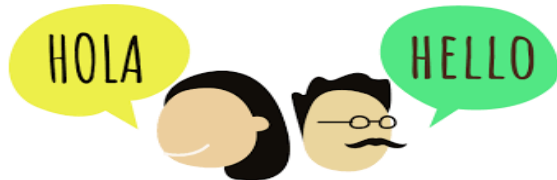


This information has been written for parents who are raising children into a **bilingual** (or multilingual) culture. If your child is having difficulties learning to talk and communicate, this is understandably worrying for parents, but here are some facts and tips to ease any concerns you or your children may have:

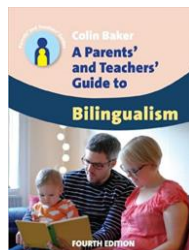
Bilingualism: The Facts



- It's normal for children to mix their languages together
- If a bilingual child has a speech or language difficulty, it will affect both languages. However; these problems are not caused by learning two languages
- Learning two languages will not confuse your child. Mistakes are a part of normal bilingual language development
- Children with speech and language difficulties may have more difficulty learning a second language but research shows many can do so successfully
- Although the ideal language-learning window is during the first few years of life—the most rapid period of brain development—older children and adults can still become fluent in a second language
- Children may have a 'quiet' period as they learn a new language, and choose not to use the new language for a while
- Many people who are bilingual have a dominant language, which can change over time, depending on how often the language is used

Resources:

- **Books**
 - A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism (by Colin Baker)
 - Bringing up a Bilingual Child (by Rita Rosenback)
- **Video links:**
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTTNhoK_3gA
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me_v82q0ins



Top Tips

- Keep the languages separate (e.g. you might wish to speak one language at home, and one away from home/one in the morning, and one in the afternoons, for example)
- Rephrase with the correct model when your children make mistakes in using language, instead of correcting them, as this could affect their confidence
- Take advantage of the media and technology to help give your children more exposure to the languages they're learning



- Find resources such as books, tv programmes or podcasts that could encourage your child to practise either of their languages
- Read and tell stories in your language, and encourage your child to join in. Use dress-ups and be creative!
- Singing is a great way to introduce a second language to your child. And, it can be a lot of fun!
- Use gestures and actions to support your child's understanding of both languages
- Be consistent in the choice of words to name objects. Both parents should use the same set of vocabulary. For example, if the child hears his mother refer to a 'dish' and his father refer to a 'plate', it will take longer for the child to understand and use the word for the object
- Keep the new language simple initially, to support your child's gradual acquisition