**TOP TIPS**

* **One person, one language**: the easiest way to bring your baby up bilingually is for one parent to speak one language and the other to speak another.
* **One language, one place**: If both parents speak a different language from the community they could speak their native language at home and their child can learn another language when participating in the community.
* **One language, one Time:** You can use bedtimes, meal times or visiting times to speak one language
* **Start Early & Keep it Up:** The earlier your child is exposed to two languages the better and keep it up- children can lose a language if they aren’t encouraged to keep using it.
* **Be Patient**: Remember learning two languages isn’t all your child is learning; they are learning to walk and play and eat!
* Provide your child with opportunities to **play** with other children who speak the languages you are teaching him (look for community groups and complementary schools in your area).
* Make learning two languages natural and fun by playing games, singing songs and cooking together.
* Use DVDs and TV to increase exposure to languages but remember **human interaction** is best!

**Bilingual Babies**

**Remember over 70% of the world’s population is bilingual; your baby is more than capable of learning two languages!**

**Why should we bring our child up bilingually?**

* your child will be able to communicate with your extended family
* you will be able to speak naturally in your home language to your child
* your child may have better career prospects by being bilingual
* your child may achieve more academically by being bilingual

**What if we can only speak our home language?**

That’s fine! Just speak your home language at home and when your child is ready to join a children’s centre group or a pre-school she or he will be able to learn another language. It is important that your baby develops her first language well so that she has a firm foundation on which to build her second language. When a child learns one language at home and then learns an additional language this is called sequential bilingualism.

**Should we speak two languages at home?**

Yes, the best way for your child to learn two languages is to hear both languages spoken at home. Learning two languages from babyhood is called simultaneous bilingualism. This works best if you and your partner are fluent in the languages you are using with your child and if you are consistent in using the two different languages. You should always speak to your child using your language while your partner speaks to your child using his language.

**My husband speaks Mandarin and I speak Polish, shouldn’t we be teaching our baby son English too?**

You could teach your baby some English but don’t try to speak *only* in English especially if you are not fluent in English yourself. Your baby will have plenty of opportunities to learn English later when he goes to the children’s centre, to pre-school, to the shops or when he watches television; your baby will be surrounded by English and when he starts school- over 50% of his input will be in English. It is important that your child learns your home language well as he will learn English better later if he has a good foundation in his home language.

**Our two year old is mixing the two languages we are teaching him, aren’t we confusing him?**

No, this is normal. Most bilingual children go through a stage of mixing languages and borrowing words from one language while speaking the other language. If a child can’t remember the word for *sweets* in French they use the word they do know in Italian so that they get what they want! In time your child will be better at sorting the languages out

**If we only speak our home language at home our child will be lost when she starts pre-school. Should we try to teach some English too?**

You could teach your child some English words and phrases that will help her at pre-school, and you could have a time every day when you “play” at using English but don’t try to replace your home language with English especially if you are not fluent.

**We speak Spanish and English at home; our toddler does not know as many English words as her cousins, is this because we are bringing her up bilingually?**

Possibly, but don’t forget that although she may not know as many *English* words as her cousins she may know just as many words in total when you add what she knows in Spanish to what she knows in English.