

How to promote mother tongue

Objectives

After completion of this unit students will be able to :

- Develop knowledge about importance of mother tongue.
- Develop understanding about the challenges in developing mother tongue in children staying outside their native place.
- Develop understanding about how parents can promote mother tongue.
- Develop understanding about the advantages of mother tongue education.

To quickly succeed at school, children should use the majority language not only at school, but even at home. In fact the opposite is true. Children can learn two or more languages at the same time. We know children who learn to speak fluently two or three languages in some countries where more than one language are spoken. Researches show that children from immigrant families learn the social majority language in the early years at school very quickly, although it takes longer to learn academic language, and can lose their ability to use their mother tongues easily. They can lose it even in the home context if the mother language is not used constantly at home or among peers of the same community. They may retain comprehension, but will use the majority language with siblings, friends, and parents. Preferring second language to first language most often occurs because children do not know how to express themselves fluently in their mother tongue in certain contexts and situations. They lack vocabulary and literal expressions in the mother tongue and find it easier to express themselves in the classroom. As children grow up, parents see the linguistic gap between them and their children has widened and leading to an emotional disconnection.

Keeping mother tongue in a foreign country does not happen spontaneously. Instead, it is an achievement that requires commitment and determination, especially from the family. Parents must establish a strong home language policy and make consistent efforts to help their children develop good literacy skills in their first language.

Here are some ideas about how parents can promote learning mother tongue:

-The first step parents should take is make children love mother tongue by finding ways that motivate and encourage its learning.

-Leave second language to the outside world and speak to children only in your mother tongue at home.

- Devote time each day to reading and writing in mother tongue with children until they become able to read and write it independently.
- Tell stories and discuss interesting topics such as your childhood-children love to hear about parents' childhoods-your home country celebrations, because this will develop both their oral and vocabulary skills.
- Have books and multimedia for children in the home language.
- Provide a reward system and make learning mother language competitive among children. - Watch TV series or favorite cartoons with them in the target language.
- Listen to songs in mother tongue.

Advantages of Mother tongue education

- 1) Mother tongue education leads to better academic performance
- 2) Mother tongue might also actually make the acquisition of second Language easier
- 3) Being educated in Mother tongue can give children a sense of pride in their heritage and identity.
- 4) Teaching younger children in a language that is not their mother tongue appears to disrupt cognitive ability and interferes with the learning process
- 5) The acquisition of language becomes easier when literacy in the home language has been achieved.
- 6) Languages are the most powerful tools of preserving and developing our Tangible and intangible heritage.
- 7) Mother tongue plays a role in forming our thinking, emotions and spiritual world.
- 8) Mother tongue helps in the formation of personality which gives us trust and confidence

Check your progress

1. What is the importance of mother tongue?
2. What are the challenges in developing mother tongue in children staying outside their native place?
- 3 .How parents can promote mother tongue?
4. What are the advantages of mother tongue in education?