



## Full Immersion Preschools

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### **Preschool and childcare programs immerse toddlers and preschoolers in foreign language learning**

Many childcare centers and preschools have a foreign language program as part of the curriculum. Some early childhood education programs treat foreign language study as a separate subject like math or reading. Other programs are full immersion programs. Full foreign language immersion preschool programs are of great benefit for children in terms of early foreign language learning.

### **What is a Full Foreign Language Immersion Program?**

A language immersion program is one in which children spend all or a large portion of their day learning in a particular foreign language. The foreign language is used to teach in all other subject areas and is not a separate subject area, according to Myelita Melton, CEO of [SpeakEasy Communications, Inc.](#), and author of the SpeakEasy Spanish™ series.

At the [Language Workshop for Children](#), teachers speak only the target language in their immersion preschools and the teacher never translates. "Depending upon the level of the group she may or may not pause to demonstrate meaning with visual aids and other devices," says Francois Thibaut, founder of the Language Workshop for Children.

A language immersion preschool teacher normally presents all the same activities that you would expect from a regular preschool teacher. "She reads stories, offers arts, crafts and other projects...monitors socialization and motor skill development, and leads them to the next step in their overall early childhood development, but all in another language," says Thibaut.

### **Advantages of Full Immersion**

Enrolling your child in an immersion preschool or daycares can be more advantageous to your child's foreign language development than a program that offers a foreign language as a subject.

Children in total immersion programs work toward total fluency in the foreign language. They are more likely to "think" and function naturally in the language. "Normally, they are able to achieve an extremely high level of overall competency, and they hold speakers of that language in high regard. In addition, their skills in English flourish," says Melton.

According to Thibaut, full immersion is less confusing than a translation-based curriculum, which is more appropriate for the adult learner. In addition, in a full foreign language immersion program, children have an opportunity to pro-actively use and rehearse foreign language in a challenging, intimate, emotionally supportive environment that stimulates all their senses.

### **Disadvantages of Total Immersion**

Thibaut notes that when children focus on learning a particular language ("language 1"), their development of language skills in "language 2". This is a temporary disadvantage and is not the case for every child in a full immersion program.

For more information about early foreign language learning, see [Foreign Language in Preschool](#).