

Bilingual Language Development



FACT

All children are capable of learning multiple languages, including children with developmental delays and learning disabilities.

Families should speak the language they are most comfortable speaking, so children are given rich linguistic models and can interact best with other members of their community.

Bilingualism does NOT cause language delays, and has been shown to improve children's ability to learn new word, identify sounds, and problem-solve.

“Tanslanguaging” occurs when individuals grammatically mix aspects of the languages they speak. It fosters cultural and metalinguistic awareness.

Learning language is an active process that requires many opportunities for children to practice communicating in context with others. Listening and responding are both crucial for developing competence.

MYTH

Speaking 2 or more languages to a child can “confuse” them, so it is better to only speak 1 language.

It is better for families to only speak the language taught in school to their children, even if they do not speak the language well.

Young bilingual children are delayed in learning language compared to peers who only speak 1 language.

Bilingual children should not mix parts of the languages they speak.

Children become bilingual just by listening to people around them speaking the seconds language.