Mastering A Second Language

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CNK Digital EBook Series
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Learning languages sets the foundation for a whole world of exciting opportunities for a child! Second language study offers a multitude of benefits to children in terms of improved communicative ability, cognitive development, cultural awareness, and job opportunities. Early language learning has been tied to higher test scores, better and more advanced reading skills, greater confidence and more! Parents and educators would be wise to take advantage of the many available opportunities and resources for second language learning for the benefit of children coming of age in the 21st century.
As a child learns a second language, they establish the ability to process executively. This means they are able to exceed the abilities of a monolingual child and pay attention for longer periods of time as well as better organize their thoughts.
Individuals who speak and read more than one language have the ability to communicate with more people, read more literature, and benefit more fully from travel to other countries. Introducing students to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures gives greater depth to their understanding of the human experience by fostering an appreciation for the customs and achievements of people beyond their own communities.
Long before their children begin school, parents can begin to facilitate second language learning. Children can learn elements of a second language from a babysitter, a nanny, a family member, or a friend; they can also attend a multilingual preschool or a preschool with a language program. If a child has a number of positive experiences with another language, he or she can become quite receptive to learning other languages.
The best time to teach your child a second language is in elementary school. Studies have shown that children who learn a language before onset of adolescence are much more likely to have native-like pronunciation. Also, the more years a child can devote to learning a language, the more competent he or she will become. Introducing children to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures generally broadens their outlook and gives them the opportunity to communicate with many more people.
Will a Second Language Interfere With My Child’s English Ability?

Absolutely not! Learning another language enhances a child’s English ability. In fact, children enrolled in foreign language programs score statistically higher on standardized tests conducted in English including the SATs and in particular, verbal sections of standardized tests. Children can learn much more about the English language by learning the structure of another language. Cognates also help children learn the meaning of new words in English.