

Using more than one language with your child



'Bilingualism' means a person can understand and use more than one language.

Using more than one language can be called bilingualism or multilingualism.

Being bilingual is an asset!

Being bilingual

Being bilingual is an asset (benefit) because it can help children to:

- Connect with their culture
- Speak with family members
- Socialise with others.

Children mostly have one language they are best at, this is their preferred language.

Bilingual children have the same chance of having difficulties learning to talk as children who only learn one language.

Which language to use?

Always use the language (or languages) that you are confident with, to make sure you are giving your child the best models of words and grammar (your preferred language).

Parent quote about being bilingual...

It offers an awakening. It offers an awareness that there are lands and people beyond the immediate culture.

Find further information

If you are worried, ask your health visitor, playworker, childcare or school practitioner for information.

What to do:

- Join in with your child's play and follow their lead.
- Talk about what your child is doing in your preferred language.
- Share books in both languages. Don't worry about reading the words, you can talk about the pictures or make up a story.
- Don't worry if your child takes a while to speak in one of their languages, especially when they go somewhere new. It's a normal part of language learning. Give them time to communicate and don't put pressure on them to speak.
- Remember to accept and praise communication in whatever language the child chooses to use.