

For further information about this service contact:

Children's Therapy Team - Speech & Language Therapy
Ground Floor, Winchester Place
80 Thorpe Road
Peterborough
PE3 6AP

Tel: 0300 5555 965

Email: cpm-tr.sltmailforparents@nhs.net

Website: <https://www.cpkt.nhs.uk/training/peterborough-childrens-SALT.htm>

Notes

Speech and Language Therapy Service Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

How to Support Children with Multiple Languages at Pre-School and School

If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.

What is bilingualism?

Children are considered bilingual if they have acquired or are acquiring communicative skills in more than one language, even if they don't speak both languages with equal fluency.

In two thirds of the world, learning more than one language is the norm.

What are the advantages of learning more than one language?

Current research shows that learning more than one language enhances children's cognitive and linguistic development. Children learning to read in two languages that share a writing system (e.g. English and Spanish) show accelerated progress.

Will learning more than one language cause speech and language difficulties?

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists recognises that learning multiple languages in a child is an advantage and does not cause communication disorders. However, specific language impairment and speech disorders are under-identified in the bilingual population in the UK.

A child is only considered to need speech and language therapy if there are difficulties in their primary language as well as English.

How can school help?

It is very important that parents use the language that they know best and the one that they feel most comfortable using.

Sometimes well-meaning professionals advise parents to abandon the use of the home language in favour of English. However, this is not supported by evidence.

Some bilingual children may have a smaller vocabulary than their monolingual peers and may need some specific teaching of words and concepts. Schools should find ways to celebrate different languages and cultures so that all children feel valued.

What should I do if I have concerns about a child's first language?

- If there is a concern about another language/other languages besides English, speak to a Speech and Language Therapist.
- Useful Links

www.literacytrust.org.uk

www.rcslt.org

www.slc.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk

<https://sites.google.com/site/cambiling/home>