

Bilingualism

MYTHS vs FACTS

Learning two or more languages delays language acquisition in children

Recent studies show that all children are capable of learning multiple languages, including children with learning disabilities. They just have a different learning curve.

Young bilingual children are slow learners compared to their monolingual peers

Learning two or more languages can improve a child's ability to learn new words, identify sounds and problem-solve.

Children have the ability to acquire another language just by listening to people around them

Language learning is an active process that requires children to practice consistent communication with others. Just by listening is not enough. Having ample opportunities to respond to situations in two or more languages is crucial. It may seem that children have an easier time learning languages than adults, but we should not underestimate the effort it takes.

The only way to be bilingual is to

learn two languages simultaneously

during childhood

Research has shown that one can become bilingual in their adolescence or adulthood. In general, people will become bilingual when life requires them to communicate in two or more languages.

All bilinguals know both languages perfectly and fluently

Bilinguals' fluency level is dependent on how much they need to use the language in an everyday context. The fluency level of bilinguals are very diverse, as are monolinguals.

Bilingualism is a rare phenomenon

It has been estimated that more than half of the world's population are bilinguals. So bilinguals are not unicorns!

Parents who do not speak a language perfectly will pass on their errors and accent to their children

This might be true only if the child has never been exposed to any other speakers of the language, which is highly unlikely!