



Celebrating Mother Language Day

February 21st Mother Language Day; is an internationally recognized day, commemorated worldwide. It is designed to promote linguistic diversity and multilingual education, which highlights greater awareness of the importance of mother tongue education.

In Canada, English and French are still the predominant mother tongues spoken (57% and 21% of Canadian). However, over 20% of Canadians speak a language other than these at home (Statistics Canada).

Calgary is a rich vibrant diverse community filled with families of many different cultures and backgrounds. Each year throughout the city, people of different backgrounds come together to acknowledge and celebrate their differences and their unique traditions and culture. There is no better place to celebrate our diversity, cultural event together than at school. It provides opportunities for students to explore the cultural diversity of our community and evaluate their attitudes and values as citizens of a multicultural society.

The significance of Mother Language Day is that it sends a message that their culture is important. It also provides an opportunity for family members to participate in an activity where they are the experts.

Materials:

- ✓ Nametags (have parents and family members print their name in their mother language)
- ✓ Pens or markers for family members to print their names
- ✓ Sign-in sheet
- ✓ Craft materials for cultural art (include natural materials such as feathers, stones, wood, etc.)
- ✓ Refreshments

Set-Up:

- ✓ If possible, have students in the school identify their cultural identity and ask them to create art, or an expression of themselves to represent that culture
- ✓ Display student's art to celebrate their cultural identity
- ✓ Create "WELCOME" signs in multi-languages for families as they enter the school.
- ✓ Send out personal invitations to the event (phone calls, emails, post on the school website, and create card invitations; invite family members as they deliver and pick up their children) to parents, students and their families for the event.
- ✓ Create a mother language day – cultural celebration program with activities for families to participate in throughout the night that showcase their cultural identity. Some ideas include: dressing in cultural clothing, singing a song in their mother tongue, creating arts that reflect culture

Recommended Time: Weeknight evening; for about 2 to 3 hours

Recommended Location: School classroom, library, or gym depending on size of event



Throughout the evening:

- ✓ Set up a front desk with name tags where parents and family members sign their names in their mother language.
- ✓ Make sure to leave time at the end for families to mingle with each other, and for parents to speak individually with the teacher if they wish.
- ✓ As parents and family members come in allow children to guide their parents and tour their classes and show them their arts.
- ✓ Allow time for presentations, activities, and any showcasing of cultural activities.
- ✓ Arrange for presentations by students and family members to showcase their talents and culture

Your school's cultural celebration can be planned on any day throughout the year. Make it fit for your school!

Culture is the widening of the mind and the spirit ~ Jawaharal Nehru