



# PUMA

Produktiver Umgang mit  
Mehrsprachigkeit im  
Alltag von Kindern

**PUMA for parents**

## Playful language development in everyday life



## *Dear parents! Dear guardians and carers!*

**W**e are pleased that you have found out about „PUMA für Eltern“ (PUMA for parents) and would like to try out the language development tips with your child. The linguistic education of children is of great importance to us at the Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum (ÖSZ). With these tips, we would like to offer you a variety of suggestions as to how you can support your child's linguistic development in everyday life in a playful, joyful and very simple way.

We know from science and research that children benefit from their closest and most familiar contacts in a very special and irreplaceable way, both linguistically and emotionally. Children's language acquisition is highly dependent on the stimuli they receive from their environment. As a result, quality language services are particularly important. In any case, trusting relationships, attentiveness and appreciation are the foundation upon which languages thrive.

Children are surrounded by different variants of the German language: Everyday language, dialect, and, already in the setting of a kindergarten, with so-called erudite language. Confident use of erudite German is crucial for successful careers in education and the workplace as well as for successful participation in society. However, one does not acquire erudite language overnight. It is a long process that runs through all the years of kindergarten and school and it is something that becomes increasingly complex. Language acquisition takes place in specific stages and each child climbs these stages at their own pace.

With „PUMA for parents“ we would like to accompany you and your child a little bit on the exciting path towards erudite language and we wish you a lot of fun and enjoyment trying out the different activities!

***Your PUMA team at the ÖSZ  
Karin Weitzer, Beatrice Maierhofer  
and Karin Gspandl***



# Everyday language development tips

+ Be a linguistic role model for your child and speak slowly and clearly. In addition, speak as naturally as possible.

+ Maintain eye contact with your child and speak in clear, short sentences.

+ A conversation is a dialogue: Therefore, in all conversations with your child, pay attention to the alternate pattern of listening – speaking – listening.

+ React positively and appreciatively to the correct statements your child makes. It is better to correct your child's incorrect statements indirectly: „*Die haben sich immer so gestreitet.*“ – „*Genau, das waren die Mäuse, die sich immer so gestritten haben.*“ (“They always runned this way.” – “Exactly, it was the mice that always ran like this.”)

+ Rituals and repetition give your child confidence and security. In addition, your child will expand their vocabulary and as such, their ability to express themselves through the frequent repetition of favourite reasons to speak.

+ Reading aloud means encounter! Create regular opportunities for such a shared experience in an environment of security.

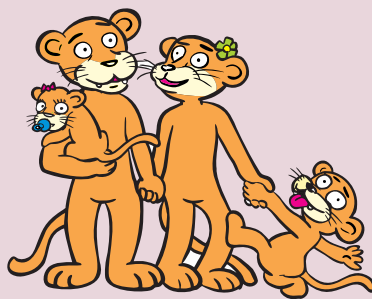
+ Discuss the actions during role plays. Ask open questions with “Who? Why? What for? What?” during a “Punch and Judy show/Theatre” or hand puppet play. This way, your child does not only

answer with “yes” or “no”, but is encouraged to speak in whole sentences and imaginative dialogues can be created.

+ Enable your child to have a lot of experiences with the environment. Motivate your child to talk about their experiences.

+ Talk about everyday actions and encourage your child to do the same: Whether it is getting dressed, helping around the household, cooking together or while you are on a car journey. If you consistently make sure that your child describes their activities, e.g. when sorting cutlery, emptying the dishwasher, folding laundry, setting the table and much more, you will “inconspicuously” promote your child's linguistic competence at the same time.

+ Remember to take photos of days out, visits or special experiences and then talk to your child about them.



You'll find further great ideas on the following pages.



# RECOGNISING LETTERS

1

*Draw your child's attention to what is written in your environment. Make your child aware of the world of letters. This will sharpen your child's visual perception and bring the characters closer to them. In the transition phase from kindergarten to elementary school, children are particularly sensitive to the **assignment of letters to sounds**.\**

🐾 The child's own name is often a first point of access to the written language and/or letters. It is a good idea to start with the letters of your child's name. Furthermore, you can allow your child to discover their own name or the names of family members in newspapers, books or posters and have them say it aloud.

🐾 Children are often sensitive to the lettering of car brands, shops, football clubs, etc. Ask your child which letters from these logos they can already name.

🐾 Write letters that your child already knows with your finger on their back. Let your child guess the letters. Change the roles once in a while and allow your child to write letters on your back.

🐾 Natural materials such as stones, chestnuts, nuts, leaves, etc. are also ideal for laying down and naming letters.

🐾 Allow your child to form letters from different materials, e.g. modelling clay, clay, wool threads. Or bake "alphabet biscuits" together. Always remember to accompany these actions with language, e.g. "Mmmh, the K tastes good! Which letter do you like best?"

## Alphabet biscuits

250g flour  
125g butter  
90g sugar  
1 TS baking powder  
1 egg

Knead all ingredients well and roll out the dough. Shape or cut out letters of your choice. There are no limits to your imagination when it comes to decoration and ornamentation. Preheat the oven to 175 degrees. Baking time 10 - 12 minutes. Good luck!



**\*Definition:** The assignment of letters to sounds describes the connection between spoken sounds and characters, i.e. a certain sound is assigned to a character.

# FINGER GAMES, RHYMES AND TONGUE TWISTERS



Why?

Finger games give your child the opportunity to closely observe the movements of your fingers. They will listen carefully and repeat the text at the same time. This increases your child's vocabulary and stimulates the formation of rhyming words. There is joy in listening and reproducing because different sound melodies are used when speaking. It also promotes concentration, because texts are learned by heart along the way and reproduced. With rhymes, tongue twisters and finger games, you support the development of your child's so-called **phonological awareness\***. You also sharpen your child's attention towards typical German phonetic connections.

How?

🌟 You can try talking like a robot for a while and not change your pitch once. Ask your child what that sounds like. What do expressions of feeling, such as "I am very sad" or "I am so happy" sound like?

🌟 Tongue twisters based on a topic are not only popular with children, but are also entertaining, e.g. „*Ein braver Hai isst Haferbrei*“ ("Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers")

🌟 When expressing longer words, encourage your child to clap, stamp, swing or hop the syllables of the words in a touchy-feely way, e.g. "*But-ter-brot*", "*Sand-kis-te*", "*Re-gen-schirm*", "*Wür-fel-spiel*", "*Gar-ten-zaun*" ... ("*Sand-wich*", "*sand-pit*", "*um-bre-lla*", "*board-game*", "*gar-den-fence*")

## Link tips

👉 [kitakram.de/eine-sammlung-klassischer-und-neuer-fingerspiele](http://kitakram.de/eine-sammlung-klassischer-und-neuer-fingerspiele)

👉 [www.kidsweb.de/schule/zungenbrecher.html](http://www.kidsweb.de/schule/zungenbrecher.html)

👉 [www.heilpaedagogik-info.de/zungenbrecher.html](http://www.heilpaedagogik-info.de/zungenbrecher.html)



## Babaku, der Ohrwurm

A rhyming song and many more songs: 👉 [www.babaku.at](http://www.babaku.at)



Even PUMA came up with a **rhyme** – you can find it on the penultimate page



**\*Definition:** "Phonological awareness" refers to the ability to draw attention to the formal characteristics of spoken language, e.g. the sound of words when rhyming, words as parts of sentences, syllables as parts of words and finally, above all, the individual sounds of spoken words.

# FINDING GENERIC TERMS

3

*Children learn to identify commonalities when they find generic terms. Distinguishing features can also be recognised. As a result, they are prepared for meaningful combinations of letters, among other things.*

Put four to five different objects on top of a generic term and add an object that does not fit, e.g. different crockery articles and a toy car. Ask your child to name the object that does not match. Then name the appropriate generic term for the leftover items.

Talk to your child about the features that distinguish the objects on the table, but also about what connects these objects and what they have in common.

Conversely, ask your child to bring four or five objects to a generic term. Now have your child name the things they have brought.

Alternatively, have your child bring up to ten different things and ask them to sort them by generic terms. Motivate your child to speak about their activities. Ask your child to explain why they made their choice in this way or what characteristics they were able to sort the items by.

## List of ideas

*Spielsachen, Nahrungsmittel, Getränke, Körperpflegeprodukte, Bekleidung, Schuhe, Fahrzeuge, Werkzeug, Besteck, Geschirr, Möbel* (toys, food, beverages, personal care products, clothing, shoes, vehicles, tools, cutlery, crockery, furniture)



# THE PERCEPTION OF SPACE / BODY AND MOTOR SKILLS

4

*The language acquisition of children is very much influenced by the age-appropriate development of movement. Movement situations that can be integrated into the daily routine provide beneficial occasions for this. They create paths to the child as well as paths to language. A good ability to **orientate in space\*** makes it easier for your child to learn to write. In particular, balancing exercises support this important competence extraordinarily well.*

How? Have your child perform balancing exercises such as standing on one leg like a stork, walking backwards or balancing (such as on a rope).

Carry out top-down, front-back, left-right exercises with your child, e.g. "Stand by the chair. ....in front of the box." Alternatively: "Place the book by your left hand. ....behind your right foot." Change roles with your child, so that they can also accompany your actions linguistically.

Mirror image: Strike a pose and ask your child, who is facing you, to imitate your figure/posture as a mirror image – then change. Your actions could look like this: You place your right hand on the tip of your nose. You touch your right ear with your left hand. And again, something which is very important: Don't forget to talk along!

***\*Definition:** "Spatial perception" relates to the ability to perceive the position of two or three objects in relation to oneself and in relation to each other.*



# OBSERVING THINGS IN ORDER AND TIME SEQUENCES

5

*Observing and recognising sequences promotes logical thinking. It is only when a child succeeds in perceiving and remembering an order correctly that it is possible for them to plan and coordinate their actions in advance. In turn, this is an important prerequisite for learning to write, because it is here that adherence to the sequence of letters and words plays a major role. The same applies to arithmetic, when adhering to a sequence of numbers.*

🌸 Place different objects (e.g. nuts, chestnuts, stones) in a certain order and ask your child to continue this order. Motivate your child to accompany their actions with language, e.g. „Jetzt nehme ich zwei Nüsse und lege sie hin. Als nächstes brauche ich eine Kastanie ....“ (“Now I’m going to take two nuts and put them down. Next, I need a chestnut ...”)

🌸 Let your child talk about their daily routine. Support them with questions such as „Was hast du/haben wir am Morgen/in der Früh als erstes gemacht?“ (“What did you/we do first thing in the morning/in the afternoon?”) Also, discuss shared experiences, such as visits to the zoo, theatre or circus.

🌸 How about the popular nursery rhyme „Morgens früh um sechs kommt die alte Hex“ (“The old witch comes in the morning at six”)? Recite the poem about the little witch with an intonation that is as differentiated as possible. This will help you to understand the content. Then ask questions about the experiences of the little witch: „Wann kommt sie?“ „Was macht sie um acht Uhr?“ (“When is she coming?”. “What is she doing at eight o’clock?”) etc.

🌸 The year also passes according to a precise chronological sequence and nature changes with the seasons. Talk to your child about the four seasons: What is typical for spring, summer, autumn and winter? Which festivals are celebrated? In which season is your child’s birthday/the birthday of family members? Which activities can be done in which season?

🌸 The days of the week are also suitable for helping your child understand the chronological order of events. Questions such as: „An welchem Wochentag hast du deine Reitstunde? Wie viele Tage sind es noch bis dahin?“ (“On which day of the week do you have your riding lesson? How many days are there until then?”) etc., many reasons for a discussion can be found.

## Link tips

Rolf Zuckowskis „Die Jahresuhr“ to sing along to: 🐾 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ0uJo5kJ04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ0uJo5kJ04) . Also PUMA’s friend Bakabu has created a song about the days of the week: 🐾 [www.bakabu.at](http://www.bakabu.at)





# DISCOVERING DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

6

*Activities relating to differences and similarities not only train visual perception but also endurance and the ability to concentrate. These are skills that play a major role in learning. Being able to concentrate on one thing for a long period of time in order to achieve a sense of achievement is a valuable experience for children that gives them a great deal of self-confidence. The playful promotion of these skills is very important for the later acquisition of written language.*

🐾 Change something about your child's favourite play figure, e.g. you can give a favourite doll a new hairstyle or dress it in a new dress. Ask your child what is missing and/or different.

🐾 Spot the difference pictures are very popular with children. Discuss the details with your child that they discover when looking closely and encourage them to engage in a dialogue about them.

🐾 Let your child discover special features about their favourite play figure. For example, the well-known game „Ich sehe was, was du nicht siehst“ (“I spy”) is suitable for this.

🐾 Children also like to compare family members with each other. Create situations for dialogue by making comparisons together who is taller/smaller, older/younger, heavier/lighter ....



## PUMA Pocket XXL



This fold-out poster offers two large picture puzzles including a picture dictionary and a “spot the” game.

## Link tips

👉 [www.raetseldino.de/fehlersuchbilder.html](http://www.raetseldino.de/fehlersuchbilder.html)

👉 [www.kleineschule.com.de/fehlerbilder.html](http://www.kleineschule.com.de/fehlerbilder.html)



# READING ALOUD AND TELLING STORIES



Why?

*Looking at and reading from picture books is the best discipline for supporting language development. The more you read aloud to your child, the more positive the effect will be on learning to read and write. It is scientifically proven: Reading aloud on a regular basis and reading together helps children to improve their speaking and language skills.*

*When reading and looking at books and having a dialogue, you as an adult primarily ask questions or give more impulses about the content. Your child, however, increasingly slips into the role of the narrator.*

How?

- 🐾 Pick up on your child's favourite subject, e.g. pirates, princesses, knights, unicorns etc., and offer stories and/or books on it.
- 🐾 Ask simple questions that encourage your child to talk about the book.
- 🐾 Formulate questions that encourage your child to link what happened in the book with their own experiences.
- 🐾 Try to find questions that encourage your child to talk about details in the book.
- 🐾 Repeat your child's statements in agreement and expand them with individual words and/or additional information.
- 🐾 Pause the story repeatedly and let your child add a word or complete a sentence.



## PUMA – The Globetrotter



This fold-out poster offers an exciting story through pictures with many entertaining situations for dialogue.

### Reading tip: „Leitfaden dialogisches Lesen“

👉 [www.researchgate.net/publication/323376163\\_Leitfaden\\_Dialogisches\\_Lesen](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/323376163_Leitfaden_Dialogisches_Lesen)



# PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER

8

*The German language has many compound words e.g. „Puppenhaus“, „Apfelbaum“, „Vogelnest“ (doll's house, apple tree, bird's nest) etc. It is important that children pay attention to the sound of words (or syllables as parts of words) at an early age, but also recognise words as parts of sentences.*

Give your child two nouns\*, e.g. „Sonne“ (sun) and „Brille“ (glasses), and ask them what new word can be made out of them (answer: „Sonnenbrille“ (sun glasses)). Ask your child to find other words with „Sonne“ (sun) in them e.g. „Sonnenhut“, „Sonnencreme“, „Sonnenblume“ (sun hat, sun cream, sunflower)..... If necessary, give your child examples. In addition, your child can check whether there are any specific objects at home that correspond to the examples given.

Let your child walk around the house and discover objects that consist of two compound nouns. They should name their discoveries.

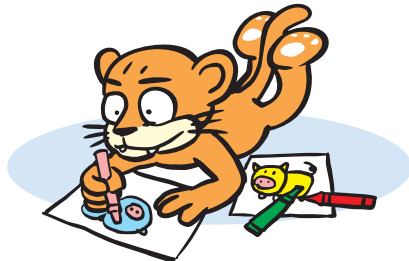
Play „Aus zwei mach eins“ (“Make one out of two”) with your child. One of you will think of a compound noun, e.g. earthworm (*Regenwurm*). Then word one, i.e. “earth”, is first explained without naming it. Then word two, i.e. “worm”, is explained – again, without mentioning the word itself. You and your child can now alternately try to guess the word.

## List of ideas

*Windrad, Apfelkuchen, Puppenwagen, Haustür, Blumentopf, Tischtuch, Kleiderschrank, Fußballtor* (even contains three nouns!)  
(Windmill, apple pie, doll's pram, front door, flowerpot, tablecloth, wardrobe, football goalpost)



**\*Definition:** “Nouns” relate to a type of word. A noun is also called a naming word because it gives a name to things such as animals and plants but also people.

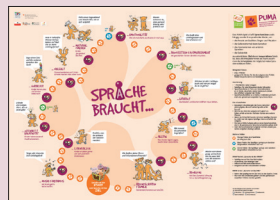


# A summary of our other PUMA materials

If your curiosity has been aroused, we also recommend our “PUMA – my languages” (*PUMA – Meine Sprachen*), “PUMA Pocket XXL” and “PUMA - The Globetrotter” (*PUMA – der Weltenbummler*) products. Based on linguistic findings, the three PUMA fold-out posters help your child to develop their speaking and language skills through play. Joy, curiosity and fun in the diversity of language are always in the foreground.

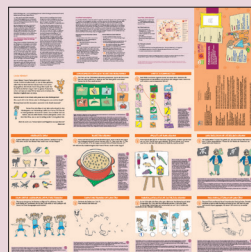
## Fold-out poster „My languages“

- information pages for teachers and parents with links and literature tips
- creative pages for children
- mini language learning documentation
- a cooperative dice game in an A2 format
- The poster is currently available in German, English, Burgenland Croatian, Romani, Slovenian, Hungarian, Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Farsi and Turkish



## Fold-out poster „PUMA Pocket XXL“

- 10 interactively creatable pages with language games and activities
- 2 large hidden object pictures including a picture dictionary and a “spot the” game
- 17 imaginative “what if...” questions for speculating and philosophising



## Fold-out poster “PUMA – The Globetrotter”

- a dice game with activities that stimulate language
- coordinated digital activities (QR Code)
- a picture story
- an audio book accompanying the picture story in German, English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish
- tips for the creative use of the picture story



All three posters can be ordered free of charge, as long as stocks last. Download and all further information: [www.oesz.at/puma](http://www.oesz.at/puma)

## **PUMA rhyme**

Because PUMA likes to experiment with words, he immediately came up with a rhyme in German for your child:

*Morgens früh erwacht  
PUMA meist um acht.*

*Nachmittags spielt er im Frei'n,  
um sieben ruft Mama „Komm herein!“*

*In der Schule lernt er zähl'n bis zehn,  
dann darf er in die Pause geh'n.*

*Abends liest Papa bei sanftem Lichte  
eine Gute-Nacht-Geschichte.*

*Zu Mittag knurrt der Bauch ihm sehr,  
heimwärts geht's um eins daher.*

*Um neun im ganzen Haus ist Ruh',  
und PUMA fallen die Augen zu.*

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## **Morgens früh um sechs**

The nursery rhyme we talked about in No 5 “observing things in order and time sequence”:

*Morgens früh um sechs  
kommt die kleine Hex'.*

*Morgens früh um zehn  
holt sie Holz und Spän',*

*Morgens früh um sieben  
schabt sie gelbe Rüben.*

*feuert an um elf,  
kocht dann bis um zwölf.*


*Morgens früh um acht  
wird Kaffee gemacht.*

*Fröschebein und Krebs und Fisch,  
hurtig Kinder, kommt zu Tisch!*

*Morgens früh um neun  
geht sie in die Scheun'.*


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## **Further materials and background information**


 [www.oesz.at/puma](http://www.oesz.at/puma)


 [www.literacy.at](http://www.literacy.at)

 [www.bakabu.at](http://www.bakabu.at)

 [www.charlotte-buehler-institut.at](http://www.charlotte-buehler-institut.at)


 [www.schule-mehrsprachig.at](http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at)

 [www.elementarpaedagogik.edugroup.at](http://www.elementarpaedagogik.edugroup.at)

 [www.sprachsensiblerunterricht.at](http://www.sprachsensiblerunterricht.at)

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