RUMACCC
Raising Children in More than One Language

Transitioning from a bilingual kindergarten to school

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What language(s) would I like my child to speak?

Bilingual

- Bilingual school (same languages)
- Bilingual school (different languages)

Monolingual

- Monolingual school
- Monolingual school
- Monolingual school
Wired for language (0-5yrs)

- Before birth
- Vocalisation
- Observing
- Babbling
- First words
- 1-2 word phrases
- Sentences
- Elementary stories
- Grammar
- Social rules
- 5 years
Statistical patterning
Bilingual statistical patterning
“Research confirms that young children have the ability to learn two languages from birth and that learning two languages does not delay development of either language.

Moreover, some research suggests that dual language learning—as early as the infant/toddler years—has long-term cognitive, academic, and social benefits.”
e.g. Cognitive flexibility
e.g. Social and creative benefits
Keys to success

• Aim to gain high levels of competence in both languages
• Start early (and gain late)
• Be friendly and persistent!
  Use both languages regularly
• Provide rich learning environments
A strong bilingual programme …

• Has clear separation of language use (e.g. one educator – one language)

• Provides a safe, warm environment

• Indicates equal status of languages

• Provides quality interactions that are in tune with the developmental stages of the child

Froebel, 96 Barkley St, Fitzroy North VIC
Babies room (0 - 1 year olds)

• Rich input allowing intense observation of patterns

• Caring, warm gestures, voice and facial expression

• Songs and some routines ("schlafen", "essen")

• 1-on-1 or 1-on-2 interactions and games
Toddler room (2 - 3 year olds)

• Repetitive routine phrases (e.g. “Hände waschen, aufrauemen”)

• Songs (e.g. Welcome song)

• Group activities (e.g. singing, reading with educator)

• Free play - Children starting to teach each other

• Lots of watching other children / following what they do
Kindergarten room (3 - 4 year olds)

• Moving beyond routine phrases

• Play-based and child-centred learning

• Using interests of children as starting point (e.g. rainbow)

• Increasingly central role of language in games and interactions:
  
  • Tendency towards using stronger language with educators, friendships but focus on child’s interest areas can over come this
“Keine Angst vor der Sprache aufbauen.”

(2-3 year old room educator)
The horse hasn’t bolted!

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- Monolingual
  - Monolingual school
  - Monolingual school
  - Monolingual school
- Monolingual childcare / kindergarten
  - Bilingual school
  - Monolingual school
  - Monolingual school
- Bilingual childcare / kindergarten
  - Bilingual school
  - Monolingual school
  - Monolingual school
• Active vocabulary of 500-1000 words
  Passive vocabulary of 8000+ words

• Most of grammatical forms of language
  (e.g. questions, negative statements,
  dependent clauses, compound sentences)

• Can talk about objects / events outside
  immediate context

• Can vary language according to situation (e.g. baby talk to babies, polite
  language to grandparents)

• Start of emergent literacy and metalinguistic awareness
  (ESPECIALLY bilingual children).
• Bilingual children are generally more able to look at language from a distance, which prepares them better for learning to read and write:

• Differences in writing systems (left to right, top to bottom)

• Arbitrary nature of sound – object relations
  (e.g. ‘Tisch’, ‘table’, ‘Table’, …)

• Arbitrary nature of word – object relations
  (e.g. ‘raupe’ and ‘caterpillar’)

Metalinguistic awareness
Language learning at school

• 3000 words / year added throughout schooling

• Central importance of peers and teachers to language development

• Attainment of literacy:
  – Removes focus from here and now
  – Increases individualization of language use
  – Promotes understanding of register/dialect
  – Provides exposure to complex grammatical structures
  – Opens child to a range of world views

• Increased awareness of rule-governed nature of language, e.g. *Where did the King hide his armies?* – *In his sleevies!*

• Development of extended discourse and de-contextualised language
Immersion schooling

Clear language segregation

Quality resources

Rich / varied input

Warm / safe environment

Age-appropriate interactions / activities

Bilingual teacher training

Equal status of languages

Literacy in BOTH languages

Deutsche Schule Melbourne, 96 Barkley St, Fitzroy North VIC
Equal status of languages

(Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008; Genesee, 2008)
Bilingualism AND biliteracy
A warm friendly environment
“Du darfst es auf Englisch sagen”
(Sport steacher – Prep)
Wir sind im Deutschunterricht

(German Year 2 teacher)
Language awareness games
(German Years 3-6 classes)
“In English benutzt man AM – PM” (German teacher Year 2)
• Bilingual learners can have half as much exposure to each language as monolingual learners, but show same basic developmental patterns at approximately the same age as monolingual children.

• Spending time learning the minority language does not necessarily detract from children’s acquisition of the majority language in the long run.

• Dual language learners will not acquire full competence in both languages if their exposure to each falls below some as-yet-unknown lower limit.

• It is not simply amount of exposure but also quality of exposure that can influence children’s language development.
• Dual language development during the infant–toddler years is as natural as monolingual development

• All children can enjoy the benefits of knowing more than one language in adequate learning environments.

• Birth to 3/4 years are a particularly good time for beginning dual language learning, but bilingualism can still be achieved later than this.

• For minority language infants and toddlers, being bilingual allows them to keep a critical sense of identity with the home language culture.