



## Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Is it wise for a child with communication delays to simultaneously learn both English and another home language? In the past, some providers may have said “no “. Providers may have even recommended that parents focus efforts on one language. ***Now researchers tell us that exposure to two languages will not cause, increase or worsen delays.*** In fact, the advantages to dual language learning are vast and include development of cultural identity, socialization into the family and community, and even cognitive benefits.

**First Steps mental health professionals encourage cultural awareness and sensitivity to support families around dual language learning.**

### Supporting Dual Language Learners:

- \* **Ask parents to share common words and phrases in their language.**
- \* **Take time to talk with parents about and include favorite games, songs, foods, or other materials that can be used your planned activities.**
- \* **Invite parents to tell you about their understanding of the parents’ role in teaching their child.**
- \* **Locate parent friendly information in the home language.**
- \* **Look for children’s books and other materials in the home language.**
- \* **Learn about current research in dual language learning and disabilities.**



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**Reference/ Resource: Zero to Three, September, 2008 or  
<http://www.zerotothree.org>.**