

Learning 2 Languages

Bilingualism is learning more than one language and being able to understand and communicate in these languages. **Simultaneous Bilingualism** is learning more than one language at the same time, from birth. **Sequential Bilingualism** is learning a second language after the first language is established, often when a child starts daycare or school.

Does Bilingualism adversely affect child development?

- There is no evidence that being exposed to more than one language causes language difficulties or delays in children
- Children with language difficulties can learn more than one language, either simultaneously or sequentially. **What is most important is that children are involved in enjoyable back-and-forth interactions in both of their languages**
- Being exposed to two languages does not interfere with the language development of children on the Autism spectrum

DID YOU KNOW... The best way to help children learn a new language is to support development of their first language. By speaking to your child first in a language you are most comfortable (i.e. home language), you are laying the foundation for them to learn a second language. Trying to speak with a child in a language that you are not fluent/ comfortable with can make learning more difficult.



How to best support a bilingual child who has a language difficulty or delay:

- Expose your child to the languages that are considered important in your community and family. Speaking in these languages can allow a child to participate more fully in their family and culture.
- Children need to hear a language to learn a language. A child needs regular opportunities to hear and learn both languages. Practice words and phrases in both languages.

How to connect with support:

Anyone with a concern about their child's development can contact SmartStart Hub at Lansdowne Children's Centre to start the referral process and seek support.

No diagnosis or doctor referral is required. There is NO COST to the family for accessing SmartStart Hub services, supports and resources.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Lansdowne SLP or CDA for help.

Visit www.lansdownecentre.ca/speech

Call toll free 1-800-454-7186 ext. 507