

BILINGUAL ADVICE KEEP USING YOUR HOME LANGUAGE

Why?

Your child will develop stronger English skills if you continue to use and develop your home language

Your home language will help your child to learn. When a child knows about things in the home language, he or she will learn about things in the second language more easily

Your home language supports your child's sense of identity

Knowing the home language helps children to communicate easily within the family and the community



It is important that you continue to use all languages introduced to the child. If you do not, **language loss** will occur and this will affect your child's language development in **ALL** languages.

- Do not be concerned about mixing different languages in one sentence. This is natural for a bilingual speaker.
- The focus should be helping the child feel successful in giving and receiving a message. Continue speaking your chosen language/s to your child even if he or she speaks back to you in a different language. If the child responds, the message has been understood.
- Use short phrases with lots of gesture and facial expression, as well as expression in your voice. This will help the child understand the meaning behind the words.
- Encourage your child's attempts to communicate in either language, giving lots of praise.

The Speech and Language Therapy profession recognises that bilingualism in a child is an advantage to learning.

Stages of Bilingualism

Continued use of the home language

Children use their home language with everyone in the hope that they will be understood.

Silent period

Children may experience a silent period of up to 6 months when they are first introduced to another language (e.g. when starting nursery or school).

Children may still communicate non-verbally i.e. with gestures and pointing. They will still be learning language. Your child needs time to adjust to their new setting and to tune into the sounds of English.

Repetition of routines and single words

Children begin to use single words or phrases during the early stages of learning English. E.g. 'wash your hands'

Becoming more confident

When children become better at using their new language they may stop using their home language. Then they may use their new language all the time. For example, a child with a home language of Punjabi learns English. His grandmother speaks only Punjabi, but the child now responds to her in English!

Interference

A child may use the rules of their first language when speaking English. Eg: putting the verb at the end of the sentence.

Language Proficiency

It can take 5-7 years of exposure, for a second language to fully develop in school aged children, (according to research by Jim Cummins of Canada.) A child who hears English for the first time when attending nursery at age 3 may not become fully proficient until age 8-10. This is not a language disorder, however extra support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) will be beneficial.