



BILINGUAL CHILDREN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT ADVICE

A bilingual child is one who is exposed to or speaks two or more languages (multi-lingual). Bilingual children develop language through a series of stages.

- 1. Words:** Initially the child develops an understanding of words e.g. 'chair' (= 'sit on it'). Then they develop a name 'label' (vocabulary), which might include names of objects from all the languages the child hears.
- 2. Sentences:** When making sentences, children use rules to help them put the words together. The bilingual child initially only has one set of rules. Your child may mix rules from both languages or use the rules from the language he/she hears most. This stage makes the child's sentences sound incorrect or confused:
 - e.g. an Asian child may say the sentence, "I eat an apple", as "I apple eat", as this is the order of words used in the Asian language.
 - The child may also mix the two languages in one sentence:
 - e.g. "I go" spoken by a Punjabi child may be said as, "mein [Punjabi] go [English]".
 - This mixing is a normal and acceptable feature in bilingual language development.
- 3.** The final stage develops when the child separates the vocabularies and rule systems for the two languages.