



Would it be helpful or beneficial for my child if we used two languages with her/him?

There is not enough research available yet to say whether using two languages with your child is beneficial or not, but it would definitely not be harmful. One simple rule is: Use the language that your family is most comfortable with and the language that your family enjoys speaking.

What are some early warning signs of autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

- Children may not point to ask for what they want.
- Children may not show interest in interacting with people and may show excessive interest in objects and parts of objects.
- Children may not imitate facial expressions or words.
- Children may show a delay in communication development.

Is it harmful for my child if I use two languages at home?

No. Children on the autism spectrum who grow up in a bilingual home develop language similarly to children on the autism spectrum who grow up in a monolingual home. They do not have language delays or increase in behavioral challenges because two or more languages are used at home.

I want my child to speak Spanish, but I think it is also important for him/her to speak in English. What can I do?

When children grow in an environment that speaks both Spanish and English, they learn both languages. For example, they will learn to understand and speak in Spanish at home. At school, they will understand and speak in English. As a parent, you can:

- Speak, read, and play with your child in both Spanish and English.
- Show the same level of excitement and appreciation when your child speaks Spanish or English.
- Your language choice is independent of your child's diagnosis.



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Children on the Autism Spectrum in Bilingual Families

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My child doesn't speak, but he uses a talker (speech-generated device). Can I have him use Spanish on the device?

Absolutely! There are AAC apps and software that are available in both Spanish and English for children building communication skills in a bilingual environment. Your child's communication system can be adapted to your child's vocabulary and language use. Work with your speech-language pathologist who has experience in using AACs and supports your choice of languages.



What can I do if my speech-language therapist doesn't speak Spanish?

It would be nice to have a speech-language therapist who speaks Spanish, but it is always not possible to find someone who speaks your language. There is currently a shortage of bilingual speech-language therapists in the United States.

- You have the right to request for a language interpreter if you are not comfortable in English. The school, hospital, or clinic where you receive services must provide you access to a language interpreter.
- You can seek the support of a family member who speaks both English and Spanish.
- You can also take a trusted advocate (friend or family member) who can come with you to meetings and appointments.
- Work with a speech-language therapist who supports and honors your language choices even if they don't speak your native language.

What can I do as a parent to support my child and myself?

There are several things you could do as a parent for yourself.

- Educate yourself and learn more about autism.
- Because each child with autism is unique, understand your child's unique strengths and challenges.
- Get connected to professionals in your community, and do not hesitate to ask questions or ask for help.
- Involve your family. Educate them about your child, share your experiences, and seek support when needed.
- Join support groups for parents in your community. We have noticed that when families are connected to each other, they feel less isolated and more supported.
- Remember to care for yourself. Regularly do things that help you relax. Several parents pray, spend time with their family, exercise/work out, or develop a hobby for relaxation.



Resources for bilingual families:

El Grupo VIDA
<https://elgrupovida.org/en/home/>

Department of Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences at Metropolitan State University of Denver
<https://www.msudenver.edu/speech-language-hearing-sciences/>

Autism Signs From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/spanish/autism/signs.html>