

## BabyTalks | Brilliantly Bilingual: Growing Up With Two Languages

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

#### Understand the brain's role in supporting dual language learning.



Rapid brain growth between birth to five supports language development.

Experiences determine which connections form between neurons, and how strong those connections are.

#### Explain how everyday experiences build bilingual children's language skills.

- Infant brain responses are stronger to whatever language they hear most in their daily lives.
- The strength of infant brain responses to a given language are related to their productive vocabulary in that language as toddlers.

#### Describe the cognitive advantages of learning more than one language.

- Dual language learners have a longer sensitive period for language than monolingual children.
- Studies have shown that infants learning two languages show increased activity in the prefrontal cortex and orbitofrontal cortex, two areas of the brain related to executive function skills.
- Dual language learners often show improved performance on cognitive flexibility tasks like the Stroop Task and the Sun-Moon game.

#### Learn strategies to support dual language learners in the classroom.

- Work with bilingual families to learn which languages children hear and speak at home.
- Talk and read with children in whichever language(s) you feel most comfortable speaking.
- Use the Planned Language Approach for research-based resources to support your work.



### OTHER RESOURCES

- Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/efof>
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center // Dual Language Learners' Toolkit  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/toolkit>
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center // Gathering and Using Language Information that Families Share  
[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/dll\\_background\\_info.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/dll_background_info.pdf)
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center // Planned Language Approach  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/planned-language-approach>
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center // Code Switching: Why It Matters and How to Respond  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/code-switching.html>
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center // How to Use Bilingual Books  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/nccclr-gguide-how-to-use-bilingual-books.pdf>
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center // Tips for Teachers: Dual Language Learners // Language Modeling and Conversations  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/conversations-teach-tips-dll.pdf>