

BILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS

Children with language delays and/or disorders are capable of learning multiple languages. Bilingualism will not delay their progress or inhibit their language development.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My child only has a few words in one of the languages he/she speaks, is he/she delayed?

A: Bilingual children typically have a stronger set of language skills in one language when compared to the other, which is known as language dominance. Count all words in your child's vocabulary in both languages. Your child's total vocabulary should be equal to or greater than the vocabulary of monolingual peers.

Q: If my child has a delay in their language development, should I continue to use both languages?

A: Yes! Research shows that children with language delays or disorders can learn multiple languages and become bilingual.

Q: Is a silent period normal?

A: Yes. If children are learning a new language, they may initially understand more than they can speak. There may be a silent period in which they are focused on listening.



RED FLAGS

- The child has not said their first word or is not combining words in *both languages*.
- The child uses gestures instead of words to communicate in *both languages*.
- The child has difficulty answering questions in *both languages*.
- The child has difficulty understanding questions.
- The child has difficulty communicating wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas in *both languages*.
- The child has difficulty following directions in *both languages*.



MYTH VS FACT

- **Myth:** Speaking two or more languages to a child can confuse them, so it is better to speak only one language.
 - **Fact:** All children are capable of learning multiple languages, including children with developmental delays and learning disabilities.
- **Myth:** Exposing children with language delays or impairments to two languages will cause them to become further delayed.
 - **Fact:** Bilingualism does not cause language delays. Children with language impairments are capable of learning more than one language.
- **Myth:** Bilingual children will have academic problems when starting school.
 - **Fact:** Research shows academic advantages of being bilingual, including exceptional problem solving and multitasking skills.