

Learn the Lingo

and Support Dual Language Learners

There are many different terms being used to describe children who have exposure to more than one language. Understanding how these terms are similar or different from one another and why you might choose one term over another is an important place to begin.

- **Monolingual:** A monolingual child speaks one language or is learning to speak only one language
- **Bilingual:** Children who are bilingual speak two languages equally well and fluently
- **English language learner:** This term refers to a child who is learning English for the purpose of his or her education. Most often, English language learners are children who speak another language at home (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Creole) but who are receiving their formal education in English.
- **Dual language learner:** A dual language learner is a child who is learning two languages at the same time or learning a second language while mastering his or her first language (Office of Head Start, 2008).
- **Cross-language transfer:** the process of transferring knowledge and skills learned in one language to another language
- **Sequential language development:** when a child is learning a second language after having learned a first language
- **Simultaneous language development:** when a child is learning two (or more) languages at the same time

