

United Nations' International Mother Language Day

*Languages represent a true reflection of
humanity's cultural diversity.*

—UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova

February 21, 2015

Join the Office of Head Start and the
National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness
and celebrate International Mother Language Day on February 21!

What is it? Mother Language Day, sponsored by the United Nations, recognizes the critical role of languages in sustaining the growth and development of a global society. In Head Start, programs work in partnership with elders, families, and members of the community to support the diverse languages of the children and families; this day celebrates those efforts!

Why celebrate? Each family has their own unique story and knowledge bank, which when shared in the mother/home language with their children has a lifelong impact and creates amazing familial bonds. Mother Language Day provides programs and families the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the importance of language.

How can families participate?

- ◆ Encourage all families to share at home with their children the stories, songs, rhymes, etc. of their childhood.
- ◆ Help families record the songs they sing in their mother/heritage/home languages for children in your program to hear.
- ◆ Share with the families of the children in your program the books in the classroom that reflect their home languages.
- ◆ Invite all families, community leaders, and Elders to share a song, story, or poem in their home language in the classroom and during family fun nights and home-based socializations.
- ◆ Encourage families to talk with their children about how people speak different languages and why that is a positive experience for all.
- ◆ Invite all families, community leaders, and Elders to share what their home language means to them.
- ◆ Using songs that are sung in the classroom, provide families with the words to these songs in different languages.
- ◆ Share word and language games that families can play at home, such as lotto games.

