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Multilingual children: developmental opportunities and challenges

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Abstract: Recent research on multilingual development reveals some intriguing effects of being multilingual not only on language per se but also on cognition of multilingual children as early as from infancy. Still, factors leading to cognitive gains in multilinguals are not fully recognized. On the other hand, multilingual children may experience challenges in educational contexts (especially in monolingually oriented school systems) and may be at higher risk for inaccurate diagnosis of language disorder. A recapitulation of gains and losses that may be experienced by multilingual children and their families can help in better understanding of a very common but sometimes still undervalued phenomenon of multilingualism.