

What is the Two-Way Dual Language Program?

Dual language is a type of bilingual education program where students are taught in two languages. Dual language programs foster bilingualism and biliteracy so that students are able to speak, read and write in two languages and utilize academic language. Dual language programs also foster an increased awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and encourage high levels of achievement through instruction in two languages.

Characteristics of Dual Language Programs

English native speakers and Spanish native speakers are instructed together. There is a clear and consistent separation of languages.

Why does it work?

“Knowledge learned through one language paves the way for knowledge acquisition in the second language” (Lindholm-Leary, 2007).

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What are the benefits of Dual Language programs?

Research suggests that children who have rich and early exposure to two languages are cognitively more advanced than their monolingual peers on certain highly sophisticated cognitive tasks related to attention and abstract reasoning (Petitto, 2002).





How can I help my child?

- Encourage your child's interest in the language
- Read with your child every day
- Allow your child to watch YouTube-appropriate channels in Spanish (songs, books, shows)
- Check out Spanish books/bilingual books at your public library
- Download Spanish learning apps on home iPads
- Encourage but do not force your child to speak in the second language
- Connect with other parents raising bilingual children in your school/community

How soon can I expect to see progress in my child's second language learning?

If your child has little or no exposure to the second language when they begin the program, they will first go through a silent period. During this time, the student will be unable to respond orally in the second language and may or may not feel overwhelmed. It is important at this time that the child is encouraged to speak in whatever language they feel comfortable with. Slowly, as they increase their comprehension, they will feel more comfortable responding in their second language. Research shows that it takes from 3 – 7 years to develop native-like proficiency in a second language.



“Developing proficiency in two languages is associated positively with greater cognitive flexibility and awareness of language, which contributes to academic achievement” (Cummins, 1999).

Stages of Second Language Learning

Pre-production (0-6 months) Non-verbal, draws, points

Early pre-production (6 months to 1 year) Limited comprehension, 1-2 word sentences

Speech emergence (1 to 3 years) Simple sentences, good comprehension, grammar errors

Intermediate fluency (3 to 5 years) Excellent comprehension, few grammatical errors

Advanced fluency (5 to 7 years) Native level of bilingualism in comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing