

Keynote speech
Cognitive Advantages of Bilingualism in Childhood
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Learning two languages in early childhood has been shown to have a powerful impact on children's development. Language acquisition in bilingual children follows a similar pattern and timeline to that of monolingual children, but vocabulary is built up more slowly in each language than it is for monolingual speakers of only that language. At the same time, metalinguistic awareness and literacy develop at least as rapidly, and sometimes more rapidly for bilingual children than is found in monolingual children. The largest impact, however, is on the development of executive control, a set of processes responsible for attention, monitoring, shifting, and updating. These crucial processes are used for a variety of tasks, including nonverbal ones, to manage attention in complex problems. A large number of studies has demonstrated that these processes develop earlier in bilingual children than in monolinguals. Studies demonstrating these general results will be described.