

BILINGUAL KIDS · AGES 2-8

My Child Mixes English and Bengali — Is That Normal?

PRINTABLE ARTICLE

"Ma, I want more jol." This kind of mixing is one of the most well-documented, normal parts of raising a bilingual child.

What's actually happening

This is code-switching — pulling whichever word arrives first. Bilingual children as young as two show clear patterns in how and when they switch.

Why this doesn't mean "confusion"

Children as young as one can distinguish between their languages and adjust which one they use depending on who they're speaking to.

What to actually do about it

- **Model the English word back, gently.**
- **Don't interrupt mid-sentence to correct.**
- **Keep both languages present.** Skip rigid "English only" rules.
- **Expect it to reduce with more exposure.**

Mixing peaks in toddler/preschool years and decreases as vocabulary grows in each language.

When it's worth a closer look

A broader delay in BOTH languages at once — not ordinary mixing — is worth mentioning to a professional.