



## Silent Period Support Guide

*A Calm, Research-Informed Guide for Multilingual Families*

---

### What Is the Silent Period?

The silent period is a natural developmental stage in bilingual children during which they understand language before actively speaking it. Understanding often develops first. This reflects processing — not delay.

### What Research Shows

- Receptive vocabulary often develops before expressive vocabulary (Tabors, 2008).
- Children may temporarily favor one language for production (Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004).
- Consistent exposure supports long-term bilingual competence (Place & Hoff, 2011).
- Silent phases are common in additional language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

### How to Support Your Child

- Maintain steady exposure to your heritage language.
- Avoid pressuring your child to repeat or perform.
- Integrate language into daily routines.
- Involve familiar voices such as grandparents.

- Model calmly and consistently.

## Key Takeaway

The silent period is not absence. It is preparation. Language rooted in connection and consistency tends to last.