



# **The Park Slope Parents Guide to Raising Bilingual Children**

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*Language is so much more than just words, but an entire history and belief system that is not obvious to an outsider.*

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## The Park Slope Parents Guide to Raising Bilingual Children

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*“I try to remind myself about how huge of a gift it is for a child to have two languages growing up, and feel like it’s worth the sacrifices.”*

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So says a Park Slope Parents member, summing up the challenging yet beautiful journey of raising a bilingual child. The positive effects of bilingualism on all areas of life, from brainpower to academic and career success, have been [well documented](#)—but if you’re reading this, you don’t need to be convinced, and you’re already gearing up to give your child the gift of two languages.

In this guide, you’ll find insights to help you at all stages of the journey, courtesy of the Park Slope Parents [Raising & Nurturing Bilingual Children panel](#):

- [Ilana Shydlo](#), MS, CCC-SLP, TSSLD-BEA, Speech-Language Pathologist and Bilingual Parenting Consultant
- Jennifer Wilkin, Founder and Head of School at [Science, Language & Arts International School](#)
- Sarah Creider, EdD, Applied Linguistics and TESOL, Teachers College, Columbia University.



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## Demystifying bilingualism and early language development

In many cultures, as Jennifer Wilkin, Founder and Head of School at [Science, Language & Arts International School](#), points out, it's completely normal to grow up with multiple languages. If you're looking to raise a bilingual or multilingual child, there's no need to think of the road ahead as "teaching" them a new language. Rather, you're just allowing them to do what children do, which is learn a language—or in this case, more than one. The process of bilingual language development is the same as development for just one language: Your child's brain is powerful enough to absorb both languages and make sense of them at once.

Sarah Creider (EdD, Applied Linguistics and TESOL, Teachers College, Columbia University) explains that language learning begins in the womb. Research shows us that, before babies are born, they are already starting to learn the soundscape that makes up the languages around them. They are also becoming familiar with the voices of the people around them. All in all, they are getting a head start on attuning themselves to language.



When babies are first born, they're able to distinguish between pretty much any set of sounds in any language. (This is a task that can be difficult for adults—for instance, an adult learning English for the first time might have a hard time distinguishing between a hard and soft "th" sound, since that dichotomy of sounds is specific to the language.) By the time a child is about ten months old, however, they're starting to narrow their focus to whatever sound systems they're used to hearing around them. This is around the time they start babbling—which they'll do in the sounds of whatever language they're learning. If they're learning English, they'll babble in English; if they're learning Mandarin, they'll babble in Mandarin.

Next comes the phase of learning grammar and figuring out the rules of language. This is when they figure out that "toe" means "toe," not "foot" or "wiggly thing." This is also when some fears and misconceptions of bilingual language learning can come into play on the part of parents—so let's delve in and calm some common concerns that may arise during this time.

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## Myths vs. realities of a bilingual household

We fear that which we don't know, so it's not surprising that—in a majority monolingual country like the United States—myths would abound about the realities of raising a bilingual child. Here's some wisdom from [Ilana Shydlo](#) (MS, CCC-SLP, TSSLD-BEA; Speech-Language Pathologist and Bilingual Parenting Consultant) to dispel any common misconceptions you might be harboring. You can check out even more bilingual myths (and the truths behind them) [here](#) on Ilana's blog and [here](#) on the American Academy of Pediatrics website.

### ***Myth #1: Being bilingual leads to speech delays***

Parents often ask whether bilingual children start speaking later or suffer delays in their speech development. The answer to this worrisome question is “no.” As a general rule, bilingual children reach language and speech-related milestones on the same timeline as do their monolingual peers. Furthermore, bilingual and monolingual kids experience speech delays in equal proportions, and the idea of the young brain not being able to handle multiple languages at a time is misguided. That said, if you do have concerns about your bilingual child experiencing delays, it is advised to see a Speech-Language Pathologist who speaks both of your child's languages.

[For more, check out “[Speech and Language Development Milestones for Kids](#)” on Bilingual Kidspot.]

One key difference between the way bilingual and monolingual kids experience language development, though, is that you might see bilingual kids mixing languages—speaking in more than one tongue throughout the course of a sentence or thought. Which brings us to Myth #2...

### ***Myth #2: Mixing languages will confuse my child***

On the contrary, mixing languages is completely normal and expected, especially for kids between the ages of two and four. It doesn't end there, though. Adults mix languages all the time as well, and the practice even has a name: [code-switching](#), which is used to refer to switching both between languages and between linguistic norms (e.g., accents or vernacular).

### ***Myth #3: Children pick up language like a sponge***

There is some truth to this one, but most people underestimate just how much consistent language exposure kids need to become fluent. Children need significant long-term exposure to both languages to become fluently bilingual. The sponge metaphor not only creates an unrealistic image of how easy it is for kids to learn a language, but also implies that the ability to absorb and assimilate a language ends when childhood does. In fact, it's never too late to learn a language.

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## Bilingual family configurations



### **Terminology check: Majority vs. minority language**

For the purposes of this guide, “majority language” refers to English, while “minority language” refers to whatever non-English language the speaker has.

Bilingual families come in all shapes and sizes, and there are no prerequisites or barriers to entry: For instance, it is possible to raise a bilingual child even if neither parent speaks the target language. That said, here are a few common configurations and parameters, courtesy of [Ilana Shydlo](#), that might serve as a guide while you consider who in your family will speak what, where, and when.

**Minority language at home:** At home, parent(s) and child speak only the minority language, while the majority language is used at school and in the community. For more info, check out [this article](#) from Bilingual Kidspot.

**One person/one language:** One caregiver speaks the majority language, while the other speaks a minority language to a child. For example, one caregiver speaks English and one speaks English and French, but only speaks French when speaking to the child. For more info on one person/one language configurations, check out [this article](#) from Bilingual Kidspot.

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**Mixing languages:** One or both caregivers switch back and forth situationally between languages—a scenario that can be appealing because it may come more naturally and take less mental energy to implement.

**School- and caretaker-based:** There are a myriad of ways to link language learning to situations outside of the parent-child relationship, which might be particularly apt if one or both parents are not fluent in or do not speak the minority language. This could take the form of bilingual day school, nannies who speak the minority language, or private language tutors, to name a few.

**Time-based or place-based:** Speaking a language is day- or time-specific for the former, or context-specific for the latter.

As you are considering the practical dimensions of your quest to raise a bilingual child, think not only about what will create the most exposure to the minority language, but also how the configuration you want to try will balance with the rest of your life.

For more, explore the chapter on [finding the right school for your bilingual child](#).



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## Fostering bilingual learning

Understanding the importance of immersion and exposure is one thing, but translating (pun intended) those concepts into reality is a whole other ball game. Have no fear: Sarah Creider is here to offer three simple yet powerful techniques for you to build your child's foundation from the ground up in any and all of the languages you choose to impart.

First of all, a note on **questions**. In our culture, many of us are raised to ask questions, which is a tendency that carries over into how we talk to our children: "What's that?" "Can you say what that is?" "What do you see on the page?" Questions like this set up an immediate power dynamic, in which the asker has a lot of power, and the answerer has very little. With this in mind, and with the existing power differentiation that exists between caregiver and child, questions are often really **tests**.

Too many questions can set up a situation where everything is either right or wrong, and so can **empty praise**—another thing to avoid when imparting a new language to your child. If you say "Good job" one time but not another, your child may worry that they didn't do a good job, creating a sense of insecurity.

To be clear, it's not that you should never give praise or ask questions, but do try to think critically about why you are asking those questions and what types of conversations ensue after you ask them. When it comes to languages, too much testing can train your child not to take risks in their learning, which impairs their ability to make gains through trial and error. To that end, here are some alternative methods of communication you can use to help your child create lasting bonds between their language and the physical world.

### ***Technique #1: Narrating***

From the time your child is sitting up and starting to babble, you can begin narrating, which is exactly what it sounds like: speaking out loud as you interact with your kid and with the world around you, helping them focus in on what is happening. To narrate, just make sure that you are talking about everything you do, therefore immersing your child in a "language bath." For some of us who are naturally more quiet, this may take practice, but don't get discouraged—it will start to come naturally.

Ideally, you want narration to sound conversational and interactive, but don't use it as a test ("What color is this?"). In fact, there's no need to ask questions at all. Rather, just keep a steady stream going as you move through your day ("Now it's time to put on your coat. Your coat is puffy and blue! Now I'm going to pick up your arm. Now I'm helping you put your arm in your sleeve. I'm zipping up your coat now. The zipper makes a funny noise..."). Your child's task is to connect the abstract realm of language to the concrete world around them, and by keeping up a narration, you are offering them an enormous amount of language to help them build that link.

**Tip:** Each of these techniques can be used for any language or languages, and each is most effective when you keep in mind **interaction** and **responsiveness** as central goals of your linguistic practice.

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### ***Technique #2: Embroidery***

This is another technique that you can begin as soon as your child learns to talk, and it entails simply taking what they are saying and giving it back to them with more complexity—in other words, embroidering on your child’s raw linguistic material. For example, if your kid sees a puppy on the street and says “dog,” you could reply, “Oh look, yes, that’s a small dog! Remember yesterday we saw a big dog, but this dog is very small. This dog is walking quickly down the street with its human, and look, there’s a little girl walking with them too, just like you...”

Rather than putting your child on the spot by correcting or prompting them, embroidering is you echoing their words back, embellishing them with complexity and vocabulary. While it might feel unnatural at first, the more you embroider, the more comfortable you will feel using it as a way to interact with your child on a daily basis.



### ***Technique #3: Pointing and naming***

This technique is specific to reading with your child, regardless of whether they are old enough to follow along with the words themselves. To prepare, first make sure you’re snuggled up next to your child with both your eyes and theirs on the book. Being next to someone is a less hierarchical position than being face-to-face, and it will help relax your kid so that they can better absorb the information coming their way.

Start by making one general statement about the book: “This is a book about cats.” Then, as you read, point at specific things on the page while naming them: “There are three cats on this page, one, two, three. This cat is wearing red socks, and look, you’re wearing red socks too.” Match your finger pointing to the words exactly—you’re helping your child both focus their attention on the page and connect language with the physical world. Pointing and naming can continue with increased complexity as your child grows older, and then one day before you know it, you’ll be reading together!

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## Finding the right school for your bilingual child

Brooklyn boasts a rich and varied linguistic landscape. Many languages in the local area have reached a critical mass of speakers, such that a wide range of dual-language programs (DLPs) for preschoolers and elementary-age kids are easily accessible. For instance, in District 15 (which encompasses Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, and parts of Boerum Hill and Fort Greene) alone, there are 15 Spanish programs, five Chinese programs, two French programs, and one Arabic program.

The prevalence of DLPs not only indicates Brooklyn's diversity, but also shows the high priority families here place on preserving their native languages or gifting their children with bilingual brains—both wonderful and worthy pursuits. Nevertheless, as a parent, keeping up with the special considerations of a dual-language trajectory does add an additional layer of complexity to managing your child's education. From Jennifer Wilkin, Founder and Head of School at [Science, Language & Arts International School](#), here are some thoughts on navigating the local dual-language schooling scene.

For babies and toddlers, informal dual-language playdates and playgroups abound. Be sure to [join PSP's Culture/Heritage/Language Groups](#) to access all sorts of opportunities to connect with fellow bilingual families, from member-driven meet-ups to potlucks planned by the PSP Events Team. Supplement your PSP membership with Yahoo, Google, and Facebook groups, and join all of the relevant listservs you can. Use your online communities to seek out language immersion playgroups, which help to foster a fun context for the minority language.

If you're looking to enroll your bilingual child in an immersion daycare, be aware of the realities of these types of programs, as they vary widely. At some programs, the idea of an immersion daycare is that some or all of the staff speaks the target language, but with partial immersion daycares, many staffers end up lapsing into English simply because it's easier to do so. If it's important to you, you'll need to find a program that specifically prioritizes speaking the target language rather than switching into (and staying in) English.

When it comes time for preschool, kindergarten, and beyond, it's key to be savvy about the resources available to you as well as the realities and quirks of your local dual-language programs. Many people use the term "dual-language" to talk about any school that offers instruction in more than one language, but it can be misleading. In fact, "bilingual" is more of an umbrella term, while "dual-language" is a specific model seen in public schools.

[Visit the NYC DOE website](#) for a full list of bilingual learning options in Brooklyn. This page provides a list of dual-language programs such as the ones discussed here, as well as Transitional Bilingual Education programs, which are designed to gradually transition English-language learners into an English-only instruction class.

In its purest form, dual-language works on a 50-50 model, from 3-K through elementary school. The idea is that 50% of the class comes in already being bilingual, while 50% speak English only. In theory, the former group is made up of English-language learners (ELLs) who are stronger in their home language than they are in English, and that both halves of the classroom help each other gain strength in the target language—that target being English for the ELLs and a non-English language for the English-speakers. In reality, however, it is difficult to find bilingual kids who are not more comfortable in English, and it is easy for the classroom to lapse into English.

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In terms of instruction, many dual-language programs operate on a side-by-side model. That means there are two teachers—one English-speaking teacher and one teacher fluent in the minority language—who teach the class on alternating days. Ultimately, the entire curriculum is taught side-by-side, with each lesson introduced in one language and then the other.

In a variation on the side-by-side model, some dual-language programs alternate between languages several times per day, with one bilingual teacher switching back and forth between the target language and English. To signify the switch, they might put on a prop—like a pin, scarf, or hat—while speaking one language, and take it off for the other. Most dual-language programs in the city start out side-by-side and move to the one-teacher model later on, but as in all aspects of education, there is a wide range of variation.



Alternatively, you may consider placing your bilingual child in an immersion program, often referred to as a 90-10 model: namely, 90 percent of instruction in the target language, plus 10 percent of English Language Arts. These programs are mostly found in the private school landscape. As is often the case in daycares and schools, however, the balance tends to tip toward English. For immersion programs, the percentage of target-language instruction typically declines as the students get older and require more English reading and writing skills for their academic work, ending up at a 50-50 or 60-40 balance by third or fourth grade.

On the other hand, some programs strive to allow for a seamless transfer back into families' home country—which involves maintaining not only the target language but also following the curriculum used in the home country. Schools with this model, such as [Lycée Français de New York](#), are based on the understanding that enrolled families are only in the United States for a limited time, and that they want to transition smoothly back to their home country without curricular or linguistic challenges for their school-age children. If this type of program represents the traditional end of the bilingual-education spectrum, then the progressive side is embodied by schools with innovative curricular models, such as, for example, a bilingual immersion Montessori school. In addition, some schools are

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not technically immersion or dual-language programs but still have a deeper focus on language than you might see elsewhere—for instance, several periods of language class per week.

Regardless of your program's specifics, you're not unlikely to face a challenge when it comes to encouraging your child to practice and grow more comfortable in the target language. Even if you do not speak English as your primary language at home, kids are constantly exposed to English when out and about in the world, so internal motivation is crucial to keep the minority language alive and kicking. (That's where some of the tips in this guide—from Ilana Shydlo, Sarah Creider and PSP members—come in.)

*Consistency is key, because as soon as they start school, English will become the dominant language and then it can become a battle to keep them interested in the second language.*

Looking ahead to middle school, some dual-language programs still exist, but at this point in your child's educational journey, the focus shifts more toward hitting curricular benchmarks. Kids often lose interest in language learning as they move through middle school and into high school, in part because language grades are not considered with the same weight as other core subjects in college applications. In addition, particularly with college-application pressures, kids may find it challenging to maintain language study on top of all of their other interests and extracurriculars. Therefore, the middle and high school years are a very easy time for kids to let go of their language learning, meaning that extra effort is needed on your part to help them maintain the internal motivation mentioned above.

Browse the [readings and resources](#) chapter of this guide for local language-learning resources and opportunities!

In pursuing this goal, you can tap some of the many opportunities that exist in the local area for out-of-school language learning. One-on-one tutoring can support deep learning and provide a personalized focus, while small-group tutoring is better for practicing social interaction in the minority language. Especially helpful for fostering internal motivation are content-area classes—such as cooking, filmmaking, or dance—taught in the target language. And during the summer, consider immersion day or sleepaway camps to supercharge your child's learning and increase their comfort in the minority language.



**Tip:** As you navigate the wild world of New York City schooling, remember that PSP has plenty of resources to guide you, including:

[The Park Slope Parents Guides to Kindergarten and Preschool](#)

Our extensive library of [articles on Childcare and Education](#).

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## Tips, strategies, and experiences from Park Slope Parents members

Queries from PSP members always spawn a rich array of responses from fellow parents who are navigating the ins and outs of raising a bilingual child. As you browse, keep in mind the fact that every family is different and every situation is unique. Some of the experiences below might conflict with each other or with the advice of the aforementioned experts.

### ***PSP Member Question #1: Who speaks what at home?***

“My wife and I are expecting our first child any day now (she’s due this Friday!) and we’re hoping to raise him as a bilingual English and Mandarin speaker.

I’ve been self-studying Mandarin for about two years, and my wife was born and raised in LA, but her parents came from Taiwan, so she grew up hearing and speaking a decent amount of Mandarin.

The most consistent piece of advice we’ve heard about raising bilingual children is to take the ‘one parent, one language’ approach (i.e., have each of us only speak in one of the languages). Unfortunately, neither of us feels like we could be as expressive as we’d like to be in Mandarin, so that doesn’t feel like a realistic option.

Has anyone been in a similar situation and/or have advice for this?”



The plan that we have come up with is that:

- My husband generally speaks to the baby in English
- I speak exclusively in Chinese to the baby (as my Chinese is stronger and I’m more gung ho about this project) when we are alone—I can’t bring myself to do it around people besides my husband because I just feel too weird being a non-Chinese person doing that, so I switch to English then
- When my husband is feeling enthusiastic, he joins in the Chinese at home and we speak Chinese to each other in front of the baby so that the baby can see that it really is a communication method!
- We try to get Chinese babysitters from time to time
- I read him lots of Chinese books
- I use [this service](#)--HIGHLY recommended, as it gives you all the words you need to use with a baby. Try not to be offended by the “.mom” website address!! Anyone can use it, and it’s really great.



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We have a five month old son who I am exclusively speaking to in Chinese and since I am just starting out as well, I can't say that I have any definitive answers for you. But for what it's worth, I've been doing it for five months and it's been going OK so far. I guess it depends on what her level of language is, and how confident she feels speaking, but I would say if she is conversational, and can communicate the basic things that you would need to say to a baby (trust me, it's less than you think, there's a lot of repetition when it comes to taking care of an infant! ) for her to just jump in and try it and see how it feels. She may surprise herself with how naturally it comes, especially if she heard and spoke Chinese going up. And then just commit to speaking only in that language for some period of time. and then after that time you can reassess. Nothing about parenting is perfect, and there are times that I feel like I make mistakes or I am not saying exactly what I want to say all the time or that I don't have the same sense of humor and timing and breadth of knowledge as I would in English. But **I try to remind myself about how huge of a gift it is for a child to have two languages growing up, and feel like it's worth the sacrifices.** My child might figure me out before long, and it might be sad the day that he does, but until then my hope is to try to take it as far as I can. **The main thing that I tell myself is that doing it is much more important than doing it perfectly.** I often think of all those parents out there who come from different countries and raise their kids in a second language. They do it, and they find a way. As I said, it's been going better than I thought so far, but come talk to me in 2 to 3 years and I might have a different answer for you!

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We heard the one-parent-one-language advice too but did not execute it consistently. I think for us, the most likely success factor was hiring a nanny who used predominantly Mandarin and could pretend not to know English. Our daughter used Mandarin as her primary language for a few years until she went to preschool every weekday. Then, in a month, she switched to English-primary. Since then, we have had her take Chinese classes. She can read/write more characters than her ABC dad (me) but doesn't get a lot of practice. Now her English reading/writing is years ahead of her Chinese.

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For more info and suggestions on classes, check out the chapters in this guide on:

[Finding the right school for your bilingual child](#)

[Readings and resources](#)



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**PSP Member Question #2: How can I help my child absorb the target language?**

“My husband and I are raising our now 14 month old bilingual (English-Italian). I speak to her in English and he in Italian; however, he works in the restaurant business and is therefore not around a lot so we are both a little concerned about how well she’ll be able to absorb Italian.

I am also fluent in Italian (though it’s not my native tongue) so my husband and I speak to each other in Italian in front of our daughter. We figure she gets exposed to the language this way too.

For any experts (or those with experience) on the topic, do you know if it’s too late for me to start speaking to our daughter in Italian? Would you recommend it?”

**Some members recommend following the one-parent, one-language approach...**

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I speak English to my son, my wife speaks French, and we go back and forth between languages when we speak to each other. For direct talk, to me it makes sense that my son associates one language with one parent and another language with another, so that even if an object has two different sounding words, there’s a consistency he can hang onto. So I generally stick to English when I speak to him.

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**Answering only in the minority language...**

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My husband speaks to our five-year-old daughter exclusively in Italian and I speak to her in English. He and I speak to each other in English. My daughter and I spend at least a month in Italy every summer and I speak Italian to everyone there so she knows I can speak it but I still speak English to her. **My husband spends at most an hour a day with her during the week and often no time at all due to his work schedule however she is completely fluent in Italian. I believe the reason is because he always insisted on her answering him in Italian, she NEVER speaks to him in English and never has.** She has many friends whose parents speak to them in a foreign language and they answer in English and their level of fluency and comfort is nowhere near hers. I was told to stick with my native language so that is why I don’t speak to her in Italian and, frankly, when I do she makes fun of my accent.

I believe he must ALWAYS speak Italian to her and insist that she ALWAYS speaks Italian to him until it is just natural. I’m not sure if anyone can back me up out there but in my experience that has been much more important than the fact that he doesn’t spend a lot of time with her. My daughter can switch mid-sentence...even mid-word...when she is in conversation with both of us without batting an eyelash because it is just natural for her at this point.

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### *Saturating as much as possible with the minority language...*



I would like to offer some advice, although it [may] not be strictly ‘by the books.’ I am bilingual myself (Polish-German) and my husband and I are raising [our] daughter bilingual (Polish-English).

**In both cases there was one ‘stronger’ language, the official language of the country of residence** (in my case German, in my daughter’s case English). **So there is always a struggle for the ‘weaker’ language to break through.** In my case it was easier. We spoke Polish at home, and German anywhere else. I still struggled with Polish: I would understand it, but I was refusing to speak it. But when we moved back to Poland when I was eight years old I picked it up with no effort.

I feel that with my daughter the challenges will be greater. She only hears Polish from me (my husband does not speak it), and she picks up lots of English at daycare. If my husband spoke Polish I am 100% convinced we would speak Polish exclusively at home.

This is why I would recommend that you do switch to speaking exclusively Italian with your child, to expose her as much as possible to the ‘disadvantaged’ language. And spend [as] much time as you can in Italy with her, which does not sound like a terrible chore :) Buona fortuna.



I have a 22 month old daughter who speaks mostly in Spanish right now, but understands everything in English. I am at home with her all day, so we speak Spanish. My husband speaks to her in English, and he and I speak English to each other. There is no mixing of languages. Either we speak English or Spanish, so there is a clear distinction between languages. We also go to a Spanish music class once a week, and try to be around friends who speak Spanish. I buy children’s books in Spanish when I travel to Mexico, and I read to her all the time in Spanish.

My sister has a daughter who is almost 11. They were very consistent with her - no mixing of languages. She spoke Spanish with my sister and family, who live in California. She spoke only English with her dad. They read a lot, sang songs in Spanish, etcetera. My niece is fluent in both languages, with a very slight accent when she speaks Spanish and an excellent vocabulary ... **Consistency is key, because as soon as they start school, English will become the dominant language and then it can become a battle to keep them interested in the second language.** I think that taking trips to one’s country of origin with some frequency is also very useful, as well as surrounding them with books [in both] languages.



### *Starting early...*



We’re raising our kids bilingual French-English. My husband is native French speaker and speaks only French to the kids. I am a dual national (my mom is French) and am basically fluent. My main piece of advice is that, if you want to speak Italian to your daughter, start soon! By the time I decided I wanted to [do] this, my son was 2 and too used to me speaking English.



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### *Keeping your minority language skills up...*

“ Though I speak French, my English is still much better than my French, so I decided to speak English to our first child. By the time our second child came along, 2 years later, I regretted ‘wasting’ my ability to speak French and tried to switch to French. But, my then-toddler was angry when I spoke French to him. So the compromise was that I switched to speaking French with my husband and this way the kids do indeed have greater exposure to the language. The biggest challenge is for me – I always have to ‘decide’ who I’m addressing when I speak – English for the kids, French for my husband – **so it’s some mental gymnastics**. I’m with the kids more, plus they have English-speaking babysitters and are in regular English public school – so they are definitely English dominant. But, they understand pretty much everything in French. And, our older child, now 8, will speak French when he’s with French-only speakers. We try to go to France once a year, and have French books, movies, etc.

### *Not letting yourself be pressured by your kids to stop speaking the minority language...*

“ I myself regretted that my mother, who is native French-speaker, stopped speaking French to us when we were growing up mainly because my siblings and I badgered her to stop. She started out speaking out only French, but because we were growing up in a very homogenous American suburb (with very little, if any, non-English speakers!), we were typical kids wanting to be like others and didn’t want to be the “weirdos” speaking French at home. Only later did we appreciate how lucky we were!

### *Immersing your kids in the language...*

“ What helped me really learn the language was spending time in France. Our kids’ French also always improves a lot when we spend time there (though we don’t stay for visits longer than 1-2 weeks). Even if there is not total consistency at home (that is, if they are only hearing the language from one parent, etc.) being around the language from an early age definitely makes a difference – even after my mom stopped speaking French to me, French class in school was much easier for me than for my classmates. **People always talk about the need for consistency and I agree that is the ideal but I think even imperfect exposure to the language is very helpful though for sure, the more immersion the better.** Oh, and I found the concerns about language delay to be a non-issue. Our first child was pretty verbal early and has remained so. Our second took a bit longer to start speaking but was not delayed per se and both of them have strong English language skills.



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**PSP Member Question #3: How should I handle language etiquette when out and about?**

"I have a 2-year-old daughter with whom I speak only Russian. She speaks English at daycare and in the outside world, and generally answers me in English, although she fully understands what I am saying.

When we are with friends and family, I still only address her in Russian (although I will address her and a friend, for example, in English together). I've started to realize that some relatives seem annoyed by this, as they can't understand what I'm saying when I speak to her, and they feel excluded. On the other hand, I really want my daughter to hear me speak in Russian as much as possible, and I fear that she'll lose whatever Russian she's learned if I start speaking English to her when we're with others.

Am I being rude? What is the etiquette here?"

**Members share their experiences...**

“

We are a bilingual family Spanish/English. My husband is from Central America and is the fluent speaker. I speak very basic Spanish, but since I am home with my little one, I do my best to speak Spanish to him as much as possible. It's been great for both of us. I try [to] say everything in English and Spanish, or to just use Spanish, but often around family or friends it seems kind of strange or disingenuous to speak Spanish. No one has said anything to try to dissuade me, and I do still speak, but **it does feel a little like a juggling act to be inclusive and yet try to continue to speak.**

”

“

Every family is unique in method but it is always worth the effort to expose kids to languages, even if for a short time. Especially with languages that have very nuanced tonal varieties, tuning the ear to those subtleties at a young age can be a great advantage later in life if they choose to pick up the full language as teens or adults.

**In the end, if the kids speak another language together, it's not the worst.** You are still actively demonstrating the language(s) with a richness of accent, context, traditions and particularly structure (i.e., slang vs formal) and that is priceless. Language is so much more than just words, but an entire history and belief system that is not obvious to an outsider.

”

**And address concerns about rudeness...**

“

I have a 6 month old and try to only speak my native Icelandic with him, but find myself speaking English to him when we are around others, as I'm afraid of being rude or alienating. Def going to try to stick to my plan of Icelandic only from now on. It's important to me that my son at least understand the language.

”

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***...including the importance of setting expectations:***

“

I'm Italian and I ONLY speak Italian to my kids. I was embarrassed/felt guilty at the beginning when there were non-Italian people speaking around but then **I decided that my kids knowing the language was way more important than people being annoyed.**

Something I started doing and that I encourage you to do as well - set the right expectations and explain [to] people around you that if you speak Russian [it's] not because you want to cut them [off] of a conversation but because that's the only way you can ensure your kids speak the language and that's extremely important to you.

People not only understand but are also supportive once you explain the situation and by doing so you also lift a weight off your mind and won't feel guilty anymore.

”



“

We lived in France when the kids were very young such as the age of your child, and more formal in social situations. When we would arrive somewhere new I would always work into the conversation early that I speak exclusively to my children in English. This way when I would talk to my kids they were at least prepared and feel less of the 'are they talking about me?' issue. I found more people were intrigued and asked questions about raising children multilingual than annoyed. As for my family, after a few years when they realized the dual language mode wasn't leaving, they adjusted.

”

***Making a deliberate effort to be inclusive can help...***

“

I speak German with my bilingual son (German-English) and have been pretty consistent in speaking only German to him and repeating what I said in English to him if there are kids/people present and it's about them too. My non-German speaking husband has been a trouper since I do the same thing at home. At the beginning I was hesitant to only speak German since I didn't want to make people feel excluded, but I found that the solution of repeating it in English was a good compromise. And guess what: my son's first words are in German! I'm proud (and pleasantly surprised) since during the day [he] speaks English with his Dad & at the daycare.

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“

When conversation would involve another child that didn't speak English I would repeat myself in each language, so first English (towards my kid), then in French (towards the other kids). This still allowed me to keep an 'English only' continuity with my child while living in a place that required me to speak in another language with them around.

We quickly realized this strategy was necessary at the dinner table also where our conversation runs in both languages. To us, there is no break in conversation but my poor parents were bewildered hearing only half of the conversation! LOL **Yes, the conversations are slower but I summarize rather than repeat verbatim what was said for the English speakers about the French part that was spoken.** Similar to how you would explain a term or concept more in-depth to someone while in the middle of a story.

As the kids got older, friends and family became used to the split conversations and even started a game to guess what was being said. Now that my kids are 13 and 10, and their language skills are solid in both languages when we have guests who don't speak French, the entire family switches to English. Ditto when we are around French family although my kids now correct my French.

”



#### *As can understanding cultural nuances...*

“

I am fully tri-lingual (Russian, English, Hebrew) and have lived in Russia (as a kid) and then in Israel before coming to the US about 15 years ago. I think the question of a different language is both personal and cultural. **I think that in European countries where speaking more than one language is the norm, not one would probably raise an eyebrow.** Here in the US, on the other hand, I find that sometimes native American only-English speakers can be pretty stuck on what they probably may think [of] 'the superiority' of the English language. Kind of like: we accept it in general and it's wonderful, but I don't want it near me b/c obviously people switch to another language to speak about me/in order to have me feel left out. I have encountered this first hand as well.

What I would recommend is to choose your battles and your settings. I speak Russian and Hebrew to my kids: Russian mostly when it's just me, Hebrew with my husband around b/c he understands it but not Russian. We spend a lot of time with his parents (they live nearby and help us) and we switch to mostly English near them, although I try my best to at least use Hebrew and then repeat in English so that they understand (even when directed to kids). My father-in-law actually speaks Hebrew well, but he spends less time with us on his own. Other family/friend events: depends on the situation. With English-only speaking friends, if it's directed to my kids in the group of other English-only kids - I speak English or I may repeat both (it's easier for other kids esp if they are at our house).

”

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**PSP Member Question #4: What's the best way to navigate language learning and speaking between siblings?**

"[My son] now has a 6-month old brother and he only talks to [his brother] in English at home. They're in the same daycare together so I don't think he needs to speak exclusively Spanish, but at home I'd prefer if they spoke Spanish if they're playing with each other. What has everyone's experience been with older siblings and younger siblings?"

“

You can't unfortunately control how siblings speak between themselves, it's really a separate relationship that they have between themselves. I know this from personal experience: when we moved to Israel from Russia my parents insisted that we speak only Russian at home so we don't forget, but they absolutely couldn't control how my sister and I interacted, no matter how much they tried. As soon as we were proficient enough in Hebrew (probably within a year or so), we were only speaking Hebrew to each other, but yes continued speaking Russian to our parents. We were 11 and 7 when we moved there. **I would recommend instead of telling him how to speak to his brother, to continue speaking to both of them as much as possible in Spanish and teach by example.** If you 'pretend' that the youngest is answering to the oldest - have it be in Spanish, if you show them both how they should play a game - explain both of their sides in Spanish etc.

”

“

When my second kid was born, I spoke to my older one and said that whenever possible, we should try to speak to him in German, so he can also learn our language. Sometimes they now speak in German, especially if they are only with me. But ultimately it will be their choice what language they speak to each other and I can already detect a lot of switching, which perhaps is great in its own way.

”



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**PSP Member Question #5: What are the best strategies to raise a bilingual child when only one parent is bilingual?**

“For those who are raising their kid bilingual when only one parent is bilingual - how are you doing it? What works / what doesn't? I speak Mandarin and English and want to raise my child to speak both but my husband only speaks English. We are expecting next month and unlikely to lean on my extended family for support in the near-term due to covid (my father is high-risk). We are wondering especially how to navigate the first few years before our little one attends school (where we can put him in language immersion programs, summer camps, etc.) Any advice is welcome.”

**Try splitting the languages.**

“ My husband is Swedish and I am American; I do not speak Swedish well but can understand somewhat. We have two boys, one just turned 5 and the other is close to 3yrs. **We have from day 1 had a system in which Pappa (my husband) speaks only Swedish to our boys (well, at least 95% of the time depending on circumstance). I speak English. Family members and friends who speak Swedish are asked to use that language with them.** Both of our boys can completely understand both languages, and are working at speaking Swedish better. We have found a specific time of day (bedtime) where the entire process is conducted in Swedish; he even translates books if my boys want to read an English book. I haven't found this split difficult and my husband has been able to keep it up; it's rather an old habit at this point. In fact I've learned more Swedish in the process and my oldest also likes translating for me if there are multiple Swedes around. Since the boys are getting much more English influence, and are not yet fluently speaking in Swedish, we are in the process of sponsoring a Swedish au pair whom we are asking to do the same language-wise. I highly recommend that you split the languages and speak one each; it is clearer to the kiddos and they can develop an emotional attachment through the language which will certainly help with them becoming native in both if that is the goal. Good luck!

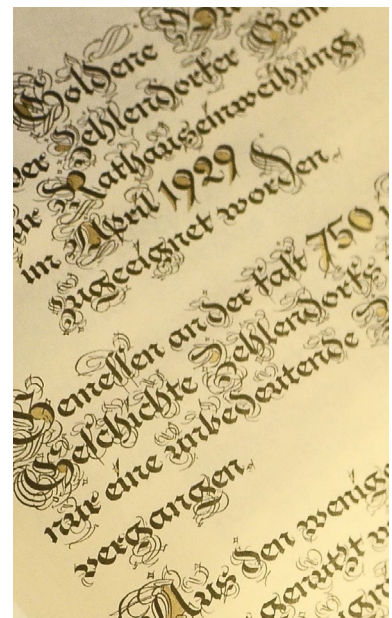
“ We are raising a tri-lingual 5yo.

My husband speaks Italian to her, I speak French. She was in an English speaking nanny share and school had been in English.

**We, parent, stick to our language.** French is mostly used when we all speak together (since my husband's French is WAY better than my Italian - wip!), but she uses Italian when addressing her dad specifically.

Her English is better but she definitely understands and speaks the other two; totally comfortable switching between them and making mistakes like any other 5yo, even with one language only.

Totally worth the initial effort because the habit comes very quickly and will last a long time.



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“



Park Slope Parents



My husband is a native French speaker and from Day 1 exclusively speaks French to our daughter (now almost 4). She is completely fluent in French. We also hired a native French speaking nanny from 2 months on that exclusively speaks French to our daughter. He always chooses the French language option when watching shows or movies with her. We have tons of French music books, which she will sing along with repeatedly <sup>100</sup> in French.

**We spoke with a lot of bilingual / trilingual families when we were expecting and the advice we received from all of them was for one parent to exclusively speak the target language to their child and the other parent speak English/ or other target language exclusively.** Your child will hear you and your partner speaking English as well, along with others.

While my husband only speaks French to our daughter, she primarily responds in English. When pressed, she will respond in French, but that's not her preference/ first instinct. She does the same within the large Francophone community we have as family and friends. Our daughter also goes to a French immersion school and still primarily speaks English back to her dad, other French speakers, also to her teachers. Most of the kids in her class who are also fluent in French, some even coming from <sup>100</sup> French speaking families also respond in English. Kids get so much English, it will inevitably be their dominant / preferred language as long as they live in the US.

I speak a limited amount of French, but have learned a lot from hearing him and others speak with her. She can also translate for me now (basic things) which is super cool.

From our experience it takes dedication, but it's worth it and a wonderful gift you can pass along to your child!



***But don't feel defeated if your child seems to prefer English over the target language...***



I am French but was raised mostly in the US, so I speak both fluently and without accent. My husband is American, understands some French, and is starting to speak a bit more. We speak English with each other. I have spoken exclusively French to my children since birth (Lucien, 3 y/o and Bleuenn, 3 m/o), even in the company of English speakers. This was always natural and felt right for me. I read them books and sing songs in French. Their grandparents speak French with them.

My son, at age 3, is becoming much more verbal very quickly, and it has been difficult and disheartening for me that he mostly speaks English [back] to me. It feels like a bit of a detachment from the intimacy of sharing a language. When I press him, he often knows how to say in French what he just said in English, but it does not come as quickly to mind. That being said, there are certain French words he's learned in the home, with me, that he always uses in conversation, no matter which language he is speaking (ie: "Papa, I want *pâtes*", "Can I change B.'s *couche*?" etc) I would say he's still in very active language acquisition mode, and that this language salad is his way of expressing himself as quickly and clearly as he knows how.



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*...and give yourself grace rather than pressure as the sole bilingual parent.*

“

Spanish is technically my first language but I am more comfortable and fluent in English having immigrated to Canada at age 4. My husband only speaks English (despite our Canadian education where we learned French since Kindergarten) and he has also picked up more Spanish in the last 2.5 years than our 17 years together and encourages her (and I) to speak in Spanish.

My daughter is almost 2.5 and realistically, I'm speaking to her in Spanish maybe 75-80% of the time depending on the day- the more tired I am the harder it is for me to stay in Spanish. Despite my being inconsistent, she can completely understand Spanish but responds solely in English unless I prompt her.

Our families are all on the west coast, so when we video call my family she's used to only hearing them speak in Spanish.

At home, I play music in Spanish, signed up for a bilingual book club, follow bilingual instagram accounts, change language settings for shows she likes to Spanish (waffles and mochi, ada twist) I also translate books in the moment into Spanish though she will say 'no Spanish, only English' when she prefers a book read in English or vice versa.

We decided not to enroll her in a nearby Spanish immersion daycare due to cost and we really like our daycare. She has a few classmates and teachers who speak Spanish and her teachers have commented that when they speak to her she understands them. We're in Bed Stuy and with the pandemic it's been hard to do PSP language meet ups/create a community.

Once she's older I'll look into camps etc, but have also given myself the grace to accept and acknowledge that I can only do so much as the only bilingual parent. **My goal is to build a foundation and foster a love and appreciation for her heritage so that as she gets older she'll have a desire to develop and explore it on her own.** I know that without formal study, she will never be as fluent as I am (I was an AP Spanish teacher for 7 years which is why I have maintained my fluency and can read/write effectively).

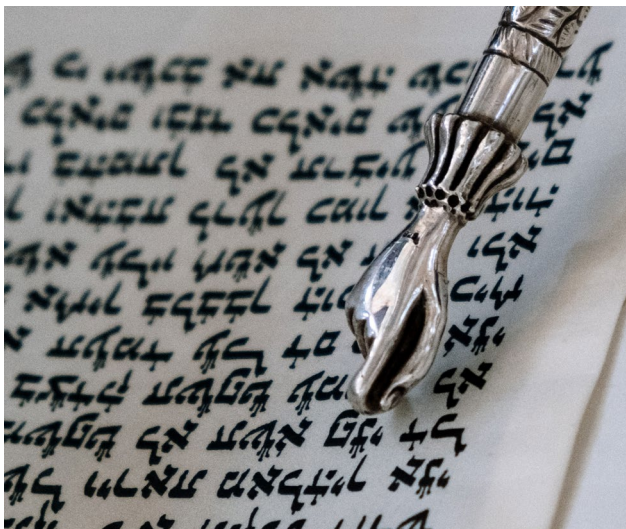
I'm expecting #2 in a few weeks and one big difference this time will be speaking to the baby in Spanish as soon as she's born. It was really awkward for me with my oldest for the first few months because I was so out of practice.

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***Learning language is certainly easier earlier on in life, but also know that it's never too late.***

“ My son is almost 12 months, and my husband and I are trying to raise him trilingual using the one parent one language method (husband: Spanish, me: Japanese, both: English). So far we know he understands some words/commands in both Japanese and Spanish. I don't think it's ever really too late to reinforce the use of another language, but it's definitely easier when they're under the age of 10. I'm very aware that it'll be more of a challenge for me to stick to speaking Japanese with him as he gets older, since I can't fall back on “ I don't speak very good English” excuse like my mom could and do not speak Japanese daily anymore, nor do I keep up much with media or music. Some steps I'm taking beyond reading to him every night in Japanese and having Japanese cartoons on is trying to get more involved with other Japanese speaking parents and making Japanese speaking mom friends and look for Japanese-focused interest groups in the area. My son is only 1/4 Japanese and only has one Japanese grandparent, unlike his Hispanic side, so I know I need to put in the work (socially) to compensate.



***And even if you're not super-strong in the target language, using it will get easier as you go on too!***

“ We are raising our almost 2 year old bilingual. I'm from Ukraine and my first language is Ukrainian. I've spoken to our daughter exclusively in Ukrainian since day 1, while my husband who's American and doesn't know Ukrainian speaks to her in English.

At first, it was very difficult for me to speak to her only in Ukrainian, especially since English has become my preferred language (I immigrated to US when I was 13) and I felt a bit awkward speaking to my daughter in Ukrainian around my husband and his family who don't understand my language, but I made it a goal to just stick to it. Over time it became easier and as another mom in this thread noted, it also improved my native language because I was practicing it all day long. Now, I don't even think about it, I speak to my daughter in Ukrainian at her gym class, on the playground, amongst American friends and family. We also hired a Ukrainian speaking nanny for 2 days a week when my daughter turned 6 months old and that has helped so much.

Our daughter has a richer vocabulary in Ukrainian at the moment because she spends most of the weekdays with me, hearing Ukrainian, but she can understand my husband when he speaks to her in English just as well. Kids are truly amazing. She's just 21 months but somehow has figured out that my husband doesn't speak Ukrainian and uses mostly the English words she knows with him, while talking in Ukrainian with me, my family, and her nanny.

I'm sure it will become more difficult to keep her speaking Ukrainian as she gets older and starts school but I have friends who have managed to raise their kids bilingual even as they got older and I'm hoping we'll be able to as well!

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## Final words of encouragement

This bears repeating: Raising a bilingual child is not an all-or-nothing project. You aren't going to break your kid's brain if you flub a grammar rule once in a while in the minority language, nor are you going to take a wrong turn and somehow leave them unable to communicate. By making the effort to raise your child in a bilingual environment, you are undertaking a process, not aiming for a set endpoint—and you are giving your child a precious gift. For when the going gets tough, though, here are a few comforting reminders, courtesy of Sarah Creider.

*The main thing that I tell myself is that doing it is much more important than doing it perfectly.*

### #1: Learning a language is like driving a car.



Hear us out: You don't need to know how an engine works in order to drive a car, and you don't need to grasp the specific phonological system or intricate grammar rules of a language in order to speak that language and impart it to your child. Here, it's helpful to consider the difference between knowing a language and knowing ABOUT a language. Definitions of what it means to know a language or be fluent in a language vary immensely, in common parlance as well as among linguists. The important question is "Can I use this language for interaction?" rather than "Can I describe this language's primary verb forms?" Be aware of this distinction when you are thinking about what you are offering to your child by raising them bilingual. Your goal is to have them be able to use the minority language and to understand it as a part of their lives and themselves. Grammar is not to be disregarded, of course, but don't get so caught up in the nitty-gritty that you can't see the forest for the trees.

### #2: Practicing one language benefits all of the other languages too.

There's a common misconception that, if you want your child to learn their minority language in school, you ought to avoid speaking the majority language at home. This can be a source of great distress for Spanish-speaking immigrant families in particular, as kids are often thrown into sink-or-swim English-language-learning programs in school, and parents may feel they have to minimize interaction in Spanish at home if they want their kids to succeed. In fact, if you want your kid to learn more languages in school, one of the best things you can do is give them a solid foundation in their home language. Speaking the minority language at home can be wonderful if it's an option for you, but remember that language skills transfer across different languages. Any help you can give your child in understanding the nuances of the majority language will help them thrive in the minority language, and vice versa.

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### #3: Mistakes are synonymous with brilliance.

For children, language-learning is a process of finding underlying patterns, and that sometimes means overusing or misusing patterns as they are discovered. For instance, when a kid says “I runned” instead of “I ran,” they are demonstrating their knowledge of how to form the past tense—they just don’t yet know all the extra rules and exceptions that govern that construction. Therefore, even so-called mistakes like “runned” are actually beautiful, and in fact are exactly what we want to hear.

You can try all you want to correct the mistake, but your efforts won’t go far: Your child’s brain is already busy doing its work, and with trial and error, it will land on the correct answer eventually. That said, when you do make a correction, it’s best to do so by modeling back the right way to form the sentence in question: For instance, “I runned to the store” gets a response of, “Oh, wonderful, you ran to the store!”

For more, check out this article on [“10 Language Mistakes Kids Make That Are Actually Pretty Smart,”](#) which explains how “mistakes are evidence of very smart hypotheses the kids are forming from the limited data they’ve been given so far.”



Children can go through this process of identifying, applying, and refining patterns in multiple languages, but to do so, they need face time in those languages. Remember: Screens and apps won’t cut it on their own (although they can absolutely be used to the advantage of your bilingual child—check out [this article](#) for more). Language is about interaction and responsiveness, so—whether you’re calling up your language tutor or plopping down with your kid and a Swedish picture book—don’t fear, just dive in and enjoy the miraculous process of raising a bilingual child.

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## Readings and resources

### Books

[The Bilingual Edge: Why, When, and How to Teach Your Child a Second Language](#), Kendall King, PhD, and Alison Mackey, PhD: The authors are linguistics professors at Georgetown University. Between them, they have written nearly a hundred research articles and books on bilingualism and language teaching methods. Also, they are both parents, teaching their children more than one language.

[Raising Multilingual Children: Foreign Language Acquisition and Children](#), Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa: The most recent studies in linguistics, neurology, education, and psychology are evaluated and the findings are presented in a recipe format. Parents and teachers are encouraged to bake their own and evaluate the multilingual children in their lives with the use of tools which include a family language profile and family language goals worksheet.

[Be Bilingual—Practical Ideas for Multilingual Families](#), Annika Bourgoigne: Multilingual families from all around the world have contributed by sharing their best resources and tips on how to make growing up with two or more languages an enjoyable experience.

[Bilingual by Choice: Raising Kids in Two \(or more!\) Languages](#), Virginie Raguenaud: For parents, educators, immigrants and expatriates, Bilingual by Choice deals directly with the obstacles to sustaining a second language, including unsupportive relatives, issues at school, frequent relocations and discrimination, countering each one with the author's firsthand experience with both sides of the growing-up-bilingual journey, as a child and as a parent.

[Raising a Bilingual Child \(Living Language Series\)](#), Barbara Zurer Pearson: Raising a Bilingual Child offers both an overview of why parents should raise their children to speak more than one language and detailed steps parents can take to integrate two languages into their child's daily routine.



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[Raising Bilingual Children: A Practical Guide](#), Maritere Rodriguez Bellas: Author and parenting expert Mari Bellas provides answers to questions such as: What do I do when my five-year-old doesn't want to speak Spanish at home? My husband doesn't speak Korean, so how do we find common ground to raise our kids with two languages? My child is two years old and not speaking in either of the two languages we speak at home—should I be concerned?

[7 Steps to Raising a Bilingual Child](#), Naomi Steiner and Susan L. Hayes: This book helps parents in both monolingual and multilingual families determine and achieve their bilingual goals for their child, whether those goals are understanding others, the ability to speak a second language, reading and/or writing in two languages, or some combination of all of these.

[List of books on bilingualism and multilingualism](#) from Omniglot

[15 books for parents and educators of bilingual children](#) from Multilingual Parenting

[Brooklyn Public Library](#): Use interlibrary loan to search the full catalogue, order books, and have them delivered to your local branch.



## Blogs and websites

Park Slope Parents has a range of [Bilingual/Heritage groups](#) to help you connect with other parents who are raising their child(ren) with multiple languages, races, ethnicities and nationalities.

[Polyglot Parenting: Expert Advice on Raising Bilingual & Multilingual Kids](#)

[The Linguist List: International Linguistics Community Online](#)

[Away Together: One Family, One Year, Many Places, No Regrets](#)

[Bilingual Monkeys: Ideas and inspiration for raising bilingual kids \(without going bananas\)](#)

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## Bilingualism & speech/language concerns

### [Bilingual Language Milestones \(and Red Flags\)](#)

### [4 Must-Know Aspects of Bilingual Kids' Speech Development](#)

## Articles

The New York Times, "[Raising a Truly Bilingual Child](#)"

American Academy of Pediatrics, "[7 Myths and Facts About Bilingual Children Learning Language](#)"

Linguistic Society of America, "[FAQ: Raising Bilingual Children](#)"



## Interactives

A few notes from Jennifer Wilkin on online language learning at home: The key elements for success are rich linguistic input, multisensory skills practice, and relationship building. Short, frequent sessions are much more effective than longer, less frequent sessions: Research shows that learners can recall more info the next day after a longer, less frequent session, but shorter, less frequent sessions are far better for long-term recall. Here are a few resources that you can incorporate into short, frequent sessions with your child.

[UpToTen.com](#) has fun kids' games that will allow you to switch languages so that you can give your children more exposure to language outside of person-to-person communication.

[TalkBox.Mom](#): "HIGHLY recommended, as it gives you all the words you need to use with a baby ... Try not to be offended by the ".mom" website address!! Anyone can use it, and it's really great." BrainPOP features educational quizzes, games, activities and more, and comes in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [French](#) versions.

The International School of Brooklyn lists resources for young learners in English, Spanish, and French on its [Student Resources page](#).

Language learning apps, such as [Duolingo](#), [Busuu](#), and [Babbel](#) can help you seamlessly integrate learning into your and your child's daily life.

[YouTube](#): Search to see you can find popular videos in different languages. Ask your PSP Language Group about great resources they've found.

[Spotify](#): Use the "Browse" function to explore Spotify's music libraries in different languages. There are lots of premade Spanish-language playlists, but also Hindi, Arabic, Korean (K-Pop), and more.

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## Local resources and classes

[Idlewild Books](#): Language classes & travel bookstore in Carroll Gardens

[Multilingual Storytime](#) at the Brooklyn Public Library

[One World Project](#) has special Saturday playgroups in different languages

[The Language and Laughter Studio](#): Early childhood education from native speakers in Downtown Brooklyn

[Lango Foreign Languages for Kids](#): preschool, classes, and camps in Boerum Hill

[French and Spanish Summer Language Immersion Program](#) at the International School of Brooklyn in Carroll Gardens

Mommy Poppins has a list of [10 Dual-Language and Immersion Preschools in Brooklyn](#).

PSP has [Membership Discounts](#) for language-related activities and classes.

The PSP website features member recommendations and reviews for [Chess, Writing, Foreign Language & Book Classes](#). (Also check out our general categories for [Classes & Activities](#), [Winter or Vacation Camps](#), and [Summer Day Camps](#), then call and ask if there are classes held in a different language.)

Explore the PSP [Pre-K - Dual Language](#) category for member-reviewed schools with dual-language programs. Also check out the NYC Department of Education's downloadable [inventory of bilingual education programs](#).

**Was this guide helpful? How could it have been more helpful? Let us know!**

♥ [\*\*PSP Guides Feedback Form\*\*](#) ♥

*Your anonymous review will help us improve our resources and offer better support to parents in Brooklyn and beyond. Thank you!*

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