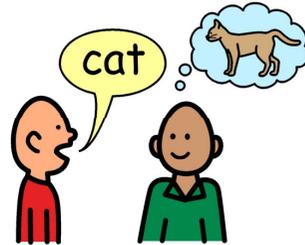


My Child Hears More Than One Language - What should I do?

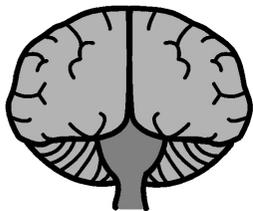
Bilingualism **does not cause** language delay.

Due to the common misunderstanding that bilingualism causes language difficulties, many parents stop using their native language in the home. This doesn't benefit the child's speech and language development.

In fact, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that using home language can actually **help develop English** language rather than hinder it.



Children who learn more than one language tend to do well at **multitasking and focussing their attention**.



Research has found that having two languages can help **protect against the decline in the brain's abilities** when aging.

Kingston Children's Speech and Language Therapy

There are two ways children acquire two (or more) languages:

Simultaneous: when both languages are acquired at the same time, ie from birth

Sequential: when a child learns a second language after the first language is more established.

AT SCHOOL

Silent period

Children learning a second language sequentially can go through a 'silent period'. This is often noticed in the school environment. This should be treated as a normal phenomenon - like any settling in period in a new environment.



Learning

If your child has learnt a second language sequentially, he/she will begin to talk to peers in the playground relatively quickly.

However, may take longer to gain the language ability needed for academic aspects of the classroom (eg written work). Speak to your child's teacher to ensure they are aware of this.



MYTH BUSTER

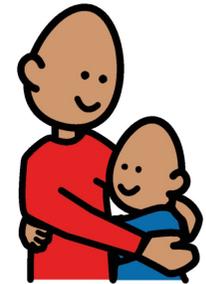
✓ You can mix **languages within a sentence** when you talk to your child

- ✓ Your child **can mix languages in one sentence** when they talk to you
- ✓ It is OK to **speak in your chosen language** to your child, even if s/he **responds in a different language**. *If the child responds this shows that the message has been understood*
- ✓ **Codeswitching** (moving between 2 languages) is a **completely normal** pattern of talking used by all bilingual speakers
- ✓ Evidence shows that young bilingual speakers produce their **longest and most complex** sentences when codeswitching
- ✓ If your child has learnt a second language simultaneously s/he is likely to be at the **same level** as a child who learns **one language only**



Advice for parents

- Talk to your child in the language you feel most confident and comfortable
- Do not change your natural pattern of language use at home
- Keep language simple: use short phrases when talking, use lots of repetition and keep modelling language to your child
- Use gesture, facial expression and body language to help show your child what you mean
- Encourage attempts from your child to communicate in any way or language - show them you are interested!



Speech and Language Therapy strategies can be delivered in any language. Talk to your Speech and Language Therapist for more advice.

Kingston Children's Speech and Language Therapy

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Helping Children Communicate



With Their World