

Introduction for Parents--Text

Most adults fear or even loathe the idea of learning a language that is foreign to us, and as a result, avoid bringing up the subject of learning a new language with our children. The shame is that children, especially younger than the age of 5, have brains that are primed to absorb language so easily that it is not unusual for children to be bi-lingual, or even to speak multiple languages.

The following lessons are designed to make it easy for English speaking parents to teach simple, basic words to their children, and then to encourage the children to use those words to form basic sentences. They are merely an introduction to the much wider world of language and are intended only to form the basis for further education.

Usually, the most vexing part for parents of teaching language is the pronunciation but we have included pronunciation prompts that are written in English letter sounds. The only other thing to keep in mind is that Spanish sounds are much shorter than English—"S" sounds like the "S" in "yes," not in "smile," "O" sounds like the "O" in "cope" not in "bone," etc. The Spanish "R" is a little scary too, but when it is in the middle or the end of words, it sounds like the English "D"—only at the beginnings of words is it trilled. Give it a try—it's not too hard.

There are two special letters in Spanish: "ñ," which sounds like the "n" in "onion," and "LL" which sounds like the "J" in "jump." Oh, by the way, in Spanish "V" and "B" sound exactly alike, like a soft English "B".

But here is the best part. Once you have introduced your child to these Spanish basics, your job gets easy. Children learn foreign languages the way we learned our native language—they figure it out. If you have Spanish or some other foreign language television or radio station broadcasting in your area, turn it on for 30 minutes a day. Your kids will soon start signing the songs, and responding to the images on the screen when questions are asked, just like they do in English. Better yet, if you have someone who works in the house or who is a neighbor who speaks some other language natively, ask them to use that language with your young children. Immersion is the best teacher of language, and with even small amounts of exposure to foreign languages, children catch on quickly.

Finally, don't be concerned that exposure to a foreign language will inhibit your child's progress with English, or that it will confuse them. Children as young as two years old are able to distinguish different languages and when bilingual, are able to accurately select the appropriate language. In addition, kids who speak two languages, whether in whole or in part, tend to be more proficient with the dominant language as their pathways in their brains are better connected for learning language in general.

We hope you'll enjoy these brief lessons, and hope you'll continue with a deeper education as a result.

Introduction for Parents—Script

Jade Hello, and welcome to **Let's Say Some Words in Spanish**, a collaboration between KidCourses and Fabulosokids. We decided to make these videos because we know that most parents want their kids to learn a second language but are intimidated by being the teacher. Our hope is that you will share the videos with your kids so that the two of you can learn Spanish together!

Since their brains are primed to absorb language, these videos will be especially important to children under the age of 5 and so have been kept simple and easy to learn. As you progress through the series, more and more words will be added until you and your kids can make simple sentences in Spanish using a vocabulary of more than 50 words!

In order to help you practice at home, we've also included pdf's of each lesson on the KidCourses website. Because we know that pronunciation of Spanish words is sometimes difficult for non-Spanish speakers, we have included pronunciation prompts that are written in English letter sounds. You'll also be able to hear my partner Miguel, who is bilingual, pronounce each Spanish word slowly and clearly so that the printed pdf can function as a sort of cheat sheet for you.

The best part is that these introductory courses are a gateway to a wider world of language. After following them, you and your kids will have the foundation you need to learn even more Spanish. One of the best ways to do that is by listening to Spanish speakers. Just 30 minutes of Spanish language television or Spanish radio each day will improve your skills in the same way that you and your child learned English—by hearing it repeated over and over until suddenly—you can speak Spanish.

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We hope you'll enjoy these brief lessons, and hope you'll continue with a deeper education as a result. Thanks for watching!