

4. Tips for motivating your children to speak Vietnamese

1. Enhancing your child's belief about the value and relevance of speaking Vietnamese

There are many benefits to being multilingual. Communicating clearly to your children how these benefits are personally relevant (e.g., their career aspirations, life opportunities, friendship goals, relationship with family) will enhance their belief of the value of speaking Vietnamese. Think about your own beliefs and attitudes towards maintaining Vietnamese –children model their parents' behaviours.

2. Cultivating a sense of autonomy

Children are more likely to be motivated to speak Vietnamese when they have a sense of autonomy (make their own decision). Include your children in discussions about your family language policy. Listen to and value their input and provide them with choices of different ways of maintaining Vietnamese. Having a personal choice is likely to lead to small achievements, that then builds children's enjoyment and sense of achievement about speaking Vietnamese more often.

3. Cultivating a growth mindset

Having a “growth mindset” is important for learning languages. Help your children understand that their ability to speak Vietnamese can grow with effort, practice, and planning. Using the word “yet” is a simple way to start promoting a growth mindset.

If your child says:

“I just cannot say it right; this is so hard!”

You may encourage them by saying

“You cannot say it right yet; let's see what strategies we can use.”

Praise their effort and persistence **“You worked so hard”** rather than their innate ability *“You are smart”*.

For more information, see <https://www.mindsetworks.com/parents/growth-mindset-parenting>

4. Validating your child’s perspective and emotions

Motivation strategies (see above) are most effective when you have a strong relationship with your children. A powerful way to develop a strong relationship is through “emotion coaching” which involves validating your children’s perspectives and emotional experiences.

When your children feel frustrated about having to speak Vietnamese or feel anxious about not being able to speak Vietnamese well, avoid reacting to their emotion (e.g., parents feel frustrated that their children feel frustrated) or the tendency to fix the emotion (e.g., parents may say “It is not that hard; there is no need to feel anxious”).

Instead, sit with their emotions, acknowledge their feelings and reassure that their difficult feelings are normal. Your child has the right to feel whatever emotion they feel, and it is important that parents help them understand that they are understood, and their feelings are fully accepted without any judgement.

Emotion coaching will most likely bring their emotional arousal down and facilitate a more meaningful discussion of solutions.

For more information

- **Emotion Coaching for Caregivers: Tips and Tricks.** International Institute for Emotion-Focused Family Therapy, 2019 https://e78f226b-636a-4b6d-b774-75ca09eb3c0c.filesusr.com/ugd/c390c7_2a970b5df7ee40428dedb31d25a4c843.pdf
- **Emotion Coaching Framework Cheat Sheet.** International Institute for Emotion-Focused Family Therapy, 2019 https://e78f226b-636a-4b6d-b774-75ca09eb3c0c.filesusr.com/ugd/c390c7_85269bd0a7f0450c9b19167907654cb3.pdf

