

Raising in Japanese? Raising in mother tongue?

What to do with children's language?



When we heard our child start to speak for the first time, we felt joy as parents.

We are excited merely by thinking what kind of conversations we are going to talk about with our child growing up, just imagine that she/he will start to learn and remember a lot of words from now on.

When foreign parents raise children in Japan, many children are brought up in an environment that touches multiple languages. Now, let's think about the language that we should teach to our children!



NPO MIRAI Corporation

MIRAI is holding a salon for parents with children ages 0 to 6 years old.

For more information about us.

Facebook NPO法人みらい(NPO houjin MIRAI) <fb.me/mirai.chiryu>



1 What is a language?

Language is necessary for communication.

With words you can express how was your day, your feelings, other parties feelings. You will understand each other better and the bonds will deepen.

The role of the word is not only to communicate but “to think” “to imagine” “to understand”. It is important to develop such power. Rich language, rich vocabulary skills and expression make the child’s life richer.

Mother tongue makes the foundation of rich language.

We hope our children will learn a lot of words.



Children learn words if spoken aloud to the scene.



2 What is a mother tongue?

There are various definitions of mother tongue.

In this case, we define a mother tongue as **words the child first encounters**. Many of the children use their parental native language.

The mother tongue has an important role in learning the language. Children who have the mastery of the mother tongue can learn the second language with more success. If the mother tongue is incomplete, there is a tendency that next words will be incomplete.

Mother tongue is really important in raising children.





For child's sake, Should I use Japanese at home?

By all means, parents can raise them in the language that parents are able to speak fluently. There is no need to force yourself to raise them in Japanese.

To encourage children to learn a lot of words, to develop their ability to think and power to imagine, it is the best for parents to talk to them in their confident language. A child who is properly guided by a good foundation of parents will learn so many new things even when they enter nursery or school.

If parents raise children with their confident language, they can still talk about various things even when they grow up, they can talk about their worries, what is happening in school and a lot of other topics, and they will be protected by their communication with parents. Also, if the child knows two languages, he will become bilingual. It is said that bilingual is a capable person with multifaceted perspective.

On the other hand, for parents who are not confident in raising children in Japanese, it is difficult that the foundation of the mother tongue will properly consider. When their child enters in nursery or school and the Japanese language is not develop, may become double limited. Also, as the child grows up, there will be times that parent and child will lost proper communication. It is actually happens that if the child has done something wrong, the parent will have a difficulty telling the child that he did mistake in "words". Also, children do not really seek advice from parents because children think parents cannot understand anything.

※What is double limited?

It means that they do not have the ability to speak either Japanese or their mother tongue, it may not enable them to keep up with learning in school.



To my child "what is this?"
"why?", you should reply with a
language that can answer with
confidence.





For my child learning Japanese in nursery and school

How can I raise my child mother tongue?

1 Let's create an environment where the two languages are properly used. Such as using mother tongue at home and Japanese when outside.

If you combine Japanese and mother tongue, the child will definitely use easy language. Even if you speak to him in a mother tongue, he will response in Japanese and vice versa. Let us make a household rule of answering in your mother tongue.

2 Let's give importance to communicate with our children.

Do not let your child be always in front of the T.V. and smart phone, let the child think on his own and appreciate questions and playing.

3 Let us read picture books.

Picture books are very important for nurturing the language. You will learn a lot of different combined words. Also, entering to the world of picture books, inflating your imagination of feeling and becoming the character will also raise rich sensitivity and ability on concentration skills.

4 Let's talk with your grandparents and relatives in your home country, go out to gatherings with friends who speak the same language, and make an environment that touches your own mother tongue.

※Even if you work hard at home, your mother tongue may become weak. In nursery or school the child may not even able to say in Japanese what they wanted to express, let us listen carefully to what they really want to say and try to understand their feelings.

International marriage couple with different language mom and dad

If parent's mother tongue is different from each other, there is also a way to make a rule in your home such as speaking with mom ○○ language, with dad △△ language. Let's think about the best way to nurture language in each household.

Mother voice 1



We also go to church aside from using it at home, to increase my child's opportunity to use Portuguese.

Mother: Chayamiti Mari (brazil origin)
Daughter: Yukari (born in Japan)
Yukari is currently active as a bilingual middle school teacher



5

Is my child's Japanese good enough?
I wonder if he can get along well in Japanese school?

For children studying at a Japanese school



Is our children learning Japanese words quickly?

The words used in daily life are different from the words used for learning in various ways.

The words that children use in daily life are normally acquired in their daily conversations and playing. It is said that Japanese words for daily conversation can be mastered within 1 to 2 years. While the words that are formally used for learning takes about 5 to 7 years.(case by case basis)
And even after they can speak fluently, they need to watch a long term at home.

Child who encounters various words in her mother tongue has a smoother understanding of learning.



What parents can do for children.

- ① Listen carefully to your child about nursery and school life.
- ② Even if parents do not understand Japanese, keeping interests in their children's learning is a big plus. It is also important to make it a habit of family learning.
- ③ The use of mother tongue is important, but without denying Japanese. Both mother tongue and Japanese language are important. Parents must show positive attitude towards Japanese language and culture.
- ④ Aside from learning, experiences such as various kinds of play and relationships with friends are very good in school life. Let's have various experiences before the school starts.



Mother voice
2

I tried to confirm whether my child was able to do her homework, when she could not understand it my friend helped us out.

Mother: Furuya Luzia (Brazil origin)
Daughter: Mariane
(1 yr. and 8 m. when she came to Japan.)
Mariane went to France as an exchange student during her college days.
She graduated in a master's degree.
Currently working in a major company.

If parents value the mother tongue, is Japanese not important?

Please give importance of your mother tongue at home. But, if you go outside it is a Japanese society. If you want to raise your child in Japan, it is better to understand their language as well as communication with teachers in nursery and school.

Also, let us gather information regarding Japan education system.





Want to know more! Q&A



Q1

Is the child getting confused when speaking in different languages from the time he was born?

The child will not be confused if you make a rule, like the one being used at home and the society outside, or speaking with mom ○○ language, with dad △△ language.

It is not because you divide language, the child's development of intelligence will be late, and it will not damage his personality. Compare with monolingual, they have a facility to communicate and to live with various people, will not create barrier with other people.

Q2

We are raising our mother tongue at home, my child is having difficulty speaking Japanese in nursery. Should we use Japanese at home too?

Your child might be just quietly listening and learning. Sometimes there is a process to learn language, some children learn silently. It is called silent period. Instead of switching into Japanese language, let us carefully listen from the child's nursery school in mother tongue and watch over a little longer is important.

Q3

Dividing the language, mother tongue at home and Japanese in nursery, it seems that my child's learning gets a little bit slow compared to other kids, is that alright?

As the child grows up around two or more languages it is expected that the child's language development will be a little slower compared to others. If you are still worried, you can seek some advice from the agencies like health center.

Q4

Leaving the child in nursery and spending long hours there than at home, not much time for him to learn the mother tongue, Is there anything better we can do at home?

As he spend long hours in nursery, the chance for learning mother tongue decreases, but if the parents will consider talking to the child using rhythm play, songs, picture books(encounters), the chance to develop learning for the mother tongue increases.

Q5

We are not Japanese but we are raising our child in Japanese, is it wrong?

There are parents who are not Japanese but are living within the Japanese affiliated society and know how to speak the language, these people are bilingual. The important thing is the confidence taken by parents with regards to communicate with their children in raising them up. Not because you are not a Japanese, you can never raise your child in Japanese language.

~Lastly~

There are different circumstances and environment in each household. Parents will be the one to decide for the language that the child will use at home. Please discuss it properly in each household.



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