

Language Development in Bilingual Children

**Guest speaker: Nisrine El-Choueifati,
Speech Pathologist**

Sector Capacity Building Program

Acknowledgement of Country

KU respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Wiradjuri land on which we are meeting today.

We acknowledge the contribution by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in particular to the education of young children.



Language development in Bilingual children



TALKING TRIUMPHS
SPEECH THERAPY SERVICES

Presentation by Nisrine El-Choueifati -Speech therapist
For KU Children's Services
NSW Preschool Inclusion,
Sector Capacity Building
Program

Supporting development and knowing when to seek help



Who am I and what do I do?

My name Nisrine El-Choueifati and I have been Certified, Practicing Speech Pathologist for 16 years.



- I **was able to learn 3 languages by the age of 6**, including ; French, Arabic and English and was able to learn Italian at school
- I have **worked with families, educators and speech pathology** students to support all children to be able to communicate and participate.
- I am also **privileged to be teaching future speech pathologists**
- I have a passion for supporting bi-lingual language learners.
- I am also the **author of a children's book called “I have a Magic Ball”** which is a book inspired to encourage all children to interact and participate in book reading. Go to: <https://nisrineelchoueifati.com/>

Getting to know you ...



Reaction – if you speak another language?



Reaction – if you speak a language of children and family in your service?



Chat – What languages do you speak?



Use the chat or audio to share ...



What would you like to gain from today ?



What are your specific questions

What is the aim of today's session ...

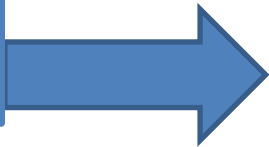


1. Understanding bilingual children's language development and supporting the development of more than one language.



2. Strategies to observe and identify language differences in bilingual children and knowing when to refer to a speech pathologist.

This will be achieved throughout ...



3. A range of tools and frameworks to help gather information, and plan for supporting bilingual children who may have difficulties with speech and language development.

What is the aim of today's session ...



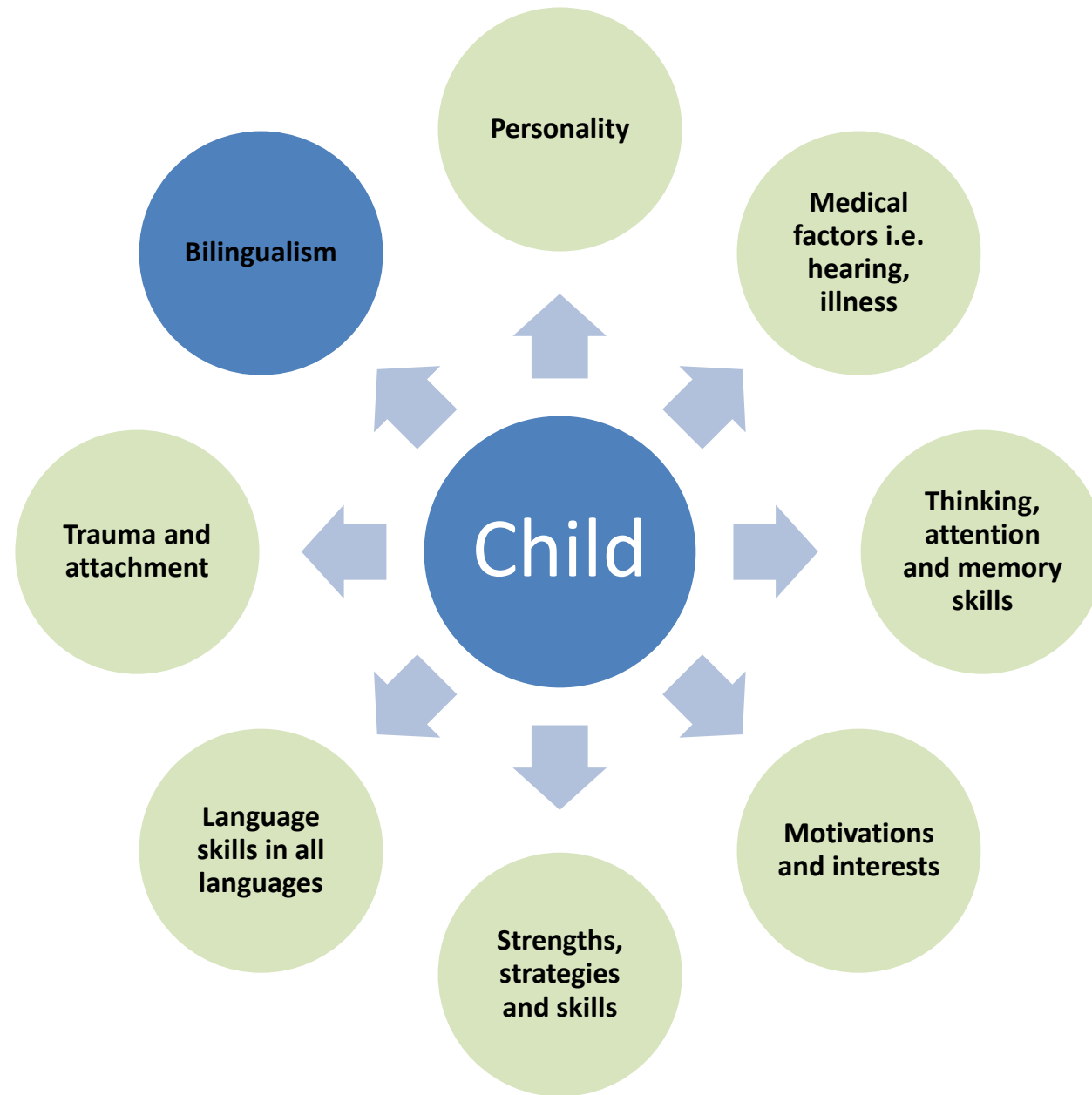
1. Understanding bilingual children's language development and supporting the development of more than one language.

The goal and vision ...

Supporting bilingualism is not about making sure that all children who live in Australia speak English, but to ensure that children are able to maintain the relevant language system that allows them to belong, share and become a part of a multilingual Australia.

**Bi-lingualism
DOES NOT cause
language,
speech or
communication
problems**

**We need to look
at the whole
child and family**



De-bunking myths and misconceptions



MYTH

Speaking 2 or more languages to a child can "confuse" them, so it is better to only speak 1 language.

It is better for families to only speak the language taught in school to their children, even if they do not speak the language well.

Young bilingual children are delayed in learning language compared to peers who only speak 1 language.

Bilingual children should not mix parts of the languages they speak.

Children become bilingual just by listening to people around them speaking the second language.

FACT

All children are capable of learning multiple languages, including children with developmental delays and learning disabilities.

Families should speak the language they are most comfortable speaking, so children are given rich linguistic models and can interact best with other members of their community.

Bilingualism does NOT cause language delays, and has been shown to improve children's ability to learn new words, identify sounds, and problem-solve.

"Translanguaging" occurs when individuals grammatically mix aspects of the languages they speak. It fosters cultural and metalinguistic awareness.

Learning language is an active process that requires many opportunities for children to practice communicating in context with others. Listening and responding are both crucial for developing competence.

Bilingualism in young children- separating fact from fiction
<http://www.hanen.org/helpful-info/articles/bilingualism-in-young-children--separating-fact-fr.aspx>

BILINGUAL

Q & A

What is the most common indicator of DLD in bilinguals?



Persistent grammatical errors in BOTH languages.

Should we expect bilinguals' languages to influence each other?



Yes. Language influence is a natural outcome of hearing more than one language.

Are bilinguals typically delayed in both languages?



Typically bilinguals may seem delayed in 2 languages if we only look at 1 language. We need to account for what they know in each language.

Won't children with DLD become more confused if they have exposure in to 2 languages?



There is no research that shows that 2 languages are harder for children with DLD than 1 language is for children with DLD.

Should bilingual families use only one language if their child has DLD?



NO! Families should provide rich conversation and interactions in whatever language(s) they speak.

Bilingualism in children with language delays

<https://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Articles---Printer-Friendly/Research-in-your-Daily-Work/Bilingualism-in-children-with-language-delays-Part.aspx>

Interests,
Need,
reason and
motivation

People, connection,
responsive and culture

Input and
Exposure -
enough language and
modelling

Clear and
informed
family
decision



A Plan

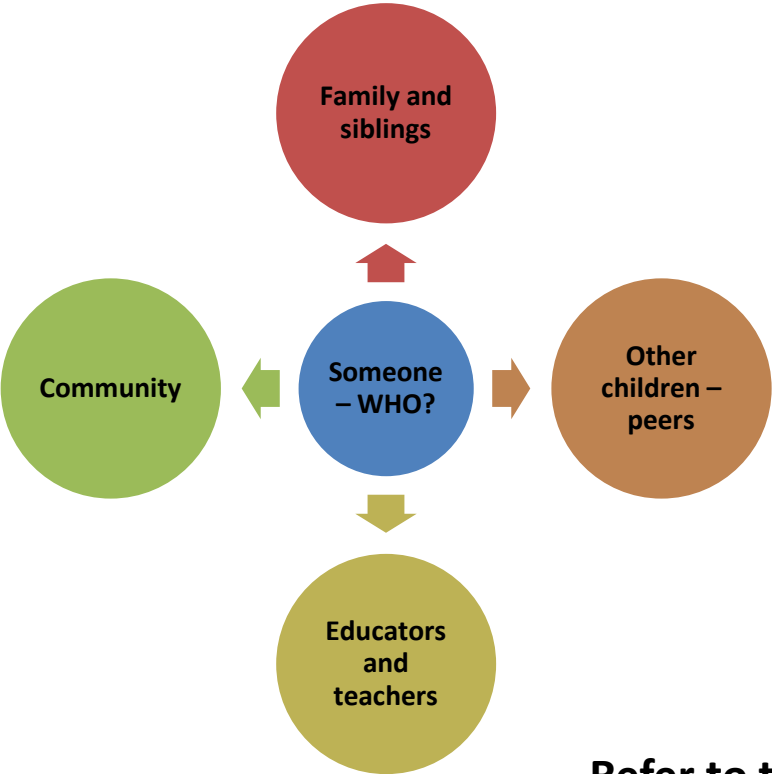
A recipe for multi-lingual success

Supporting Second Language Learning

<https://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Articles---Printer-Friendly/Research-in-your-Daily-Work/Supporting-Second-Language-Learning---PF.aspx>

To learn to communicate, children need:

- Someone to communicate with
- A reason
- A way



Refer to the planning tool provided

How do children learn a second language?

Dual language development in Typically developing children -

<https://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Articles---Printer-Friendly/Research-in-your-Daily-Work/Dual-Language-Development-in-Typically-Developing-.aspx>

Can children with Autism learn two languages ? -

https://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Can-Children-on-the-Autism-Spectrum-Learn-Two-Lang/01_January_Can-Children-on-the-Autism-Spectrum.aspx

Processes for learning multiple languages

Sequential

learning another language after the first language is already acquired.

Simultaneous

Learning more than one language at the same time, typically before age 3.

Language shift

Occurs when an individual stops speaking a language, replacing it with another. This is commonly due to the influence of more dominant language

(Paradis, Genessee & Crago, 2011)

Normal features of bi-lingual language development

Feature	Definition	Example
<i>Silent Period</i>	When children are first exposed to a second language, <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Focus on listening and comprehension.- Children are often very quiet, speaking little as they focus on understanding the new language	Child may be silent but will observe and demonstrate an ability to observe and follow instructions based on environmental cues what is happening
<i>Codeswitching</i>	Switching between two languages over phrases or sentences.	For example, a Spanish speaker might say, "Me gustaria manejar-I'll take the car!" ("I'd like to drive-I'll take the car").
<i>Interference or Transfer</i>	When children transfer features from their first language (L1) to English (L2). This means that a child may make an English error due to the direct influence of an L1 structure. Accents are also an example of transferring sounds from language with another.	For example, in Spanish, "esta casa es mas grande" means "this house is bigger." However, a literal translation would be "this house is more bigger." A Spanish-speaking child who said "this house is more bigger" would be manifesting transfer from Spanish to English.

Normal features of bi-lingual language development

Language Loss

- When the child's home language is not reinforced and maintained while he/she is learning a second language, he/she will lose skills and fluency in the home language

Avoidance

- Child avoids things he/she can't say or participate and situations where he/she doesn't have the communication skills

Fossilisation

- This occurs when a certain incorrect structure of the second language becomes fixed and cannot be changed

Reduced Exposure to Home and Second Language

- Not a "normal behaviour" of second language learning. Lack of exposure to both languages therefore the child does not perform well in both languages



**SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT-
Helping your Child learn two languages on Youtube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlrD7PkeDdg>



2. Strategies to observe and identify language differences in bilingual children and knowing when to refer to a speech pathologist.

Language is one aspect of culture - the role of family and community is so important

The role of parents is so important for how children will learn language and it is our role to support this decision making :

- The decision belongs to the family.
- Deciding for the family by recommending one language has an impact on the interaction around language, identity and belonging.
- It is our role to help families to make an informed decision so you can plan for success and consider ALL the crucial child, family and community factors that can enable bi-lingualism.



**Language= communication= identity=
relationship= belonging**

1. Family
2. Educational Setting
3. Community



Communication and Language

1. Positive, safe , responsive, Interactions

- [family language input](#)
- [Family choice and decisions](#) are important
- [Family connection to language](#) IS important
- [Family joy and interaction](#) with language IS important

Re **SPECT ful
and inclusive?**

Re LOOK
SEE
OBSERVE



Specialist , look and see...

Family lens

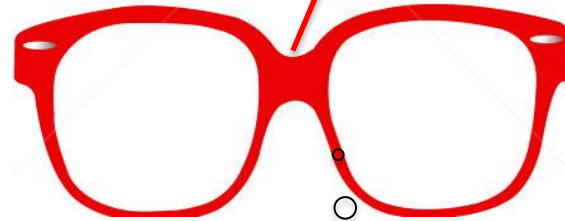
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes, beliefs and experiences



Behave,
act,
respond

Educator lens

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes, beliefs and experiences



Behave,
act,
respond

The child's lens

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes, beliefs and experiences



Match or mis-match?

Commonly misinterpreted Behaviours



Common misinterpreted behaviours include:

Speaks infrequently

Speaks excessively (in the home language or in English)

Refuses to answer questions

Confuses similar sounding words

Is unable to tell or retell stories

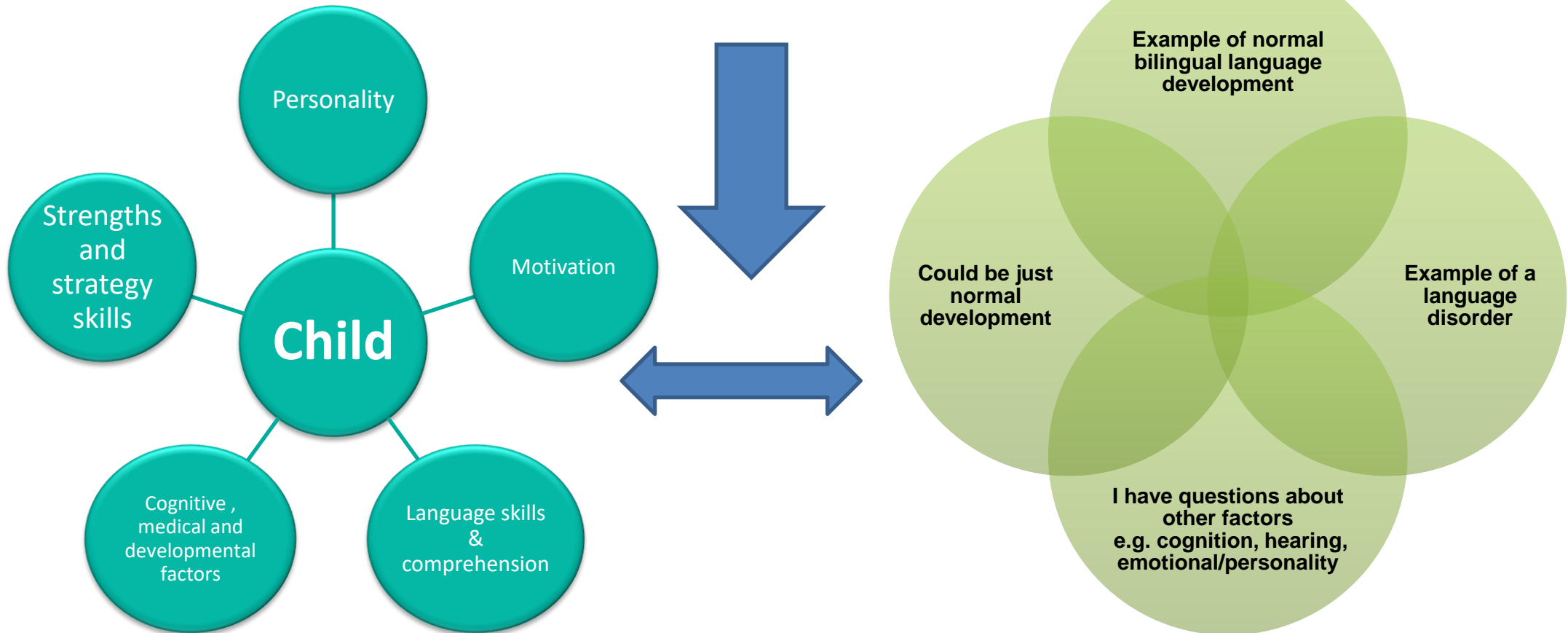
Has poor recall

Uses poor pronunciation

Uses poor sentence structure and grammar

Does not volunteer information

Observation and assessment



Strategies to support information gathering about a child's language development.



Strategy for ascertaining information	Examples	What information did I receive and what action will I take?
Observation Have a observed the child in a range of settings to consider the influence of the role of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personality - Trust - Language - Cultural expectations and context In language learning Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	Child with peers	
	Child with their family	
	Have been able to observe the child in a <u>recorded</u> interaction communicating in a comfortable environment	
Discussion with the family Have I spoken to the family about their understanding of the child and their goals and priorities? Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners	Using the Mapping tool to understand the "How", "Why" and "Ways" of bi-lingual language development	
Developing positive interactions for teaching and learning	Do I know the child's interests? When is the child motivated and interested what skills and strengths do they demonstrate?	

Nisrine El-Choueifati – Speech Therapist -Supporting information gathering for communication development.

The Communication Passport

The passport is a resource that can support communication and information gathering between early childhood educators, families, bi-cultural support workers or interpreters. It provides a range of questions and observations that can support in identifying the child's strengths and needs in language learning as well as the families resources and supports. Each member of the team may have different information and bringing it together can support the assistance and communication to provide more specific support.

EYLF outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.

Child safety and security	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Settling well into early childhood service	
<input type="checkbox"/> Requires support to separate.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has developed relationships with educators.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has developed relationships with peers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has specific interests that make them feel safe	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is familiar with the preschool routine	

EYLF outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.

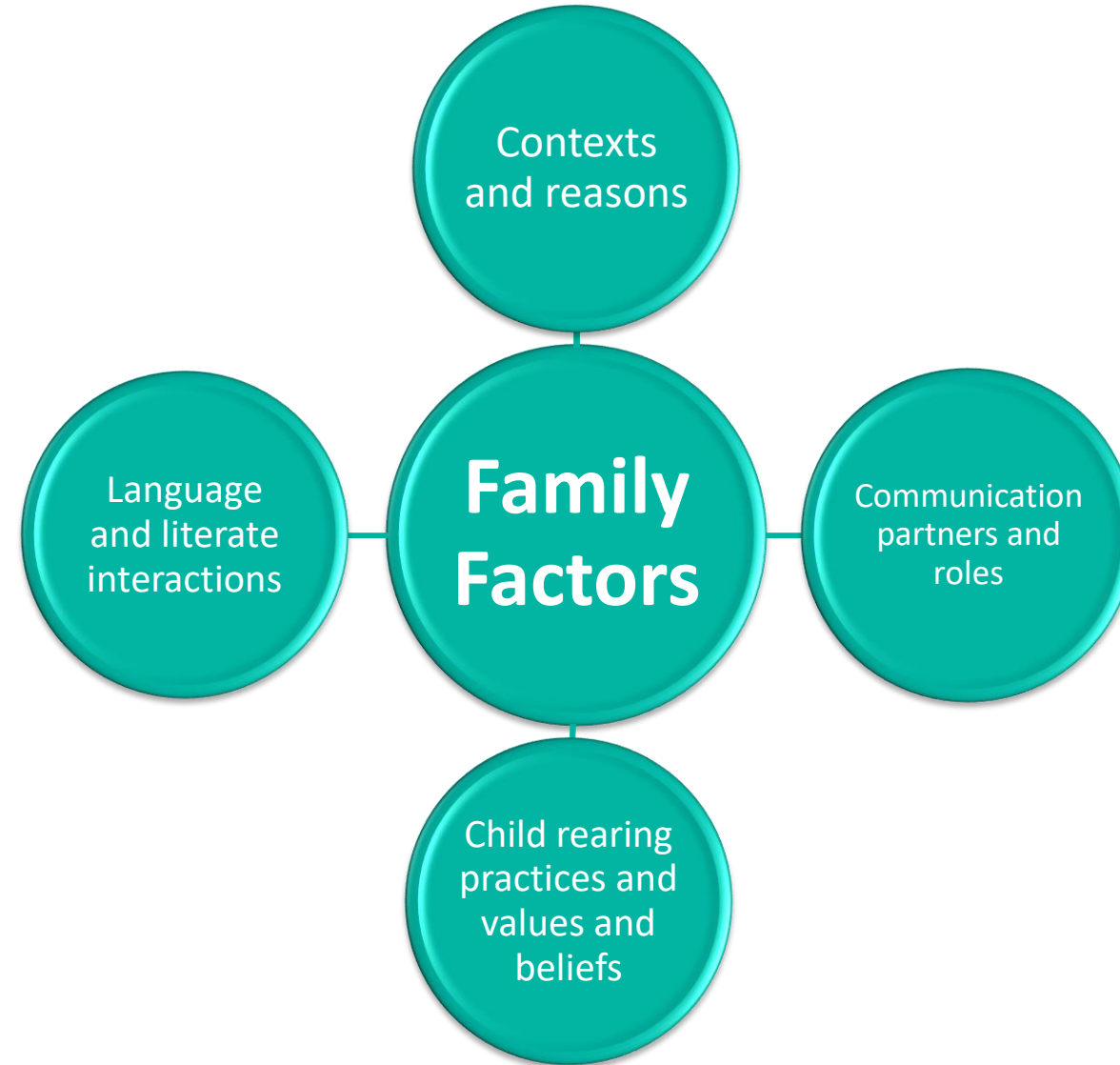
Child Interests and strengths	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Craft and drawing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Music	
<input type="checkbox"/> Movement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction and transport	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social and peer play home corner	
<input type="checkbox"/> Puzzles	
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____	

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

Child's understanding of language	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Routines	
<input type="checkbox"/> Simple instructions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Questions in conversation	

Gathering information from a range of sources in multiple languages –

- Educator observations over time
- Family observations and discussions
- Bi-cultural support worker observations



Cultural beliefs influencing early childhood

- How parents/carers interact with you
- Their view of play, learning, toileting etc
- Child rearing practices - their views on managing good and challenging behaviours, play, learning, toileting etc
- Their view of their child's needs and how they articulate these needs or their own needs with respect to you
- Family lifestyle and rituals – sleeping/bed sharing
- Who cares for the child at home
- Giving children choices or a voice
- Language
- Festivities and celebrations
- Music
- Childminding
- Role of childcare
- Who makes the decisions with respect to the child
- Education



Kevin



Christa



Stephanie and Lucija



Lilliana

**Let's meet 4 families and children –
Every child and family is different**



Kevin is 3.5 years old and he lives with his parents and grandparents.

Sequential learner: He has been learning Chinese since birth and will begin to learn English when he starts preschool.

Child's communication : He is very competent and very skilled in expressing his ideas and telling stories in Chinese. He comes home and tells his mum in Chinese that no one at preschool can speak and he is teaching them.

Interests: He watches Chinese TV for children, reads Chinese books and also attends a Chinese playgroup.

Preschool: The family wanted him to start preschool so that he can begin to learn English before he goes to school. He is happy to attend but the preschool teacher told the parents after 3 months of attending they are worried that Kevin is not communicating.

Family questions:

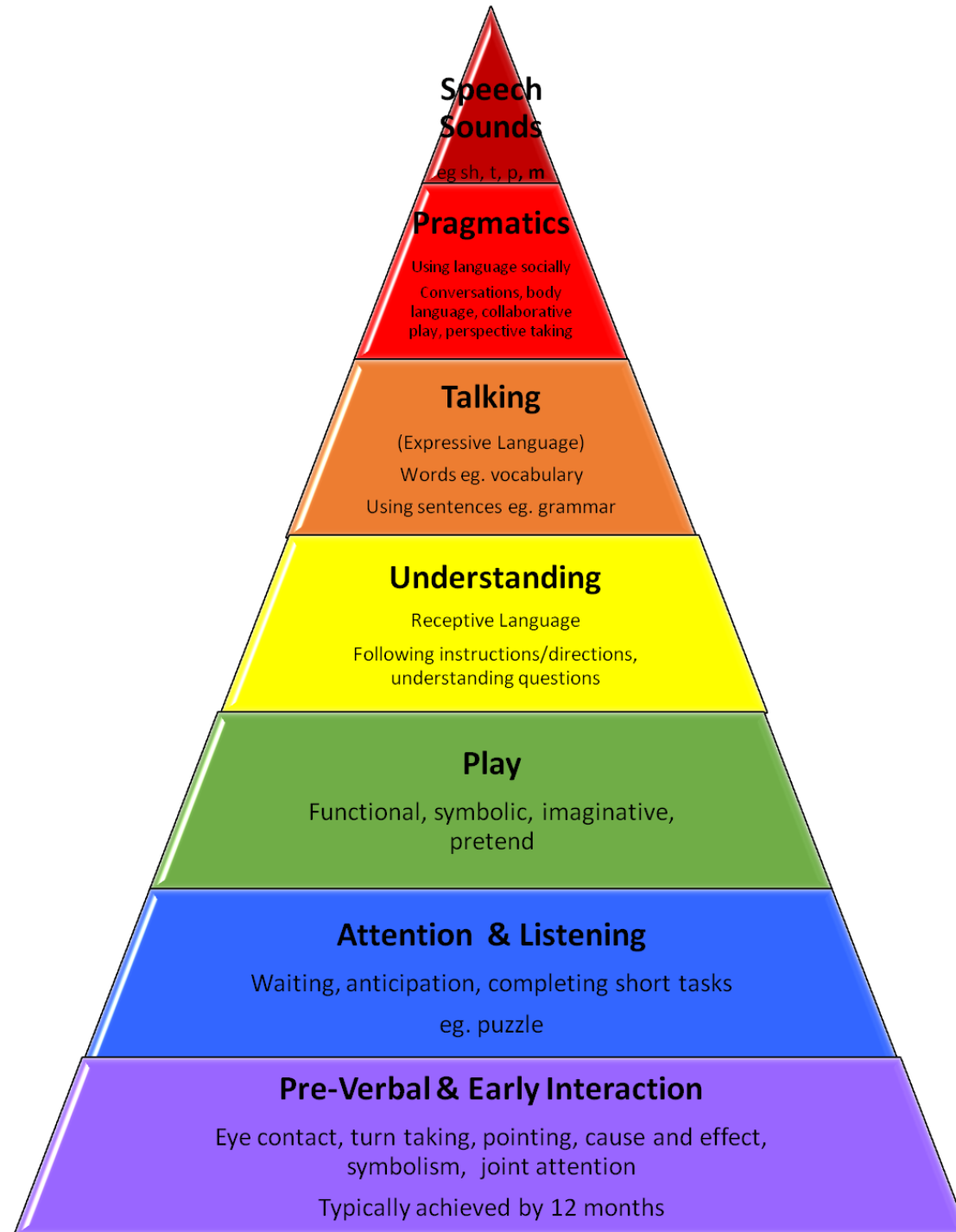
- How can they share Kevin's communication skills with the teachers?
- The family does not want Kevin to forget Chinese as his grandparents will go back to China.
- They are worried that he won't learn English

Acting as a bridge between home and education settings

- **The silent period** is normal and language learning takes time especially for sequential language learners.
- **Families should share their child's skills in the home language with educators** – share videos of your child in home language so educators can see your child's personality
- **Invite the child to be the expert at preschool** - teach staff and children new words
- **Family volunteer to read a story** for children or teach all the children your child's favourite song
- **Family to ask the preschool to share books they are reading** in English and borrow them to practice translating in home language.

Resources and supports with early childhood settings

- Bi-cultural support - [Early Childhood Services - Ethnic Community Services Co-operative \(ecsc.org.au\)](http://ecsc.org.au) – excellent resources to support Early childhood services - [ecsc-resources-order-form.pdf](#)
- Early language Learning Australia : <https://www.ella.edu.au/>
- Diversity Kids – resources and training to support [Resources - DIVERSITY KIDS](#)
- [Inclusion Support Program - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)





Christa is 4 years old and she lives with her mum, dad and 3 sisters.

Simultaneous learner : Christa's mum speaks Thai with her extended family and her dad speaks Greek with his extended family. Her mother and father speak English to each other and the children.

Christa's Communication skills : Christa speaks English most of the time. When Christa goes to either of her grandparents she can understand instructions and can sometimes say key words in Greek and Thai. She also likes some Greek music and loves when her Thai grandmother shares bedtime stories.

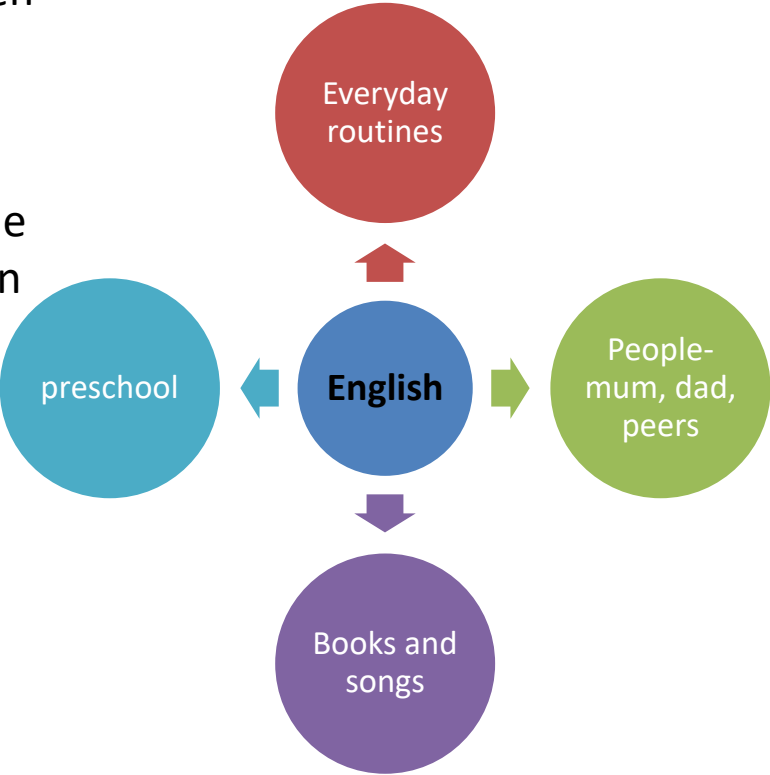
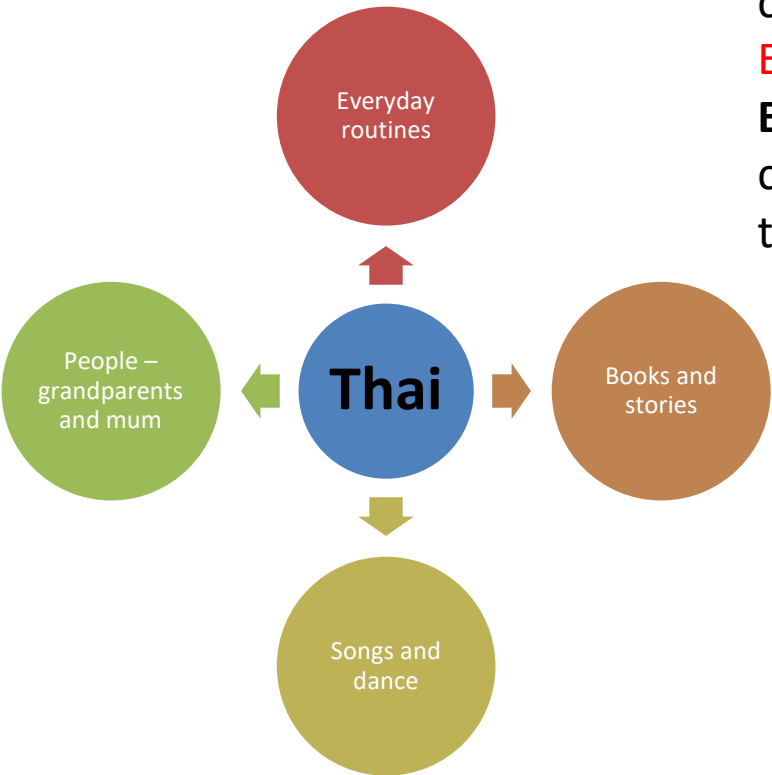
Family questions:

- The family want to encourage Christa to learn Greek and Thai so that she can be connected to the culture, but they feel very confused about how this can happen?

Planning the opportunities – when adults are clear the child will be clear.

EXPOSURE + NEED is the KEY

Building routines can also help the child – specific books, song time in the car , movies.





Stephanie is 4 years old and Lucija is 2 years old .

Simultaneous learner:

Stephanie's mum and dad have encouraged their children to learn Croatian since birth and Stephanie was fluent in speaking in Croatian. Stephanie has been going to preschool for 2 years where she was exposed to English.

Stephanie's Communication skills : Stephanie would know that when she came home she would speak in Croatian with her mum and she would speak with her younger sister in English. Recently, Stephanie responds in English and doesn't want mum to speak in Croatian anymore. She will also mix Croatian and English in the same sentence.

Family questions:

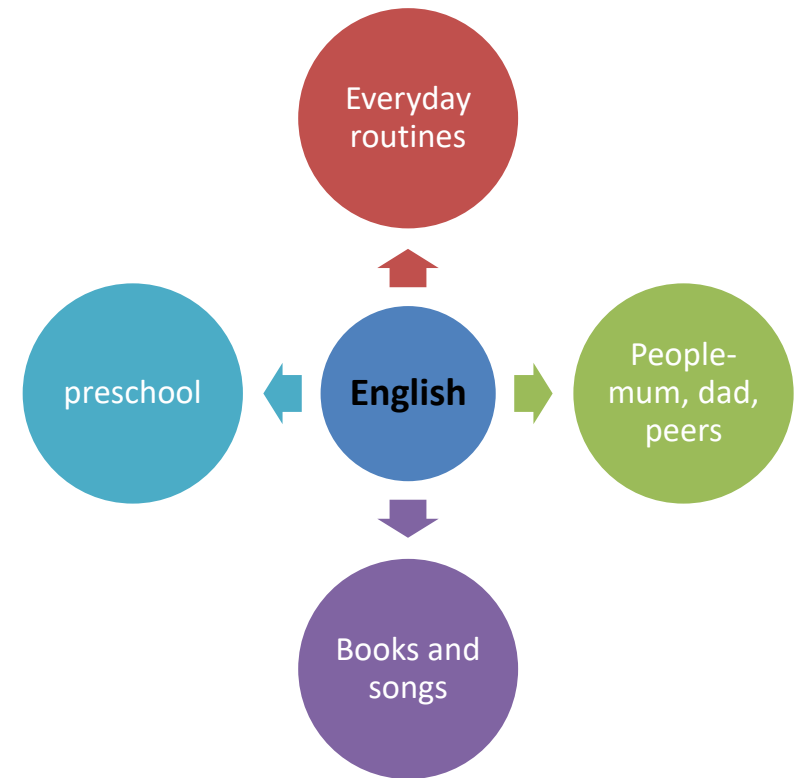
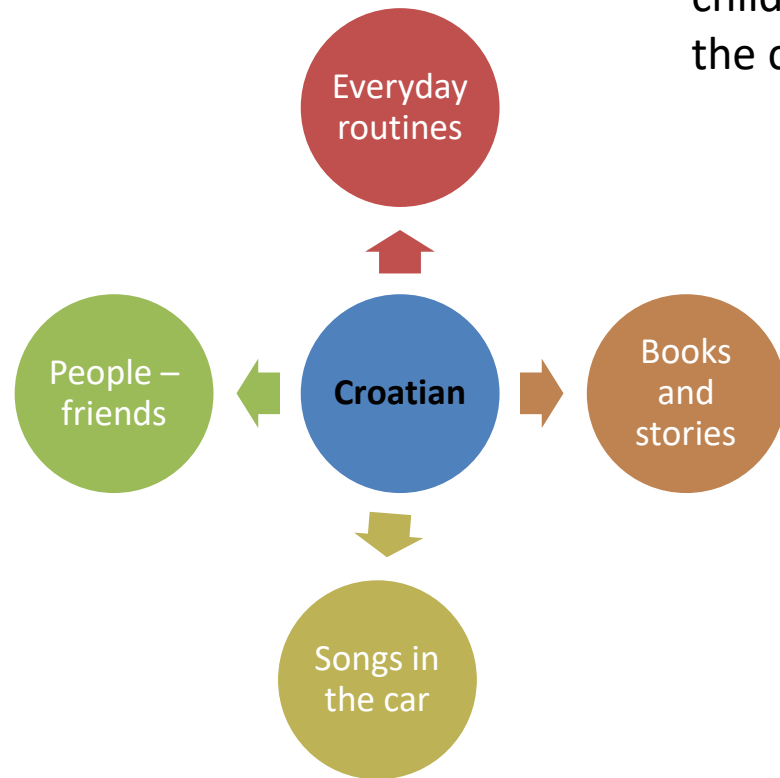
- They don't want to force her to speak the language but want her to maintain it. What strategies can they use?
- They are also worried that she is mixing words in the sentence

- Family to consider: WHY Is it important for the child to be bi-lingual ?
- **It is normal for Christa to Code switch** (swap between languages) as often as they wants to. Some words are better understood in one language compared to another. **Respond by modelling a full sentence in one language but it's normal that you may also code-switch as an adult.**
- **Don't force the child to speak in one language** , it is important to respect they may take time understanding and need support to hear the language. Be patient and stay joyful.
- **Building interest and connection with peers** and sharing language and culture with preschool and peers

Planning the opportunities – when adults are clear the child will be clear.

EXPOSURE + NEED is the KEY

Building routines can also help the child – specific books, song time in the car , movies.





Lilliana is 3 years old, and Mum speaks Spanish at home. Mum is not confident in speaking English, and the family have been in Australia for 2 years. They don't have a lot of family support .

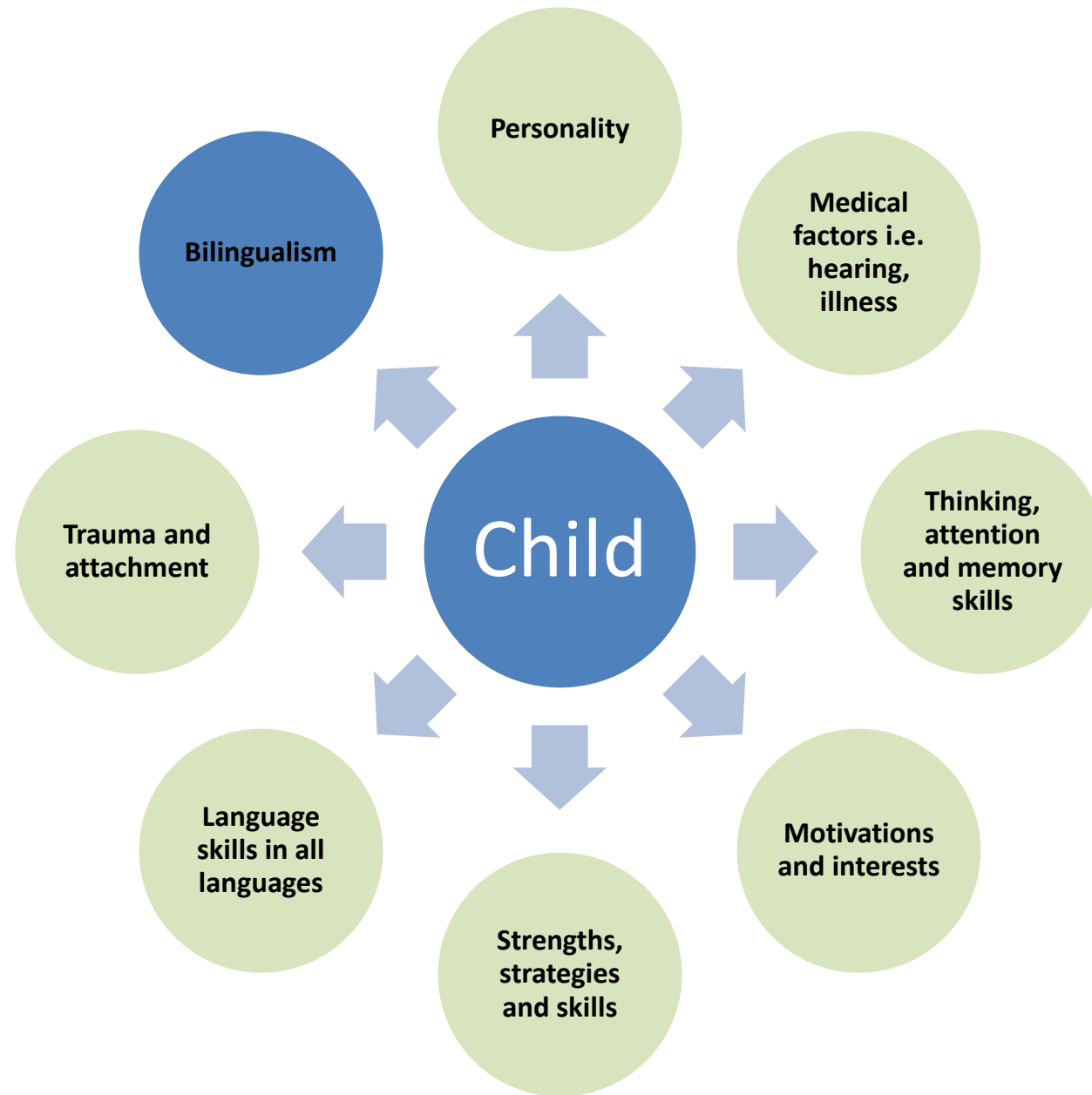
Lilly's Communication skills: Lilliana is only using one word to ask for things in Spanish. Mum said that Lilliana is hard to understand, and she doesn't say all the sounds in words for example the Spanish word for dog is "Perro" and Lilliana says " Pepe". Lilliana likes to look at books by herself but covers Mum's mouth when she starts reading.

Family question:

- Is Lilly confused because of the Spanish language ? Is she copying my accent?
- Mum is unsure about Lilliana's development and has seen other children her age who can speak using a words in a sentence?

**Bi-lingualism
DOES NOT cause
language,
speech or
communication
problems**

**We need to look
at the whole
child and family**



What is an accent ?

If **two languages share a sound**, you would expect that the shared sounds would not be difficult for a second-language learner to produce in their second language. For example, English and Spanish both have /b/ so the word "baby (bebe)" should not be a problem.

If **a sound is not shared by two languages**, you would expect the second-language speaker to 1) delete 2) distort or 3) replace the sound. This is in fact the case. Let's use Spanish and take a look at a few examples:

1.Deletion: *Don't* becomes *Don* REASON: No final /t/ and no final clusters in Spanish

2.Distortion: *Spaghetti* becomes *Espaghetti* REASON: No initial /s/ cluster in Spanish

3.Replacement: *This* becomes *Dis* REASON: No /th/ so the brain chooses the most similar sound from the first language.

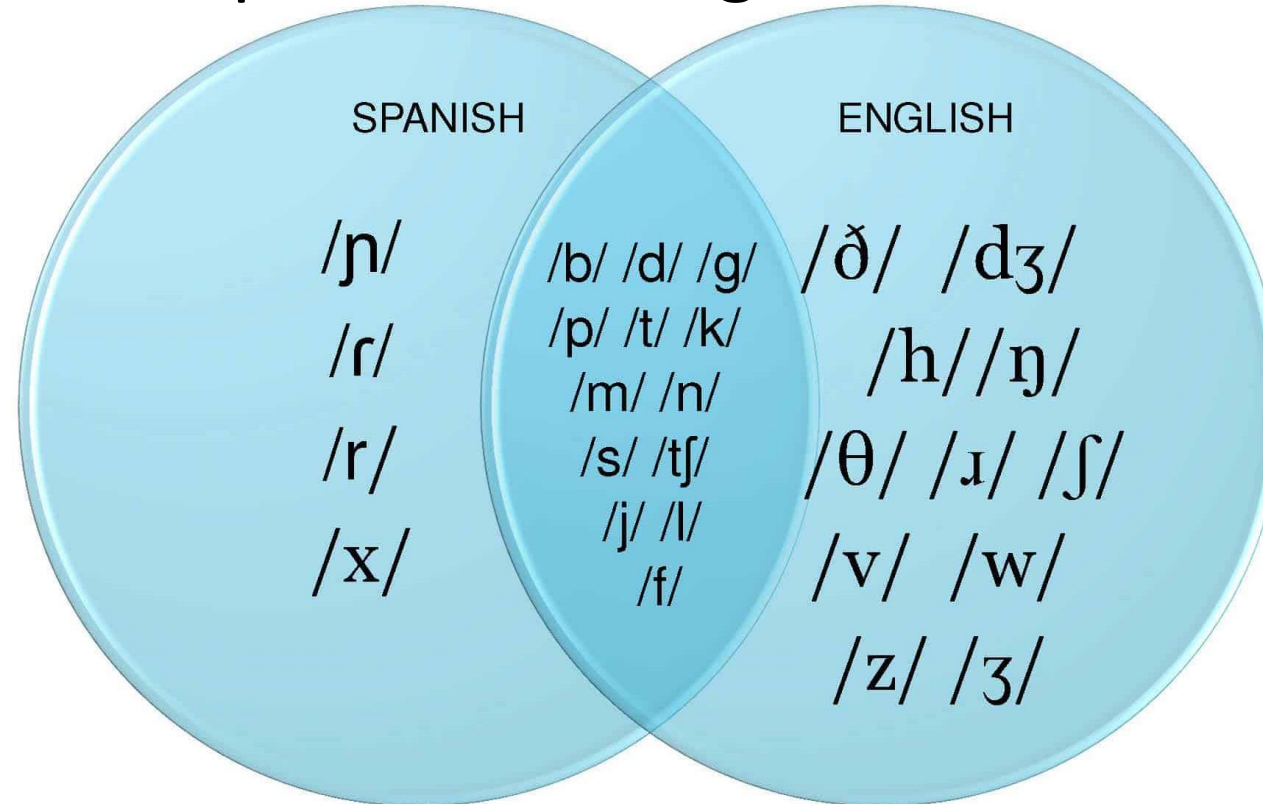
Can children catch an accent ?

As adults learning a new language it is very hard to hear and distinguish new sounds and accent has a story of courage and bravery.

When a child learns a new language early, they will take time to hear and learn the new sounds and it is normal they may change sounds.

We know that children no matter what language they learn can have speech sound difficulties and may develop sounds slowly and it is important if they are producing sounds incorrectly in Both or their first language to get help from a speech pathologist.

Spanish and English Sounds



Many languages share similar sounds to English but there are many differences in language learning. It is much easier for children who learn a language before 7 to hear the differences and produce different sounds.

BILINGUISTICS

“Is My Accent Confusing My Child?” How Do Multiple Accents Affect Children’s Language Learning? By Dashiell Brockman (2023)

[PF---Is-My-Accent-Confusing-My-Child-pdf.aspx \(hanen.org\)](https://www.hanen.org/PF---Is-My-Accent-Confusing-My-Child-pdf.aspx)

A context to address 3 goals:

Goal 1: Build interest, connection and interaction with any language

**Goal 2 : Exposure, building Understanding and vocabulary – in any
language**

Goal 3 : Develop expression and communication in any communication

To learn to communicate, children need:

- Someone to communicate with
- A reason
- A way



**Goal 1: Build interest,
connection and interaction
with any language**



Tell stories without the book and make connections with everyday life. **Create photo books about your child's life to translate**

Choose books, activities, songs that relate to your child's interests

Find **books that are interesting** with flaps and puppets.

Introduce a puppet that will represent a new language – This helps the child associate the puppet with what language is spoken.

Choose a book about a song or sing the words in a story



- **Let your child hold the book** and turn the pages.
- **Look at what they are interested in and talk about it .**
- You don't have to read the book word for word. You can make up a story

Include your child and families' names in the story this will help the child relate. Choose books that have images that relate to your country and culture.

**Goal 2 : Exposure, building
Understanding and vocabulary – in any
language**

Point to the pictures and say the words - this helps the child learn to understand and connect to the meaning of words and sentences.

In bilingual books – point to the different print and say the words. This helps the child connect to what words and letters look like in different languages.

Build on the vocabulary of the book in other environments , interactions and contexts :

- Play
- Everyday activities – bath time, cooking, gardening
- Songs and rhymes
- Daily interactions

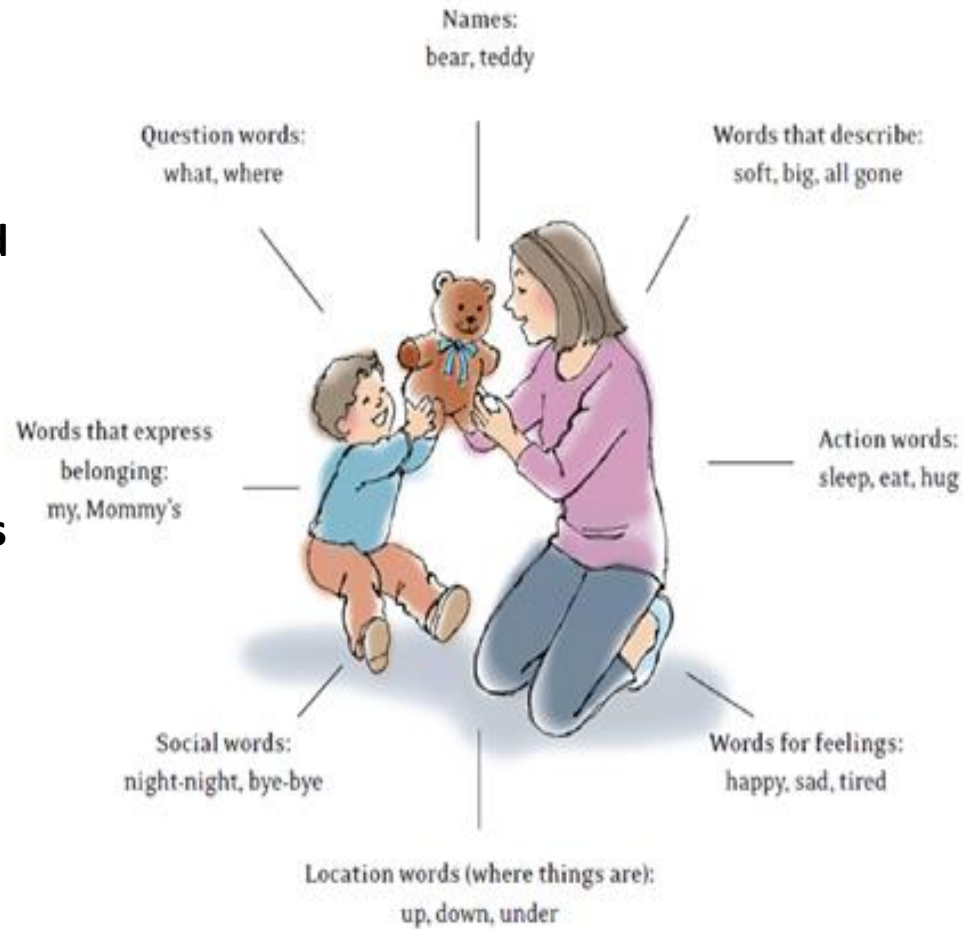
Give a child time to listen and understand before choosing to speak

Re-read books over ,over and over again! This helps your child to learn the words and make the connection between the letter names and sounds.



**Choose to translate a book or borrow Audiobooks so
of a book your child knows** well into a new language
and build on their understanding.

Add language and different types of words and vocabulary relating to interest and focus



Stress the new word to focus the children's attention
Show the children what the word means
Tell the children what the word means
and
Relate the word to children's personal experiences and knowledge, as well as to other words and situations
Say it again — and read the book again

Tips to Build Vocabulary: Repeat Words That Match Your Child's Interests - *By Rachelle Comeau - Speech-Language Pathologist, The Hanen Centre*
<http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Repeat.aspx>

Goal 3 : Develop expression and communication in any communication



Avoid asking too many questions and testing a child. Instead **make a comment and model sentences** about what the child is observing or interested in and wait. Share comments about what you like and what you enjoy.

Talk about what a child is looking at: Example: if your child is pointing to the picture of a bird and saying “bird” it is a great time to model a sentence in any language “ oh the blue bird is flying”

Let a child code switch (swap between languages) as often as they want to. Some words are better understood in one language compared to another.

Respond by modelling a full sentence in one language.

Don't force or tell a child to “say this” or repeat words. If your child says something incorrectly acknowledge it and provide a model.



Communication Milestones Chart

Speech Pathology Australia has developed a Children's Communication Milestone Chart to help identify each of the language and literacy milestones from 12 months to 5 years old.



It is free to download from the Association's website:
www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/milestones



What if a child is having difficulties?

- Speech pathologists are here to support you and your child.
- It is best to refer early.
- If you are unsure to refer or not, contact a speech pathologist, and we can talk through your concerns.
- Have a look on the Speech Pathology Australia website.
- Use the **Find a Speech Pathologist** link on the Speech Pathology Australia website and/or contact your local community health centre.

www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/find

Translated materials to support families understanding of communication development

THE EARLY WORDS EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

– <http://www.earlywords.info/>

Free tip sheets for supporting language and literacy of children from birth to 5 years old [Tip sheet downloads \(earlywords.info\)](http://www.earlywords.info/)



[Early Words Aboriginal early literacy program for western Sydney: resources](http://www.earlywords.info/)



Questions...

**For more information and support
please contact me ...**

Nisrine El-Choueifati

Please email me :

talkingtriumphs@gmail.com or

Phone : 0423224449



TALKING TRIUMPHS

SPEECH THERAPY SERVICES

Coming up soon

Webinar:

Supporting young children with anxiety through The Brave Program

Presenter:

Prof Caroline Donovan, Griffith University

Date: Mon 6th March 4.30-5.30pm



Register for our PD events here:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/professional-learning/events>