

Tips for parents

- › Give your child the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of being bilingual by offering them a consistent bilingual upbringing throughout their childhood.
- › Provide your child access to bilingual activities, such as sports or music lessons and Sunday schools.
- › Be consistent in using the language you speak best and feel most comfortable with, even if your children only respond in German or mix languages.
- › Don't let other people's prejudices put you off!
- › If you have any further questions, take advantage of counselling and support services for parents of bilingual children.

RECOMMENDED READING

Solveig Chilla & Annette Fox-Boyer
»Zweisprachigkeit/Bilingualität. Ein Ratgeber für Eltern.« Schulz-Kirchner Verlag, 2012.
(available in German, Russian and Turkish)



No. 2 – Achieving bilingualism Overcoming prejudices and benefiting from advantages

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Achieving bilingualism Overcoming prejudices and benefiting from advantages

2

SCIENCE FOR LIFE
Facts – Research – Information
for Parents and Teachers

Who is bilingual, anyway...?

... a person who speaks two languages perfectly?
Or someone who knows just a few words in another language?

- › There is no definitive answer to this question. Not all researchers agree on this issue.
- › According to the predominant view, bilinguals (or multilinguals) are people who can use two (or more) languages in everyday life, irrespective of their proficiency in each language or the age at which they started learning these languages.

Bilingualism is very common:

- › More than half of the world's population is bilingual.
- › The number of bilinguals in Germany is increasing steadily.
- › Almost every second child in Berlin is growing up to be bilingual.



Overcoming prejudices & misconceptions

There are still many prejudices and misconceptions about bilingualism and bilinguals. Research shows that these prejudices are unfounded.

- › Children are not confused by hearing or speaking two or more languages. Bilingualism does not make language acquisition more complicated.



- › Learning two or more languages at the same time does not cause developmental problems of any kind.
- › Bilingualism does not cause speech and language disorders, nor does it make existing speech and language disorders worse.

Benefiting from advantages

Bilingualism has many advantages:

- › It is easier for bilinguals to acquaint themselves with other cultures and value other languages and traditions. Therefore, they contribute to shaping an open-minded, modern community.
- › Bilingualism opens up broader career prospects.
- › Learning additional languages is easier for bilingual children.
- › Bilinguals have better metalinguistic skills. This means they are better at thinking about the properties and structure of languages, which, among other things, is important for literacy development.
- › Bilingualism can have a beneficial impact on brainpower and creativity – right up until old age.

