

Will learning more than one language make my child talk later than others?

- No. Bilingualism does not cause language delay.
- Your child should talk at the same time as children learning one language.



Will it be difficult for my child to learn more than one language?

- No. 2/3 of the world's population speaks more than one language.
- Children can start learning more than one language from birth. The first 3 years are a good time for learning as the brain is developing quickly.

I speak more than one language. Which one should I use when talking with my child?



- Use your strongest language because that's when you do your best talking and children need to hear a good language model that is natural.
- Don't worry if you mix languages when talking. It is natural for people who speak more than one language to do this. Your child will quickly learn that the two languages are different.

Is it important for my child to learn English before starting nursery or school?

- No. It is important that your child has good skills in their home language before they start school.
- Once children know how to use one language, they can usually learn another one very quickly.
- Don't worry about teaching your child English. They will learn this skill in nursery/school.

How can I help my child develop our home language?



- Talk and play with your child throughout the day
- Sing nursery rhymes and songs in your home language
- Talk about TV and DVDs in your home language.
- Look at books and talk about them in your home language
- Talk about what you are doing in your home language e.g., at mealtimes, shopping, bath times, after school.

My child has started nursery / school and has begun using English instead of our home language. Is this a problem?

- No, children will speak the languages they hear most. Once they start school and hear more English, they are likely to use more English, even at home.
- No, children often understand more of their home language than they use. You can help them to develop your home language by using it with them.

Is it ok for me to speak my home language when my child talks to me in English?

- Yes. By speaking your home language you will help your child to keep developing their skills.
- Yes, your child will be able to use your home language; this can help them to communicate with your whole family.



Is it important for my child to continue learning our home language?

- Yes, the home language is part of your family identity.
- Yes, you can speak naturally and fluently with your child.

My child is mixing up the languages he is learning – Is this a problem?

- No, all children learning more than one language will mix them up sometimes.
- No, this is a natural stage of bilingual language development. Children will work out the different vocabulary and rules of the two languages as they learn them.

My family speaks several different languages – what should we do?

- Each member of the family should speak the language or mix of languages that come most naturally to them.
- Children learn language best when they hear a natural model.



Leaflet originally created by CLCH Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Service

Updated November 2011
By Margaret Brown - EAL Advisor and
Sarah Childs – Principal Speech and
Language Therapist

BILINGUALISM

LEARNING MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE

Talk to your child in your most fluent language

