

More than one language (Bilingualism)



Speaking more than one language is an advantage when it comes to language learning and does NOT cause speech and language difficulties

If a child who speaks more than one language has difficulty learning their home language then they may have a speech and language difficulty separate to being bilingual and this will likely impact on their ability to learn English as a second language.

All children should be encouraged to continue speaking their first language, even if they have a language difficulty, as this connects them to their family, their culture, their heritage and is part of their identity. By continuing to speak their home language to them, as well as English, they will have many more opportunities to hear language used and will learn how to switch between the two languages. Here are some top tips:

- ▶ Keep your language simple and at the level the child already uses e.g. if able to say single words then use single words when talking to them.
- ▶ Focus on modelling grammar as this changes across languages, make sure they have some teaching/interpretation in their home language so that both languages develop equally and encourage use of their home language at home and at school.
- ▶ Support both languages with pictures and symbols when talking to help develop their vocabulary and aid understanding.

If you need advice about your child's language development, please get in contact with your local NHS Speech and Language Therapy Service or talk to their school/nursery setting/Health Visitor.

