



Bilingualism: Can my child with hearing loss learn two languages?

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Objectives

1. Define bilingualism
2. Discuss the research that supports the potential for children who are DHH to become bilingual in spoken languages
3. Recognize some myths and facts related to bilingualism.
4. Identify strategies that help children to develop two spoken languages.



Bilingualism: Definition

- The use of at least two languages by an individual (ASHA, 2004).
- A fluctuating system in children and adults whereby use of and proficiency in two languages may change depending on the opportunities to use the languages and exposure to other users of the languages.
- A dynamic and fluid process across a number of domains (experience, tasks, topics, and time)



Importance of Bilingualism

In the United States, 28% of preschool-age children are from households where a language other than English is spoken, with a wide range of languages represented (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

This increasing presence of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) populations across the United States presents the need to refine clinical practice for these populations.



Important Facts related to Bilingualism

- ❑ Limited research describing the experiences of parents from linguistically diverse backgrounds when deciding on communication modality and educational programming for children who are DHH.
- ❑ Communication modality selected by families tends to follow the recommendations of professionals (i.e., English + sign).
- ❑ **Most families expressed interest in raising their children bilingual in spoken languages.**



Important Facts related to Bilingualism

- ❑ Families have frequently been advised by professionals that children who are DHH should not/cannot become bilingual in spoken languages
- ❑ English generally prescribed: “language of the school”
- ❑ There is a general absence of knowledge about current theories of bilingualism or bilingualism in populations with disorders



Theoretical Framework

Bilingual bootstrapping

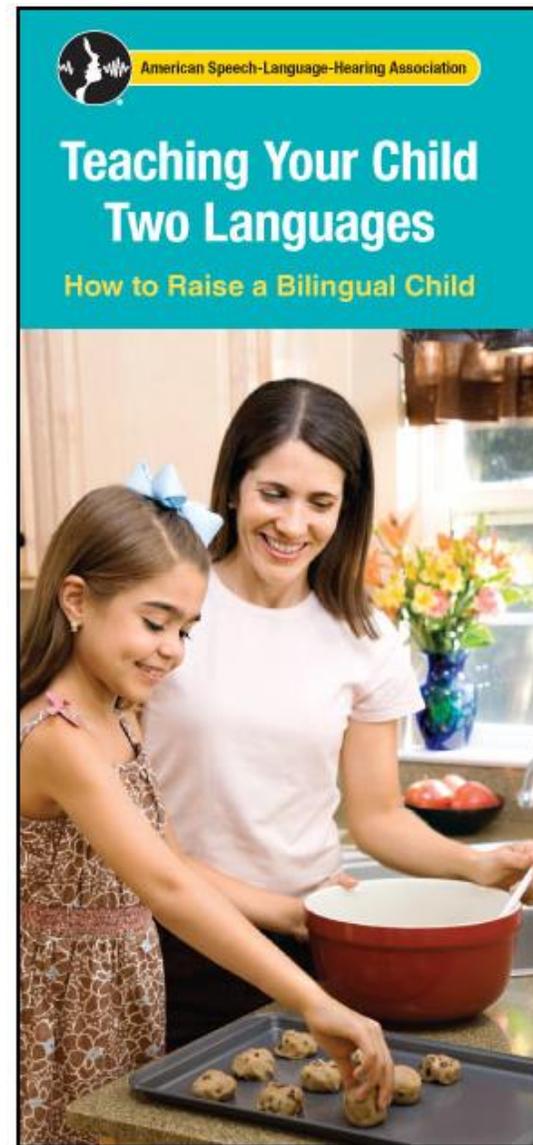
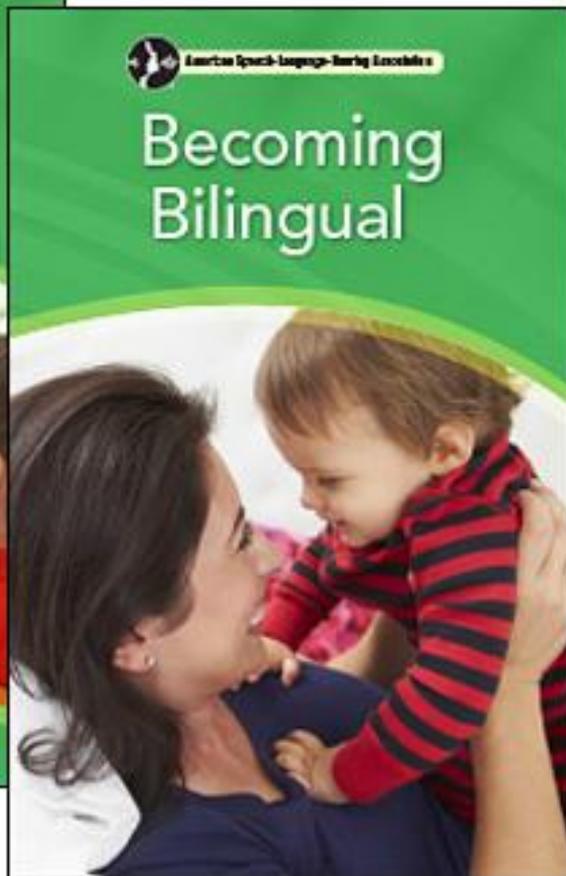
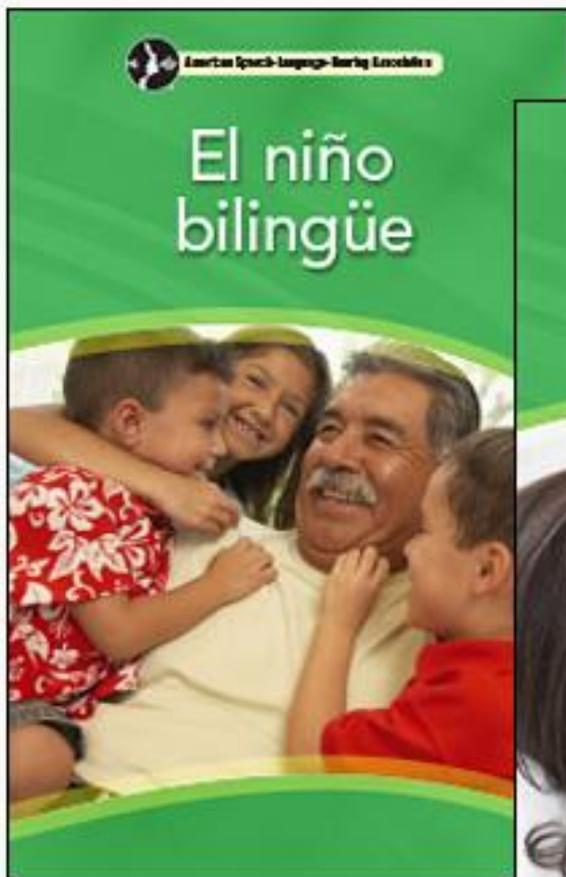
“refers to the idea that a bilingual child’s development in one language can be advanced by the other, dominant language, and/or that the two languages can be mutually advanced by virtue of sharing some linguistic-conceptual knowledge”

Both theories related to Bilingualism present the idea that cross-linguistic influences may have a positive facilitating effect on language development.

Bilingualism and the LSL approach

- ❑ Bilingual DHH children in Spain had stronger L1 development than monolingual children. (Guiberson, 2014)
- ❑ Providing home language support could lead to higher language outcomes for bilingual children with hearing loss (Bunta et al, 2016)
- ❑ Support of home language could:
 - Improve caregivers' ability to implement intervention practices
 - Help caregivers' to accept the HL diagnosis (Douglas, 2011)





MYTH vs. FACT

Bilingual Language Development



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.

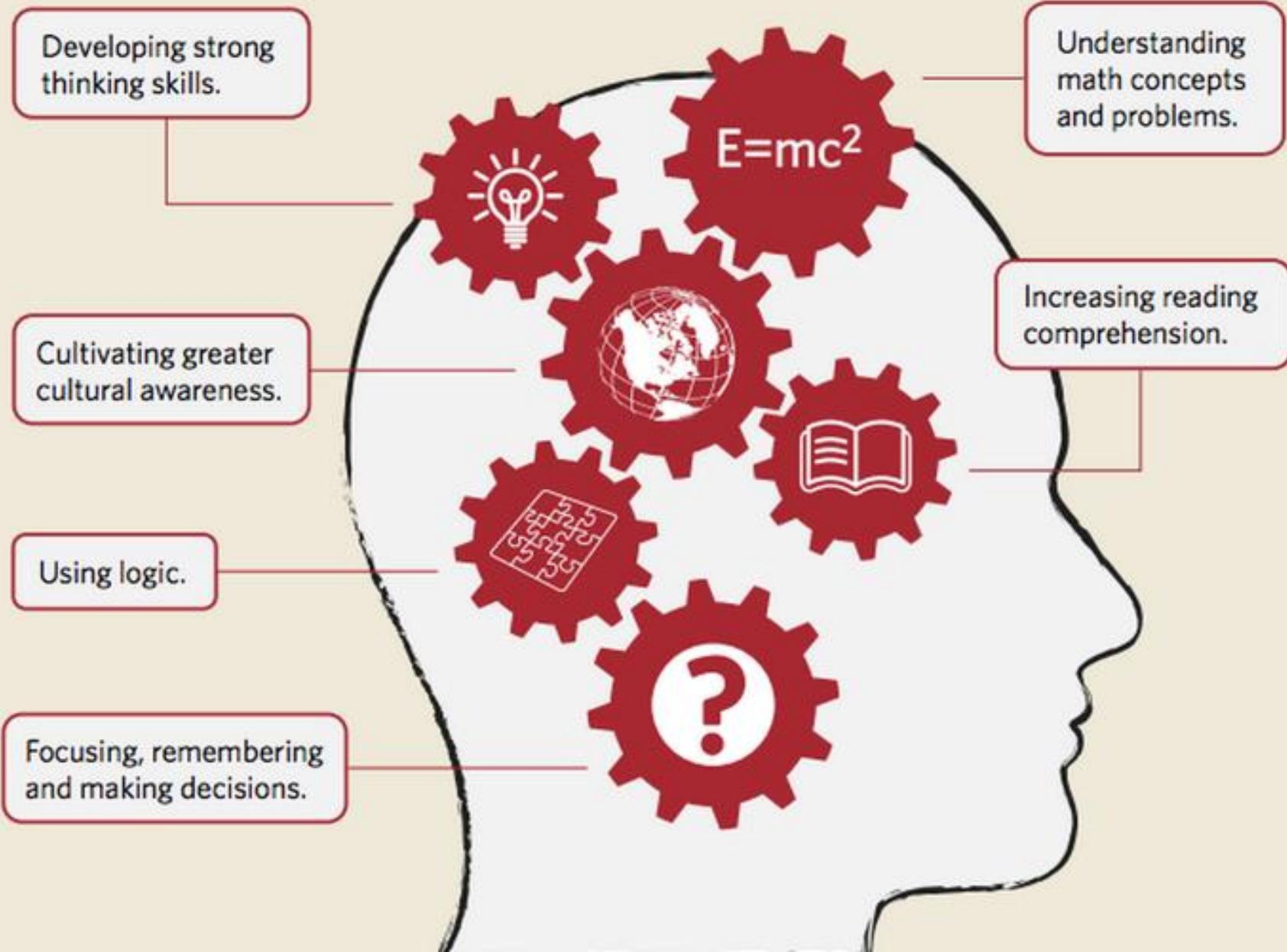
Bilingualism does NOT cause language delays, and has been shown to improve children's ability to learn new words, identify sounds, and problem-solve.

"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.



Research shows that **bilingual people** have an easier time with these key brain functions:



Mental Health

A multilingual brain is quicker, nimbler and more resistant to Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.



Academic Performance

Students in dual language programs consistently outperform monolingual peers on state-mandated tests, regardless of demographic.



Preparation for the Future

Bilingual adults have several advantages over monolingual adults, including higher average

Spanglish and Code Switching

English & Spanish

- ❑ Code Switching (also called language mixing): the “use of elements from two languages in the same utterance or in the same stretch of conversation”
- ❑ Occurs when children or adults alternate between two or more languages
- ❑ The most common way young children mix two languages: beginning a sentence in one language, then switching to another



Examples of child code switching in English and Spanish:

- ▶ “*Quiero jugar* outside.”
 (“I want to play outside.”)
- ▶ “This is not what I want to *comer.*”
 (“This is not what I want to eat.”)



 HEAR to LEARN



Parents/bilingual teachers are strong language models when they:

- Use language to extend children's original questions or comments
- Listen responsively to children
- Start and continue conversations that children are interested in
- Are intentional about supporting vocabulary acquisition
- Support children in remembering and talking about past events and personal experiences

Strategies on how to help a child learn two languages

A 2-year-old says, "More *leche*."

Sample *Spanish-speaking* adult responses

▶ "Sí, voy a darte más leche. ¿Te gusta tomar leche?"

▶ "¿Qué comiste con tu leche? ¿Un plátano?"

▶ "La leche es sana y deliciosa. Bebemos la leche para tener huesos y dientes fuertes."

Sample English-speaking adult responses

▶ "Here is some more milk. Do you like to drink milk?"

▶ "What did you eat with your milk? A banana?"

▶ "Milk is healthy and delicious. We drink milk to have strong bones and teeth."



Source: National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

Strategies on how to help a child learn two languages

A 3-year-old in the art area says,
"I drew a picture of my house *y mi gato.*"

Sample *Spanish-speaking* adult responses

- ▶ "Dime más sobre tu casa."
- ▶ "¿Cómo se llama tu gato y qué le gusta hacer?"
- ▶ "¿Esto me recuerda de la semana pasada cuando dibujaste tu casa y tu perro. Me dijiste que tu perro era muy juguetón y travieso. ¿Cómo es tu gato?"

Sample *English-speaking* adult responses

- ▶ "Tell me more about your house."
- ▶ "What is your cat's name, and what does it like to do?"
- ▶ "This reminds me of last week when you drew a picture of your house and your dog. You told me that your dog was very playful and naughty. What is your cat like?"



ONE language at a time!

Parents/bilingual teachers
should plan separate
times to read a book in
each language.



Source: National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness



Other suggested intervention approaches

Minority Language at Home (ML@H)

One Parent One Language (OPOL)

Time & Place (T&P): mixture of ML@H and OPOL

Website

<http://heartolearn.org/>



Communities

<http://oirparaaprender.org/communities/index.html>



Learning Together

<http://oirparaaprender.org/communities/learning-together.html>

For questions or to request materials, please visit our website:



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[Questions and Comments](#)



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