When your spouse won’t speak the language

How important is consistency?

TOP TEN TIPS: TO STAY ON TRACK

History of bilingual language diaries

HOW CHILDREN REALLY LEARN LANGUAGE

The ABCs of multilingualism

School vocabulary in both languages

Our multilingual lives interview

Cinnamon rolls

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below and

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From the Editors’ Desks...

We celebrate New Year’s Eve in Austria with a glass of champagne: “Prost Neujahr!” and waltz to the melody of the Blue Danube waltz. In Spain they swallow grapes, one for each beat of the clock striking towards midnight. And in Ecuador they have a unique tradition in which the “año viejos,” stuffed dummies representing the old year, are burned. Whichever way you celebrated your New Year, you will, surely, have taken one minute to reflect on the old year, and made your New Year’s Resolutions.

Looking back, how do you feel the linguistic situation in your family went? How has everybody been developing language-wise? Are you satisfied with the method that you have been using? Have you met your goals? Did you encounter problems and obstacles?

Now is the time when you should dig out your language diaries, tape recordings and videos that you made of your kids. Can you see and hear how much they have progressed, how their vocabulary increased, what fabulous sentence constructions they are now using that they didn’t a year ago? We often don’t see progress because we are with our children all the time. Often it requires an outsider to tell us “Hey, your child made amazing leaps in that language!” for this realization to kick in. Give yourself a pat on the back! You and your family have come a long way and each success, no matter how minor, deserves to be celebrated!

If you are like me, getting started is always easy. Staying motivated is what has always been a tremendous challenge. How to maintain your enthusiasm? How to keep things going? What to do when we encounter problems? How not to lose faith in what we are doing? Even now, after 5 years, when our daughter is nearly fluent in German and English and has a sound, passive knowledge of Spanish, I catch myself thinking: “Bah! Trilingualism just isn’t working for us!” when we are going through a difficult phase. I am talking about these times when it is just too exhausting to keep up speaking the minority language at the playground all the time, and you cave in to your desire to just speak the majority language to your child for once, and to heck with consistency (see my column “An apology for being inconsistent” on page 36). Or these times when you are just so convinced that all these awful myths must be true after all. I know myself well by now and think it is natural to go through those phases.

Are you in a motivation slump? There is help and advice out there! How about trying out some new things? What about starting a language diary? (see article by Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert on page 18) Or trying out some of those fabulous activities by Starr de Graffenried (see page 48)? Often it helps to read through the questions that other people are having (see our Ask an Expert section on page 46), or try out our list of Top Ten Tips on staying motivated on page 31.

People encounter different problems on different levels. For some, getting started is the precise obstacle they have to overcome. Maybe there are family members who are opposed to bilingualism. Maybe they just don’t know how to go about doing things right. We need to battle myths and false information as well. What’s right? What’s wrong? One thing is clear: we all want the best for our children. But we also want them to grow up multilingual.

With a New Year starting, 2008, we dedicate this magazine to you, dear reader. To those who are new to the wonderful world of multilingualism, and to those who are faithfully trodding along their chosen path. Whether newcomer or old-timer, we have compiled some alphabetical practical tips on how to make the ride easier for you (see page 40).

We want to say a hearty thank you to all those who have subscribed and who are thereby helping us maintain the magazine. We couldn’t do it without your support. Please keep spreading the word! As always, we would love to hear from you! If you enjoy reading this magazine, drop us a line and tell us so! If you have questions or problems, let us know, maybe we can help. If you are interested in contributing by sharing your story, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us: editor@multilingualliving.org.

We want to say THANK YOU to all the wonderful contributors who are giving us their time, energy and enthusiasm! A particularly heart-felt thank you to Madalena Cruz-Ferreira, to Sarah Dodson-Knight, our faithful columnist, and to Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert for their invaluable contributions and advice (if you haven’t filled out Suzanne’s survey yet do so now! See page 8)!

Happy New Year everyone! Frohes neues Jahr! Feliz año nuevo! Bonne année! Sae hae bok manhi baduseyo…

Alice & Corey

We look forward to Multilingual Living Magazine becoming an integral part of your life as your trusted, intelligent resource for living a multilingual and multicultural life. Our goal is to empower YOU to make decisions that work for you and your family, to inspire you to embrace the unique circumstances of your life and to help you and your family flourish in your multilingual living.

PHOTO: © iStockphoto.com/lisegagne
RAISING BILINGUAL CHILDREN

Listen to our very own Paula Taylor’s podcast where she discusses raising children in more than one language. Voices en Español creator, Eleena, interviewed Paula to share her insights with others via podcast. What is Voices en Español all about? As Eleena explains about her site: “Voices en Español is a blog and a podcast. That’s the short version. The long version is Voices en Español is a place to evangelize the Spanish language.” Although not a native Spanish speaker, she is an avid lover of all things Spanish and is helping to spread bilingualism throughout the US. Keep and eye on her site, especially if you are a family with Spanish-speakers! Paula’s Podcast: spanish-podcast.com/2007/11/26/raising-bilingual-kids/

While you are out and about on the internet, check out the following YouTube videos:

Here is a commercial about the “Importance of Being Bilingual”:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpRZVYZsWdU&feature=related

Another commercial with a similar theme titled “Bilingual Cat”:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=xu0q0d9jkpi&feature=related

Check out this fun video about “Emmett: The Bilingual Dog”:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfJiTzz97t4&feature=related

Here are two critical videos about the impact of the United States’ “No Child Left Behind” education assessment program on bilingual children. “No Child Left Bilingual Part I” is here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlUEEdj6Ikw&feature=related

“No Child Left Bilingual Part II” can be found here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRemrjF6zo&feature=related
Dear Multilingual Families,

I am writing a book on Siblings & Bilingualism (to be published 2008 by Multilingual Matters, UK).

I really need to know what you think about life with two or more children. What languages do the siblings speak together? Do the siblings speak the same languages? Have you changed strategies after having more children?

If you have 2 or more children (aged 3 +) please take a little time to complete my anonymous online survey on the way you use languages within your family.

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=R0K8paLXMWcF9tPZfC3R8q_3d_3d

* Please note the Survey ends 30 January 2008!

Thanks a million!
Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert
bilingsiblings@yahoo.com
bilingsiblings@blogspot.com

If you feel that any of this info would be useful to your readership, I would love it if you would link to my blog. Tomorrow on my blog I will provide a list of online resources and will include your web site among the recommendations.

Thanks again and warm regards,
Eleena

I am a brand new subscriber and have thoroughly enjoyed reading Multilingual Living Magazine.

Thank you for providing access to the back issues of the magazine. Otherwise I would have missed some great articles.

I am American and obviously I speak English (just like every other American, right). To achieve a goal I have had for many years, speaking a second language, I started to learn Spanish 18 months ago at the age of 29. I recently read the book The Bilingual Edge. This book jump started my desire to teach the Spanish I have learned to my children.

Especially in the last few months I have searched for information on becoming bilingual and having bilingual children. This brought me to your wonderful magazine. My wife and I currently
homeschool our oldest two children (5 and 4) and recently just had our third child. I try hard to speak Spanish (the Spanish I have learned anyway) with my oldest children as much as possible. With our third child, I only speak Spanish.

The fact that I am a non-native language teacher/parent, thank you very much for articles such as:

* Bilingual Homeschooling - Sept/Oct 2007
* Going Non-Native! - May/June 2007
* Being or Becoming Binlingual: Practical Tips for Getting Started and Staying Motivated - Jan/Feb 2007
* Sarah Dodson-Knight's articles

I look forward to more articles on the same subjects. A new and now faithful reader,

Lee Graves

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I know this has been a busy year for you, but you have a lot to be proud of! I hope you are enjoying some good quality time with your family this holiday season.

Anneke

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**SPONGE SCHOOL INVITE:**

Please come nibble on treats, make your own drum, and join in an interactive taiko performance at the Sponge tea party. We're excited to have YushinDaiko perform and we're looking forward to making music with you, too.

**Where:** 3107 S Day Street, Seattle, Washington, USA

**When:** Sunday, January 13th 3-5pm

**RSVP (not required):** events@spongeschool.com

**Website:** www.spongeschool.com

---

**Latina Style** magazine finally updated their website and is featuring the 10 winners of the “Anna Maria Arias Awards.” Please click here and scroll down:


Enjoy,

Christianne Meneses Jacobs

**EDITORS:** Congratulations, Christianne! You have definitely earned such a great award! To learn more about Christianne’s fabulous Spanish-language magazine, go to: www.nicagal.com/iguana/eng/

---

We want to know what you think! Which articles do you enjoy the most? Did any impact you positively or negatively? Let us know! Email us at info@multilingualliving.com and tell us your thoughts!

Note that we reserve the right to edit your message for grammar and length if we include it in Multilingual Living Magazine.

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Manuela Slye

I just now reviewed in detail the Nov-Dec issue of Multilingual Living Magazine. Again, you did a phenomenal job on this issue. So much great content!
Hand in Hand

This is a fun game for the whole family and easy for the little ones! Children from all over the world hold hands in this game, and two dice will decide who’s next: a boy or a girl, with or without a hat. It contains 36 picture boards, 2 dices with symbols and instructions. You can also vary this game and play different versions of memory with older children. Age 3+.

Das Ravensburger Buch der Advents- und Weihnachtsgeschichten

This beautiful anthology is filled with lots of stories, songs and poems for the Christmas time. They are telling from Santa Claus and snowmen, fairies and gnomes, angels and Christmas trees, and, of course, from the Holy Night.

Different authors like Janosch, James Krüss, Ottfried Preussler, Ursel Schefler contributed to this 164 p. book, just to name a few. A nice book to share the Christmas spirit with your loved ones, regardless of age.

Die Jahreszeiten

This book is the 10th of a series called Wieso? Weshalb? Warum? Junior which is for children aged 2+. The four seasons are nicely shown and explained in different settings that are known to a child of this age. The book helps the child understand why, for example, we have to dress warm in winter, not in summer and what are goose bumps. There are many lift-a-flaps that reveal more details and are fun to find.
Max auf dem Mond + Max und der Zauberer - Doppelpack

Max on the Moon and Max and the Magician can be played in the four languages German, English, French and Spanish and are for children aged 4-8 years. The illustrations are hand drawn and full of details. In each game Max has to look for something: either moon chickens, to help his friend Mona who is stranded with her spaceship on the moon in order to get her keys back from the man in the moon or, help his friend the Magician find the right spell to become a person again. It is easy to play and especially good for computer beginners. For PC and MAC.

Mäuseschlaue & Bärenstark - Wissen, Lachen, Sachen machen

A fun board game that gets you moving! The rules are simple and the whole game lasts about 15-20 min. Mouse cards will ask you interesting questions, e.g., when do we see a rainbow?, while Bear cards will ask you to do silly actions like flying like a butterfly around the game table. The clock has to be set if you pick a card and you’ll learn to tell time in no time!

The game contains of 1 board, 6 figures, 1 Clock, 80 cards and instructions. Age 5+.

We offer a wide selection of popular German children books, CDs/DVDs, toys, games & more products imported from Germany in our store and invite you to browse! Our quality merchandise has been carefully selected to encourage children of any age to read, learn, and play with German language products, especially in a bilingual environment. Most of our products are in stock for fast and economical shipping, including optional gift wrap service. We ship worldwide and accept major credit cards, Paypal, checks or money order.

Do you need a special book or other German product? Contact us and we will do our best to find it!
Did you know...

...that the first printed book in the world was in German? In 1455, Johannes Gutenberg, inventor of the movable type printing press, printed a 42-page bible which had been translated by Martin Luther from Latin to German.

...that Hawaiian is an official language in the state of Hawaii?

...that no word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple?

...that the Chinese language does not require punctuation?

...that South Africa used to have two official languages and now has eleven?

...that French was the official language of England for over 600 years?

...that according to Illinois, USA state law, it is illegal to speak English. The officially recognized language is “American.”

...that around 2000 BCE the first purely alphabetic script is thought to have been developed? This script was created for Semitic workers in central Egypt.

...that that the Finnish language has 15 cases and the Hungarian language 17?

...that the earliest writing system was invented by the Sumerians around the 34th century BC?

Time for some Auld Lang Syne!

When the clock strikes midnight, ushering in 2008, many will cheer, hug and kiss their loved ones, and then start singing the well-known song, Auld Lang Syne.

“Auld lang syne,” literally translated means “old long since” in Scottish. However, it is better translated idiomatically as “times gone by.” It is a song to reflect on the past and to look forward to the future. Around the world it is most lovingly known by English-speakers as the song sung when the new year is celebrated; that special moment in time when the past year is behind us and the new year has taken its place. The singing of Auld Lang Syne is commonly accompanied by a traditional dance (in Scotland it is often sung at the end of a céilidh or a dance). “The group who is singing forms a ring, holding hands for the first verse. For the second verse, arms are crossed and again linked. For the third verse, everyone moves in to the centre of the ring and then out again.” In many countries it is used as a graduation song, in others as a funeral song, and is very popular around the world as a farewell song, sometimes with different lyrics. In fact, “before the composition of Aegukga, the lyrics of Korea’s national anthem were sung to the tune of this song.” For more information go to: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auld_Lang_Syne
What will you be eating this new year?

In many cultures around the world, it is believed that what you eat as part of your New Year’s celebration will bring good luck or wealth or success or more! What will you be eating as the new year rings in?

- Many believe that anything in the shape of a ring will bring good luck in that it represents having come “full circle.” The Dutch believe that eating donuts on New Year’s Day will bring good luck. And in the Philippines you will find people collecting 7 different types of round fruits for the new year. The round shape of the fruits signify money and seven is believed to be a lucky number. The fruits are set on the dinner table and are believed to bring prosperity and sound financial status for the coming year.

- In the southern United States, it is said that eating black-eyed peas and collard greens will bring you good luck (black-eyed peas) and money (collard greens).

- In Italy, and a few other countries, for each time the clock chimes at midnight, Italians pop a grape into their mouth, thus ringing in the new year with a mouth full of (twelve) grapes!

- Late in the evening on December 31st in Buddhist temples in Japan, bowls of buckwheat noodles called “toshikoshisoba” (“year-crossing noodles”) are eaten. At midnight the temple bells are rung 108 times. The sound of these bells is said to purify the listeners of the 108 sins or evil passions that plague every human being.

- For Denmark, Germany and Poland, fish takes the limelight: In Denmark, the new year is ushered in by eating boiled cod while in Germany and Poland it is believed that eating pickled herring will bring good luck. For the Germans, the pickled herring must be eaten at the stroke of midnight while the Poles say it must simply be the first bite of food in the new year.

- For the Greeks, the new year is rung in by eating a cake baked with a coin inside. Whoever finds the prize in their slice is guaranteed a year of good luck!

Happy Multilingual-Multicultural New Year!

Language is the steed that carries one into a far country.
Arab Proverb

How’s That for Accent Marks?

The word hétérogénéité (French for “heterogeneity”) and Héréhérétué (an atoll in the Pacific Ocean near Tahiti) have five accent marks.

You think that’s a lot? Have a look at Hungarian: újjáépítéséről (“about its reconstruction”) and újjáválaszthatóságáról (“about his/her re-electability”) each have seven accent marks.

Speaking of marks, let’s have a look at Finnish: pääjääjää (meaning “the main stayer,” partitive case) has 14 dots in a row! members.aol.com/gulfhigh2/words1.html
A change is taking place this year in the Texas school districts. They are turning to what is called “dual language” classrooms. The schools are turning to this new classroom format based on the recommendations presented by “education researchers.” This is exciting news because it indicates that (1) education researchers are honestly realizing the essential need to evaluate the ways our schools approach education from the perspective of non-English speaking students, (2) education researchers understand that the goal is beyond just teaching English to non-English speakers -- it is about educating many children in more than one language, and (3) school districts are actually listening to what the education researchers are saying on this topic and are implementing the recommendations!

The program which the Texas school districts have chosen to adopt consists of the following: Students will receive half of their lessons in English and the other half in Spanish, thereby helping students become truly bilingual via their studies. Some programs will allow non-Spanish speaking students to participate as well. This is in contrast to the previous bilingual programs where teachers would speak 100% Spanish in kindergarten and use more and more English as quickly as possible so that students could be put into the standard classrooms. As reported in the article, “A better way to teach bilingualism?” in the August 17, 2007, The Dallas Morning News, “Some educators and researchers worry that focusing on two languages in the dual programs could hurt basic skills in the long run. Still others believe English is the only language that belongs in a Texas classroom. But many teachers and parents believe dual language will forever change bilingual education. ‘It’s not a politically charged issue, not when you’re with the kids,” said Stephanie Bunch, academic coordinator at Rosemont Elementary School in Dallas. ‘We’re just trying to help them find their place in the world. We’re in a global society now.’"

Email blamed for decline in Canadian bilingualism

An anonymous email may be to blame for 2006 census numbers showing that bilingualism is declining in francophone Canada. Either that or bilingualism really is declining in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick where only 68 percent of the population reported being able to speak the provinces’ official languages of English and French. This is in contrast to 71.5 percent reporting they could speak the languages in 2001. According to Statistics Canada analyst Jean-Pierre Corbeil, this is the first time that they have seen a decrease. However, he is quick to state that it is “pretty unlikely that there’s a decrease in bilingualism in provinces where the proportion of francophones who speak English most often at home is pretty high.” As reported in Canada: “One month before census enumerators hit the streets in April 2006, a cyber missive was launched onto the Internet bidding francophones to deny their ability to communicate in English.” People were warned that if they reported being bilingual in the census that services to francophones would risk being cut by the federal government. Although the government countered with their own media blitz, it appears that it wasn’t strong enough to counter the initial story which was circulated. To read the story go to: www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=cp_fj3llvb618&show_article=1&catnum=7

Halle Berry goes Bilingual!

Pregnant Halle Berry reportedly plans to raise her child bilingually in English and French! Her French-Canadian partner, Gabriel Aubry, has already started with his end of the bargain by only speaking French to his unborn child, while Halle is doing her part to learn as much French as possible before the baby arrives. She hopes to continue after the birth. “French is hard, especially when you’re over 40,” she told The Sun in October of this year. For the full story go to: thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/showbiz/bizarre/article343711.eco
Learning More than One Language at Home

New research from the University of British Columbia and Ottawa is revealing how children growing up in bilingual households learn language differently from their monolingual peers. When it comes to using detailed sound information to learn differences between words, bilingual babies follow a slightly different pattern. Infants raised in bilingual households were tested by researchers to determine their ability to associate two words that differed in a single consonant sound with two different objects (for example, the nonsense words “bih” and “dih” differ only by their initial consonant). The results of the research showed that bilingual infants began to understand this association on average three months later than monolingual infants: at 20 months rather than 17 months for monolinguals. The research team believes this may be a kind of adaptive tool used by bilingual infants which in the long run may have cognitive benefits. “By paying less attention to the detailed sound information in the word, bilingual infants can devote more cognitive resources to making the links between words and objects.” Although research shows that bilingual children meet language milestones well within the normal range, outlining these cognitive differences goes a long way in helping to understand the specific needs of our bilingual children and language learning. “Through studies with bilingual infants, we can gain a deeper understanding of language development in all infants,” according to Christopher T. Fennell, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Ottawa and the lead author of the study. “In addition, the findings emerging from such studies will have practical implications for parents who are raising their children in a bilingual environment by revealing how young bilinguals acquire language.” To read the full article go to: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/09/070928092050.htm

We Sound it Out!

Have you noticed how bilinguals rarely mix languages (unless they want to)? Thomas Munte of Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg, Germany, and his team suggest that this is because bilinguals have the ability to switch between language filters that throw out foreign words. The research has shown that bilinguals actually go through a kind of “sounding out” process with their brain’s internal dictionary whereby words not part of the target language are filtered out. Once this is done, the target language words are associated with their meanings. This allows bilinguals to successfully ignore the other language and to stay focused on the language at hand.

“Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies of brain activity cannot distinguish between two small populations of nerves in the same general area, explains Cathy Price who studies brain anatomy at University College London. The new study suggests that timing rather than space is important. As well as fMRI, Munte’s team measured the brain’s electrical signals for a second after people were shown a word. By tracking activity in space and time the group is ‘taking a new perspective,’ says Price. Different nerve circuits carrying the two languages will ultimately be found, thinks David Green who investigates language processing at University College London. The question will then be how they are controlled. ‘We’re only at the beginning,’ he says.” To read the full story go to: www.innovations-report.com/html/reports/interdisciplinary_research/report-8099.htm
Families around the world raising bilingual and multilingual children will sigh a breath of relief to find Colin Baker’s third edition of A Parents’ and Teachers’ Guide to Bilingualism. With its expert answers and easy-to-read format, this book will be a touchstone for families just getting started as well as those needing guidance along the way. As the world changes quickly, Colin Baker has taken the initiative to seek out and answer the most pressing questions and concerns of today’s bilingual families including questions on dyslexia, multiliteracies and autism with the same ease and expertise that we have come to expect from him.”

Corey Heller, Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network founder and publisher/editor of Multilingual Living Magazine

Written in a very reader-friendly style, the book is a practical introduction for parents and teachers to bilingualism. Straightforward and realistic answers are given to a comprehensive set of frequently asked questions about bilingualism and bilingual education. Areas covered include family, language, culture, identity, reading, writing, schooling and issues.
I have so far discussed three technical terms commonly used to talk about multilinguals, namely, language-mixer/code-switcher, semilingual and dominant multilingual, all of which were shown to leave much to be desired as far as their precise meanings are concerned. As if in acknowledgement that labels expressed in words can be very baffling, the literature on multilingualism also abounds with numerical identification of languages -- not least, I suspect, because numbers have always sounded more intimidating and therefore more profound in their hidden implications than mere words. The neat-looking labels in this heading refer to the order of appearance of different languages in the life of an individual.

My discussion of the label dominant multilingual reached the conclusion that this label reflects an implicit expectation: multilinguals must have a dominant language. We saw that this expectation arose because monolinguals obviously have a dominant language too, which is their one and only language, and because multilinguals continue to be treated like funny variants of monolingual individuals. When you label the languages of a multilingual by means of numbers, no such expectation is implied: instead of pulling rank among your languages, you serialise them.

Numbering languages in this way first became popular to account for typical school-learning situations. Typically monolingual learners were said to speak an L1, which is their first (and only) language. When they learn a second language, this language then becomes their L2. They may later learn other languages, which are then consecutively labelled accordingly. So far so good, but things started getting really funny with the generalisation of these labels to other kinds of multilingualism besides the well-behaved ‘After-You’ one that they were meant for.

Take simultaneous multilinguals, those who start life with several languages, or who later acquire several languages at the same time. A simultaneous bilingual will have two L1s (pronounced ‘El Ones’), both labelled ‘1’ because they both come first in acquisition, as the numbers are meant to describe. So that makes two languages. Since calling the next language an ‘El Two’ might be perplexing for this reason, this person then acquires an ‘El Three’ instead. In case no other languages follow, these multilinguals will then have two L1s and one L3, with the number ‘2’ nowhere in sight among their ‘Ls’. In addition, ‘L3’ doesn’t now mean ‘the language acquired in third place’, but the one acquired in second place, which is after L1, and which therefore is different from an L3 acquired after an L2 which in turn follows an L1.

Mind-boggling, I agree. In a very funny twist to the usually unambiguous nature of numbers, each of these numerical labels in fact turns out to add to the confusion, by referring to at least two different things, the chronological order of acquisition of one particular language and the number of languages of a multilingual at any one point in time.

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira, a native of Portugal, is the author of Three is a crowd? Acquiring Portuguese in a trilingual environment, (2006). She is currently a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore. She has lived in Singapore for over 10 years with her Swedish husband and their three trilingual children.

Coming in the next issue: “Balanced Multilingual”
Stop talking!
I need to write down what you just said

BY SUZANNE BARRON-HAUWAERT
One of the first, and most famous diaries on bilingual children, was done in the 1940’s by the American linguist Werner Leopold. He wrote a huge four-part series of books on his daughter, Hildegard, on her first seven years of language development in German and English. Werner was inspired by a fellow linguist and father, Jules Ronjat, who wrote about his French/German son’s language use in 1913, and how the parents used the one-parent-one language approach.

In the 1980’s there were several books written about bilingual children by linguist-parents. Australian George Saunders noted the development of his three German/English-speaking children over about ten years from birth to teenagers. George noted several amusing anecdotes and even drew cartoons. One example is his youngest child, Katrina, at age two pretending to fish with her mother, and saying ‘I caughting fish with my angelrute.’ (fishing rod in German). Katrina had learnt the word for fishing rod from her German-speaking father, and even though she knew the English word preferred to use the German one. Katrina had also added the ‘ing’ ending to ‘caught’, which could have been a transfer from the English, or just her emerging grammar.

Alvino Fantini, an American with Italian heritage and a South American wife, described how their family maintained a Spanish-only environment at home in America. Over ten years of diary entries we see how the family sent Mario to visit family in Bolivia and employed Spanish-speaking nannies to keep his Spanish active. Alvino compiled a fascinating timeline showing Mario’s growing understanding of his multilingualism. At age two years and seven months little Mario was mixing considerably, but just a month later he had stopped and was making the effort to separate the two languages. By 3 years and nine months, Alvino remarks on Mario referring to each language, saying ‘First use of a label to describe the English language’. Later on, at age four years and two months, the father noted Acknowledges own bilingualism Comments on his own bilingualism (“Yo hablo dos”/I speak two).

Traute Teaschner carefully reported on her two young German/Italian daughter’s use of transferring and mixing within the two languages. The German-speaking linguist and mother tried hard to stop her daughters speaking Italian (the language of school and their community) to her. She would say Wie bitte? or ‘What did you say?’ pushing the girls to change language with her. As the diary excerpt says: ‘In the beginning the girls thought their mother was merely a bit deaf and would repeat the same words at a louder pitch, sometimes even shouting.’ But the technique paid off and soon Traute saw an increase in German at home.

In 2006 Steven Caldas published a book on his three teenage French/English children. Steven gives a particular insight into the adolescent bilingual child’s mind. Steven recounts the older brother, John, going through a stage of language rebellion first, temporarily refusing to speak his mother’s language (French), and causing a sibling rift. John’s twin sisters, eight-year-old Valerie and Stephanie, insisted that their brother ‘Parlez...
français!!’ (Speak French!!), to which the ten-year-old John angrily replied ‘English! English! English!’ At the time the twin girls were attending a French immersion program at that point, and felt more ‘French’. The girls were speaking French together, dreaming in French and even re-telling English stories fluently, while their brother remained pro-America and anti-French. Later on, the balance changed as the girls started High School and abandoned French temporarily too. The self-conscious teens needed to have their bilingualism validated by their peers, and when they felt being bilingual made them ‘different’ they quickly switched to being monolingual.

So how do these diaries help us learn more about bilingualism? Usually the linguists tested their children at regular intervals. One common test was to record the average length of their sentences in each language, for example, could they use three or five words together? They checked the child’s knowledge of vocabulary items in each language or focused on the way the children mixed the languages. These results helped shape the knowledge we now have regarding the development of two languages in a child. For example, we can say that a period of mixing languages in young children or language refusal in adolescents is normal, and not something to worry about. The diaries also offer a unique view of bilingual children that no outsider could get. We are able to see how children really talk in a family home context, rather than in a laboratory or with a stranger who sits in their home recording them. We see how a child starts talking in one language and mid-phrase moves to another language. It’s clear that each language has a function and is used for a reason, and one language can quickly become redundant if no-one in the family needs to speak it.

These intimate case-studies showed that bilingualism could work, even when the children lacked much contact with one language or were overwhelmed by the language spoken in the country where they lived. The diaries also showed strong perseverance on the part of the parents who were often faced with negative criticism from their children’s teachers, doctors or family members. In all the diary records there were times when a parent, or a child, would much rather only speak one language and abandon bilingualism there and then. Somehow they managed to keep going and the child or parent managed to work out or find a solution to keep both languages active.

The message is that all families have times when it seems like bilingualism will never work. This is an important message, especially when a few months, or even years later, the child can suddenly surprise everyone by using the language perfectly. However, the diaries also show an acceptance that being bilingual is different for every child and cannot be taken for granted (even when your father is linguist!). Children reach varying degrees of fluency in each language, and even with the parent’s best efforts it does not always work out.

As it becomes easier to record your child’s speech, through new computer technology, digital recordings, blogs or web camera links, we may see more diaries about bilingual children from different families all around the world. So, if you have some spare time in the cold winter months try to record some of your child’s amusing mixed language sentences. With a favourite picture book, or picture dictionary, you could note how many words they know in each language, and see how they do six months later. You could even make a short film every few months, or record their progress in a timeline with the exact age and note how your child is dealing with the two or more languages. There’s no need to write a four-part book just yet, but when your children are grown-up it will be fun to look back on those wonderful multilingual moments!!

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If you have a multilingual family, enjoy writing, and are interested in contributing to our magazine, we would like to hear from you!

We seek short articles up to 800 words in which you report about the daily joys and challenges of raising children in more than one language.

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We are currently unable to pay any of our writers, but regular contributors receive a free subscription to our magazine.
Since writing “Won’t Your Spanish Hurt Their English?” for LA Language World (www.lalamag.ucla.edu) last July, I have received dozens of responses from Los Angeles–area parents who shared my dismay over the shortage of Spanish language heritage schools in a city that is over 50 percent Latino and has so many Spanish speakers.

We know from many linguistic studies that the heritage language is essentially lost by the third generation. If we want to prevent that loss, we need to ensure that heritage language instruction is available for our children starting at a young age. For families like ours, living in two languages is a necessity, not a luxury. Along with knowing both languages comes a sense of identity and place in the world.

But our experience has taught us that developing heritage schools will take time, especially in a state that passed Proposition 227 in 1998, placing severe limitations on bilingual education in California’s public schools.

Like most Spanish-speaking parents in this metropolis, we are left crafting practical strategies for passing on Spanish to our boys, now enrolled in preschool and kindergarten, where English instruction predominates. Our plan so far is to expose our children to Spanish at home and take them to a weekend Spanish language heritage school. But that won’t be enough, and we need to ask for our schools’ support. We think it’s fair to ask them to develop after-school programs, focusing on literacy, to preserve the second languages of heritage speakers who learn all day in English. These classes could be taught in many languages in addition to Spanish.

One such program in Arlington, Va., was founded by George Mason University Professor Lisa Marie Rabin, who wondered why her daughter’s many
Spanish-speaking classmates were not being taught literacy and literature in their heritage language.

With the principal’s blessing, George Mason Spanish majors began reading books, provided by the university and a local foundation, to students in grades one through four. Since then, these “book clubs” have developed into free after-school classes in Spanish literacy. A key to their success is the recognition that heritage language learners need a different type of instruction than children who learn Spanish only in the classroom.

**WHAT WE’RE UP AGAINST**

This simple after-school model could be replicated in preschools and elementary schools in California. Although it requires few resources, it could promote the cognitive gains of learning another language, preserve the most critical links between children and their families, and broaden students’ career opportunities.

So the proposed middle ground between no school involvement and a full component of bilingual programs is to increase the number of weekend Spanish language heritage schools and supplement them with after-school programs. In both cases, the decision to participate would be left to parents and their children.

To call it a “middle ground” is not to say that we should stop there. Ultimately, Californians need to expand the reach of dual immersion classrooms. Over 100 dual immersion schools in California already teach the standard curriculum in two languages, usually Spanish and English, but also in English and languages including Chinese and Korean. Two local examples of dual immersion programs are at the Foreign Language Academy in Glendale and Edison School in Santa Monica. The majority of these schools enroll an equal number of children who speak each language. The Spanish-English schools begin kindergarten with 90 percent of the curriculum in Spanish and each year increase the amount of English taught. The early focus on Spanish makes sense because of the exposure that all students have to English.

Moreover, the study plan raises the status of the Spanish-speaking kids, since the rest rely on them in class and to explain homework. As the balance between Spanish and English levels out, the advantages of this education remain evident, including high student achievement and membership in two linguistic communities.

By sixth grade, these children are ahead of their monolingual peers because they have been challenged to excel in two languages. They have also gained insight into who they are, both because they do not risk losing their ties with parents or grandparents and because they have become accomplished bilinguals.

The constant and debilitating attacks on bilingual education, the anti-affirmative-action movement symbolized by Proposition 209 and the anti-immigrant vitriol that English-Only advocates and others promote in a cynical era of “No Child Left Behind” all make for an unreceptive environment for increasing the number of dual immersion programs in the state. This resistance remains strong in spite of many successful dual language programs, both public and private, in this country and abroad.

I’m suggesting a challenge to that resistance. In a world city like Los Angeles, it makes no sense to be provincial. Instead of discouraging bilingualism, let’s create opportunities to promote it. ♦

Rey M. Rodriguez, vice president of Business & Legal Affairs for Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures Distribution International, is a grateful son who hopes that he can pass on the gift of speaking at least two languages to his sons, just as his parents were able to do. All opinions expressed are solely his own.
Madalena Cruz-Ferreira hails from Portugal and received postgraduate degrees in linguistics from the University of Manchester, UK. Her main research interests are child multilingualism, multilingual phonology and intonation, and the language of science. Recent publications include her book *Three is a Crowd? Acquiring Portuguese in a Trilingual Environment* (2006, Multilingual Matters). She has published a book on the language of linguistics (2003, Prentice Hall), articles and book chapters on child prosody and multilingualism, foreign intonational accent and Portuguese phonology and intonation. She has lived in Singapore for over 10 years with her Swedish husband and their three trilingual children. You will find Madalena Cruz-Ferreira's articles and knowledge throughout Multilingual Living Magazine, where she shares her expertise in the field of raising children in more than one language. Here she shares with us her own personal experiences as a multilingual.

**What are your languages?**
Portuguese, French, English, German, Spanish, Swedish, in order of appearance.

**What language do you use in your family (with your kids, wife/partner)?**
With my children: Portuguese by default, other family languages as and when the situation calls for them. With my husband: mostly Swedish, sometimes Portuguese.

**In what language did you receive your schooling?**
Portuguese and French.

**In what languages do you commonly read for work?**
Portuguese, French, English, German, Spanish, Swedish.
pleasure (can you name some titles of your favourite books, poems, etc.)?
Portuguese, French, English, Swedish. Favourites, respectively (among many, this is a difficult question!): Nitido Nulo by Vergílio Ferreira; António Gedeão’s poetry. J.-P. Sartre’s plays; ‘Les Rocs’ (among Eugène Guilleivic’s poetry). All of Jane Austen; Joseph Heller’s Catch 22. Enligt Maria Magdalena by Marianne Fredriksson; Pär Lagerkvist’s Aftonland.

In what languages do you commonly watch movies? (what are some of your favourite movies?)
Portuguese, French, English, Swedish, though I’m not a keen movie-watcher. All-time favourite: the BBC series ‘Allo ‘Allo.

What language do you dream in?
In all of my languages, depending on what I’m dreaming about.

When you get angry, what language comes to you first?
It depends on what language I’m thinking or getting angry in.

What is the language you prefer to use to make a declaration of love?
As they say, love has a language of its own.

In which language do you prefer to debate over a controversial issue?
It depends on the issue and on which language the issue is presented to me in. For example, I debate household issues with my family in Portuguese and Swedish, and work-related academic issues in English, because these are the languages in which these issues arise.

In what language do you prefer to write, and why?
My preference again depends on the purposes of the writing. I use Portuguese to write to my children and Portuguese-speaking friends, Swedish to my husband and Swedish relatives and friends, and so on.

Do you like to mix languages or do you like to keep them strictly separate?
I don’t give much thought to whether I’m mixing languages or not, except at work, where English is the lingua franca because we have no other language in common. Mixes into English from my other languages and those of my interlocutors might thus prove quite disruptive.

Did you ever rebel against a language/ decide not to speak a language, and if so, why?
No. On the contrary, I cherish every opportunity to use each one of them.

Do you think you are different when you speak a certain language/ does it affect your personality?
Yes. This is why I think it’s great to be able to express myself in different languages. I’m still me, with all these different ways of being me. And besides, there’s always the right word or the right tone of voice in some language somewhere, to say what I want to say.
So your spouse doesn’t want to speak the Other Language?

BY ALICE LAPUERTA
We cannot force someone to speak a language that they don’t really want to speak, least of all with their own children. Your spouse may have some deeply set personal reasons. Remember that language is intricately connected to issues of identity, culture and personal history. Aptitude also plays an important role. Many people have performance fear, for example: “I haven’t spoken this language in such a long time, what if I embarrass myself?” or simply, “I don’t speak it well enough, I’m rusty,” which may or may not be true. If your spouse’s language ability is really not up to par, you should respect this argument, at least on a personal and emotional level.

If aptitude is not an issue and the reason stems from a misapprehension such as “I won’t speak my native Spanish with my child because it is better for her academically to learn English,” or “I don’t want my child to be bilingual because it will harm her,” then you can, and should, confront this issue directly with your spouse. You can do it by referencing studies which show that children who grow up with more than one language are not disadvantaged and often are ahead of their peers in many areas. (Read through back issues of Multilingual Living Magazine for articles which discuss this as well as articles and information on www.biculturalfamily.org. And get a copy of Colin Baker’s “A Parents’ and Teachers’ Guide to Bilingualism” published by Multilingual Matters: www.multilingual-matters.com.) But even with every bit of proof in your hands, you still have to remember that you cannot force your spouse to speak his or her language with the children. This decision will have to come from your partner’s own free will. Hopefully, by seeing you interact with your child and seeing you and your child’s enthusiasm in the process with motivate your spouse to join in.

**TO SPARK YOUR SPOUSE’S INTEREST IN USING HIS OR HER LANGUAGE, TRY THE FOLLOWING:**

**Learn your spouse’s language.** This is essential in showing your support. It is the number one advice we give to families wanting to raise children in more than one language! Additionally, if your spouse decides to speak another language with the kids, he or she will not end up feeling that you are being excluded from the conversations.

**Leave books, cds, nursery rhymes lying about in your spouse’s language.** Maybe he or she will pick it up and browse through it, and one day go one step further and actually read the book to your child?

**Read books aloud in front of your spouse.** Rest assured that when you make a mistake in pronunciation, he or she will pipe up saying, “actually, you pronounce it as ‘x,’ not ‘x.’” Upon which you can say, “Gosh, honey, maybe YOU could read the story to the kids? You can do it so much better and with the right pronunciation.”

**Ask your spouse to translate certain things.** It is easier to repeat something than to come up with something brand new. Try reciting a story, and then say, “Now Mama/Papa is going to tell you the same story in Italian.”

**Give your spouse space and privacy to get used to the idea.** Maybe your spouse speaks his or her language to the children when they are alone together? Let your spouse know that you understand that it takes time and that you are willing to help however is most helpful.

**ULTIMATELY, YOU WANT TO PROVIDE YOUR SPOUSE WITH SUPPORT, NOT THREATS:**

**Try to understand what is at the bottom of your spouse not wanting to speak his or her language.** Is your spouse’s refusal to speak the language because of ability (“I don’t speak it well enough”), because of self-consciousness or because of something else?

**Don’t police or nag your spouse!** For example, saying the following won’t help things at all: “You should be speaking French with him, not English!!” “You spoke English AGAIN just now! I told you not to!” Work on using positive reinforcement such as: “I really love it when you speak French with our little girl. The other day I heard how she counted from one to ten in French! Look how fast she’s learning! Isn’t that awesome?”

Time will tell whether your spouse can warm up to the idea of speaking another language to the children (be it a native language or a non-native language). Be patient, tread carefully and always approach the subject with a loving heart. ✨
**Language and Thought**

- Aristotle believed that speech symbolized thought: that speech was used to tell others what was going on inside in our heads and how we experienced the world around us.

- The Philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (who worked in Germany) thought that language was tightly connected to thinking and therefore people who speak different languages would think differently.

- American linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf is the father of the so-called “Whorf-Hypothesis” which is based on the idea that thoughts are controlled or influenced by the language we speak.

- Listen to this fun discussion about Language and Thought online at Philosophy Talk: [www.philosophytalk.org/pastShows/LanguageThought.html](http://www.philosophytalk.org/pastShows/LanguageThought.html). Part discussion, part news report and part interview with Lera Boroditsky, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Stanford University.

**Soccer**

When in the United States, it is “soccer” but when in England, it is “football.” How confusing can it get!? But did you know that we are to thank England for originating the word “soccer”? Yes, indeed!

“We have to thank the students of the 1880s for the word ‘soccer.’ It seems it was the practice among the well bred students of Oxford to abbreviate words whilst adding ‘er’ to the end; ‘brekkers’ for breakfast for example. On asked if he wanted to play ‘rugger’ (i.e. the ‘rugby rules’) a student replied ‘no, soccer’, an abbreviation of ‘association’, or the ‘association rules’, i.e. the rules of the Football Association in London. ‘Footer’ was also used, but could have referred to either code. David Pickering’s ‘Soccer Companion’ (Cassell, 1994) names the student as Charles Wreford Brown, later an England international and F.A. vice-president.”

(answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=6442)

**Australia**

The name “Australia” is derived from the Latin Australis, meaning “Southern”. Legends of an “unknown land of the south” (terra australis incognita) dating back to Roman times were commonplace in mediaeval geography, but were based on no actual knowledge of the continent. English is the national language and is spoken and written in a distinct variety known as Australian English. According to the 2001 census, English is the only language spoken in the home for around 80% of the population. The next most common languages spoken at home are Chinese (2.1%), Italian (1.9%), and Greek (1.4%). A considerable proportion of first- and second-generation migrants are bilingual.

It is believed that there were between 200 and 300 Australian Aboriginal languages at the time of first European contact. Only about 70 of these languages have survived, and all but 20 of these are now endangered. An indigenous language remains the main language for about 50,000 (0.25%) people.

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2008 is the International Year of Languages!

The United Nations General Assembly, “recognizing that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Languages.” With the United Nations taking an active role in promoting an understanding of the value of our mother tongue, this is a great boost for all of us raising children in more than one language! As stated on the Unesco website: “Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and planet. Yet, due to globalisation processes, they are increasingly under threat, or disappearing altogether. When languages fade, so does the world’s rich tapestry of cultural diversity. Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression – valuable resources for ensuring a better future are also lost.”

- February 21st has been declared as International Mother Language Day which has multilingualism as its theme: UNESCO is organizing a series of debates for the Day. On 21 February, author Assia Djebar of the French Academy will speak on the theme “Mother Writing”. Two other debates will be held on the same day: “Philosophy: A riddle of words” and “Multilingualism in Romance-language countries”. The programme on 22 February will focus on multilingualism in cyberspace.

- May 21st has been declared as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development by UNESCO. “The Day will provide us with an opportunity to deepen understanding of the values of Cultural Diversity and to learn to ‘live together’ better. To learn more go to: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/admin ev.php?URL_ID=35097&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201
As I sat down at the computer to try to figure out what to say about my nephew Carl, now 22 months old, and his linguistic adventures, I realized that he hasn’t made any amazing recent breakthrough in French. While his English keeps improving—vocabulary depth, sentence length of sentences, frequency—his French is still pretty much where it was the last two columns. But instead of feeling disappointed, I’ll consider this a sign that spending one afternoon a week with him is enough to keep his skills up, which is encouraging and worth mentioning here!

His French is nonetheless impressive for a 22-month-old who doesn’t encounter it very often: he can say sentences on his own as long as four words (“Tatie joue avec Carl” when I’m playing with him), though they’re often more like two words (“feuilles tombent” as he watches leaves fall from the trees); he can repeat longer sentences; he can count to 15 (and then continue with “eighteen, nineteen, twelve!”); he can respond appropriately to yes/no and choice questions (for instance, “Tu as bien mangé?” after he’s eaten or “Est-ce que le cheval est par terre ou dans le lit?” when he’s playing with stuffed animals in his crib); and he answers open-ended questions in French with accurate responses in English (“Qu’est-ce que c’est?” What’s that? “Owl book”).

I can tell that he really does understand a lot of what he hears, sometimes even more that I expect. I barrage him with speech in French when we’re together, using as many words and explanations and songs as possible. I narrate what he’s doing and describe in detail what he’s looking at. To my surprise, sometimes he’ll agree with my explanation and repeat it in English! For example, when he grabbed a dictionary and paged through it as if it were a particularly scintillating storybook, I remarked “Tu lis le grand dictionnaire, même s’il n’y a pas d’images?” (You’re reading the big dictionary, even though it doesn’t have any pictures?) Without taking his eyes off the page, he replied, “Carl reading grand dictionnaire no pictures.” Or the other day, when he was pushing a huge plastic car along his small wooden train track, and I said “La voiture est trop grande pour le rail!” “Car too big,” he agreed.

As you can see, Carl blithely mixes English and French. He’ll pull at his bib after lunch and say “Want bavoir off!” or tell me “Carl done dodo” when I come into his room after his nap. This combination of languages doesn’t seem to faze him, as if he simply grabs the word that comes to mind first. He most often mixes the two when he’s trying to negate a verb (which he’s still getting the hang of in English), which leads to sentences like “Carl doesn’t mange biscuit” (Carl’s not eating a cookie) or “Carl no touch pas le livre” (Carl doesn’t touch the book). I’ve even heard him add English morphological endings to French words, like when he jumped up and down and announced “Carl sauting!”

Sometimes I do worry that I am not enough, that Carl needs to hear French from his peers. Unfortunately, I don’t know any other Francophone kids his age in the area. But this will change: by the time you read my next column, Carl will have a baby cousin to speak French with! My husband and I are delighted to announce that we’re expecting our first child in January and plan to raise him bilingually. Stay tuned!
TOP TEN TIPS...
FOR PARENTS TO KEEP UP THEIR LANGUAGE
1. Crossword puzzles
2. Radio/tv online in respective language
3. Create your own vocabulary book in which you record words/phrases
4. Get people to send you magazines, newspapers in respective language (or subscribe)
5. Meet regularly with people who speak your language (maybe start your own weekly gathering at a local café)
6. Join networks and chatgroups online, which gives you the opportunity to write in your language
7. Telephone or skype with family and friends back home
8. Write in your language in your journal/diary
9. Sing songs in your language
10. Read out loud to your children in your language as much as humanly possible

TOP TEN TIPS...
TO STAY MOTIVATED IN RAISING MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN
1. Keep track of your child’s progress: keep language diaries, make tape recordings, record on mp3 players, make videos. Review these when you feel particularly down and you will see the progress!
2. Tired of reading the same old book for the 101th time? Make your own picture-book!
3. Make a list of new activities you’d like to try with your child. Multilingual Living Magazine includes our favorites in each issue, or check out our “Once A Day” section under www.biculturalfamily.org and do an activity a day!
4. Celebrate each small success! Your child has just learned to count from 1-10 in Tagalog? Celebrate!
7. Revise your attitude. What are your expectations? What is your definition of “bilingual” or “multilingual”? Why are you feeling frustrated? Are you expecting too much too soon? Are you expecting perfection in all three languages because of the high expectations you have set up?
8. Keep plodding along! Keep in mind there is no right way, no single way, no perfect way of doing this.
9. If you think you need help, don’t hesitate to reach out and contact experts. Make sure you talk to the right people, though (doctors, pediatricians and many speech therapists can help you with health and overall developmental problems but may not give you the help you need for raising a child in more than one language). For specific questions on multilingualism talk to the experts who have studied this: The “Ask a Linguist” panel at linguistlist.org/ask-lin allows you to post questions. We have our own “Ask an Expert” section in our magazine and welcome questions anytime which will be answered by experts in the field (just send your question to editor@multilingualliving.com). Or if you want to talk to an expert directly, we are glad to get you in touch with them personally. Email us at: editor@multilingualliving.com.
10. Stop worrying about which language you speak to whom and when. Stop berating yourself as to whether you are doing things “right” and whether you are sticking to the rules. Just play, have fun, make language a joy in your life!

PERSISTENCY: continuing despite all odds.
PATIENCE: not expecting success immediately; knowing success will come eventually if we keep taking one step at a time.
Kids will say the most extraordinary things. Cute things, hilarious things and, sometimes, baffling things that may start us wondering whether we should worry about their language development.

This article summarises some of the knowledge we have about child language acquisition. All children, monolingual and multilingual, acquire language in the same way. They must learn the rules of the language game, just like they must learn how to play tag or chess in ways that satisfy other players of the same games. In order to learn, children follow their own strategies, just like the rest of us. So let’s see how they go about cracking the code of the language game.

**PHYSICAL STRATEGIES: ‘WORK SMALL’**

The first stumbling blocks are sounds. We can tell that there are difficult sounds and easy sounds by looking at what children do. Children start using speech sounds when they start babbling. They’ll produce things like bah bah bah, dee dee, goo goo goo, plus several combinations of the sounds spelt here b, d, g, a, ee, oo, but not things like fay fay or zoh zoh zoh. The former are easy sounds, the latter are difficult ones.

Take vowels, the sounds usually spelt ‘a, e, i, o, u’ in English. The three vowels most commonly found in babbling (ah, ee, oo) are easy because they are articulated as differently as possible from one another: small differences are more difficult to perceive and hence to produce. For ah, you just open your mouth wide. For ee and oo, you close your mouth, but you pout your lips for oo. Vowels are easier than consonants and are generally learned first, because vowels are the sounds that carry: if you want to shout for someone named Fred or Archibald you prolong the vowels in their names, not the consonants. So your child is likely to go through...
some stage where all or most vowels are fine in his speech, but all or most consonants may still be funny.

Turning now to consonants, they are so called because they must be sounded out (‘sonant’) with (‘con’) vowels, to make up words. Being ‘dependent’ sounds in this way, consonants are really tricky for children. All children start with stop consonants like b, d, g, p, t, k, m, n (g and k as in geek), which are pronounced by banging articulators together, as it were. Children are experts at pronouncing stops because they are ‘feeding’ and ‘gurgling’ sounds. If you smack your lips together you get b, p, m-like sounds, if you suck your thumb or a nipple you’re positioning your tongue to pronounce t, d, n, and if you lie on your back and gurgle you’ll produce g, k-like sounds. This is also why in virtually all languages the baby-words for ‘mummy’ and ‘daddy’ have easy sounds like these. It’s not that the children ‘know’ the words for mum and dad, it’s simply that these are the kinds of words that children can say (they say them to us, to the cat, to their toys, to themselves), but we parents decided to believe that the children are calling us ‘by name’, and so reinforced their use of these words to us from time immemorial!

Other consonants involve finer control of articulators, for example the consonants beginning and ending words like juice, cheese, shave, roll. Children either replace them with easier sounds, or simply drop them from their speech. This is why small children will call Sam ‘Tam’ but won’t call a pan ‘fan’, and may want to ‘pee’ potatoes with a potato-’peewah’ or ask you why strawberries are ‘wed’ and not ‘boo’. The same strategy operates in children’s spontaneous play: they start by banging toys and things together, which doesn’t require the fine motor skills that will develop only later. Whether with toys or articulators, your child is doing what she can do, while waiting for what she cannot yet do to fall naturally in place for her.

You may now guess that pronouncing several consonants in a row is young children’s worst nightmare. English is particularly child-unfriendly, with many words like splash (beginning with three consonants) or like texts (ending in four, the letter x represents two sounds, ‘k’ and ‘s’). If your child is bilingual in a devilish language like English and a benevolent one like Hawai’ian, where only single consonants appear before vowels, you shouldn’t be surprised if she becomes fluent in Hawai’ian much earlier than in English, or if a proud Hawai’ian parent tells you that his monolingual children started ‘speaking much earlier’ than all the English monolingual children he knows. It’s the languages’ fault, not the children’s. The insights that we gain from cross-linguistic observations like these, especially among multilingual children, teach us that using child productions in one single language as the benchmark for typical language development across the board is very short-sighted indeed.

Work Small strategies also account for why children leave out certain words and not others in their utterances, for example. They may say things like ‘Mummy big glass table’ but not ‘On if her the’. These are two quite different types of words, the former much more salient to children because they carry stress in connected speech, and therefore much easier to perceive and produce.

**COGNITIVE STRATEGIES: ‘THINK BIG’**

Suppose you show a banana to a group of children who are at the one-word stage (when all their utterances contain only single words) and suppose you ask them “What’s this?” Some children will say ‘nana’, others will say ‘mama’, others still may say ‘bana’. Child words like these exemplify children’s use of generalisation: children modify words, replace, add and remove word bits, to make them conform to a general pattern that they find easier to tackle. The straightforward two-syllable structure of words like these, featuring a sample of preferred consonants, is typical of children’s first words all over the world.

But suppose one child in the group says ‘moo’. This doesn’t sound like ‘banana’ at all, now does it? Before you start worrying about this child’s linguistic (or cognitive) abilities, try to think about your question and his answer on the child’s own terms, not yours. You are expecting a word that sounds like ‘banana’, but how does the child know what you are expecting? And how do you know what is going on inside his mind in his attempt to reply to you? In particular, why should the sound of the word be more relevant to him than, say, the shape of the object you’re holding? It may well be that this child has recently become fascinated by the night sky and all shiny things in it, whose names he’s just learned. And a banana does look like a crescent ‘moon’. This child is also generalising, though in a different way from his friends. He is besides showing that he knows how to relate what he learned before to whatever activity is required of him now, which is a very good thing to have mastered indeed. We all do
the same: if we see an insect that we never saw before and that looks like a cockroach, we’re likely to think it may be a cockroach and thus call it a cockroach. It is this kind of generalisation that makes young children, sometimes very embarrassingly, call all adult males ‘daddy’.

Other examples of Think Big strategies may mistakenly cause concern. Say your English-speaking child uses so-called irregular past tenses like came or went fluently, as well as regular ones like baked or cried. Then one day she starts saying things like ‘Mummy drived me to school today’, or ‘I sleeped so well’. What is happening here is that your child has realised that there is a pattern in some part of her language: some words (linguists call them ‘verbs’) can have extra sounds at the end to indicate events that happened before the time we are talking about them. Most verbs are regular in this way, so productions like goed or swimmed show that your child has actually learned a general rule and immediately started applying it to any verb. Again, she’s generalising from her observations, just like you did with the cockroach. The same happens with noun plurals: your child may start talking about foots or even feets where she talked about feet before, and will make similar generalisations in all her languages.

These apparent ‘errors’ in fact mean that learning is progressing as it should: the earlier, ‘correct’ production of irregular and regular forms was simply due to imitation. The generalised forms will disappear once your child is ready to learn the next rule, which is that some words follow the general rule and some don’t. Other apparent regresses may start appearing in your child’s speech, typically when she learns to put words together in one single utterance. She may hesitate, slur words that she had no problem pronouncing before, or even start stuttering; this is all part of the normal process of learning the very difficult skill of coordinating breathing with speaking in long utterances.

MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Multilingual children will use these learning strategies in all their languages. Their progress across languages will vary, depending on which language happens to be in the foreground for them at any point in time and for any reason. I found a very, very strong link between experiences and languages among my children. For example, they could only discuss skiing in Swedish (my husband’s language), because that’s the language in which skiing ‘takes place’, so to say. So if your child just spent three weeks with his Hungarian-speaking cousins and his skills in this language shot forward accordingly, then don’t expect him to be able to tell you all about it in Japanese, the language you and him normally use, with the same degree of linguistic sophistication.

Finally, if you want to find out more about typical language development, I have two suggestions. David Crystal’s book *Listen to your child: a parent’s guide to children’s language* (Penguin, 1986) offers a very accessible and very entertaining account of what children do with their own language learning. And the Learning Disabilities website lists typical milestones in cognitive, linguistic and social development, at www.ldonline.org/article/6313 (In case you’re wondering, the reason why information about ‘typical’ development is found in a learning ‘disabilities’ site is that we cannot know what may be wrong if we don’t know what is right.)

Just keep in mind one very important thing: these two resources deal with monolingual language development. Believe it or not, we still have no developmental guidelines dedicated to multilingual acquisition.

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira, a native of Portugal, is the author of *Three is a crowd? Acquiring Portugese in a trilingual environment*, (2006) Clevedon, Multilingual Matters (www.multilingualmatters.com). She has received postgraduate degrees in linguistics from the University of Manchester, UK and is currently a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore. Her main research interests are child multilingualism, multilingual phonology and intonation, and the language of science. She has lived in Singapore for over 10 years with her Swedish husband and their three trilingual children.

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Multilingual Living Magazine - Jan/Feb 2008
QUESTIONS:
1. Which country rang in the New Year with a ban on smoking in its most iconic institution – the smoke-filled café?
2. Which two countries started using the Euro at the strike of midnight?
3. In which city did Pope Benedict lament what he called the “trivialization” of sexuality and lack of faith among young people?
4. In which country were the New Year’s festivities marred by bombings that wounded 27 people?
5. Where were traditional fireworks cancelled because of a terror threat?
6. In an effort to “go green”, which city outfitted its New Year’s celebration icon, a 1,415-pound ball, with more than 9,500 energy-efficient light-emitting diodes?
7. Which country will be ringing in The Year of the Rat in February 2008?
8. In which country did a television presenter read a new year’s message from the ailing leader who saluted the country’s people for their “half century of heroic resistance” against the United States?
9. Which city was one of the first in the world to ring in the new year?
10. Which city witnessed something it had not seen since before the invasion of 2003 — people publicly partying to welcome in a new year?

ANSWERS:
1. France: The smoke-filled cafe became a thing of memory in France. Following up on a ban last year on smoking in many indoor locations, cigarettes were prohibited in dance clubs, restaurants, hotels, casinos and cafes.
2. Cyprus and Malta: The Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta, both former British colonies, were scrapping the Cyprus pound and Maltese lira to bring the number of countries using the shared currency to 15.
3. Vatican City: Pope Benedict XVI took a somber note, lamenting what he called the “trivialization” of sexuality and lack of faith among young people during a vespers’ service in St. Peter’s Basilica.
4. Thailand: An army spokesman said he believed that five bombs set off by suspected Muslim insurgents in a Thai-Malaysian border tourist town likely targeted New Year’s revelers. The bombs, which wounded 27 people, exploded in the hotel and nightlife area of Sungai Kolok, spokesman Col. Akara Thiprote said.
5. Brussels: Fireworks were canceled in downtown Brussels, Belgium, where police last week detained 14 people suspected of plotting to help an accused al-Qaida militant break out of jail.
6. New York: More than a million revelers in New York’s Times Square cheered at the 100th drop of a giant ball. A century ago the tradition began with a 700-pound ball of wood and iron, lit with 100 25-watt incandescent bulbs. This year’s event featured an energy-efficient sphere clad in Waterford crystals, with 9,576 light-emitting diodes that generated a kaleidoscope of colors.
7. China: Chinese New Year — also known as the “Spring Festival” — falls on a different date each year, ranging from late January to mid-February, (basically on the second new moon after the winter solstice.) The big day itself may be February 7 2008, but festivities can occur on weekends before or after that date — often with a flamboyant Parade.
8. Cuba: An ailing Fidel Castro saluted the Cuban people for their “50 years of resistance” against the United States in a message that was read on state television.
9. Sydney: Sydney was one of the first cities to celebrate the New Year. One million revelers cheered as fireworks sprayed from the iconic Harbor Bridge.
10. Bagdad: The ballrooms of two landmark hotels — the Palestine and the Sheraton — were full of people for New Year’s Eve celebrations. After years of car bombings, mortar fire and suicide attacks, Iraq’s capital was sufficiently calm to warrant the two high-end parties in the once-posh hotels.

For a full article, go to: www.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-12-31-new-year_N.htm

Happy New Year around the world!

How many of these New Year’s 2008 news stories can you answer correctly?
An Apology For Being “Inconsistent”
When consistency just doesn’t seem to work

BY ALICE LAPUERTA

Alice Lapuerta is the Managing Editor of Multilingual Living Magazine and a mother to two trilingual children (English, German and Spanish). She lives in Austria together with her Ecuadorian husband.
One thing I’ve been confused about in our multilingualism-adventure is the “consistency” factor. It crops up everywhere: Bilingualism yes, but make sure you’re consistent. Choose a method and stick to it. But always be consistent! This worries me. For there seems to be an unspoken, unwritten phrase that follows: “Be consistent! Or else…”

The question that I always feel like asking is: How consistent, if you please, is consistent? Does this refer to a kind of consistent that doesn’t allow any exceptions? Consistent as in Papi speaks one language, Mami another, both are strictly separated, ever and always, to the end of our days, amen? Or: don’t ever utter a word in the majority language within your four walls because that will be the beginning of the end?

Be consistent! The Alpha and Omega of multilingual parenting.

What if you’ve adopted a certain method when your child was born and you are now relocating, or somehow finding that the method doesn’t serve anymore? Does changing your method mean that you are being inconsistent? That, to be responsible and consistent in your multilingual parenting, you should always stick to a single method, always? Because if you don’t, it can, quite possibly, have dreadful consequences - like confusing your child?

Or does “consistency” mean: don’t ever mix languages. Yes but… See, this is another one of those things. What exactly does that mean? That I should not ever invent my own words, or speak Spanglish, Germanspanish or Germenglish in front of my children because our children just won’t learn how to speak properly if I do? Or does it mean that I am not supposed to switch languages in front of my child? That he only ever hears one language emerge from my mouth? Like when we are at the playground. Everyone speaks German, the majority language, yet I should stick to English with my son. But… isn’t that rude? I feel so self-conscious when I do that and would rather speak German with my son, too, so the others understand what I am saying. Doesn’t matter, the answer seems to be. You stick to your language, always. You gotta be consistent.

And what if my daughter speaks to me in the “wrong” language, what do I do then? I guess I better ignore her or try to goad her into repeating what she said in the “right” language. She’s got to learn to be consistent as well, doesn’t she? Or else she won’t grow up into a “proper bilingual.”

More often than not I find myself in this situation:
“Mami, what is this?”
“It’s uh …” (dang it! What was that again in English? Consistent! Consistent!!)
I give up. “It’s a Dampfwalzmaschine, honey.” So much for consistency.

Or does it mean: consistent, yes, but in the end you have to do what feels right. This is another one of those paradoxes.

We need to be consistent on one hand, but can, and probably should, bend rules according to our own needs. Interpret that as “being consistent at your own whim.”

Somehow that doesn’t help much, either.

How oppressive this consistency-factor is becoming. It’s a load full of rocks on my shoulders. Mr. Consistency is like an inflexible and conservative schoolmaster, waving a rod, threatening in the background, checking on us whether we’re sticking to the rules, ready to smack my fingers at any time. It gives me guilty feelings and instills worry. We start to check and control every single word that leaves our mouths. We check and control each other: “You just said something in English again, honey, you know you shouldn’t (at least not when the children are around)”

Ah no, it’s not easy. For when mommy speaks German and Papi speaks Spanish and between us we speak English, yet the majority language is German, this situation is just the epitome of inconsistency. And so I bow my head in resignation. I’m really sorry, but there’s no way we can ever be consistent. It’s just not possible. Not realistic. We just need to switch languages, code-switch, mix, and sometimes invent our own words to communicate. We need to be flexible. We cannot stick to just one method forever and always. Instead, we ended up using two methods and merged them together, by chopping off one and sticking it to the other, fitting and molding them to serve our unique linguistic family situation. Via trial and error we created the one method, the one system that worked for us, that made us all happy. And in the process we broke all rules of consistency. Yes, we are guilty here. I do confess: sometimes we start a sentence in one language and end in another. What can I say. Multilinguals DO tend to do that. It’s in our genes! It’s part of our lifestyles.

So I sacked Mr. Consistency and felt considerably happier.
I’ve been pondering, lately. What if “consistent” is simply meant to say: “don’t give up”? Be “persistent”? You started the bilingualism adventure, it doesn’t matter how you do it, what methods you chose or what rules you have to bend to make them work for you: be CONSISTENT in keeping your faith that it will all work out somehow, in the end? More often than not you find yourself whining: “Why can’t we just be the average, normal monolingual family like our neighbors! How easy, how simple life must be for them?” Maybe here, precisely here, we need to tell ourselves: Let’s not give up! We can do it! Others are doing it, we can, too! Let’s just be consistent!

Lo and behold, Mr. Consistency, the strict schoolmaster, decided to put his rod away. He’s finally smiling upon us.

Disclaimer: this is a subjective reflection on personal experiences. The author is not proposing for everyone to be inconsistent in their bilingual parenting, now. By all means!
Let’s talk about it
gain and again and again!

Ensure your child has a school vocabulary in BOTH languages

BY COREY HELLER

Each day your child goes to school and picks up a tremendous amount of new vocabulary. How can you even imagine keeping up with this kind of language explosion in your own language?
The truth is, you can’t. However, you can make a difference by incorporating school subjects into your discussions at home in your language. We aren’t talking about repeating everything at home that your child has learned in school! No need for that. Just find ways to discuss the same topics - it will give you the chance to use words like Medieval and estuary and multiplication.

TIPS ON REPEATING SUBJECTS AT HOME:

Start by finding out which subjects your child is covering in school.

Either you can ask your child what was covered that day in school or ask to see the papers and books that he or she brought home. Don’t be too obvious! Otherwise your child might start to feel that you are invading his or her world. Another way to go about this is to talk to your child’s teacher. Explain that you are raising your child in more than one language and would like to talk about the same subjects at home. Explain how this not only will help your child become truly bilingual, it will also mean additional focus on the school topics. That’s a good thing all around.

Gather materials.

It is easier to cover the same topics when you have resources on hand to utilize. Books, DVDs, access to internet programs and print-outs - all of these will help to facilitate numerous discussions. If you can afford it, think about getting an encyclopedia in your language! However, if you can’t get your hands on books and DVDs, just use resources in the community language (for example your child’s school materials) and use them to start a discussion in your language.

Come up with a plan.

You are better off NOT sitting your child down and saying, “Ok, time to go over your school subjects in my language,” unless you want to receive a sigh of boredom and rolled eyes in response. Instead, you need to find ways to help your child become interested in such a discussion. For example, you can say, “Oh, wow, you are learning about King Arthur in school.
That is fabulous! I remember learning about Kind Arthur. My favorite parts of the story were...”. And since you are prepared, pull out the books that you have ready on the shelf and start going through them with your child. And don’t forget about the great internet sites that are available to review with your child.

Have fun!
You have heard it said a million times already in our magazine that having fun is the most important aspect in helping children learn our languages. There is no difference when it comes to covering school subjects with your child in your language. Remember what inspired you the most when studying the same subjects and instill your child with that same joy. Remember, you do not need to teach your child the subject again - your child’s teacher has already done that in school. Just find ways to include your language's vocabulary so that your child will have enough exposure.

You can’t cover everything.
There will be some subjects and topics which you won’t be able to cover. Don’t worry about it! The fact that you are even covering any subject is a wonderful bonus to your child. So don’t dwell on the things that you aren’t able to accomplish and the areas which are left unaddressed.

Repetition is the key to learning a language. Each time your child hears a word used in context, the better he or she will learn it. Finding excuses to use our vocabulary is the fun of raising children in more than one language. Try not to let this aspect become exhausting. This is what makes it so creative and unique and special.
Enjoy! ✷

RESOURCES

Amazon
Amazon is still a favorite location for families around the world looking for resources in their language. Shipping can be expensive so be prepared.
amazon.com

YouTube
Even though there is a lot of junk out there on YouTube.com, there is also a tremendous amount of wonderful language resources! From TV programs from your country to more informal videos, take some time after your kids go to bed to do some YouTube.com researching.
youtube.com

Enchantedlearning
The site looks a little funky with low quality graphics and links located all over the place but despite this, the site continues to grow and add more and more useful resources. One of the exciting additions the last few years has been their focus on language resources. Currently they have fun resources in eight different languages.
enchantedlearning.com

ABCTeach
This site is packed with print-outs for all kinds of subjects. It is in English but you can either use the site to get ideas for self-made print-outs or just use those in English and have your child do everything in your language.
abcteach.com

A to Z Home’s Cool
This is a homeschooling website packed with resources and information about different school subjects. Most things are in English but you can use the ideas, tips, and much more to spearhead your home discussions in your language.
homeschooling.gomilpitas.com
Ask questions!
Find reliable experts and supportive families and ask as many questions as you can. You need to be as prepared as possible so get into the habit of asking others what is working and not working for their families.

Believe in yourself and your abilities.
This is no time to start second guessing your strengths. Come up with a plan and see how it goes. If you tell yourself that you can't do it for any of a number of reasons, then you are setting a path for failure before you have even begun!

Choose your method.
You can change your method along the way, don't worry. But you need to come up with one before you can change it! One-Parent-One-Language? Or maybe Minority-Language-at-Home? Whatever it is, make sure you figure it out and then give it a whirl.

Define your goals.
Don't really know why you are raising your children in more than one language? You need to figure this out first, then you can move on from there. Defining your goals is the very first place to start.

Explain to your extended family what you are doing.
You don't necessarily need their approval (even though it really helps) but you should decide how you are going to explain to them what you are doing. Show them articles on the benefits of raising children in more than one language and explain your motivations, goals and methods and how they can participate.

Find playgroups and make playdates.
Don't do this completely on your own. Figure out where there are other families who are either raising children in your language or who are also raising children in more than one language.

Get together with other families.
Whether other families you get together with are raising children in more than one language or not, you need to find ones who are supportive and help you keep up your motivation and resolve.

Hang in there and don't give up.
It takes time to raise children in more than one language. This is something that you need to stick with through thick and thin. This means that when the going gets tough, you need to stick with it.

Ignore others who try to discourage you.
Just don't listen to what they say. Smile, nod and then completely ignore it. No need to argue with them. No need to disagree. Just let them get their discouraging comments off their chest and forget everything they just said to you.
Just do it.
Stop worrying so much about what is the right or wrong way to raise children in more than one language. Just get going with it and work through things as they come up.

Keep a language diary to track progress.
You want to find some real motivation? Then keep a diary of the words your children are learning and of what YOU are learning along the way. You will laugh when you look back at the earlier entries when your children are older and bilingual!

Laugh, laugh, laugh.
Raising children in more than one language is something to enjoy! Have fun with it. Find ways to laugh together about it rather than turning it into a struggle and conflict.

Make sure you and your spouse are working together.
This isn’t something you want to do in conflict with your spouse. It is too hard to maintain your resolve with a spouse who is constantly discouraging you. So find a way to at least compromise. Figure out what is most important to you in raising children in more than one language. Find out why your spouse is so concerned and perhaps nervous about the whole idea. Then work through ways in which both you and your spouse can agree on things.

Network with other bilingual families.
They are out there so make sure to find them! They may not live in your neighborhood. They may not live in your town. If so, get online and find some via cyberspace.

Offer support to other families.
Once you get yourself headed in the right direction, help other families find the support they need through your experiences and expertise. Try not to sound like a know-it-all and definitely don’t tell other families what to do. Be an example through the actions of your own family and let others know that you are more than happy to share if/when they are interested.

Put yourself in your children’s shoes.
Think about how your children might feel about you raising them in more than one language. Would you want a parent shoving language down your throat? No way! You’d want them to make it simply part of life - to make it fun and natural (and you’d want your parent to understand your embarrassment when friends are over!) This doesn’t mean that you as a parent have to stop raising your children in more than one language. It means you learn to compromise a bit along the way and take into account each of your children’s feelings and perceptions about what this multilingual journey.

Quit comparing yourself with other families.
Who cares that everyone else is perfect, have found the one and only right way to do things and are successful in every way shape or form. Aside from the fact that this isn’t true, it also doesn’t matter. Focus on your own family, your own family’s needs and the unique make-up of your family’s language and personalities.

Read up on advice by experts.
Make sure to have a few really good books on hand (Colin Baker’s are top notch) and pull them out for advice and support whenever you feel like you are stuck. Don’t forget about the back issues of Multilingual Living Magazine as well!
in the end, remember that just as it takes patience, time and dedication for your child to learn the alphabet (in more than one language no less!) it will also take the same patience, time and dedication from you in this rewarding endeavor to raise your children in more than one language. Have faith in your abilities and know that putting out the effort is what really counts.

**Stock up on books, cds, dvds.**
These items are your magical tools of the trade. You will want to have as many as you can so that the language magic can be as complete as possible.

**Try out different language approaches.**
Just because one approach seemed to work yesterday doesn’t mean it will work today. Your children are developing and changing and adapting and learning. So you need to do the same along with them. Are they tired of that language game that you play while driving them to swimming class? Then have them help you come up with a different language game!

**Utilize the internet for language resources.**
There are so many resources out there at your fingertips! YouTube.com has a ton of videos in your language. You can find print-outs to help your child learn to read in your language as well as interactive games for your kids in your language.

**Vent your frustrations to those who are supportive.**
We all go through tough times. The key to getting through such times is to have a few friends who will allow you to vent your frustrations without making you feel guilty or discouraged. These friends can be the most important sources of motivation along your family’s language journey.

**Wait and watch before making any major changes.**
Come up with a plan and then let it do its magic for a while. Give each of your decisions time so that you can honestly assess whether they are working or not. Don’t expect that things will have an instant result. In fact, it may take many years before you see any results.

**(e)Xpect to have times when things don’t go smoothly.**
This is simply part of the process. Remember this: things will NOT always go smoothly - that is a given. The question is how you will react when these times occur. Be prepared for the rough times and you will get through them more easily.

**Yes, you can do this!**
Honestly, you really can! It may not always work out exactly as you expected but you can do it and it will be worth it in the end no matter the mistakes along the way.

**Zero in on what is most important.**
Remember that success is measured by the goal. If you don’t know what your goal is in raising your children in more than one language, then you are bound to either be disappointed or to wander around aimlessly. Set up some realistic goals and then keep them close to your heart. Write them down and stick them on the refrigerator so that you and your family can see them each and every day!
Start the new year right by creating a lively, welcoming, multicultural classroom or playroom! Language Lizard offers multilingual posters with a variety of themes. Each poster has text in English and many other languages. Kids will enjoy seeing the foreign language texts and learning about where all the languages are spoken. Young students and friends will feel welcome and proud when they see their heritage languages represented on the posters. Below are just a few of the posters available. For the full range, visit: www.languagelizard.com/Posters_Maps_s/20.htm.

**Hello Poster**
A popular poster that welcomes children of all ethnic backgrounds with illustrations of friendly children waving “HELLO” in 22 languages.

**Prepositions Poster**
Children who are learning prepositions will enjoy images of playful kids going in and out of a tunnel; up, over and under a climbing wall; through and behind tires; and down a slide. The multilingual edition of this poster includes English and individual words in Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Portuguese, Somali, Urdu and more. A French-English edition of this poster is also available at www.LanguageLizard.com.

**Opposites Poster**
Kids love this beautifully illustrated poster showing opposites: i.e., big/small, short/long, left/right, open/closed, hot/cold, sweet/sour, near/far, front/back, dry/wet, heavy/light, full/empty, slow/fast. This poster is multilingual with English and individual words in Chinese, Czech, French, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu and many other languages. A French-English edition of this poster is also available at www.LanguageLizard.com.

**Global Warming Poster and Mini-beasts/Insects Poster**
Students learning about global warming or insects will enjoy these colorful posters. And can you think of a better gift for an educator who is teaching thematic units on these topics?
As a former classroom Spanish teacher with a bilingual husband, the choice to raise our children in a bilingual household was a natural one. We both speak English and Spanish, so encouraging our children to develop their two languages is a joint effort that we are very dedicated to. Mark, my husband, is a first generation Mexican American. His parents are from Mexico, and he was born and raised in Houston, Texas. My experience learning Spanish began in middle school, and I pursued it as a college major. I spent college and post-graduate time living and working in Spain, Mexico, and Ecuador. After returning to the States, I moved to Houston on a whim with some single college friends. We were in search of exciting, new teaching positions, which we found! We also all found some Texans to marry! Within a week of moving to Texas, I met my future husband. His bilingual upbringing and my experience learning Spanish as a second language is the foundation on which we are raising our own children.

Raising bilingual children is a constant joy and at times a challenge. Our daughter was very verbal at a young age, speaking both Spanish and English. Not only did she clearly understand who was or wasn’t a Spanish speaker, she was able to switch back and forth with much ease. Even today as a five-year-old, she is very comfortable communicating in her second language Spanish. My husband and I are very conscientious about setting our language boundaries and encouraging her to answer in Spanish when we are conversing. Recently, we have instituted a sticker chart for reinforcement. It has been working very well, because it is forcing her to speak more fluently and elaborate on topics in particular conversations. She knows if she keeps the conversation going, she will eventually receive a sticker. However, she is very confident and comfortable communicating with her grandmother in Spanish, when we travel to Mexico, and with our Spanish-speaking friends.

On the other hand, our three-year-old son is a completely different species. His bilingual development is constantly evolving. He had a much longer silent period than my daughter, not saying anything at all until after age 2. Then, when he did speak, it was almost entirely in Spanish. He understood English, but would only communicate his words in Spanish. Now as a busy three-year-old, he is speaking very clearly and understands both languages. He makes us laugh sometimes with his opinionated responses to us. We were having our family dinner the other night and speaking only Spanish. Our son decided that he had enough. He told us: “Too much Spanish, I don’t want...
you to talk like that right now!”. Continual exposure and reinforcement is going to the game plan for both of our kids. We know that since we are not living in a Spanish-speaking country and are not completely immersed in the language, it will be our responsibility to keep their language development alive.

I became a business owner when I chose to leave my full-time classroom Spanish teaching position, to raise my young daughter. The word quickly spread in our neighborhood that my toddler was bilingual and I received many requests to host “Spanish playgroups”. I began to think about ways that I could incorporate my love for languages, my passion for teaching, my dedication to teaching other parents about the benefits of early language learning, and being with my children full time. The Bilingual Fun Company was born!

My living room was the venue for our first session of parent/child Spanish classes. Soon, the interest was so overwhelming that I began renting classroom space in a local church. Armed with a Master’s degree in Bilingual Education and two children who are being raised speaking both English and Spanish, I put my personal and professional experience to use. My classes became very popular within our community, as we offer classes to children as young as 18 months through age 12. The class format teaches to the multiple intelligences of young children, incorporating a variety of kinesthetic, musical, and verbal activities, just to name a few. My husband is my partner in the bilingual business of raising our children and growing our company. Our children attend Bilingual Fun classes, and my 5 year daughter often acts as my assistant. I have a wonderful schedule, as I form all classes around my children’s activities, school, etc. The addition of two more bilingual instructors to our staff has allowed our program to grow even more.

Our current goals are adding Mandarin Chinese to our curriculum and licensing our training materials, so that other educators have the opportunity to start a program in their community. Bilingual Fun is unique in that our philosophy is to teach to the parents as well, so that learning and reinforcement may happen more easily at home. We are proud of the success that our interactive language program has received. We recently garnered national recognition with features on Good Morning America, ABC News Now, Redbook, and Family Circle Magazines.

The second exciting part of my business is our online store. After many requests from parents seeking additional reinforcement activities, my husband and I worked together with a production company to produce Spanish for Children DVD series. We are thrilled that it has been met with success and it is now an award winning production! I have been enjoying growth and online sales as we learning the ins and outs of online marketing and advertising. As an educator, the ‘business’ side of things has been a continual learning experience. I am involved in several professional associations, attend local business seminars, networking events, and rely on the advice of my very supportive husband. With my two young children at home with me, my top priority is being the best mom I can be.

As I have been enjoying my new journey as an entrepreneur, there have been some challenges along the way. Balancing the schedules of my young children and family, and keeping up with the demand of my growing business has proven to be something that is continually evolving. I look forward to continuing to grow my company, create educational products, and to increase the awareness of the importance of early language instruction.

Jennifer Manriquez is the mother of two bilingual children and founder of The Bilingual Fun Company. She and her husband Mark are dedicated to educating others on the importance of early language instruction. Her company teaches Spanish as a second language to children and parents, as well as offers educational products supporting early language learning.

Website: [www.bilingualfun.com](http://www.bilingualfun.com)
Ask An Expert...

ANSWERED BY MADALENA CRUZ-FERREIRA

The questions in this section have been collated from those that readers sent in to us.
Do you have a question for our experts? Send your questions to: editor@multilingualliving.com.

Question: We are raising our children with two languages, one for each parent, but the children also have close contact with speakers of other languages, for example in school where other children are also multilingual in different languages, or in the community where we live. Is it all right to let them be introduced to a third, or even more languages, or will this threaten their first languages? My wife is also bilingual, should she start using her other language with the children too? When is the best age to do so? We don’t want to deliberately introduce a “Tower of Babel-like” situation in our family, but we have a love of languages, and hope this passes on to our children. They should be as malleable as possible linguistically for later years to help facilitate whichever directions they desire to pursue in-depth in languages. In order to mould their “phonetic fluency” for a variety of languages, we have thought to begin playing tapes of different languages (stories, songs, readings) as they are just lying quietly, or going to sleep, and even while sleeping, softly in the background. I am also interested in feedback on this idea.

Answer: Children will learn any languages which are relevant to them, at any time they become relevant. Languages are not collectible items, as it were, unless you are yourself interested in them, as you say. You don’t know whether your children will come to share your interest, and I don’t think you can train them to become interested in languages. The reason is that young children are not interested in languages for their own sake: languages are tools that get things done for them, which is in fact what languages are there for in the first place. Introducing a new language poses no problem and no threat to other languages, so long as the children know that there is good reason to introduce them. Many bilingual parents do exactly what you ask about here, they speak their two (or more) languages to their children, because that’s what comes naturally to them. Chances are that conditioning your children’s ear in the way you suggest won’t work. Their ear will become attuned to whatever languages matter to them, not to meaningless background ‘noises’. Languages are much more than their sounds and they are learned through natural, active interaction with human beings, so language tapes, or TV, or computer-bound activities may eventually become interesting to children but simply to reinforce what is already there.

Question: In my country, there is a phenomenon going on. People want to learn how to speak English and have their children speak English. But there is no structure in place to deal with this. It is very difficult to find a nursery or school dedicated to teaching English, although they all claim to be bilingual. Some do have English-speaking teachers, others offer only two hours of English a day, like one nursery I just interviewed. Is there anywhere I can find information about what a bilingual school should be? The worst part of this is that I see many schools advertising themselves as bilingual, and charging huge fees because of that claim.

Answer: I don’t think there is a clear-cut definition of ‘bilingual school’ to be found, and I don’t know whether and how different countries can, or do, enforce compliance with a definition, if one is indeed available. For better or for worse, many schools are businesses, and many want to capitalise on the new fashion of becoming bilingual, especially in English. I think you are doing exactly the right thing, which is to shop around for a suitable school according to what you require of it for your child, not according to their own advertisements. Arm yourself with a solid set of questions, not just about how many hours a week English is offered. What is taught and how, at which different levels of proficiency, and why, that is, which are the expected learning outcomes, are also important matters to discuss with prospective schools.
Question: What is the best way to encourage a partnership with my children’s teachers so they will be supportive of our bilingualism? My 6 year old attends school in a second language and she is struggling. She will have to resist her first year of primary school because she didn’t understand enough of the material. I really want to help, but I don’t know how. Should I let the school know they are bilingual? I’ve heard that sometimes schools diagnose language issues that may not really exist after learning that a child is bilingual. Also, what will be a productive way to work with foreign language teachers later on, when the children begin to study their own first language as a school subject? I may end up having the opposite problem here, because my children are already fluent and some of the language instruction will be too basic, although they will need help with their reading and writing.

Answer: The best strategy is to ask for the school’s cooperation. I should perhaps add that next, expect the best but be prepared for the worst. One of my children was indeed ‘diagnosed’ with behavioural problems in school which were flatly attributed to her multilingualism, and referred to both psychologists and special needs teachers. We parents were also sternly advised to stop speaking anything but the school language to our children, for good measure. We simply disregarded this, of course, and went on as before with our two home languages. What did help was to secure private tuition in the school language, for which we asked the school’s advice and fully heeded it. The ‘problem’ disappeared after a few months. So I don’t think you should try to help your children develop in a language in which you perhaps don’t feel confident yourself. It’s best to leave language teaching to language teachers. Later on, you just follow the same strategy and explain to the school your children’s situation concerning their own language(s). I don’t know what kind of support you may expect here either, but some schools will have alternative streams for fluent and beginner children. If not, you can always suggest gently to the teachers that they use your children as language ‘teachers’ too! Children learn best from peer interaction, and beginner learners can only benefit from seeing their friends enjoy speaking this ‘funny’ new language.

As far as reading and writing are concerned, your children will be on the same beginner level as their peers, which will also be good for their own and their friends’ self-confidence -- your children are not ‘the’ geniuses, after all. If the school doesn’t introduce reading and writing at beginner level, or doesn’t do so in one of the languages the children know until literacy in another language is in place, don’t worry about this. Again, leave matters of language teaching to the teachers.

Question: What do you do when one of the parents speaks both a standard form and a dialect of a language as well as English -- how do you deal with teaching that dialect as well as the standard form?

And how does one handle bilingual siblings? What influences them to select the language they talk to each other in? How do I encourage my children to keep on speaking our home language and not the community language with each other?

Answer: First of all, we all speak dialects of our languages, one or more. A standard form of a language is also a dialect -- a ‘lucky dialect’ of that language, for political and other reasons which have nothing to do with the dialect itself, as some linguists have observed. So if you speak both dialects naturally, just do so with your children, as you do with different languages. What won’t work is forcing yourself to speak in an artificial way to the children. They will notice it immediately, and start wondering what is wrong. Same thing for siblings, you can’t force them to use, or not use, particular languages among themselves. Older siblings will know what language to speak to newborns as naturally as you do. Later on, they will sort their languages out among themselves and they may change the language(s) they use with each other. The reason is that by around age 3, the models that start mattering to children are peer models, not parental ones. So younger siblings will adopt as peer language the language they hear from elder siblings, or vice versa. I don’t think there is a problem in having your children speak the community language among themselves. This is in fact what happened in my family, because the children were schooled in the community language, and school models are very powerful indeed. So long as our children go on speaking our languages with us parents, which they do, we see no reason to deny them their own language.
**Hide and Seek**

Hide and Seek is a great game to play with children of all ages. It is best played in an area with lots of hiding places like outdoors or a large house. The game starts with all players in a central location. One player is given the designation of being “it.” All the players, except “it,” run and hide, while the person who is “it” attempts to locate the players. Either everyone can hide until the person who is “it” finds everyone. Or the game can be played so that those who are hiding try and make it back to the central location before the person who is “it” finds them.

Hide and Seek is a great way for you to incorporate number vocabulary! Start by hiding your eyes and loudly counting to twenty (or even to one hundred) in your language while your child hides. As you look for your child, loudly repeat in your language, “Where is [child’s name]?” When you find your child, you can say, “I see you” in your language. This is a natural way for your child to learn some very valuable vocabulary during playtime.

Another way to play Hide and Seek is for one person to hide and everyone else searches. No matter how you play, do it in your language! (Adapted from Teach Your Child Spanish Through Play, A Guide and Resource for Parents, by Starr Weems de Graffenried)

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**Supermarket Scavenge**

Make shopping for groceries a vocabulary game in your language by naming something on your list and having your child try to find it in the grocery store. See if your child can name foods that are not on your list as well. Talk about how the foods taste, whether you like them or not, what color they are and at what meal they are normally eaten. Consider buying your child a treat if he or she can name the item in your language. You’ll be surprised how quickly children become proficient in your vocabulary when the possibility of getting a treat is on the line! Don’t demand perfect pronunciation. The best policy where language is concerned is to reward your child even if you can only remotely understand him or her.

Keep finding opportunities to talk about the groceries once you get home. When you take them out of the bag, talk about them again. For example, talk about which groceries go where. You might even have your child put them away for you! (Adapted from Teach Your Child Spanish Through Play, A Guide and Resource for Parents, by Starr Weems de Graffenried)

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**Body Parts Bingo**

Bingo is one of those games that can be used with almost any vocabulary set. Clearly, this game is most fun with more than one person and when some sort of prize is involved, but can also be conducted with one child and no prizes. Draw a grid five spaces long and five spaces deep. In each space either draw or cut and paste a magazine picture of a body part. Next, have your child use pennies or paper scraps to cover the pictures of the body parts that you call out in your language. When your child gets five in a row in any direction, he or she has a bingo.

You can create a bingo game focused on other topics. Try making a bingo game with different plants or flowers. Animals is also great theme (zoo, farm, African plains, domesticated, etc.) or countries! There are simply so many different possibilities, these games could keep you busy for months.

Bingo is a great game for children’s parties and language playgroups. If you can, make the bingo prizes something culturally specific (sweets from your country or little books in your language) or even geared toward the different bingo topics.

(Adapted from Teach Your Child Spanish Through Play, A Guide and Resource for Parents, by Starr Weems de Graffenried)
Restaurant Alive
With your child, make up some pretend menus. If your child can already read and write, have him or her write the words for the menus. Otherwise, you will probably want to draw or cut out pictures of food items. Talk about food in your language. Discuss color, taste, like or dislike and how much you think the price of the item should be to help review old vocabulary. Next, set up a table and act out a restaurant scene, taking turns being the waiter and customer. Make this activity more fun by dressing up in silly clothing or using funny voices. This type of role play is excellent for learning and practicing new vocabulary.

You can also use puppets, stuffed animals or dolls to use the new vocabulary to act out a restaurant scene. Recycle vocabulary by using four or more characters and pretending that at least two of them have never met one another before. Guide the conversation in a way that not only uses the new restaurant vocabulary but also reincorporates any older vocabulary that you might be able to work in. You can play this game with different mealtimes, even teatime and snacks! Make it more fun with children-sized dishes!

Verb Pictionary
With a note pad or erasable white board, choose a verb in your language and begin to draw images that depict that word. Your child will try to guess which verb you are drawing. Don’t make it too easy or too difficult - just have a lot of fun! After your child guesses, swap places and have your child draw the verb and you have to guess. Of course, this game is most fun played on teams with a group of people. Each team takes turns designating a person to draw. Set a timer for one minute (or for however long you think is reasonable). The team has to guess the verb that the drawer is attempting to portray within that amount of time. If the correct verb has not been guessed by the end of that minute, the other team gets to guess. With little kids, you can leave out the timer and just let them keep drawing until their team can guess. You can also have some simple prizes for the team each time they guess or after the fun is over.

Feeling Collages
If you and your child enjoy making artwork, consider making a series of collages for each feeling or state of being that you study. For instance, take the word “busy.” Go through magazines looking for pictures that depict the word “busy.” You might find a picture of someone at a computer, someone raking leaves, cooking a meal, etc. As you look for the pictures, be sure to talk about them in your language with all of the vocabulary that you know. Additionally, be sure to mention the name for the state of being that you are working on as often as possible. Find ways to discuss other feeling words as well. For example, “Is she happy? No, she’s sad.” Take all of the pictures that you find and make a collage to display.

There are many other topics for collages. You and your child can make collages of different kinds of clothing, food, animals, landscapes, items from specific countries, and much much more! Let your child tell you what he or she would like to focus on. It will be so much more fun for your child to direct the activity!

If your child is not interested in actually making a collage, then collect the cut out pictures and put them in a box or a ziplock bag with a label of what is inside. Either your child may be interested in doing a collage later or you can use them for any of a number of other activities!

(Adapted from Teach Your Child Spanish Through Play, A Guide and Resource for Parents, by Starr Weems de Graffenried)
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USA
Cinnamon Rolls

**INGREDIENTS:**

**DOUGH:**
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 (.25 ounce) package instant yeast
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 egg

**FILLING (SUGAR/BUTTER MIXTURE):**
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional)

**DIRECTIONS:**

For the dough: Heat the milk in a small saucepan until it starts to bubble, then remove from heat. Mix in butter; stir until melted. Let cool until lukewarm.

In a large mixing bowl, combine 2 1/4 cups flour, yeast, sugar and salt; mix well. Add water, egg and the milk mixture; beat well. Add the remaining flour, 1/2 cup at a time, stirring well after each addition. When the dough has just started pulling together, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth, about 5 minutes. Cover the dough with a damp cloth and let rest for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix together brown sugar, cinnamon and softened butter (the filling for the dough).

Roll out dough into a 12x9 inch rectangle. Spread dough with the butter/sugar filling. Sprinkle with raisins if desired. Roll up dough and pinch seam to seal. Cut into 12 equal size circles and place cut side up in 12 lightly greased muffin cups. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).

Bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes, or until browned. Remove from muffin cups to cool. Serve warm.
The Multilingual Mind: Issues discussed by, for and about people living with many languages, by Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa (editor)

This anthology is a compilation of 21 diverse essays on living with multiple languages. The articles range from practical advice for parents on how to teach their bilingual child multiliteracy skills, to topics such as the relationship between multilingualism, mathematics and musical talent, language and identity, bilingualism and adoption, bilingualism in the womb, issues of trilingualism, and challenges to bilingualism, among others. The book is versatile, easily readable and highly recommended for anyone dealing with several languages in their lives. $31.95; Praeger Paperback; ISBN-13: 978-0897899192

Teach Your Child Spanish Through Play - A Guide and Resource for Parents, by Starr Weems de Graffenried

When it comes to raising children in more than one language, the key is having resources to pull from. How the heck can we get our children speaking our language when chats about how their day at school went don’t seem to work anymore? That is where Starr Weems de Graffenreid’s book comes in extremely handy. She can help you find just the activities which will be of interest with your young ones. Although her book is written with the Spanish speaking family in mind, don’t let that keep you from considering it. It is full of hands-on activities and ideas to keep any family with young children chatting away.

The author is also very aware of the fact that language is more than just words. It isn’t about translating one language into another which makes a family bilingual. It is about making your second language integral to your everyday life. Included is even a list of major holidays in Spanish-speaking countries.

Whether you are interested in raising your child in Spanish as a second language or not, this book is a treasure trove of information, ideas, activities and much, much more. With such a lack of hands-on books out there to inspire your bilingual efforts, Starr Weems de Graffenried will get your creative juices flowing and your inspiration ignited. $14.50; Nomentira Publishing, 2007; ISBN-13: 978-0979895609
Whistlefritz
Spanish for the young at heart

When you get to know Maria, your Whistlefritz host, as my children and I have done, you will be hooked! Learning Spanish with someone as engaging as Maria will inspire even the youngest at heart! A better host for a children’s DVD would be hard to find.

Whistlefritz DVDs don’t bore you with tons of vocabulary and exhausting lessons. The learning comes automatically as you experience the world of Spanish language with your lively and beautiful host Maria. Set against a backdrop of colorful rooms and landscapes, Spanish language learning is captivating and engaging. Youthful friends and puppets join Maria to help explain the different subject sequences and are having at least as much fun as she is, if not a whole lot more.

I was amazed as my children sat spellbound watching every moment of the Whistlefritz DVDs and then asked to see them both again - especially my two and a half year old daughter. When Maria puts a pair of toddler’s pants on her head to help explain the Spanish word for head, I knew these DVDs were a winner: The uncontrolled laughter of my children emanating from the sofa said it all!

Whistlefritz offers two fabulous Spanish for Beginners DVDs: “Let’s Play - Vamos a Jugar” and “Los Animales - Animals.” The DVDs are aimed at ages 2-5 and are sure to captivate children within that age group. A Translation Guide is included inside the DVD covers so that you can learn along with your children. As stated in the Translation Guide: “No prior language knowledge is required. Whistlefritz programs are designed for beginners. You can help your child learn by watching the programs together and practicing words whenever possible.” And boy will you have fun!

Website: www.whistlefritz.com
Cost: $19.99 for one DVD or $35.98 for both
CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

January 7-11, 2008
“Responding to Change: Flexibility in the Delivery of Language Programmes”
The aim of the conference is to draw together scholars and practitioners in language teaching to discuss the implications of new challenges in the field and to explore ways to tackle them.
Hong Kong as well as Chiang Mai, Thailand
lc.ust.hk/~centre/conf2008/

January 14-16, 2008
3rd International Symposium on Intercultural Communication and Pragmatics
A focus on the intercultural communication between people from different cultures using a common language
Stellenbosch University, in Stellenbosch, South Africa
academic.sun.ac.za/iccling/index.html

January 26, 2008
“Raising Bilingual Children”
This three-hour seminar lead by Corey Heller (Multilingual Living Magazine Editor-in-Chief) will prepare parents, grandparents and other caregivers in the rewarding choice to raise their children bilingually and/or multilingually.
Bellevue, Washington, USA
www.biculturalfamily.org/seminar.html

February 6-9, 2008
NABE’s Annual Conference:
“Honoring our Roots and Expanding our Horizons - Bilingualism for All”
The 38th National Association for Bilingual Education annual conference is being held in Tampa, Florida, USA
www.nabe.org/conference.html

February 9, 2008
“Raising children with more than one language”
This interactive workshop, sponsored by Bilingual Families Perth, will provide a comprehensive introduction into bilingualism in children with a focus on the perspective of the parents.
Leederville, Australia.
Email at: bfp@webace.com.au
www.geocities.com/bilingualfamilies

February 29, 2008
“Cognitive Consequences of Bilingualism across the Lifespan”
Ellen Bialystok will give a talk at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA
depts.washington.edu/uwch/projects_bilingualism0708.htm

Send us information!

Are you giving a presentation, workshop or seminar on bi/multilingualism or bi/multiculturalism? Know about an upcoming conference or event which would be of interest? Send information to:
editor@multilingualliving.com
Did You Know?

"Feed your child a diet of rich language experiences throughout the day. Talk with your infants and young children frequently in short, simple sentences... describe the world around them to expose them to words."


**Basic findings: The stages children move through in learning to speak:**

- They babble in syllable combinations, typically from 7 to 18 months, exploring sounds to experiment with oral language.
- First words are usually spoken from 10 to 18 months. A naming explosion also occurs around this time.
- Two words are usually combined around 18 months.
- First sentences frequently occur from 24 to 30 months.
- Eventually children acquire phonemic awareness, the ability to recognize spoken words as a sequence of sounds.

**Tips for parents to increase a child’s vocabulary:**

1. Talk directly to your child beginning at birth.
2. Describe daily events.
3. Sing songs, tell stories, recite nursery rhymes or poems to your child.
4. Read books and point out and repeat the names of things.
5. Name objects in the child’s environment.
6. Listen to your child’s attempts at words and reinforce them by repeating words or phrases that the child says.
7. Encourage your child’s speech with positive responses such as “yes, that is a ball.” using the correct word and then add a phrase to expand on it such as “Let’s play with the red ball.”
8. Play word games to link words with actions. Tickle, touch toes, point to head, hands.
9. Engage in dramatic play with your child.
10. Provide opportunities for your child to interact socially and talk to other children.
11. Participate in story times for all ages and other early childhood programming with your child at your local library.

_Whether you are raising a bilingual, multilingual or monolingual child, it is important that your child receive the kind of stimulation that will encourage language development._

_**Start Today!** Find ways to incorporate these tips, suggestions and ideas into your child’s life!_

**Books:**

- _How Babies Talk; the magic and mystery of language in the first three years of life_ by Roberta Michnick Golinkoff and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. Dutton, 1999.

**World Wide Web:**

- _The Why Files_. Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin. [whyfiles.org/058language/baby_talk.html](http://whyfiles.org/058language/baby_talk.html)

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MY CHILD REFUSES TO USE ONE LANGUAGE

“For most bilinguals, there is language shift and change. Languages do not stay static and equal. In the teens, there is often movement towards a prestigious majority language. Having worked so long and so hard to produce bilingual children and gained a measure of success, parents may find it hard to accept that their child prefers one language rather than another. A child may refuse to speak on one language in the home, preferring to operate in the higher status language used in the peer group. This is quite customary among language minorities.

Even younger children refuse to speak one language. Sometimes this is because they have a stronger language and are able to express themselves better in that language. If one language is relatively underdeveloped, then a child is just being pragmatic. For example, if a child has a lack of practice in one language, then they are using the currently more proficient language. Occasionally, the child is also signaling something about relationships. There are occasions when one language is associated with a much adored person (e.g. the mother), such that the child tends to stick to that language.

Even the most loving parents may become tearful when their child does not respond in one of the parents’ languages. The worst choice is to abandon one language. That does the child no short- or long-term favors at all. At its worst, it abandons the chance of bilingualism in the future. The best choice is for the parent to continue to use his or her preferred language, even if the child does not respond in that language. The child is still becoming bilingual, or at least very ready to be actively bilingual.

Sometimes, rejection is short-lived. Just as adolescents go through fads and fashions with clothes, eating habits, sleep so there are language fashions. Language change may be temporary, reflecting peer-group culture, a symbol of growing emotional and social independence from parents and family life, growing self-assertiveness and the need for a distinct, independent self-identity from the family.

HOW TO ENSURE ONE LANGUAGE DOESN’T DISAPPEAR

“It is often the case that the strengths of a person’s two languages tend to vary across time. As there is more or less exposure to one language, as different people such as brothers and sisters enter the family situation, as schooling starts and peer-group relationships grow, so does the language dominance and preference of children for one of their two languages. A child may find it easier to speak English in some circumstances, Spanish in others and this may vary as practice and experience change.

Sometimes the shift will be large. A child may stop speaking one of their languages while still being able to understand that language. [...] This is a naturally worrying event for many parents. It is often impossible and unwise to compel a child to speak a language. Sometimes, bilingual parents try to achieve conformity without conviction. For example, a parent may say to their children that they do not understand them speaking the majority language. Unless this is handled tactfully and skillfully, the result is that children learn that language is an imposition, a part of authoritarian power. It is unwise to control dogmatically children’s language preference. This is not to say that one shouldn’t try to influence it tactfully and more latently. Manipulation rather than domination tends to achieve more in the long term.

When children are younger, one possible solution is to extend the range of language experiences in their less preferred language, for example, staying with grandparents or cousins, visits to enjoyable cultural festivals, a renewal in the language materials and other language stimuli in the home for that weaker language (e.g. videos, pop records, the visits of cousins). If both parents read to, or listen to the child reading before bedtime, or if the language of family conversation at the meal table is manipulated to advantage, then subtly the language balance of the home may be readjusted.”