

Early Years Service

We work with children under 5 living in Hackney who have difficulties with:

- Understanding language and following instructions
- Using words and sentences
- Communicating and playing with their friends and family
- Hearing, listening & attention
- Pronouncing words & sounds
- Stammering or stuttering
- Eating and drinking

Children who are in Hackney schools are seen by their school's link Speech and Language therapist and can be referred via the school's SENCO.

How we work

We work with children and their parents at home, in Children's Centres or in their nursery / playgroups – whichever is best for the child and family.

We work together with lots of other people, including teachers, Health Visitors and Early Support Workers.

Contact details

Speech and Language Therapy

1st Floor D Block
St Leonards Hospital
Nuttall Street London
N1 5LZ
Tel: 020 7683 4262
hello@gethackneytalking.co.uk

Speaking more than one language at home

Parent information leaflet



"I liked their advice about my child, it helped a lot. I would like to do more sessions with my child".

Parent after advice at a Stay and Play session

Children learning more than one language

Speaking more than one language is a good skill for your child

Understanding bilingualism

Speaking more than one language is common all over the world. Research has shown that people who speak more than one language are more able to think flexibly and learn other languages later.

Speech and Language

Some children learning more than one language might take a bit longer to get going with their talking.

However, their first words and other milestones should still be around the same age as any other child.

Remember, bilingual children can have speech and language difficulties, just like children who speak one language.

Keeping the home language going

- Start talking to your child in your home language from a young age.
- Don't worry too much if your child doesn't talk back to you in your language. This is very common when the language they hear around them is different.
- Don't stop talking in your language – your child will learn to understand it.
- When there is a good reason for your child to use your language (for example, when they play with other children who speak it) they will learn quickly.
- Show that you are proud of your language and culture. Share stories or food from your country at your child's school.

What you can do

Which language?

Use the language you are most comfortable with.

Using your own language means you will be able to give a good model to your child.

Your child will learn English more easily if they have a good knowledge of their first language.

Encouraging the home language

Tell your child stories and rhymes in your own language.

Read books together in your own language.

Have fun, play games and sing songs and nursery rhymes in your language too.

Using more than one language

Try to stick to one language at a time. There are different ways to do this. Some families have tried:

- One language per parent (e.g. Daddy speaks English and Mummy and Grandma speak Vietnamese)
- One language per environment (e.g. Turkish at home and English at nursery and at the shops)

Do what is natural! If you sometimes swap languages for certain words this is okay.

