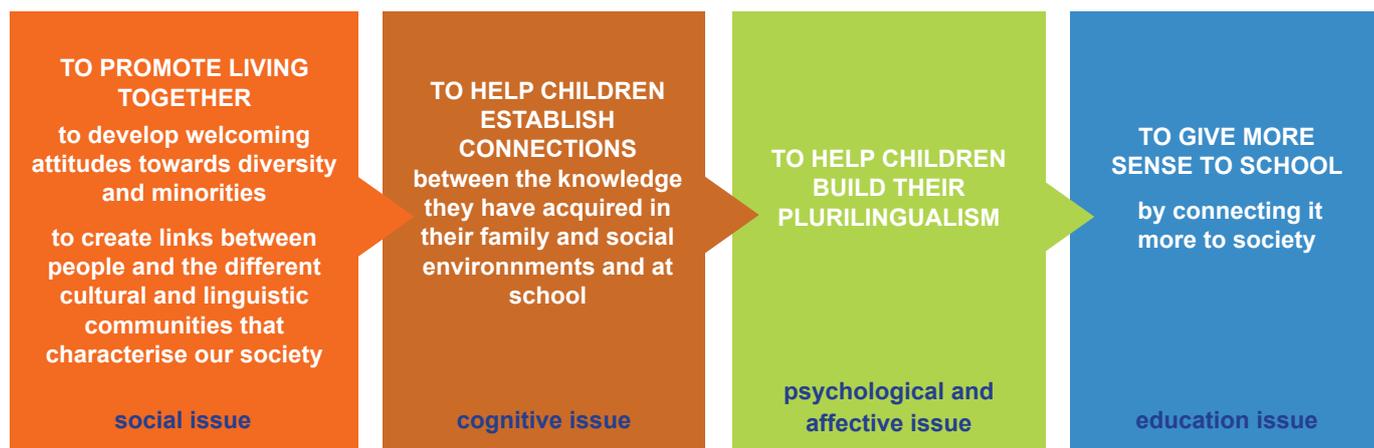


Involving parents in plurilingual and intercultural education

Why develop plurilingual and intercultural education together?



Scientific research shows that:

- 1** it is easier for a child to become bi/plurilingual when all their languages are valued and when making connections between languages is encouraged;
- 2** it is important that parents keep using their family language(s) with their children and that teachers use family languages to help children establish connections between the language(s) of their environment;
- 3** it is easier for children to engage in the languages that are taught at school when their own languages are recognised, because these languages are practised in the family environment and by the children;
- 4** valuing children's different languages and cultural backgrounds boosts the self-confidence and self-esteem that are necessary for educational and professional success;
- 5** parents' participation in school activities establishes a relationship of mutual confidence between schools and families, and helps children to dedicate themselves to their schooling.



Parents, teachers and children share their knowledge of music and dances from around the world. This activity improves cooperation between schools and families. (Escola Pia de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain).



A grandmother discovers a Provençal song (Kindergarten La Serinette, Toulon, France).

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Parents and teachers working together to develop plurilingual and intercultural education

Projects and activities that involve parents in plurilingual and intercultural education have been developed at numerous schools in Europe and further afield. These projects and activities have included the following activities and goals:



Parents, don't worry, you don't need to know a language perfectly to help children discover and appreciate it!

You don't need to know the language of the school to participate: gestures, pictures, body language and facial expressions will help you understand. Teachers trained in plurilingual and intercultural education will be there to help you prepare your activities. And, if you speak only one language, share your accent, your way of speaking and your culinary, artistic and professional knowledge. Diversity is everywhere! Inspiring interest in difference and diversity is fundamental to learning about and understanding the world.

If you think that school programmes are already overloaded, remember that these plurilingual and intercultural activities support the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are already part of the curriculum. These activities help to develop a child's ability to learn (with regard to languages – the school language and the other languages taught at school – literature, history, geography, arts, etc.) and to develop learning competences that are useful for all subjects: making hypotheses, asking questions, comparing and discovering rules, nuances of meaning and other ways of expressing oneself.

Plurilingual and intercultural education prepares children for life in a multicultural world and helps to make this world more peaceful, just and generous.



A flower of "hellos". This plurilingual flower was made in a social centre and includes "hello" in all the languages of the neighbourhood. The goal is to help visitors discover the people living in their community and the richness of this diversity. (Avignon, France).



Visit the IPPIE/CARAP for Parents website, <http://parents.ecml.at>, for more activities and goals



Kindergarten children discovering Russian with a Russian-speaking mother. This activity familiarises the children with other sounds and linguistic systems. (La Serinette school, Toulon, France).

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