

## ABOUT US

Bilingualism Matters is a new resource for families and educators, which will:

- answer questions from parents and educators about living and speaking with two languages
- raise awareness about the benefits of bilingualism
- explain the best approaches to help children's bilingual language development
- provide access to further information and latest research findings
- promote links within bilingual communities

Coordinated by the University of Edinburgh, Bilingualism Matters aims to bridge the gap between researchers and our communities to help more children benefit from bilingualism.

[www.bilingualism-matters.org.uk](http://www.bilingualism-matters.org.uk)



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Raising children with two languages?

Bilingualism is a great opportunity!



# BILINGUALISM MATTERS

AN INFORMATION  
AND ADVICE SERVICE  
ABOUT GROWING UP WITH  
TWO LANGUAGES

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# BILINGUALISM MATTERS

At least 138 different languages are spoken in Scotland today and growing up with more than one language is becoming increasingly common.

Research has shown that bilingualism offers many advantages for children's development. For example, bilingual children in general tend to have a higher level of skill in;

- attention and thinking
- reading
- language learning

plus all the benefits that come from experiencing more than one culture!

Bilingualism Matters aims to share accurate information and enable children, families and the wider community to benefit from bilingualism.

## Some typical questions that parents of bilingual children have:

**“I’ve heard that hearing two languages is too much for a baby: should I wait a couple of years before I start speaking my language?”**

*No, it is important that the child hears both languages as early as possible, ideally from birth. Research has shown that bilingual children do not confuse the two languages.*

**“I have a bilingual household and I want to raise my child bilingual but I’m not sure how to do this.”**

*There isn't a 'best method' that works for all bilingual families. The important thing is to let the child hear and use both languages in a natural way with a positive attitude and in roughly equal amounts of time. Languages are not 'taught': they are learned spontaneously.*



**“I worry that bilingualism might affect my child’s school achievement.”**

*Bilingualism can have a positive impact on school achievement, if schools, families and children have a positive attitude towards it and recognize the benefits that it brings.*

**“My child is two and is not speaking yet in either language: should I worry?”**

*Bilingual children typically start talking a bit later than children who grow up with only one language. This is normal and it is nothing to worry about.*