

## **If you think your child could have a speech or language difficulty:**

Speak to your Public Health Nurse about any concerns you might have, or refer your child to your local HSE health centre to see a Speech and Language Therapist.



Compiled by: Speech and Language  
Therapy Dept. Community Services  
Dublin West LHO

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## **Do you speak more than one language at home?**



A guide for  
parents/carers of  
multilingual children

Compiled by: Speech and Language  
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Children who can speak and/or understand two or more languages from an early age are 'multilingual'.

Learning to speak the family language links your child to their cultural heritage.

Research has shown that children learning two languages at a young age often have better problem-solving skills.

We do not know of any disadvantage to growing up using more than one language. Multilingualism does not cause speech or language difficulties.



## **If your child speaks/understands more than one language, you may expect to see the following:**



1. Their language skills may be slightly slower to develop at first.
2. They may know/use more words in one language than another. If only one language is considered, they may appear to know fewer words.
3. They may use words from both languages in one sentence, or mix sentences from both languages in their conversation.
4. When they first learn a new language, they may go through a 'silent' period (when they listen but don't talk).

## **What can you do to support your child?**

Continue to speak your first language with your child (even if each parent has a different first language).

This will lead to a better interaction with your child.

It will help your child to learn a new language if they have a well developed first language.

Talk with your child about what you are doing in everyday activities (eg. Mealtimes, bath time, dressing).

Have fun with rhymes, songs, games and stories from your own language.

Show an interest in all languages spoken at home, even when your child gets older and goes to school.