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Clinically We Occasionally See 2-Year-Old Children with an Inquiry of Speech Delay and They Want to Verify Normal Hearing Before an SLP Referral. And Sometimes the Child Is Learning Two Languages at the Same Time at Home. If There Is A Speech Delay (Or Concern About A Speech Delay), Should the Parents Be Encouraged To Only Speak One Language at Home, Or Continue With the Two Languages?

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Families should be encouraged to continue speaking the two (or more!) languages that they naturally use at home. Multilingualism does not harm children's language development; it confers many benefits for language learning and connects children with their home cultures. Recommending families to only use English at home is not only ineffective, but it also carries a significant risk of harm.

Children are remarkably capable of learning multiple languages. When developing their language learning systems, very young children can cognitively process different languages and learn the linguistic rules underlying each language. Learning multiple languages does not cause for speech or language disorders. Even for children with a speech or language disorder, no evidence of learning multiple languages will hinder the child's development. Even for children with additional comorbid diagnoses, no evidence learning multiple languages harms children. When speech-language pathologists assess children learning multiple languages who they suspect have a language learning disorder, they consider all languages the child is learning. If a child has difficulty learning a language, they will struggle learning any language in their environment regardless of the number.

Advising families to refrain from speaking their home languages with their child will not help the child overcome any underlying speech or language disorder. In fact, advising families to withhold their home languages can cause harm. For families who do not speak English as their primary language, asking them to *stop* using their home language with a child decreases the richness of language learning opportunities children have access too. These opportunities and connections are necessary to support children's language learning. Many interventions speech-language pathologists use focus on increasing the amount and type of language children hear, not decreasing!

Perhaps more importantly, recommending families to only use English at home inadvertently communicates several harmful messages. First, withholding home languages potentially excludes children from fully participating in their family, culture, and heritage. Second, it also

communicates that the family's home language is in some way less important than English. Third, this messaging suggests that a child's language or speech disorder could be caused, prevented, or mitigated by the family's knowledge of multiple languages. This messaging from healthcare professionals is harmful.

Multilingualism is a gift of rich language exposure, social connection, and cultural heritage. Regardless of their child's language learning abilities, families should be encouraged to pass these gifts on to their children.