



Speech and Language Therapy Advice Sheet

Supporting children who are learning English as an Additional Language in the classroom

What is 'Bilingualism'?

- Being bilingual means using two or more languages
- Bilingualism is a good thing, no matter how old someone is or if they have speech and language difficulties
- Being bilingual doesn't cause difficulties with speech and language development
- A child with a language difficulty will have difficulties developing English **and** their home language
- Families should keep speaking their home language with their child. The most important thing is that the child hears a good language example, no matter what language it is.

How can I support bilingual children in the classroom?

- Use simple words and repeat them often, like 'cup,' 'lunch,' and 'outside,' as well as songs and rhymes.
- Use pictures, signs, and actions to help explain what you're saying.
- Speak slowly and clearly, but don't shout.
- Let families share information with you. Use an interpreter if needed.
- Ask the family how to pronounce the child's name correctly.
- Share new words with families so they can teach the child the same words in their home language.
- If a child makes mistakes, repeat what they said correctly. For example: Child: "eat a spoon." You: "Yes, we eat with a spoon."
- Some children might not speak much at first. This is called a "silent period." They are listening and learning, so don't rush them to speak.
- Think about cultural differences. For example, make sure toys and items in the play area are familiar and respectful to the child's culture.

If you have tried using these strategies and you still have concerns about a child's speech, language and communication development:

- Look on our website for further information, training opportunities and advice:

<https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/childrens-centre/your-childs-hospital-journey/therapy-services/speech-and-language-therapy/>

- Contact the Parent Educational Psychologist telephone line

www.york.gov.uk/EducationalPsychologyServices

- Contact us via our 'Request for Help' line – see our website for further details

You can access further information from the following website: www.naldic.org.uk