

# exploring and supporting multilingualism and subjective family wellbeing

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## The Cambridge Bilingualism Network

- Public engagement initiative founded in 2010 by researchers at University of Cambridge
- Aim: increase awareness about benefits and challenges of multilingualism by sharing research
- Foster partnerships between researchers, teachers, clinicians and parents of bilingual children by building networks whose members can ask and answer questions and share resources
- Two public events a year, sometimes part of larger outreach events like the University's Festival of Ideas; visits to nurseries, schools and community groups



## Multilingualism and Wellbeing Practitioner – researcher forums

- The UK is increasingly multilingual: in 2016, at least 1 in 5 primary children spoke a language other than English; in the 2011 Census, there were more than 600 different answers to the question, 'what is your main language?'
- There is good evidence that communication within a family is a main predictor of young people's subjective wellbeing (OECD PISA 2015 Report; The Good Childhood Report 2013) and being multilingual interacts with at least three key 'priority areas' for wellbeing: Self, Learning and Relationships.
- Three forums brought together researchers across linguistics, education and psychology with practitioners such as community language teachers, English as an Additional Language coordinators, antenatal teachers, and multilingual parents
- Three recommendations which emerged from discussions were
  1. More appropriate curricula for community language education
  2. Qualification pathways for EAL professionals
  3. Multilingual family wellbeing as a topic in antenatal provision

## Exploring and supporting multilingualism Examples of activities and events

- *Your Languages, Your Future* – mini-film exploring the benefits of becoming multiliterate as well as multilingual, particularly through supporting multiliteracy in mainstream schools by offering classes and qualifications. Featuring local school students and the University's vice-chancellor!

<https://youtu.be/fcEGytWBEg4>



- *Hold on to your tongue! Community languages: why do they matter?* In collaboration with Routes into Languages East, an afternoon panel discussion featuring school heads and language teachers, researchers and campaigners.
- *Why speak different languages?* Interactive workshops run over two days as part of local secondary school's project on identity.

# CAMBRIDGE Bilingualism Network

## Supporting multilingual families at the antenatal stage Focus groups with antenatal teachers

- In progress project to meet with antenatal teachers in Cambridge, Birmingham and Sheffield
- Aim: to hear about their own views on multilingual upbringing, their experiences with multilingual parents, and their current sources of information



## Multilingualism and subjective family wellbeing A systematic review

- In progress project with Napoleon Katsos, Jenny Gibson (Cambridge) and Mirko Uljarevic (Stanford)
- Aim: to assess what effects being a multilingual family has on the subjective wellbeing of children and young people
- Protocol @ PROSPERO 2018 CRD42018095105  
[www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/display\\_record.php?ID=CRD42018095105](http://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/display_record.php?ID=CRD42018095105)