

There are lots of different ways to share talking

Remember

- Set aside time to talk to your child
- Share books and stories
- Focus on your child's strengths and praise his/her achievements
- Having more than one language does not affect your child's ability at school

Did you know that 75% of the world's population is Multilingual?

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



Children and Families Division

Better Care: Healthier Communities



Raising your child bilingually

Why raise your child to be bilingual?

Bilinguality:

- Has a positive influence on your child's life and cultural identity.
- Helps your child to value and share your culture and traditions.
- Helps communication between generations.
i.e. family members both here and abroad
broadens your child's thinking and learning.

How to raise your child bilingually

At first either

- 'One-parent-one language', i.e. each parent uses a single language whenever you speak to your child.

Or

- Use home language until it is established, and then introduce English later, i.e. speak home language only to your child until approximately three years old or they enter nursery. It helps if the whole family follows this advice.

Remember

Before your child starts nursery, one person using a mixture of languages may cause confusion in your child's language development.

From two years old:

- Bilingual children will begin to use more words.
- Children hearing two or more languages from birth will use words from more than one of them.
- Children will start to recognise which language(s) to use with which person.
- Children may use more words from one language.
- Children may prefer to speak in one language more.
- Children learning more than one language from birth may take a little longer to join words together and start forming sentences.

From three years old:

- Most children will now be joining words together. Their sentences may contain a mix of words from more than one language.
- Borrowing words or parts of words from one language is normal for bilingual speakers. Children who are learning two languages from birth may show such mixing.
- Children learning English from around three years of age will be able to use the knowledge and skills they have acquired in learning the home language to help them learn English.
- It is important to continue using the home language alongside English as this supports the learning of English.
- Children may need to hear English and feel confident for a period of time before they attempt to use it. Some children may go through a 'silent' period where they do not use English for a few months.
- Expanding on what your child says can encourage them to use longer sentences.
- Supporting children's learning by encouraging them when they make any attempts to communicate will help them learn English and continue using the home language.