



German International School of Houston

German-English Dual Language Immersion Preschool Program

ONE CHILD. TWO LANGUAGES. UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES.

6221 Main Street, # C111, Houston, Texas 77030 Phone: 832-831-6843 E-mail: office@gish-houston.org



F A Q

At what grade level is it best to begin a Dual Language Immersion Program?

The earlier the better; in the United States, most programs begin in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, or First Grade.

What effects do Dual Language Immersion Programs have on verbal and mathematical skills in English?

Studies have consistently shown that verbal and math skills of immersion students are equal or better compared to non-immersion students (Holobow et al., 1987; Swain & Lapkin, 1991).

What are the goals of a Dual Language Immersion Program?

The long-range goals of an immersion program include:

- 1) developing a high level of proficiency in the foreign language;
- 2) developing positive attitudes toward those who speak the foreign language and toward their culture(s);
- 3) developing English language skills commensurate with expectations for student's age and abilities;
- 4) gaining skills and knowledge in the content areas of the curriculum in keeping with stated objectives in these areas.

What is a Dual Language Immersion Program?

- Dual Language Immersion Program is a type of dual language education in which language minority and language majority students are integrated, and both English and the native language of the language minority students are used for instruction.
- The structure of programs varies, but they all provide instruction in the non-English language for a significant portion of the school day and integrate language majority (English) and language minority (German) students for all instruction.
- The unique feature of this type of dual language instruction is that within each program, there is a balance of language-minority and language-majority students, with each group making up between one-third and two-thirds of the total student population.
- In this model, all students have the opportunity to be both first language models and second language learners.
- Dual Language Immersion Programs strive to promote bilingualism and bi-literacy, grade-level academic achievement, and positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors in all students.

What are the benefits of learning two languages?

The child who knows more than one language has personal, social, cognitive, and economic advantages which will continue throughout his/her life.

Educational: Students who learn English and continue to develop their native language, do better at school. They also learn English better than students who learn English at the expense of their first language. Research shows that developing a second language does not interfere with the acquisition of the native language – it facilitates the process. Knowing more than one language increases a person's thinking abilities. Bilingual children have greater mental flexibility and use those skills to their advantage in figuring out math concepts as well as solving word problems.

Personal: A child's first language is critical to his or her identity. Continuing to develop this language helps a child value his or her culture and heritage, contributing to a positive self-concept.

Economic: The demand for bilingual employees throughout the world is increasing. The ability to speak, read, and writes two or more languages is a great advantage in the job market. Throughout the world, knowing more than one language is the norm, not the exception. It is estimated that between one-half and two-thirds of the world's population is bilingual; the majority of people live in situations where they regularly use two or more languages. Knowing more than one language, therefore, is a skill to be valued and encouraged.

Skills and concepts acquired in the first language transfer to the second language: Once a child learns to read in one language, he/she can transfer that knowledge of how to make sense of a printed page to another language. Students do not need to re-learn how to read. Similarly, concepts learned in one language easily transfer to another. The child only has to learn that $2 \times 3 = 6$ once; when transferring to the second language only the vocabulary needs to be learned, the concepts are already firmly in place.

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