

Introducing the Oac *Grow* Language Program

Our Oac Language Program has been developed by our in-house Language Program Specialist and tailored specifically for children aged 2 - 6 years.



Hablo español?

It's incredible how quickly young children pick up language – and at Oac, we give them the chance to start early, integrating basic Spanish language into daily activities – making it fun and immersed throughout the day.

The program focuses on children being introduced to the Spanish language each and every day that they are at Oac.

Our educators focus on the Spanish language using key times throughout the day including language, music and literacy group times to assist in incorporating this into each child's daily program.

Children are not only increasing their vocabularies, they're starting to recognize the speech patterns they've been hearing since birth. The ability to hear different phonetic pronunciations is sharpest before age 3, so just listening to music in a second language, or learning a few words in Spanish will give the children essential tools for language appreciation in the now and for later learning.

In Oac Language, listening skills are fostered through using simple songs and rhymes in a second language. This will help the children to become familiar with the pronunciation, sounds and rhythms of the new language (Spanish).

Benefits to learning a second language

- » Increasing vocabularies and recognising speech patterns
- » Builds essential tools for language appreciation now and learning to speak it later
- » Children become familiar with pronunciation, sounds and rhythms
- » Developing literacy and verbal skills, problem solving and divergent and creative thinking
- » Exposure to another language helps to develop an understanding of how languages work and provides a deeper understanding of other cultures and societies

Incorporating into the daily program through immersion and delivered by passionate early childhood educators

The Spanish Language Program has been developed by a qualified Spanish Language professional. This program has been carefully designed with early childhood learning principles in mind to ensure the program is delivered across Oac in a consistent and professional manner.

Both the Toddler and Preschool age groups participate in the Spanish program. In Oac Language, listening skills are fostered using simple songs and rhymes in Spanish and via literacy and language group times. This includes fun and planned activities that include:

- » Introducing colours
- » Introducing numbers
- » Introducing manners in Spanish

Tools and resources are incorporated into the program such as core education guides, monthly activity guides, Spanish cards, music, art activities and books.

Delivered via a core group of Spanish facilitators and early childhood educators

The Language Program is developed via our qualified Language Program Manager. In addition, across Oac a team of Spanish speaking educators have been selected to assist in supporting across the group.

The most effective delivery of any program is to ensure it is fully immersed into the daily curriculum – this is best practice and something that Oac is firmly committed to. As a result, the program is delivered daily via early childhood educators who are working with Oac children each and every day.

Oac's fantastic educator team are provided with the skills, training, resources and support to deliver the Spanish program daily into their room programs.

What support is provided?

- » An Oac team of Language Program facilitators who support our great educators

- » A comprehensive Spanish Language Program guide including quarterly and monthly activity guides.
- » A full resource kit used within the program.
- » Comprehensive support from our in house specialist Language Program Manager through campus visits, emails and phone calls with opportunity to deliver feedback or request advice.
- » Monthly themed Oac CONNECT messages for families which reinforces development and learning based on the activities.

How is the program delivered via non-Spanish speakers?

Oac's Language program has been carefully designed to enable qualified early childhood educators to be able to deliver the program through their daily practices.

As part of the daily and weekly curriculum planning, the Campus Educational Leader (Campus Director) and qualified educators follow a set language program which guides activities enabling language to be consistently and professionally delivered daily.

Toolkits, resources, educational program guides are all provided to be able to deliver the program as well as audio, music and visual materials.

Pronunciation guides and audio clips are provided and Oac has developed professionally produced Spanish songs to guide activities.

How does Oac immerse language into the daily curriculum?

Oac firmly believes that by immersing children into a learning activity has greater benefits than a language program being delivered once or twice weekly for small sessions. By including language into the program daily following a carefully designed program, the benefits are far greater. How great to include Spanish language into daily activities and linking it through to the Oac Grow curriculum. Linking through to Oac Music, Book of the Month and other key learning and play based activities.

Immersion into the Oac Curriculum - Research support

Research with children who are learning a second language in a partial immersion program (Australia, Eckstein 1986, as cited in Yelland, 1993) has shown benefits for divergent and creative thinking as well as for first language literacy skills.

Learning a foreign language not only provides a deeper understanding of other cultures and societies, it also provides the children with additional all-round advantages, including enhanced literacy, verbal and mathematical skills, increased creativity, and improved ability to solve complex problems.

Learning another language offers insights into other cultures and ways of relating to the world. A language and its culture(s) are inextricably linked – they have developed together over a long period of time. When children learn another language, they are learning not only the words used by speakers of that language to designate everyday objects and ideas, but they gain insights into other ways of thinking about and relating to the world.

Why is it easier for children to learn a foreign language than for adults?

During the first three years of life the foundations of a child's language development are laid. It is vital that children have rich language experiences at this time. During the first twelve months of life, children need faces and voices to listen to and focus on. This early interaction provides the basis for communication and for learning in both the home language and a second language. It establishes the basis for ongoing development of language in the early years. For children, the stages of their development learning a second language are similar to those of their development in their first language. They first play with language, make sounds, learn and use single words, and use non-verbal actions. These single words convey meaning to the adult who responds, elaborates and extends what is being said. When children start to interact with a second language, in the first few months they learn to link new words to actions and concepts acquired through their first language (Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke 2000, p. 23).

By exposing children to other languages at an early age, they have the opportunity to tap into their natural ability to hear and distinguish the sounds of other languages, and their capacity to make sense of what they are hearing.

Why has Oac chosen Spanish?

Spanish is a Romance language. It is the second most widely spoken language in the world with approximately 400 million native speakers. It is a truly international language. English and Spanish both use the Latin alphabet and some Spanish words are already familiar to English speakers, as English has absorbed many Spanish words.

Spanish has official status in 21 countries. It is the language, not only of a range of popular cultures, but one of the richest literary and artistic languages in the world.

Finally, Spanish is one of the easiest foreign languages to learn. Much of its vocabulary is like English and written Spanish is almost completely phonetic.

It is a fun language for children and a language that can be creatively included into the Oac Music program and other daily Grow curriculum activities.

Qué divertido! (What fun!)

