

Immersion

At Avenues, learning another language is more than an academic pursuit; it is a daily practice that transforms the way students see and think about the world. We don't teach Chinese or Spanish; we teach in Chinese or Spanish. From nursery to 5th grade, students spend 50% of their time learning content in their target language and 50% learning in English. In the ELC each classroom has a full time English language teacher and a native Chinese or Spanish language teacher. A third bilingual teacher joins the class for half the day as well. Daily exposure to authentic language input through a student-centered approach builds language skills by engaging in active, meaningful communicative tasks and projects.

Immersion by Numbers

50

% of a student's time spent learning in either Chinese or Spanish

11.9

% of the world's population who are native Chinese speakers

5.9

% of the world who are native Spanish speakers

4.9

% of the world who are native English speakers

41

Total number of Chinese immersion faculty in grades nursery–5th grade

40

Total number of Spanish immersion faculty in grades nursery–5th grade

24

Number of classroom pairs in our Early Learning Center

985

Number of Spanish and Chinese books in the ELC library

3000+

Number of e-books in Spanish and Chinese available through the library

The Architecture of Immersion

Avenues New York's Early Learning Center (ELC) was purpose-built for language immersion. Paired classrooms allow for interaction between students on each grade level and encourage collaboration among teachers. The classrooms have sound attenuated spaces which are ideal conditions for listening to pronunciation and accents.

Benefits of Bilingualism

Studies have demonstrated benefits in the following areas:

Cognitive and health

- Improved executive functioning
- Ignoring distractions to stay focused
- Switching attention from one topic to another
- Holding information in mind
- Mental flexibility
- Metalinguistic awareness (the ability to understand how language works)
- May help prevent or delay the onset of dementia later in life

Personal and social

- Deeper cross-cultural understanding
- Improved self-esteem
- Enhanced professional competitiveness

Academics

- As good or better performance than non-immersion peers on standardized measures of literacy and numeracy administered in students' first language.





“The cognitive enhancement across the life span of a bilingual person is quite dramatic. It turns out that something as ordinary as speaking a couple of languages reconfigures the brain network in a way that positively affects certain things that brains do.”

Ellen Bialystok, Author and Cognitive Neuroscientist

“We know that people who speak more than one language fluently have better memories and are more cognitively creative and mentally flexible than monolinguals.”

Alison Mackey, Author and Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University

“Think of learning a language like learning to swim. Traditional language instruction is like practicing the strokes while standing on the shore, whereas immersion is like getting into the water and actually moving your limbs. The water is the language environment that we create for our students, where their learning is direct and intuitive.”

Angela Xu, Head of Avenues Shenzhen Kindergarten