

Raising Bilingual Kids

Raising your child to speak two or more languages helps their brain grow and makes them smarter. It also makes it easier for them to learn in school and understand different people and cultures. Knowing more than one language can also help them get better jobs when they grow up. Plus, it's a way to keep their family's culture alive.

Let's bust some common myths and explore the incredible advantages of nurturing multilingual skills in our children.

Myth 1: Bilingual Kids Get Confused

Truth: Nope! Studies show that bilingual kids are great at knowing which language to use. Their brains can switch between languages easily, which is really smart! Don't worry if your child mixes languages as they speak sometimes. It's normal. The more they practice, the better they will become.

Myth 2: Speaking Two or More Languages Creates Learning Delays

Truth: Multilingual kids learn languages just as fast as kids who only speak one language. Their brains are really good at handling lots of words and rules at the same time.

Myth 3: Multilingual Children Are Not Ready for School in English

Truth: Many parents worry about this, but there is no need to use the language your child will use at school at home. Your child will get enough exposure to English at school to learn it quickly.

Myth 4: Multilingual Kids Are Unusual

Truth: Most of the world's population speaks more than one language. In Oregon, 18.9% of children 5-17 years old speak more than one language. The rate of bilingualism is growing as more and more families discover the benefits of raising bilingual children!

Myth 5: It's Too Late to Learn Another Language

Truth: It's never too late! Even if you start later,



your child can still learn another language and get all the brain benefits. Learning languages is like any other skill. To do it well, children need lots of practice and encouragement.

Here are some ways that learning two or more languages benefits our children.

Benefit 1: Better Thinking Skills

Bilingual kids are great at solving problems, doing more than one thing at a time, and developing creative ideas.

Benefit 2: Improved Brain Skills

Knowing two or more languages helps with remembering things, paying attention, and switching between tasks. These skills are very helpful in school and real life.

Benefit 3: Understanding Different People

Being multilingual helps kids appreciate different cultures and understand people better. They learn more about the world and how people are similar or different.

Benefit 4: Better Language Skills

Learning two or more languages helps kids have bigger vocabularies, speak better, and understand how languages work.

Benefit 5: Keeping the Brain Healthy

Studies show that being multilingual might help keep the brain healthy as people age. It's like exercising for the brain!

Bonus Benefit: Better Pay and Job Opportunities

Approximately 66% of hiring managers said that bilingualism is considered one of the most attractive skills. People who speak more than one language can earn 5% to 20% more money than those who only speak one language. Knowing more than one language is a big advantage in the job market!



Here are some tips for helping your child learn two or more languages at home:

Keep Practicing: Encourage your child to use their languages regularly at home. Consistent practice helps your child learn and remember them better. Look for schools, child care programs, and bilingual programs where your child can practice their languages with others.

Make Learning Fun: Play games, sing songs, watch TV, and read books in both languages. Consider joining a multilingual playgroup. Learning should be fun and exciting!

Be Patient and Encouraging: Learning languages takes time, so be patient with your child. If they mix languages in a sentence, try modeling the correct sentence by saying, "Oh, you meant . . .". If your child says, "I want leche," you can say, "Oh quisiste decir quiero leche." or "Oh, you meant "I want milk". Instead of feeling embarrassed because they didn't say it right, they will be encouraged to say it again the correct way.

When we encourage our children to use multiple languages, we give them a fantastic gift that goes beyond just words. Let's celebrate all the different languages and cultures and help our bilingual kids' minds grow and shine!

Resources for Multilingual Families

- [International Moms Group](#) (Corvallis, Oregon)
- [Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center](#)
- [Arcoiris Cultural](#) (Lincoln County)
- [Local Dual Language Day Care and Preschool Programs](#)
- [Multilingual Storytime at the Library](#) – Contact your library to find out more about their programming!
- [BBC: Bilingual babies and speaking multiple languages at home](#)
- [Colorín Colorado](#): A bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners
- [Multilingual Parenting](#): Information, and advice, for parents and educators raising bilingual and multilingual children.

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