

Celebrate!

# United Nations' International Mother Language Day

*Allowing children to learn from a very early age in their mother tongue, and then in national, official or other languages, promotes equality and social inclusion.* —UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova

February 21, 2014



**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?** International Mother Language Day, sponsored by the United Nations, honors the diversity of languages that exist globally and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a multilingual society.

**Why celebrate?** A society that celebrates and supports mother/heritage/home languages nurtures cultural identity and benefits from the rich diversity of its members.

### **How can children participate?**

- ◆ Have children help create banners and posters commemorating the day.
- ◆ Help children create a graph of the languages spoken in their classroom or home-based group.
- ◆ Teach children to say “hello” in all the languages in their classroom or home-based group.
- ◆ Teach children a simple song in each of the languages spoken in your classroom or home-based group.
- ◆ Sing or play recorded songs and lullabies to babies and toddlers in the different language spoken in your program.
- ◆ Ask children to share stories, songs, and rhymes in their mother/heritage/home language (including English) and record them for the children to take home.
- ◆ Read or tell stories to teach words or simple phrases in the different languages spoken in the classroom, such as animal names.
- ◆ Make up or adapt children’s games using words from different languages, such as playing Pato, Pato, Ganso instead of Duck, Duck, Goose.

