

Helping your bilingual child with their speech and language skills

What is bilingualism?

Bilingualism or English as an additional language (EAL) is when someone speaks more than one language. Being bilingual is a good skill to have.

A well-developed first language is important for any new languages your child learns, as they get older.

Your child will then learn English and other languages more easily.

Children will forget their home language if they only hear or speak English.

Young children can learn languages much more easily than adults. They can usually learn two languages or even more at the same time without any difficulty.

Children who learn more than one language have many benefits in school and in life. They can transfer learning between languages; this can help them to do well in education and in exams.

How can I help?

Keep speaking your home language with your child. This will help your child to:

- Become a bilingual adult
- Speak to your wider family.

Talk to your child in your home language about what you are doing together, such as: bath time, shopping, baking, at the park.

Use your home language to talk to your child about what they did at nursery or school.

If they use English words, repeat what they said in your home language if you can. Do not correct or make them use your home language.

Encourage your child to play with children who also speak the same language as them.

It is natural for the family to switch between two different languages when at home.

To help your child, try to keep your language consistent so they can learn which words belong to which language.

Have fun with songs, rhymes, and stories in your home language. You can use books or make up your own stories.

Encourage your child to join in with storytelling. If you can, try to find books in your home language so they can see how it looks.

If you have any questions, please call the Speech and Language Therapy department on ☎ 01925 946 686.



Warrington's Local Offer

Services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Updated December 2022. References:
<https://childspeechbedfordshire.nhs.uk/specialism/bilingualism/>
www.hacw.nhs.uk/bilingualfamilies
<http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Bilingualism-in-Young-Children--Separating-Fact-fr.aspx>

Please visit AskOllie at:

<https://www.mylifewarrington.co.uk/kb5/warrington/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>