



# Neurodevelopmental conditions & bilingual families: access to information and support

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## Introduction

- Research is making progress in understanding the cognitive and socio-cultural impact of bilingualism for children with developmental conditions (including autistic children)<sup>1,2</sup>
- However, less is understood about parent perspectives and the decision-making process around maintaining (or not) a bilingual environment with their child.
- Although research suggests that bilingualism does not have negative consequences for these children, parents are still concerned that bilingualism could be detrimental to their development.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Understanding the elements that feed into these concerns would help to effectively support children and families.

## Objectives

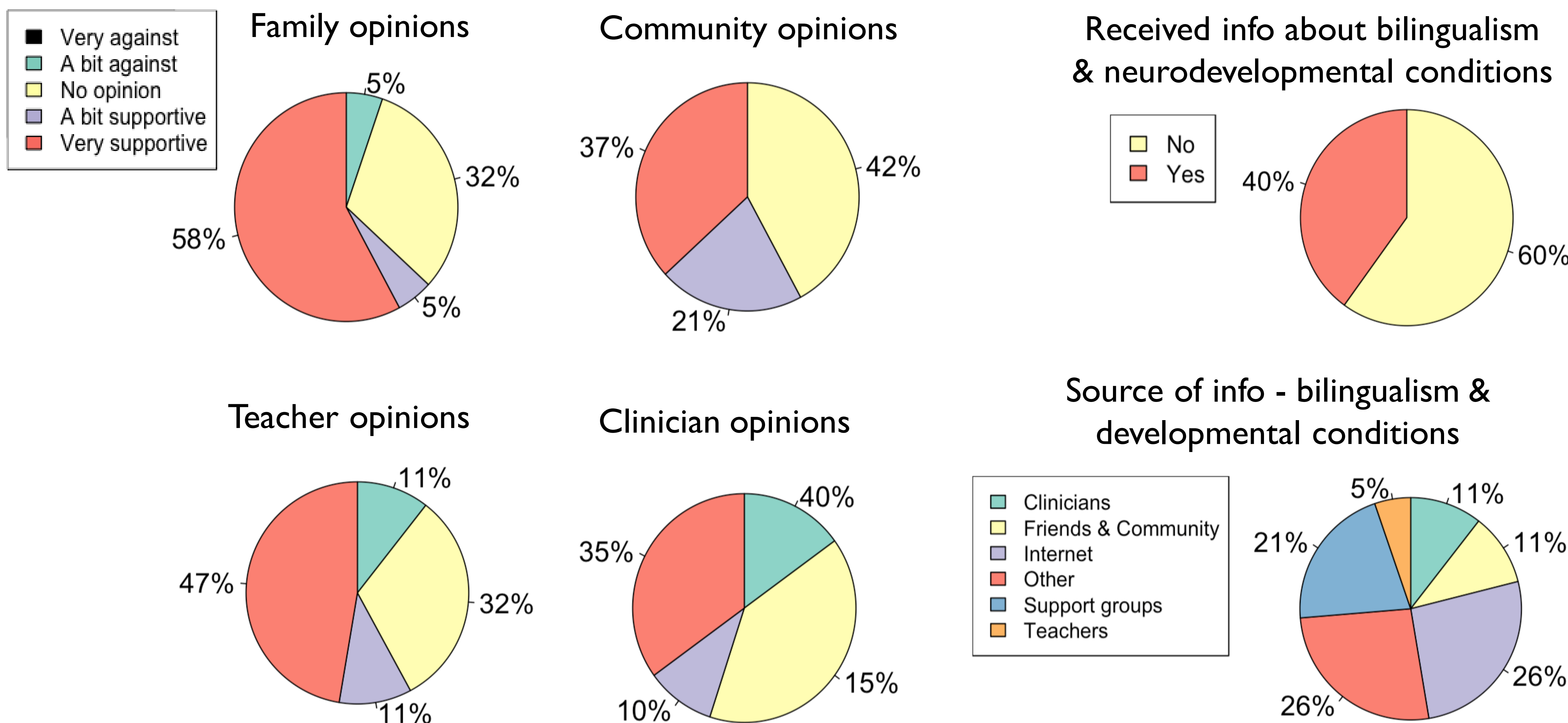
- To identify how parents make decisions about their child's linguistic environment, and what information they access.
- To understand how the attitudes of family community and stakeholder networks (including school and clinical practitioners) inform their own language practices.

## Methods

- UK-based bilingual parents of children with a developmental condition completed an online survey. So far: 20 participants' responses have been analysed.

## Results

Online survey includes quantitative and qualitative questions about the respondents' identity, family demographics, language profile, access to services for the children and attitudes towards bilingualism.



## Discussion

- This is the first mixed methods study looking to understand the gap between research findings and parent choices regarding bilingualism.
- While data collection is still ongoing, this first sample highlights areas of insufficient communication that can be easily tackled to reach impactful change for neurodivergent people and their families.
- It highlights the importance of making accessible resources and information about bilingualism for parents with neurodivergent children

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## More info

To join or share the study:



To access co-produced resources for parents in 10 languages:



To access resources for clinicians:



References:  
1. Bird, Elizabeth Kay-Raining, Fred Genesee, and Ludo Verhoeven. "Bilingualism in children with developmental disorders: A narrative review." *Journal of communication disorders* 63 (2016): 1-14.  
2. Davis, R., Fletcher-Watson, S., & Digard, B. G. (2021). Autistic People's Access to Bilingualism & Additional Language Learning: Identifying Barriers and Facilitators for Equal Opportunities. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4074.  
3. Hampton, S., Rabagliati, H., Sorace, A., & Fletcher-Watson, S. (2017). Autism and bilingualism: A qualitative interview study of parents' perspectives and experiences. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 60(2), 435-446.