



*Sisters Katie Morag and Seonag from Scalpay like playing together in Gaelic.*

### **What if my child keeps answering me in English and/or tells me not to speak Gaelic?**

This can be very hard and there's no real answer for it. It depends on what makes you and your family most comfortable:

- Ask your child why he or she prefers English. Sometimes conversations like these help you get to the heart of the matter.
- Especially in the beginning, you can try strategies such not answering, or asking your child to repeat in Gaelic what they've just said in English. Or alternatively, you can repeat in Gaelic what they've said in English.

*And even if these strategies don't appear to be working, by continuing to speak Gaelic, you are ensuring your child has Gaelic **input**, which means it will be easier for him or her to use the language later.*

## **Questions or Comments?**

My name is Dr. Cassie Smith-Christmas. I had the privilege of living in Stornoway from 2012-2014 before working at the National University of Ireland, Galway. This brochure is based in part on the findings of my project "The Challenges of Minority Language: Family Language Policy in Scotland and Ireland" (GOIPD/2016/644). Do get in touch with me at:

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### **References:**

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*That's a 'thumbs up' from Katie and Lewis from Shawbost!*

**DO YOU  
WANT TO USE  
MORE GAELIC  
WITH YOUR  
CHILD?**

*SIUTHAD, MA-THA!*



Zoë's parents didn't have any Gaelic when they enrolled her in GME—but now she stars in Gaelic films!

## Speaking Gaelic to your child can be hard for a number of reasons.

We now live in a world where no matter what language we speak, the power of English is inescapable. Speaking Gaelic—or any minority language—to your child can therefore be difficult, even if Gaelic is your native language and even if you feel very comfortable speaking it. If you haven't spoken the language for a while, or if you've learned it as an adult, it can be even harder. The purpose of this brochure is to give you some ideas on how to overcome these challenges.

Research has shown that the more positive a relationship a child has with a language, the *more likely* she or he is to use the language.

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*What are your child's favourite things to do? How can you use more Gaelic in these activities?*

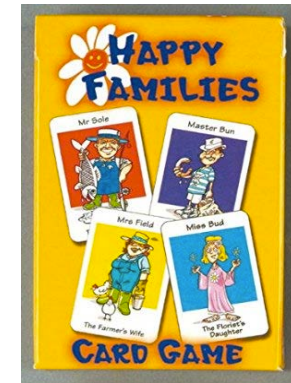
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### Some ideas....

- Make 'game time' 'Gaelic time.'
- Make a weekly meal (preferably a fun one, like pizza night!) a time where you speak Gaelic.
- Help your child 'imagine' in Gaelic. Can their toys 'speak' Gaelic to each other? What roles can YOU play in their fantasy games to help them imagine in Gaelic?

### Do your children spend time with other relatives?

Encourage them to do the same! Research has shown that relatives such as grandparents can have a very positive impact on your child's minority language development.



### Small steps can make a big difference.

You might feel less confident in Gaelic than in English. That's ok—and don't worry, research shows that it won't negatively impact your child's overall language development. You can use what Gaelic you have—and again, don't worry if you make some mistakes: we all make mistakes when we speak, whatever language we're speaking!

One very simple way to use Gaelic in a fun way is to play the game 'Happy Families'. In asking another player for a card, for example, you can say:

*'A bheil X agad?'*

And then the other player can say:

*Tha* (if you do) or *Chan eil* (if you don't)

Also 'Snakes and Ladders' can be great for using some Gaelic!