

Hello! It's Gogo here. February 21 is **International Mother Language Day**, and I want to remind you of the importance of African languages. Languages are about more than just words; they also have sayings and ideas that cannot be translated! In this way, they keep our cultures alive and give us an important sense of belonging. If we do not teach our children their mother tongues, we will be robbing them of not only a language, but of their identity too!

Here are four tips for growing a love of African languages with your children.

- ★ **Start early:** Babies and young children love rhyme and repetition. As they listen, they start to figure out how to put sounds and then words together. Use traditional rhymes that are unique to your culture.
- ★ **Share stories:** Look for books in your first language at your local library. If there are none, translate or retell your favourite stories yourself or, access free children's stories in different African languages on Nal'ibali's website, www.nalibali.org, or by WhatsApping 'stories' to **060 044 2254**.
- ★ **Keep going:** Start talking and reading with your children in their mother tongue from birth and keep doing this throughout their lives.

- ★ **Have fun:** Tongue twisters promote pronunciation and fluency. They also help to develop accents through the repetition of one sound. Here's an example: She sells seashells on the seashore (repeat three times).

