

Growing up with more than one language



Information for parents/carers
and professionals across agencies



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Growing up learning more than one language

Is your child growing up learning two or more languages? This information may help you to support your child with this. We sometimes use the word 'bilingual' to describe when a person can use two languages. Schools talk about EAL (English as an additional language).

Did you know?

- More than 70% of the world population speak more than one language.
- Some children hear and learn more than one language from the start (if parents are fluent in those different languages and use them with their children).
- Some children learn their second language (often English) when they start nursery or school.

Both of these ways to learn more than one language are effective.

Why growing up learning more than one language is good

- It helps your child to value and share your culture and traditions.
- It helps your child communicate with their wider family and community.
- Schools and teachers know that it helps your child's thinking and learning as the child gets older.

Helping your child to learn their language

Talk to your child in your own language(s), the ones you are fluent and confident to speak in (don't worry if this is not English). Your child will have opportunities to learn English in school or nursery. The better your child learns their own language, the easier learning English will be later on.

Some tips in helping your child to learn your own language

Talk about what you are doing (even before your baby is born as they can hear your voice and language).

Sing songs, rhymes in your own language with your child.

Share any picture books in your own language.

Don't forget your child will learn language much better from playing and talking with you than from any screen time (e.g. TV, tablets and other electronic devices).

If you are worried about how your child is learning their own language, please contact your Health Visitor on 0300 3000 007 or visit your local Children, Young People and Families centre.

Remember you can ask for an interpreter for any health appointment.

Further information on helping your child learn more than one language can be found at:

www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

www.multilingual-matters.com





If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format (such as large print, Braille or audio) please ask a member of staff.

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