

Are you worried about your child's speech and language development?

Growing up learning more than one language will not cause speech or language problems.

However, if you think your child could have a speech or language difficulty speak to your Public Health Nurse about any concerns you might have, or refer your child to your local HSE Health Centre to see a Speech and Language Therapist.

Some language support strategies:

- Encourage face to face 1:1 interaction
- Emphasise important words
- Shorten instructions
- Speak slowly
- Use real objects and role play to demonstrate and support understanding

Use your first language when speaking to your child



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Do you speak more than one language at home?



A guide for Parents and Carers



Developed by HSE Community Speech and Language Therapy Dept. Waterford in partnership with Waterford Childcare Committee.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE:

These features are typical and not a cause for concern:

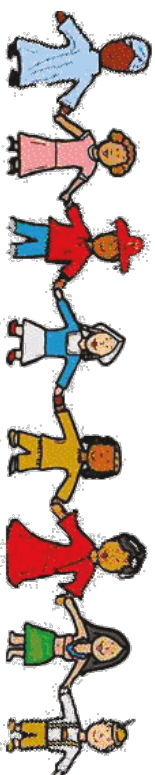
- Their language skills may be slower to develop at first.
- They may know or use more words in one language than the other.
- They may mix languages in one sentence or conversation.
- They may prefer to speak one language more than the other.
- When learning a new language e.g. English, they may go through a 'silent period' where they listen but don't talk very much.

Advantages to growing up speaking more than one language:

Children learning two languages often have better problem solving skills.

Knowing how to speak two languages, increases a child's confidence in learning other languages.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO SPEAK TO YOUR CHILD IN YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE



When you speak to your child in your first language and your child learns to speak this language well, this lays a solid foundation for the development of the second language.

It will also be easier for you to talk and play with your child if you are speaking your first language (even if each parent speaks a different language).

Continuing to speak the first language will help (not hurt) the child's English learning.

Speaking the first language well will help your child to maintain close family and community relationships.

It also helps support an awareness of the child's cultural heritage and traditions.

There are no known disadvantages to growing up using more than one language!

How can you help your child speak your first language?

- Always talk to your child in your first language. They need to hear the language in order to learn and speak it.
- Teach your child nursery rhymes and songs in your first language.
- Talk with your child about what you are doing in everyday activities.
- Take your child to events where the first language is used. The more your child hears people speaking the language the more important they will think learning the language is.
- Read books in your first language with your child. You can also look at picture books and tell your child about the pictures using your first language.
- Limit screen time e.g. TV, tablets, and computers.
- Additional information on supporting your child to become bilingual is available from www.aistearsiolta.ie

