_seccionFija.aspx?id=2)

When I moved to the US with my mother, she bought all the books from this publisher she could find. Now we can enjoy the ones from my childhood, as well as, and thanks to the internet order more online.

**Direct TV:** [www.expertsatellite.com/directv-mas](http://www.expertsatellite.com/directv-mas) and **XM radio:** [www.xmradio.com/](http://www.xmradio.com/)

We subscribe to these as an alternative to our monolingual local cable and radio. At home and in the car, these offer programming in various languages and broadcast all over the world.

**Los pollitos dicen:** [www.lospollitosdicen.biz/](http://www.lospollitosdicen.biz/)

This adorable line of onesies and t-shirts gets our kids excited about sharing Spanish vocab with their little friends.

Adoption Resources:

**Evan B. Donaldson Institute for Adoption:** [www.adoptioninstitute.org](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org)

The Adoption Institute’s mission is to provide leadership that improves adoption laws, policies and practices - through sound research, education and advocacy – in order to better the lives of everyone touched by adoption.

**Creating a Family:** [www.creatingafamily.com](http://www.creatingafamily.com)

Website of Dawn Davenport, adoptive mom and highly respected author of *The Complete Book of International Adoption*. A thorough, easy-to-navigate site, for further research.

**Adoptive Families Magazine:** [www.adoptivefamilies.com/](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/)

Award-winning national adoption publication- provides articles for adoptive families at all stages.
to my identity, we chose not to employ a strict one parent-one language strategy, opting instead for a more flexible approach. My husband speaks more English with our children than Spanish, which he’s learning increasingly by being surrounded; I speak more Spanish than English at home. Because we both work from home, our kids do end up hearing about the same of each language. We also direct the majority of our kids’ resources - toys, books, DVDs - to strengthening the minority language; in our case, Spanish. Our three are little still, but they all have a steadily growing bilingual vocabulary and, for their age, fantastic comprehension of either language.

In spite of all the work and planning required to adopt our children, and establish and maintain our family’s bilingualism, I feel a sense of profound purpose in my life. Every moment, every lesson, every tear, every joy in my life brought me to these doors; I trust that this was so that I could and would choose to walk through them.

Violeta Garcia-Mendoza is a Spanish-American poet, writer, and teacher. Her poetry and prose have appeared in a variety of literary venues. Violeta's website is Turn People Purple (www.turnpeoplepurple.com) and her blog is Multi-Culti Mami (multicultimami.wordpress.com). She writes a monthly column by the same name, on the challenges and joys of living in a bilingual, bicultural family in the US, for the magazine Literary Mama (www.literarymama.com/columns/multicultimami/). Violeta lives in Pennsylvania with her American husband, their son and two daughters, all adopted as infants from Guatemala, and their two incorrigible dogs.
When my husband and I set about adopting internationally, we found lots of resources on parenting your adopted child, and a number of resources on raising bilingual children, but none which considered both the circumstances of adoption and our desire to raise our children in a bilingual home. When I’d bring up the issue with other parents, their attitude seemed to be that you could focus on one or the other, but that trying to focus on both might be a recipe for parental burn-out. Nevertheless, we were undeterred.

Three kids later, my husband and I have found that bilingualism and international adoption are perfectly complementary after all. Here then, are the tips we would have liked to have upon setting out on the journey, and how they worked for us.

#1

Get a head start. If at all possible, send your child’s caregiver a tape, CD, or digital recording of you and your spouse reading and talking in each of your languages while you’re in process. Even if it is not commonly done, that doesn’t mean it isn’t possible – so be sure to ask before making any assumptions. This way, your child will hear the languages you speak at home from the earliest possible age, and will also learn to take comfort in your voices.

For each of our adoptions, we made a tape in which my husband and I alternated reading our favorite childhood stories in English and Spanish. We sent it down with a family traveling to pick up their child, with a note asking our baby’s foster mom to play the tape for our child before naps and bedtimes. When each of our babies came home, the tape served as something recognizable, comforting and consistent in the face of a major transition. We played it in the hotel in Guatemala, on the plane, and for months after coming home. Best of all was the look of recognition in their eyes when they put together that we were the people on the tape. And after retiring the tapes, they’re still a precious memento of their babyhood and adoption.
#2 **Nest - in two languages.** While you wait for your child’s adoption to be completed, stock up on as many bilingual baby resources as possible.

In pregnancy, nesting is one way you can anticipate your baby’s arrival. In adoption, it can still be an important way of excitingly anticipating. The wait was, for us, the most difficult part of the adoption process. We passed the time by shopping for age-appropriate toys, books, and videos and it helped us prepare physically and psychically for our new addition.

#3 **Sing!** Learn or remember the songs of childhood. When you’re too exhausted to think of ways to comfort your fussy child, children’s songs are the best thing to turn to. In adoption, they’re also a great way of sharing your own past with your new baby, and of fusing your traditions.

In addition to the many bedtimes they’ve facilitated and the tears they’ve helped avoid, the songs we sing at our house have, for my husband and I, led to some nostalgic revisiting of our childhoods, and, for our kids, led to hours of fun as we teach them to sing.

#4 **Seek out bilingual buddies.** Check out listings of bilingual organizations and playgroups in your area, ask friends and family to set you up with other bilingual acquaintances, or turn to the internet. Whether you’re leaning towards one location/one language, one parent/one language, or your own blend of approaches, you and your baby will appreciate the greater sense of support bilingual buddies can offer. As an adoptive parent, the been-there, done-that perspective of experienced parents will also see you through some hair-pulling moments.

We were lucky to become good friends with another family that traveled to pick up their son at the same time as we brought our older daughter home. Though we live in different states, we still email and call each other to discuss immersion preschool options, to tip each other off on Plaza Sésamo airings, and to share the latest bilingual toy we’ve found. Their friendship, though long-distance, is especially valuable since we live in an area that’s fairly monolingual.

#5 **Keep in touch.** Whenever possible, connect with a member of your child’s birth family, with their caregiver, or with someone from their country of origin, and keep in touch. These connections will keep you motivated in fostering your child’s native language and will provide an important link of origin and history for their identity as it develops.

On the tough days of bilingualism, our Guatemalan friends, and my desire for our kids to be able to communicate with them make me persevere. Our friendships have also provided us with information on local traditions, recipes, and our children’s individual stories, all things we appreciate and work into our own family traditions, and into the stories we tell our kids about how they came into our lives.
Culture for Kids: Raising Global Citizens

Tips to integrate language and culture into our children’s lives

BY TARYN ZIER

Panel Discussion

“We all want our children to be comfortable in this increasingly global world. But how can we best help them understand and respect the different cultures around us?”

This was the focus of a dynamic panel discussion which took place on May 15th in Seattle, Washington. The event was organized by Sponge, a language program for young children and their caregivers in the Seattle area. Four local experts were invited to speak about the benefits of early language learning and to share their experiences and ideas for integrating language and culture into young children’s lives. Topics focused on different approaches, local resources and ways that language and culture promote compassion.

The panelists:

- **Kelly Aramaki** (Principal, John Stanford International School)
- **Harriet Cannon** (M.C., LMFT Specializing in culture, language & identity)
- **Corey Heller** (Founder & Director, Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network)
- **Kevin P. Henry** (Diversity Program Coordinator, City of Bellevue)
- Moderator: **Jackie Friedman Mighdoll** (Founder & President, Sponge)

Many of us live in culturally-diverse cities, where heritage and differences are honored and valued, but how do we make the most of this? Integrating language and culture into our children’s lives helps them connect to others both in their own community and also in the greater world.

Sponge, which offers foreign language classes to young children in the greater Seattle, Washington area, hosted a panel discussion in May 2008 where local experts shared their thoughts on a topic they are passionate about: culture for kids. The participants on the panel were Kelly Aramaki (Principal, John Stanford International School), Harriet Cannon (M.C., LMFT Specializing in culture, language & identity), Corey Heller (Founder & Director, Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network), Kevin P. Henry (Diversity Program Coordinator, City of Bellevue) and the moderator was Jackie Friedman Mighdoll (Founder & President, Sponge). Although the talk focused on the benefits of early language learning and cultural exposure in raising global citizens, the discussion repeatedly emphasized the importance of parents. When children see their parents interested in other languages and cultures, they are more likely to share this interest, especially if they are getting additional exposure in school or in the community.
So, as a parent, what can you do? Here are some of the panelists’ top tips:

1. **Incorporate language learning in your routine.** Make learning another language a fun family adventure. Take a class together or learn from a bilingual relative. Show your enthusiasm and your child’s will grow, too.

2. **Get to know people of different cultures.** Children begin to appreciate cultural differences when someone they admire comes from a different background than their own. Having a friend or beloved teacher who is of another ethnicity helps children move beyond the comfort of similarity. As one panelist noted, cultural differences are in the eye of the beholder.

3. **Increase your exposure.** Once you start learning another language, increase your exposure by sending your child to an immersion school, joining a playgroup in another language, watching bilingual media, attending multicultural events, vacationing or living abroad, or hosting an exchange student.

4. **Lobby for language opportunities.** If you are unable to find existing opportunities in your neighborhood, get a network of like-minded parents together to set up a new playgroup. If your child is in school, lobby the PTA for in- or after-school language programs. Many schools are interested in offering a language component in their curriculum-help speed things up by becoming a language advocate.

5. **Figure out what works for your family.** Creativity and flexibility are important. Try speaking another language on certain days or during a certain activity. Experiment until you find the right fit for your family and don’t force language upon your child. Be sure to constantly evaluate your child’s teachers and programs to make sure they are relevant and motivating.

6. **Start them when they are young.** It is easiest to make language and culture a part of your child’s existence in the early years, when their brains are primed for language acquisition and they are open to new experiences. But, of course, it’s never too late! Take the time now to seek out opportunities for your child.

In the not-so-distant past, we weren’t ‘supposed to’ raise children with another language, and now research shows the immense benefits of doing just that. As we appreciate diversity and help our kids recognize and act on opportunities for compassion, we will be well on our way to raising global citizens. ✤

*Taryn Zier is the Marketing Director for Sponge and takes Spanish classes there with her two children, ages 2 and 4. To learn more about Sponge or early language learning research, visit [www.spongeschool.com](http://www.spongeschool.com), and for language resources, visit [www.biculturalfamily.org](http://www.biculturalfamily.org).*
Multilingual Family Profiles

Families around the world share their ways of keeping language alive…

We are a trilingual family. We live in London. My husband is Mexican, I am French and Thomas, our 2 year old son, is growing up with 3 languages. We have been following the one-person-one language method with Thomas and it’s working really well. So, I speak French to him and his Dad only speaks Spanish with him. I speak Spanish (and sometimes French) to my husband, and Thomas goes to a bilingual French/English nursery where he is exposed to French and English. Now it’s really fun to see how he can understand Spanish, French and English equally well and he has now started to really express himself a lot more in the 3 languages.
— Catherine, UK

My husband and I are English speakers struggling to find the time to learn Spanish. But we want our children to be bilingual! We had Spanish-speaking babysitters for a few years, but lately that hasn’t worked out. So I’m worried about what to do next – language is an important issue for me, but it’s not easy.
— Insa, USA

I was born in Slovakia and lived there until the age of 21, when I moved to Australia (in 1997). I now live in Australia with my husband, who is Australian. Most of my family and friends live in Slovakia, except for 2 other siblings who also moved to Australia. And so although 3 of us have moved to Australia, Slovak has always been the language we used on my side of the family, and it is the only ‘natural’ language for us. However, since my husband is monolingual in English and I already spoke his language when we met, the language of our relationship has always been English. We now have a daughter Liana, 7 months old, who is growing up as a Slovak and English bilingual. I have been using Slovak only with Liana, even during pregnancy, since that felt the most natural to me; I could not imagine not speaking Slovak with my child! The only exceptions are when I am addressing both Liana and my husband at the same time.
— Margareta, Australia
I am Russian and my husband is American. We live in Chicago and have a 2.5 year old daughter. We practice OPOL everywhere we go. I am the only Russian speaker in my daughter’s environment so it’s hard to keep Russian on the same level as English.
— Irina, USA

My husband and I are both originally from Texas. My husband is half Chinese and half Mexican American. His mother speaks fluent Spanish and father Cantonese. My husband knows very little Cantonese and basic Spanish as do I. This year our whole world changed! We moved to Brussels, Belgium and have begun the process of learning all new languages. Our children are not immersed, but in an English speaking school with French beginning at 3 years old. They are also learning very basic German from my husband (how to count, say thank you, please—enough to speak while traveling in Germany) and at times we incorporate the Spanish as well. 
— Nicci, Belgium

We are Bulgarians and we both speak Bulgarian to our baby. Our baby goes to child care and we hope that he will learn English there.
— Ivanka, Canada

I am from the US, my husband is from Germany. We met in college when I was studying abroad in Germany for 1 year. We now live in Seattle, WA with our two kids and one on the way. We speak only German at home. The kids speak and learn English at school, but we only speak German at home.
— Allison, USA

A Big THANK YOU to everyone who answered this drawing question, where we asked you to describe your family’s language arrangements! Each of your answers remind us that there is no one perfect solution – so enjoy creating your own.
**Greenland**

Greenland is the world’s largest island (by area) not designated as a continent. In prehistoric times, Greenland was home to a number of Paleo-Eskimo cultures. From AD 984 it was colonized by Norse settlers on the fjords near the very southwestern tip of the island. They thrived for a few centuries, but disappeared sometime in the 15th century. Subsequently, the island was inhabited (primarily) by Inuit, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish settlers and colonists.

The name Greenland comes from Scandinavian settlers. In the Icelandic sagas, it is said that Norwegian-born Erik the Red was exiled from Iceland for murder. He, along with his extended family and thralls, set out in ships to find the land that was rumored to be to the northwest. After settling there, he named the land Grænland (“Greenland”). The southern portion of Greenland (not covered by glacier) is indeed very green in the summer and was likely to have been even greener in Erik’s time because of the Medieval Warm Period.

Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenland)

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**Viking Runes**

The Vikings are often portrayed as illiterate, uncultured barbarians who were more interested in plunder than poetry. In fact, the Vikings left behind a great number of documents in stone, wood and metal, all written in the enigmatic symbols known as runes. They relied on these symbols not only for writing but also to tell fortunes, cast spells, and provide protection.

Early Germanic tribes of northern Europe were first to develop runes, but the Scandinavians soon adopted the symbols for their own use. When the seafaring Vikings traveled to faraway lands, they brought their system of writing with them, leaving runic inscriptions in places as distant as Greenland. Wherever they went, Vikings turned to runes to express both the poetic (“Listen, ring-bearers, while I speak/Of the glories in war of Harald, most wealthy”) and the prosaic (“Rannvieg owns this box”), inscribing them on great stone monuments to common household items.

Source: [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings/runes.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings/runes.html)

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**Good-Bye, So Long**

Goodbye came from the term godbwye (1573) which is itself a contraction of “God be with ye.” The statement “so long” may have developed from the Hebrew “shalom” (via Yiddish “sholom”), though also possibly from Scandinavian phrases, such as the Swedish “Hej så länge,” meaning “good-bye for now.”

Source: [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

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Not a subscriber? Go to: www.biculturalfamily.org/subscriptions.html (by the way, it only costs $12 a year)

It Pays to Know a Second Language!

One day a mother mouse was taking her children for a walk. As the unsuspecting family rounded the corner of a building, they suddenly found themselves confronting the twitching whiskers of a hungry cat delighted to find such a tantalizing and unprotected delicacy within striking distance. Surveying the dangerous situation instantly, the quick-witted and learned mother raised herself to her greatest height, drew in a huge breath of air, and barked, “Wuff! Wuff!” at the top of her voice. As the startled cat disappeared down the street, she turned to her darlings and said knowingly, “Do you see how it pays to know a second language?”
Tatie Teaches a Toddler and a Baby?  Maman Muddles with Multilingualism?  Français for the Garçons?  From Tatie to Maman and Back Again?

It’s time to change the title of this column and widen its focus!  Now that my son, Griffin, is four months old, and his cousin, Carl, is approaching two and a half years, I’m no longer using French one afternoon a week with someone else’s child, but filling my house with it on a daily basis.

I’m also discovering that choosing to speak exclusively French with Griffin, rather than my native language English, isn’t always fun and rewarding.  Speaking French with Carl has been a delight—as if just the two of us share a secret language whose beauty I get to rediscover every time he puts two words together in a way that he’s never tried before.  Carl seems to speak French with a grin and a giggle and a throaty R like a native.

Griffin just coos and cries and chuckles.

Over the past two years, I’ve watched Carl’s comprehension of spoken French grow like zucchini in summer, have heard his sentences develop from one or two words to four or five at a time, have cherished the times he repeats “je t’aime” back to me.

Griffin doesn’t do that yet.  Sigh.

I’ve acquired many new words with Carl—all sorts of car and truck vocabulary, random terms from children’s books, important phrases for interacting with a toddler, songs to sing while I change his couches (diapers)—but I now realize how many I have yet to master!  As a non-native speaker of French, I didn’t grow up with the day-to-day vocabulary you use as a parent, especially the parent of a baby.  After some internet research and talking with French moms, I’ve learned a great deal more, like three different ways to say “burp” and all sorts of expressions related to breastfeeding.  (On the other hand, I still can’t satisfactorily express dismay over his diaper blow-outs.)  Perhaps the most useful resource so far has been a French book on child-rearing—not for the parenting advice but rather for the wealth of vocabulary I’m absorbing from it.  (I took a notebook and labeled each page with a different category, like “labor and delivery,” “infant care,” and “nursing,” then just recorded expressions when I encountered them in context.)

As I continue writing this column—once I figure out what to name it, that is—I hope to continue sharing my experiences as a Tatie but also as a Maman.  Where do they overlap?  Why do they feel so different?  What works with one that doesn’t work with the other?  What ideas and activities and techniques from my time with Carl will also benefit Griffin?  Will the cousins parler français together one day?

And will I be able to control my impatience to have my son say “je t’aime” to me too?!  I’ll let you know—but right now there’s a stinky couche calling my name.

Sarah Dodson-Knight of Lafayette, Colorado keeps a blog, Bringing up Baby Bilingual, about her experiences teaching French to children: babybilingual.blogspot.com
Call for Submissions
Do you have a knack for writing?

If you have a multilingual family, enjoy writing, and are interested in contributing to our magazine, we would like to hear from you!
We seek short articles up to 800 words in which you report about the daily joys and challenges of raising children in more than one language.
Please contact Alice for more information:
editor@multilingualliving.com

We also seek research articles or articles by experts. These may be longer (max. 1500 words). Articles should be geared towards our audience in style and should not be too academic/technical in language (academic articles may be published on our website instead).

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We are currently unable to pay any of our writers, but regular contributors receive a free subscription to our magazine.
Ask An Expert...

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY MADALENA CRUZ-FERREIRA

The questions in this section are reprinted with permission from the Linguist List website: linguistlist.org/ask-ling/. Have a question for our expert? Send it to: editor@multilingualliving.com.

Question: When one parent wants to teach two languages: Is it too ambitious for one parent to teach two languages to her baby simultaneously? The parent is fluent in both, but because her partner does not speak those languages she is basically on her own in raising her child in those languages. The father would be teaching the third. Is this going to confuse the child? Will the child be able to separate languages? Or is it better to stick to OPOL, only one language per parent?

Answer: Hearing two (or more) languages from the same parent or other caregivers is a very common situation. Most people around the world are born into multilingual contexts, and so naturally use all their languages with their children. There is no risk of language confusion. The only condition that children need to learn the languages around them is that adults use them naturally. There is no risk either of the child not learning the mother’s languages: children will learn whatever languages are useful to them, and being able to talk to mummy is certainly useful – and fun. The number of people speaking to the child doesn’t matter, what matters is the contents of the exchanges, which will motivate the child to want to learn the languages in which they take place. Finally, the OPOL is a policy that may work for monolingual parents. If one parent has more than one language, then using all of them is the natural policy. A bilingual parent will besides be the perfect model for a bilingual child.

Question: What if the parents are monolinguals and want to help their adopted child maintain his/her heritage language, yet they do not speak that language? What advice can we give those parents?

Answer: You say “maintain” the child’s language, which I took to mean that the child already speaks it. If so, one way of keeping the language alive is to try to find other children of the same age who speak it too. Perhaps you could organise a playgroup for these children, which would also keep your child’s heritage culture alive. Languages are not just languages, they are the prime vessels of different cultures. You don’t say how old the child is, but adult-managed schooling or tuition won’t work. Children do not need language lessons; they need to learn to socialise through language so that language makes sense to them, and they do this first with their caregivers, and then with their peers (from around age 3). If you cannot find a suitable playgroup, don’t worry. You can always nurture the child’s interest in the language and its culture by means of books, activities, stories, festivals, food, clothes, even described and enjoyed in another language. Children will re-learn any apparently ‘forgotten’ languages in no time, if they so wish when the opportunity to do so arises later in life.

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira is a multilingual parent, educator and linguist. She is Portuguese and she received postgraduate degrees in linguistics from the University of Manchester, UK. She is the author of Three is a crowd? Acquiring Portuguese in a trilingual environment (2006) Clevedon, Multilingual Matters (www.multilingualmatters.com). Her main research interests are child multilingualism, multilingual phonology and intonation, and the language of science. She has lived in Singapore for over 10 years with her Swedish husband and their three trilingual children. Website: linguistlist.org/people/personal/index.html Email: mcf636@hotmail.com
A Review of:
Living Languages - Multilingualism Across the Lifespan

BY ALICE LAPUERTA & COREY HELLER

What does it take for a person to become fluent in two or more languages? Many books on multilingualism focus mainly on the early baby-childhood stage, briefly brush on school age issues and are mute when it comes to multilingualism in adulthood. What is remarkable about Living Languages is its holistic focus on multilingualism, and its emphasis that multilingualism covers the whole lifespan – for multilingual issues don’t stop when our kids grow out of their toddlerhood. We encounter entirely different challenges once they hit school age, teenagerhood, and even beyond that, adulthood. Yet how, exactly, does the process of language acquisition differ in each stage, and how should we deal with them? What are the influences of physical, psychological and social aspects on language acquisition? What goes on in the brain? What advice is there for teachers, and what kind of curriculum best supports a multilingual? Living Languages is aimed at parents, teachers and researchers with its practical information on the language learning process, the key factors in raising multilingual children, as well as the impact of the environment (family, schools and society) on the language-learning process.

As Director of the Center for Educational Development in Quito, Ecuador, as well as the mother of multilingual children, the author is able to understand, appreciate and support the struggles and solutions of both parents and educators. She emphasizes the need for teachers and parents to work in unison to provide rich and positive learning and living environments in which multilingualism can thrive. There are a number of topics which will be of particular interest to multilingual families: the links between brain development and language learning, differences between languages used for play versus languages used in a school environment, the pros and cons of choosing a specific language strategy, and literacy in first and second languages.

Living Languages encourages families and educators to continue in their goal of providing children in families, schools and communities with as much language opportunities and exposure as possible, no matter how young or old they happen to be. We are shown that the lifelong emotional, social, and global benefits of multilingualism outweigh the efforts in the long run.
Who Am I? Where Did I Come From?

Although our children may know that they come from different cultural heritages, have you thought about getting down the nitty gritty and creating a family heritage book? If your children are old enough to understand family histories, then this is just the time to get started! It doesn’t take a lot of work to get started on at least a basic collection of information. If your parents, aunts, uncles and others are still alive and are in contact with you and your family, then have your children ask different people of your family questions such as: When were you born? Where were you born? Where did you grow up? What was life like when you were younger? Who were your parents and what were they like? Let your children come up with the questions that most interest them and then engage your family members to get involved in answering the questions. Make sure to do this on BOTH sides of the family. And if there are any unique bits of information that are especially interesting, make sure to follow up on those! Beyond just gathering answers to questions from family members, see how many photos you can collect of family members and more. Print out maps of different countries and cities where family members lived as well as other bits of information that you and your children can find in books and the internet. Make it fun detective work! Put it all together into books in the end and photocopy the pages for family!

Where’s the Word?

All you need for this activity are books, magazines, newspapers or other materials with printed words. The kinds of words and size of the font will depend on your child’s age. For children who are just learning to read, plan the game by looking for letters rather than words. For older children who can read, the game can be played with whole words. Start by opening to a page in the book (or magazine/newspaper/etc.), find a word (but don’t point to it) and say the word out loud. Your child then needs to be an investigator and try to find the word on the page and point to it. Then play the game vice versa so that your child calls out the word and you have to find it. Naturally, it is possible that there may be more than just one word on the page. For example, the word “the” appears many times on most pages. (Make sure to point that out to your child ahead of time to avoid frustration and confusion.) If the words you are choosing are too easy for your child, then switch to something else with more difficult words. If the words are too hard for your child, then choose different words or find an easier book, or even just look for letters. Make sure it is fun and not boring or too easy/difficult. Be silly, pretend you can’t find words, and laugh a lot while playing!

Beach Excavation

Many families will end up at a beach this time of year, so why not use it to have fun excavation while encouraging your language at the same time! All you need are some items to bury which aren’t so small that they will easily get lost. Tell your children to look the other way (or have the other parent take them for a little walk so they can’t see where you are burying the items). Start by counting steps from the starting point to where you want to bury the first item. Write down how many steps you took and bury the first item. Then count the number of steps to the next spot, write down the number of steps and bury the second item. Do this until you have everything buried. When you kids get back, tell them now many steps they have to go to get to the first item. Have them count out loud (in your language) until they reach the spot and then start digging! Do this until all of the items have been found. To add to the language fun, have them tell you what they dug up each time. It is a very simple game but it can add to language fun without making it feel like a chore.
Travel is FUN!

It’s that time of year when families get out the suitcases and plan their vacations. How about doing the planning with your kids, at least to some degree? Have them help you plan the travel route (if you are driving) or finding good plane flights (if you are flying). Your children don’t have to have a lot of responsibility in the planning. Just let them be involved in the discussions and have a chance to see where places are on maps. Get out the calendar and discuss how many days are available for the vacation and where you’ll be on specific days of your travels. Find out from your kids if there are specific places or people they would like to visit while they are on vacation. While you are on your trip, have a collection of travel games in mind to play in your language! For example, if you are driving, you can do the alphabet game where you have to call out signs that include the letter you are looking for. Regardless of travel methods, your children can keep notes in their travel journals: draw pictures or write about events and highlights of the trip. Play the “I’m going to [destination] and I’m bringing [item #1]” game. The destination can be where you are headed for vacation. The first person says item #1. Then the second person says the same sentence and has to say what item #1 is plus add item #2 to the list, etc... The next person would have three: “I’m going to Moscow and I’m bringing soap, gum and sausage.”

Just Wanted To Say I Love You...

When is the last time you wrote a little note out for you kids just for the fun of it? Notes can be a fun and cheerful way of getting your children to read your language and to express your love for them in your language. Try leaving little notes here and there that say things like, “Hope you enjoy your lunch today!” Or stick a good-night note to their pillow: “Have sweet dreams tonight.” If you have a chalk board in the house, you can write things in chalk and let your child know that you’d be delighted if she erased what you wrote to write something in return for you. Remember that practical notes help as well: “Don’t forget to call when you get to your friend’s house.” Or, “I’ll pick you up from band practice today at 4:00.” And don’t forget the funny notes hidden in a sock or tucked inside the pocket of a jacket: “Looking forward to snuggling when you get home from school!” If your child can’t read your language very well, then make sure not to write anything that may be essential to understand!

Do You Know Your Alphabet?

This is a fun game to instill letters from the alphabet into their growing minds. Make sure to only do this game if your children feel comfortable with the basics of the alphabet. Otherwise you run the risk of making them frustrated and embarrassed. To start you can either use a standard sentence or come up with your own. A standard sentence which you can use is: “My name is [name]. I live in [place]. I eat [food].” The first person starts with the first letter of the alphabet. For example, “My name is Anna. I live in Australia. I eat apples.” Then the next person says the sentence with the next letter in the alphabet: “My name is Barbara. I live in Bermuda. I eat bananas.” If your children are old enough to play this well, then there is no need to help them and the game can be made silly by thinking up the most obscure (yet still valid) words! You or your children can also come up with a different sentence each time the game is played. That makes it even more silly and fun! If your children are younger and need more help, then think up the alphabet words together. You can help by suggesting words or asking questions, like, “Hmmm, what is a good name that starts with the letter M?” Or, “What was your favorite food again? I know that food starts with the letter L!” Make sure that you take a turn as well when playing the game and have fun with it. Remember that when your children see you having fun playing such a game in your language then it makes them enjoy it more as well. This shouldn’t be seen as a chore! It should be a warm, comfortable way for the family to come together to use your language.
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Only $12
La Ratatouille

Ingredients:

- 2 eggplants
- 2 bell peppers (1 red, 1 green)
- 1 zucchini or small summer squash
- 1 400 gram can of peeled tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 cloves of garlic

Directions:

1. Remove ends from the eggplants and zucchini and then dice into cubes.
2. Cook the diced zucchini and eggplant in a large frying pan with 4 tablespoons of olive oil until tender and golden color; set aside.
3. Remove core and ends from peppers. Dice into cubes and cook in stew pan with 2 tablespoons of oil.
4. Add the diced onion and cook until tender.
5. Add drained tomatoes, sprig of thyme, crushed garlic and salt.
6. Simmer for 30 min.
7. Add cooked zucchini and eggplant, simmer for another 5 min.

Serve warm or cold, with rice, meat, fish or bread.

Makes 4 servings.
The Opposite of Fate,
by Amy Tan

Many of us have read, or at least heard of Amy Tan and her bestselling novels The Kitchen God’s Wife and The Joy Luck Club, both works of fiction that have been informed by the author’s own experiences growing up as a Chinese-American. The Opposite of Fate, however, is a work of non-fiction, in which the author tells of her childhood, fraught with cross-cultural tensions and misunderstandings, and how she rose to become one of the world’s most beloved novelists. This is a delightful mosaic of a person carving out her identity as she negotiates between two languages and cultures, the East and the West.

$15.00; Penguin, 2004; ISBN: 9780142004890

The Kite Runner,
by Khaled Hosseini

This book is not an easy read, but totally worth it! It isn’t difficult because of the writing – it is written beautifully. And not because of the pace – it is a page-turner, with the reader always eager to find out what happens next. It is a difficult read because of the topic. A beautiful country, a beautiful people but running throughout are some of the most painful and heart-wrenching elements of humanity. The Kite Runner is set in Afghanistan and follows the life of a young boy named Amir. Throughout the book Amir struggles to figure out just exactly who he is and where his loyalties lie when it comes to family, friends and country. This book reminds us of the strength of cultural identity, tradition and, most of all, the value of true friendship, family and love.

$15.00; Riverhead Trade, 2004; ISBN-13: 978-1594480003
Vineyards, princesses and knights, beaches and more come to life in the Globe-Toddlers Adventures in France DVD from Tot Talk. Let your child delight in the sights, sounds and smells of France as puppets and children share in the cultural traditions which make France unique. Although this DVD is not heavy on language learning, the viewer can choose between English or French for the highlighted vocabulary sections spoken by native speakers. An added bonus is the French cultural information section available via the Bonus selection (written in both English and French). Here the parent can learn more about France and French specialties as well as details about songs and products in the DVD. Younger children in particular will delight in this DVD, even if they don’t grasp the meaning of the specific French cultural highlights.

Globe Toddlers Adventures in Mexico continues the global journey as your child makes his way to Mexico to share in cultural delights. The viewer is escorted to the different states within Mexico and introduced to the unique elements of each. As the recommended age group is older for this DVD (ages 1-4+), it is packed with vocabulary lessons. The most exciting element of this DVD is that the viewer can choose between four different languages: English, French, Spanish and Chinese! What fun to learn about Mexico in Chinese (whether you and your children know the language or not). As with the Globe-Toddlers Adventures in France, this DVD is also full of enjoyable songs to get your child singing and dancing along with delight. Due to the added language elements in this DVD, it was a particular favorite of our children – even when played in Chinese, a language they don’t know at all!

To continue your child’s France and Mexico learning adventure, Tot Talk offers two laminated placemats, highlighting each country’s administrative units as well as cultural elements (in each country’s native language). On the back of each is a blank area for your child to draw and/or write with washable markers. Our children have thoroughly enjoyed both sides of the placemats for language and geographical discussion as well as drawing and wiping clean numerous pictures. The cultural elements shown on each provide quick ideas for a learning adventure!

A USA placemat is also available and, as an added bonus, has a map of the world on the back! As with the France and Mexico placemats, the USA side of the placemat includes color-coded state delineation as well as cultural and product highlights. The Europe side of the map is simply black-and-white outline which allows for coloring fun. It also includes some animal and cultural highlights along the sides for added discussion.

For more information go to: www.tottalk.com
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

International presentations, workshops, conferences and more for your learning pleasure!

CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

July 8-11, 2008
American Assn of Teachers of Spanish & Portuguese (AATSP)
90th Annual Conference
San Jose, Costa Rica
www.aatsp.org

July 13-23, 2008
International Summer School: Regions of Culture - Regions of Identity
Its objective is to draw together the current debates about regional identity and the structural elements of culture upon which regions are based.
gcsc.uni-giessen.de/wps/pnn/home/gcsc_eng/

July 16-19, 2008
Associação de Professores de Português (APP)
11th Conference of the International Academy of Linguistic Law
Law, Language and Global Citizenship
Lisbon, Portugal
www.app.pt/

July 18-21, 2008
Cultures in Transit Conference
Liverpool Hope University, Evanston Campus
Liverpool, UK
www.hope.ac.uk/cultures-in-transit/cultures-in-transit-conference.html

July 19-26, 2008
93rd World Esperanto Congress
World Esperanto Association
Focus will be on various aspects of languages and language problems. All proceedings conducted entirely in Esperanto.
Rotterdam, Netherlands
www.uea.org/kongresoj/uk_2008.html

August 4-7, 2008
International Federation of Translators (FIT)
XVIII World Congress
Shanghai, China
www.fit2008.org/

August 24-28, 2008
International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA)
15th AILA World Congress
Multilinguism: Challenges and Opportunities
Essen, Germany
www.aila2008.org/

September 25-27, 2008
Cultural Diversity and Multilingualism
Conference to exchange ideas on civilisation and cultural diversity, applied linguistics, professional communication and multilingualism, foreign language didactics
Technical University of Cluj-Napoca
Napoca, Romania
www.utcluj.ro/

2nd HCLS Conference - Translation, Language Contact, and Multilingual Communication
Conference will explore (the modelling of) translation, relate it to other forms of communications in contexts of multilinguality, & suggest ways in which translation as process and as product may contribute to language contact.
City University of Hong Kong
www.hallidaycentre.cityu.edu.hk/HCLS-C2-2008

Send us information!

Are you giving a presentation, workshop or seminar on bi/multilingualism or bi/multiculturalism? Know about an upcoming conference or event which would be of interest? Send information to:
editor@multilingualliving.com
Did You Know?
“Multi-sensory information helps to form rich associations in learning. When more than one sense is used to process information, children benefit. Multisensory techniques are useful for teaching all children, and especially those with the visual-perceptual problems, fine motor problems, and the memory problems often associated with learning disabilities.”

Basic issues:
Human beings learn through different learning styles and each person has strengths in terms of which of the following learning style or combinations of learning styles work best:
- Visual learning through sight.
- Auditory learning through hearing.
- Tactile/Kinesthetic learning through touching and feeling.
- Gustatory learning through taste.
- Olfactory learning through smell.

Multi-sensory literacy activities:
1. Back writing. Trace letters and numbers on your child’s back as you say them.
2. Sand writing. Dust a cookie sheet with Cream of Wheat and guide your child’s hand to trace large letters and numbers as you say them.
3. Chalkboard writing. Guide your child’s hand as he writes with chalk or a wet sponge, saying each letter.
4. Finger painting. Use shaving cream or finger-paint on a smooth surface.
5. Skywriting. Trace letters in the air with large arm movements.
6. Three-dimensional words. Use pipe cleaners, dough, or clay to make letters, names, and words.
8. Three-dimensional markers. Make raised letters and numbers for your child to trace with her finger.
9. Magnetic letters. Place a letter you have shown your child in a bucket filled with unpopped popcorn and have your child say the letter and then find it.
10. Textured letters. Have your child feel the texture as you say the letter.
11. Key objects. Choose key objects or key pictures such as an apple, bottle or cat for each letter. Help the child match three-dimensional letters with the objects.
12. Cookie cutters. Use letter and number cookie cutters to bake cookies. Talk about the letters as you smell the fresh baked aroma and taste each cookie.
13. Alphabet macaroni. Find letters in vegetable soup or other food made with vegetable macaroni.

Books:
Phonics You Can Feel by Marilyn Kay and Andrea Colwell. The Reading Group, 1997.

Web Sites:
ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education ericec.org/minibibs/eb12.html

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**BILINGUALISM = BETTER PARENTING?**

“It seems that when parents start families knowing that they will be adding on the challenge of additional languages, they also start to pay more attention to other aspects of parenting. For example, when dad agrees to use his native language with his children, even though it’s different from the community language and the language he speaks with his wife, he has to be very conscious of his communication skills. This in turn makes him more conscious of other aspects of his relationship with his children. He thinks more not only about how he uses language with his children but also about when and in what contexts. Perhaps he becomes more concerned about doing different activities with the children as he realizes he typically only talks about soccer and homework, and he knows that as he broadens his language use with the children they will benefit not only linguistically but also as social beings.

“Success in languages can be deeply influenced by a child’s home surroundings and the interest parents take in guiding the child in the early years. Challenging children to use ever more sophisticated words as they express themselves, insisting on dinnertime conversations instead of passive television watching, and subtle corrections about proper language use are all appropriate parental roles.

“However, children also spend a great deal of time outside the home. Although parents are their child’s first teachers, this slowly gives way to the time children spend in the community and within school. The role of other family members can also be determining factors in language success.

*Excerpt from Living Languages – Multilingualism Across the Lifespan, by Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa, p. 143. Published by Praeger, 2007. www.praeger.com*

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**THE VALUE OF EVERYDAY LANGUAGE EXPOSURE**

“Children learn language through daily contacts, emotional bonds, and everyday interactions with their caregivers. Language learning happens, for instance, while children are playing everyday games like peekaboo and being talked to while having their clothing changed, sitting in their car seat, and being fed and bathed. Through thousands of these interactions over many months, young children gradually learn about the role of language in social life. And eventually they begin to recognize the language patterns that are produced within these interactions and become able to participate in them.

“As children become more adept at communicating and participating in these day-to-day interactions, their caregivers naturally begin to use more complex language forms with them. The interactions between caregiver and child gradually become more complicated and sophisticated. In this way, the caregiver supports or scaffolds the child’s emerging ability to speak.

“...Children’s own language development is closely linked to their parents’ language. For instance, researchers who have examined vocabulary growth have quantified the sort of language input children receive (for example, the number of words per hour). They’ve demonstrated a clear relationship between the number and kinds of words children hear and the number and kids children produce. In a nutshell, children who hear more language and more complex language in everyday interactions tend to produce more language themselves. What seems to matter is not what children are explicitly taught about language (for example, through the warnings that many of us heard growing up, such as “Don’t end your sentence with a preposition”). Rather, what counts is what children hear and are exposed to in their day-to-day lives through everyday conversation, at the dinner table, in the car on the way to the grocery store, or in the backyard.”