

BEZOS ACADEMY

Dual Language at Bezos Academy

In Bezos Academy dual language programs, children develop bilingualism and early biliteracy in addition to the goals of the Montessori-inspired curriculum. Below are answers to frequently asked questions about our dual language programs, which are currently Spanish/English programs. Other terms commonly used for *dual language* include *dual immersion*, *dual language immersion*, and *immersion*.

What is Dual Language?

Dual language is a program in which all children are learning in two languages, with at least half of the school day taking place in the non-English language - in this case, Spanish.

What are the benefits of Dual Language education?

Children can learn multiple languages at a very young age. When children are exposed to more than one language regularly, it can strengthen their brain development. For children who speak Spanish at home, being in a dual language program where they learn Spanish at school has additional benefits. For example, bilingualism helps children maintain connections to their home language and culture, strengthening their cultural identity and social-emotional well-being.

What does Dual Language look like at Bezos Academy?

Our dual language program uses the same Montessori-inspired curriculum that is used across Bezos Academy programs, with the addition of books, materials and instruction in Spanish. The lead teacher is a native Spanish speaker, and the assistant

teachers are bilingual in Spanish & English. More than half of the day takes place in Spanish, with some lessons and activities in English in the afternoons. This gives all children the opportunity to develop a solid foundation of oral language and early literacy in Spanish. Teachers help children make comparisons and connections across English and Spanish while they are learning about various concepts with the Montessori materials.



What if my child already speaks Spanish and I want them to learn English?

While it may seem like the opposite would be true, children who continue to learn in their home language at school learn English more quickly in the long run. When children have the chance to continue to develop a strong foundation in

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their home language at school, they tend to achieve at higher levels in English later, because the language and literacy skills transfer to English.



What if my child is a new to learning Spanish, or new to learning both English and Spanish?

Maria Montessori referred to birth to age six as the sensitive period for language. During this time, children absorb language from their environment, making it an ideal time to be exposed to multiple languages. While it may take some time for children to adapt to following directions and lessons in a new language, our teachers use various strategies to support children in learning language and concepts at the same time. For example, teachers use what's called a 3-period lesson to introduce new vocabulary in either language. In the 3-period lesson, teachers will first introduce each word using real objects to show the meaning

(e.g., spoon, bowl, beans). Then, the teacher will ask the child to point to each object when they say the word. Finally, the teacher will ask the child to say the word for each object. Another example is during circle time, where teachers use songs, rhymes, and stories to teach the language and have children practice listening and speaking.

What happens if my child enrolls in the dual language (DL) program, but we change our minds. Can we transfer to a non-DL program?

Once families enroll in a Bezos Academy program, there is no guarantee that they will be able to transfer to a different program if they change their minds. Therefore, we recommend that you consider your decision prior to enrollment. Requests for transfers will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Where can I learn more about Dual Language instruction?

Dual Language Schools.Org -

<https://duallanguageschools.org>

MultilingualMontessori.Org -

<https://multilingualmontessori.org>

Participate Learning.com -

<https://www.participatelearning.com/resources/parents/#immersion-resources>