

English as an Additional Language (EAL)



BRINGING YOUR CHILD UP BILINGUALLY OR MULTILINGUALLY

Warrington Borough Council EAL Team work to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people from ethnic minority groups, including families for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

We support educators and families to ensure all pupils can achieve their potential.

For more information:

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Models for raising bilingual and multilingual children

If you, your partner if you have one, or other people who help you raise your child speak languages other than English, you might want your child to grow up learning these languages. There are two main models for supporting bilingual and multilingual children at home. You can support children's multilingual or bilingual development through play, community activities and everyday activities at home.

One person one language model

If you and your partner have different languages, the one person-one language model for supporting multilingualism or bilingualism might be beneficial to your child. For example, if your language is English and your partner's is Cantonese, you speak English to your child and your partner speaks Cantonese to them.

This model can work with more than one language other than English. For example, if you speak Spanish and your partner speaks Italian, you each speak your own language to your child at home. If you both speak English as well, you might choose to use English with them outside the home.

Heritage language as home language model

If you and your partner both speak the same heritage language, you might want to make this the language that you and your family use in your home.

For example, you might have migrated from Iraq to the UK and speak Arabic to your child at home. Arabic is your heritage language. Your child also goes to school and speaks English with their friends and teachers.

Common concerns

My child is mixing languages

This is quite common with bilingual children; it does not mean they are confused. They are simply using their language resources to express themselves.

My child will only talk in English

Many children do this; especially when they know their family speak English too. Continue to use home language with your child to ensure your child has experience of both/all languages.

My child won't speak much English in school

Many children refuse to speak their new language for a period of time for many reasons. This 'silent phase' should be respected. Carry on speaking in your home language to them, to help them feel more connected. This phase can last between a few weeks to a few months. Speak to your child's teacher if you have concerns.

Advantages to bilingualism

Research also shows that, compared to their non-bilingual peers, bilingual people have an easier time:

- understanding math concepts and solving word problems
- developing strong thinking skills
- using logic
- focusing, remembering, and making decisions
- thinking about languages
- learning other languages

Research has found that babies raised in bilingual households show better self-control, a key indicator of school success

Heritage language GCSEs

Where a student has well-developed skills in their first language and where there is a GCSE available in that language, it is recommended that the student is entered for the GCSE. Often, students achieve very good grades in their Heritage Language GCSEs and this can be a bonus when they are applying for college places. Speak to your child's school if you believe this would be beneficial to your child.

Tips for raising a bilingual or multilingual child

DO speak your home language with your child.

DO introduce new languages to your kids as early as possible but DON'T think it is too late to introduce a new language later on.

DON'T compare your bilingual child to children who only speak one language.

DO be consistent with the language strategy you follow but DON'T hesitate to change your approach if it isn't working for your family.

DO take advantage of media and technology to help your kids get more exposure to the minority language but DON'T think that TV or media alone can teach your child a language.