

# Multilingualism: A Guide for Parents

## What is multilingualism?

Multilingualism means using two or more languages in everyday life. Children may learn languages from birth or pick up other languages later.

## Will more than 1 language confuse my child?

No. Research shows that multilingualism does not confuse children or delay language development

It is normal for children to:

- Mix languages (code-switching)
- Use different languages in different settings
- Have a “silent period” when learning a new language (a time when they are listening and taking in language before speaking much).

These are all typical parts of multilingual development.

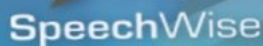
## Can Multilingualism cause speech and language delay?

No. Multilingualism does not cause speech or language difficulties.

Multilingual children usually reach language milestones at a similar rate to monolingual children (children with just 1 language). While vocabulary may be spread across two languages, overall understanding is typically equal.

If a child has a speech or language difficulty, this will usually be present across both languages.





## Benefits of multilingualism

Multilingual children may develop:

- Strong attention control and listening skills
- Great cognitive flexibility and problem-solving abilities
- Increased awareness of different cultures and perspectives
- Stronger connections with family, culture, and identity



## How to support your child at home

Support works best through everyday interaction:

- **Use your home language confidently**  
This supports communication, learning, and connection.
- **Talk during everyday routines**  
Play, meals, shopping, and bedtime all support language development.
- **Give your child time to respond**  
Especially when they are learning a new language.
- **Accept all communication**  
Words, gestures, pointing, and mixed language are all valid.
- **Follow your child's interests**  
Children learn best when they are engaged.
- **Read and share stories in any language**

## When to seek advice

### Seek support if your child:

- has difficulty understanding simple instructions
- has limited communication in either language
- is not making expected progress over time

**Key message:** You do not need to choose one language. Using your home language supports your child's communication, identity, and learning - including their development of English.

For any support please contact us at SpeechWise Therapy. We are passionate about supporting children's communication so they can thrive at home, at school, and beyond.