

- **Educational benefits**
Children who have two languages tend to do better in the curriculum and to show slightly higher performance in tests and examinations
- **Third languages easier**
There is growing evidence that bilinguals tend to find it easier to learn a third language. For example, children from countries like Holland, Denmark, Romania, Finland often speak three or four languages with ease.
- **Employment advantages**
There are growing economic advantages of being bilingual. A person with two languages will have a wider choice of jobs, as Bilinguals are increasingly needed in the retail sector, tourism, transport, public relations, banking and accountancy, administration, translation, secretarial work, marketing and sales, the law and teaching. Being bilingual is not a guaranteed meal ticket, but it gives people an additional valuable skill!
- **Raised self-esteem**
Being able to switch naturally between languages make a child feel good about themselves and their abilities. A sense of real ownership of both Mother tongue and English can do wonders to help raise a child's self-esteem.

Conclusions:

If I speak only one language, I can help my country as only one man. If I can use two languages, I can help as two men. But if I can use all nine languages, then I can work as nine men. *Village elder, Eritrea*

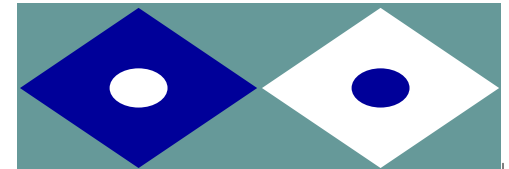


MCRC & Sure Start



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**Language for Life
Project
Multi-Cultural Resource
Centre.**



What you need to know about:
Bilingualism and the advantages of being bilingual.

Bilingualism can increase opportunities and choices. Bilingualism has definite benefits for all children... Two languages: twice the choice



Bilingualism: General Information and advantages.

4 Ethnic groups in contact within one state create certain characteristic problems, one of which is socio-structural

"The probability is overwhelming that when two groups with different cultural histories establish contacts that are regular rather than occasional or intermittent, one of the two groups will typically assume dominance over the other", the nature of this dominance is the major factor in ethnic relations.

4 **Monolingual** - A person who knows and/uses one language

4 **Bilingual** - A person who knows and/or uses two languages

4 **Multilingual** - A person who knows and/or uses three or more languages.

4 **First language**

The first language learned;
The stronger language
The "mother tongue"
The language most used

4 **Second language**

The second language learned;
The weaker language;
The language that is not the mother tongue;
The less used language.

Advantages of bilingualism:

Bilingualism can increase opportunities and choices; bilingualism has definite benefits for all children. Two languages: twice the choice.

- **Communication with the whole family and community**
- **Access to two cultures**
- **Security in identity**
- **Respect for other languages and cultures**
- **Benefits for the brain**
- **Educational benefits**
- **Third languages easier**
- **Employment advantages**
- **Raised self-esteem**

Facts about bilingualism

- Bilinguals are in the majority of the world
- 60% to 75% of speakers are bilingual
- A recent survey of children attending Speech and Language Therapy in Northern Ireland found that 17 languages were spoken in addition to English
- Learning 2 or more languages can be beneficial to a child's overall language and learning abilities.
- Research show that bilingualism in a child or adult is an advantage and rarely the cause or exacerbating feature of any disability.

- **Communication with the whole family and community**
Being bilingual creates a bridge between generations - with grandparents, being able to communicate between generations helps to build a sense of belonging to the extended family.

Being able to speak another language also allows young people who speak it to play a full part in community life in those areas where the language is widely used.

Where parents each speak a different first language, a child who is bilingual can communicate freely with both, developing a close relationship with each parent. At the same time, both parents are passing to the child a part of their past and their heritage.

- **Access to two cultures**

One of the advantages of being bilingual is having access to two cultures - two different worlds of experience. With a language comes idiom and sayings, folk stories and history, poetry, literature and music, both traditional and contemporary.

Reading and writing in two languages means a bilingual person can enjoy literature in both original languages. The pleasures of reading novels, poetry and magazines and the enjoyment of writing to friends and family are all doubled for bilingual people.

- **Security in identity**
The language is one of the few things that differentiates people, and it can be a powerful link between people everywhere. Everyone can be proud of their own language. It belongs to us all.
- **Respect for other languages and cultures**
Because two languages give people a wider cultural experience, they often have a greater respect for differences in cultures, creeds and customs beyond their own experience.
- **Benefits for the brain**
Research has shown that having two well-developed languages can give people particular advantages in the way they think:

Creative thinking: bilingual children have two or more words for each object and idea, and different meanings are sometimes attached to words by the two languages. This means a bilingual person may develop the ability to think more flexibly not only about words, but about everything.

Sensitivity: bilingual people have to know which language to speak with whom, and when. They therefore appear to be more sensitive to the needs of listeners than monolingual people.

IQ: research from around the world shows that bilingual people tend to do better at IQ tests compared with monolingual people of the same socio-economic class.

Reading: bilinguals are less fixed on the sound of words and more on their meaning. Canadian researchers have shown this gives a head start in learning to read.