

Spanish Immersion FAQs

How can I support my child at home if I don't speak Spanish?

- 1. The most important thing you can do for young children is read aloud in English.**
This does NOT mean you need to teach your child to read but simply that you are exposing them to English books and modeling fluent English reading.
- 2. Be positive and encouraging!**
Your child will often mirror your attitude, so you can model for them how exciting it is to be able to learn a second language.
- 3. Listen to your child read in Spanish.**
Even if you don't understand what they are reading, it's good practice for them! You can also ask them questions about what they read, although they may not be able to explain it all in English.
- 4. Help with homework using English instructions.**
Many teachers will send home an English copy of the homework instructions or will explain homework assignments in their parent letter. So even though your child may be completing their homework in Spanish, you can help make sure they understand the assignment and are completing the requirements. As students get older (middle school/high school), much of their homework will be in English.

What should I expect from my child?

- 1. Don't expect your child to "perform".**
Students understand that language is used for communication and will naturally use it in appropriate contexts but will likely not feel comfortable "performing" for family members and others. This, of course, depends on the personality of your child. Some children do enjoy showing off their Spanish!
- 2. Your child may not be able to fully explain what they've learned in English.**
At school, they are learning the concepts in Spanish, and being able to understand the concept is a different skill than being able to explain it in English.
- 3. Students may not be able to translate from one language to the other.**
Students in our program learn language by being immersed in it, not by translating from English to Spanish, so they may not always know the equivalent of each word in Spanish and English.

When will my child learn English? Will he/she be behind?

- In accordance with research surrounding literacy development in multiple languages, students receive all initial literacy instruction in the second language (Kindergarten-2nd grade).
- English instruction begins in 3rd grade. Up until this point, students may seem behind their peers when comparing English reading or writing, but they are actually working at grade level in Spanish. For example, a 2nd grader may not be able to read yet in English, but they are reading at grade level in Spanish. They aren't actually behind when comparing their reading skills; they're just doing it in another language!
- Once English instruction begins, students transfer the reading and writing skills they learned in Spanish to English (for example, directionality, decoding, comprehension strategies, etc.). English-specific skills that are not transferable from Spanish are addressed in 3rd-5th grade.

- Almost all of our immersion students read at or above grade level in English by the end of 3rd grade.

What if my child struggles academically?

- Research consistently shows that students who struggle in a particular area (reading, math, etc.) will do so regardless of the language.
- Immersion classes have a range of student achievement just like English classes.
- Academic support/intervention is available for those who need it.