

TITLE CARD:

Baby Development
Cultural Heritage & Bilingualism

ART CARD:

Cultural Heritage & Bilingualism
Sharing your cultural heritage with your baby

VOICE OVER:

Your baby's social environment is just as important as their physical environment. Your baby is being welcomed to your life, which includes your unique background, culture, and heritage. Parents may not think of sharing these things with such young babies, but you certainly can. Reading books, singing songs, and telling stories that highlight their culture is a good way to start. These activities can help build the foundation for a strong cultural identity and pride in your child.

As you begin to share your heritage with your baby, keep these questions in mind:

ART CARD:

[Sharing your heritage with your baby]

ART CARD AND VOICE OVER:

[What stories, music, books, food, and games reflect your cultural background? Who else can share these with your baby?]

ART CARD:

[Sharing your heritage with your baby]

ART CARD AND VOICE OVER:

[Who else can share these with your baby?]

ART CARD:

[Sharing your heritage with your baby]

ART CARD AND VOICE OVER:

[What are the important parts of your heritage and culture that you would like to pass down to your baby?]

ART CARD:

[Sharing your heritage with your baby]

How do you picture celebrating your culture and the cultures of others with your baby?]

VOICE OVER:

[How do you picture celebrating your culture and the cultures of others with your baby and with your family?]

ART CARD:

[Cultural Heritage & Bilingualism
Bilingualism]

VOICE OVER:

Sharing your home language with your baby is a great way to celebrate your cultural heritage and to help your baby develop language skills. Whether your family already speaks multiple languages, or you want to teach your baby a new language, you may have questions about encouraging bilingualism. Let's answer them.

ART CARD:

[Question:
What is home language, and why is it important for my baby?]

VOICE OVER:

Home language is the language that you and your family speak at home. It is the language of your extended family, your baby's grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. It is the language of comfort and love.

Speaking with your baby in your home language will:

Help you bond with them and share your cultural heritage and pride

Help you maintain your family connections, customs and culture

Provide benefits for your baby's brain development

And provide opportunities for your child to become multilingual if you have a home language other than English.

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Dr. Mariana Glusman MD

Ann & Robert Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

ART CARD:

[Question:
Does learning two languages cause language delays?]

VOICE OVER:

No. Learning two languages will not confuse your baby or cause delays. Speak with your baby in the language that you are most comfortable using. Babies' brains are able to manage, tell apart, and learn more than one language at the same time, it's amazing! Learning any language though, takes time and exposure. The more you talk, sing, read, and play with your baby in your home language, the more they will learn.

ART CARD:

[Question:
English is not my home language. Should I turn on English language videos to help my child learn English?]

VOICE OVER:

Children learn language through social interactions: talking, playing games, and engaging in activities. Sometimes videos can be beneficial when you watch them together with your child, while asking questions, repeating numbers, letters, singing songs, etc. But remember, it is not enough for them to watch videos on their own, even if they are “educational.” There is no app like your lap. Weekly visits to playgrounds, libraries, and playgroups with English-speaking children will help expose your child to English in a natural way, much better than videos or apps, while maintaining your home language.

ART CARD:

[Question:

Is it a problem if I switch between languages?]

VOICE OVER:

Not at all! Your baby will learn their language in the same way the language is used at home. Switching between languages is natural and often a sign of mastery in each language. So don't worry if that's the way you naturally speak at home.

ART CARD:

[Question:

I want my child to be bilingual, but I only speak one language. What is the best way to do this?]

VOICE OVER:

There are many ways to help your child learn more than one language. One of them is to seek out members of your community who are multilingual themselves and share your interest in teaching your child a second language. When your child sees your interest and enthusiasm, they will learn that speaking more than one language is perfectly normal and valuable. Exposing your child regularly to native speakers of a different language is a great way to encourage them to become bilingual. Chicago is a multicultural city. Explore and learn what different neighborhoods have to offer.

Remember, whichever language you use, your baby will love listening to your voice because it's the voice of comfort and love. Speaking and reading with your baby in any language will help their brain grow. So talk with your baby in the language that you feel most comfortable in, the language that inspires you to sing, and read, and play with them—and encourage your family members to do it, too! If you have more than one home language, use them with your baby. Speaking in multiple languages is an incredible gift that you can give to your child.

CLOSING ART CARD:

One
Chicago
Family

A trusted health resource for all Chicago families.