

All the World's a Toy

6 Reasons Why Children Should Learn English Early



Recent research is very supportive for speaking a second language. Bilingualism helps us understand the structure of languages and can give us an in-depth view of another culture. It can help your children succeed in school. Just as important, it helps build an understanding of different perspectives in an increasingly global society. And that, along with their English skills, will give your child a competitive edge in tomorrow's job market when they're all grown up.

Although most of us don't start learning additional languages until middle school or later, recent studies have shown that this is not the ideal time to begin learning a new language. In fact, research shows that the best time to pick up a new language is when we are very young.

So when's the best time to introduce a new language to our children? The answer is the earlier the better.

Here are 6 fantastic reasons why children should be introduced to languages as early as possible:

- ✔ **Get a Native Accent:** It has already been established that children who learn a language when they are very young have a much better chance of not having a "foreign" accent when speaking another language. [Research from a team at the University of Washington](#), which focuses specifically on childhood speech perception, has noted that as we get older, it is harder to pick up additional languages with native-like pronunciation. So one compelling reason to start children off early is to give them the gift of a native accent!
- ✔ **10,000 hours:** Malcolm Gladwell in his book [Outliers](#) argues that to learn something well, it takes at least 10,000 hours of time on task as well as the opportunity to learn the given task. It is hard for an adult to find that many hours to devote to language learning. However, starting in childhood, 10,000 hours spread over a number of years is very manageable. Plus, research has shown that using more than one language over a lifetime is the key behind the [cognitive benefits of bilingualism](#).
- ✔ **All the World's a Toy:** Young children enjoy learning. They don't care if an activity will improve their cognitive ability or motor skills. They just want to have fun doing it. We would never try introducing high school students to English via children's nursery rhymes, silly songs and hand puppets. Yet, for young children, this is actually the best way because it makes language learning so much fun.

- ✔ **No Fear:** The wonderful thing about young children is that they jump right in to try out what they have learned without worrying about mistakes. They are eager to see the response they will get from other students and adults when trying out their new words and vocabulary. It is an exciting and empowering experience for children.
- ✔ **Support Network:** Young children have the opportunity for exposure and input from many different influences: parents, teachers, fellow students and online games, videos and activities. A teacher can introduce words and songs in class while the online course interactives further reinforce what was learned by offering activities and language exposure at home.
- ✔ **It's a Global Society:** Introducing children to languages when they are young helps them accept that bilingualism is normal in our world. Speaking more than one language is simply an element of belonging to our global society. When young children are exposed to other languages and cultures at a very young age, they will feel comfortable growing up in a world where languages and cultures intertwine on a daily basis.

