



## Encouraging Interest In Early Language Learning

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to help arouse interest in learning a foreign language as early as possible and to achieve a general motivation in society, among parents and ultimately among children to learn German. Since foreign language acquisition develops slowly, it should start in kindergarten. The DaF offer there should build on the child's curiosity and arouse joy in new learning content (e.g. foreign language sounds).

### Keywords:

Language, learning

Parents should recognize the benefits of learning foreign languages as early as possible. They make a decisive contribution to the success of the foreign language project, even if they are not actively involved themselves. The new language opens up children and parents, but also the providers of educational institutions, to new cultures and increasingly think interculturally. You will learn to understand the particularities of the country and develop a willingness to understand and accept cultural differences.

With the offer of language play and learning units in accordance with the EU requirement for the earliest possible development of multilingualism, good learning conditions for the subsequent elementary school years are created early on. Education authorities find valuable impulses for the creation of kindergarten curricula in the individual countries.

Another concern is to bring the subject of media education to kindergartens. The term media is to be interpreted broadly and of course also and particularly includes traditional media, i.e. pictures and picture books.

Although media education in kindergartens is of great importance, it has so far received little attention in the framework concepts of kindergartens. On the contrary, there are also

efforts to keep media education completely out of kindergarten. A current study by the Landesanstalt für Medien (LfM, 2007) documents that it almost exclusively depends on the personal commitment of the educator whether media is used in the kindergarten.

However, various pedagogically valuable programs are already dedicated to media education at pre-school age and thus promote not only linguistic but also other - such as e.g. B. social - basic skills. Sensible media education in kindergarten is based on media experiences, media skills and media preferences of the children. When testing these materials, it became clear that many kindergartens are equipped with computers and the Internet, but lack an overhead projector.

Characteristics of foreign language learning in kindergarten.

The learning requirements of kindergarten and pre-school children are heterogeneous and exposed to a variety of influences, which are particularly caused by the globalization process and the ever closer merging of the most diverse cultures. For example, children who grow up in border regions deal differently with foreign languages and neighboring cultures than children who live further inland. In turn, children in metropolitan areas may have better access to media and information.

Unlike in elementary school, contact with the foreign language is mostly new for children in elementary school. Your native language skills are not yet fully developed; children only learn through play. They are open and usually willing to learn. Their reactions to the foreign language may be incorrect, but they must not be criticized or corrected (in the sense of error correction), since kindergarten children are not yet able to consciously reflect on their learning process.

#### Institutional requirements

Before a new learning opportunity can be introduced at pre-primary level, organizational and institutional issues need to be considered and decided. If individual questions cannot be answered positively in advance, it could be that the project does not develop in the sense of the original goals. During our research, we found that the learning opportunity requires its own planning. We have developed the following questions for orientation:

- Are all parents interested in a DaF offer in kindergarten?
- Can the parents be involved in the planning and implementation? (Information events, e.g. Eltern-iier.de, parent talks, etc.)
- Are there linguistically and methodically qualified educators who can carry out such an offer?
- Will an external teacher possibly be used? Is it guaranteed that he/she has educational qualifications?
- Is there already material that could be used as a basis for the offer?
- How extensive can the offer be (number of hours per week)?
- Do the local authorities support the introduction of the offer? Financially? personnel? curriculum? How else?
- Is guaranteed, I hat the DaF offer can take place at a fixed location over a longer period of time?
- Do the children have the opportunity to continue learning German after kindergarten? In which schools? Is the subsequent elementary school curriculum known?

We think that while parents and teachers occasionally still fear that children might be overwhelmed by learning a foreign language too early, the majority of parents today see early language learning opportunities as an

opportunity for their children. They are widely informed that starting early has been shown to offer clear benefits for the child to learn one or more additional languages faster and with less effort.

In their endeavors to make early foreign language learning a success, parents are an irreplaceable cooperation partner for educators and teachers. They can support their children's learning process and create important prerequisites for its successful progress. If you show a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language, and especially towards your child, and if you encourage the child in its efforts, it will be happy to participate and will be motivated. Interest in the content, praise and encouragement outside of school are important factors in children's interest in a foreign language. For this reason, kindergartens and schools should include the parents in their planning and encourage parental support. The more the places of learning - kindergarten, school, home - are related to one another, the more beneficial this will be for the child.

In order for children to be able to learn a foreign language successfully, parents should:

- are informed in a way that is appropriate for the target audience about the goals and content of early foreign language learning and also about the psychological requirements of learning. You should be kept regularly informed of your child's development and progress. This is the only way I can understand, accompany and support them in the learning process.
- clearly express their interest in their child's early foreign language learning by asking questions, encouraging them, praising their achievements and talking to them. Suggestions for lecturing or showing what has been learned should signal genuine interest and in no way have a control function.
- Do not try to influence their children's learning process with corrections. Error corrections should be reserved for the educators, who only make corrections in a very targeted and cautious manner so as not to unsettle the child and not to disturb the flow of speech.
- If possible, take advantage of offers for cooperation (parents' evenings, information events, school festivals, etc.) and also seek

cooperation with teachers yourself, although both sides must respect the respective tasks and responsibilities.

It is well known that early foreign language learning takes place in kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions. In order to meet the conditions of a qualified learning offer, it should only take place in rooms that guarantee a safe environment for the children in terms of size and equipment, in which the learning processes can be designed in a child-friendly way and the health of the learning children is not affected in any way. With the early start, all resources are exhausted to offer children the best possible development opportunities in the foreign language learning process, including the emotional, creative, social, cognitive and linguistic dimensions of the child's overall development. To a large extent, this also includes intercultural communication skills.

The foreign language competence of the learner is no longer measured solely by the linguistic competence of the native speaker, but by his or her ability to master the diverse tasks of intercultural communication. Impulses and content should be offered for child learners and in early foreign language lessons, on the basis of which the openness and tolerance of the intercultural speaker can develop. The early encounter with the foreign language should arouse interest in languages, develop joy in learning them and "motivate the child to communicate in a language other than their own". On the one hand, early language learning should focus on the development of language skills, but on the other hand it should also promote general, intercultural and strategic learning skills.

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