



Thank you for trusting Berlitz Spanish instruction for your child. With over 125 years of experience, the Berlitz Method is the most natural way to start speaking another language. Your children will learn Spanish or selected language the same way they acquired their first language; by listening, repeating and speaking, a method which gives all children the ability to speak the language from day one and acquire Spanish in an enjoyable way.

Our aim is for your child to be able to communicate effectively and to function in everyday, age-appropriate situations.

Therefore, you may find the following answers to some common questions and comments useful.

1. How do you assign programs?

All students are required to take a Level Check before their lessons start. Programs are assigned according to age, background and ability in the language. For children aged 4 – 7 and beginners from 8 – 12, this will consist of introductions, identifying basic vocabulary and a demonstration lesson. For 8 – 12 year olds who have had more exposure to the language, as well as teenagers, they will be assessed primarily on their level of fluency and accuracy of grammar usage. Many children in the latter category already demonstrate a high level of comprehension of the language and structures used, but do not actively use them in independent conversation and this is what we take into account when assigning their program.

While the assigned program materials may appear on the surface to be “too easy”, their role in the classroom is secondary to that of the teacher whose job it is to ensure that lessons are productive, challenging and fun for everyone.

2. When I asked my son what he did in class, he replied, “We just played.”

Children learn by doing. By taking an active part in something that interests them and is right for their age and ability, they are able to acquire language and what we often call “play”, is, in the child’s mind, a serious activity. When a child is interested in a task, they expand their knowledge and language by being “talked through” the activity. In the child’s mind there is little difference between a game and an activity that incorporates elements of fun, suspense, and sometimes, competition. At Berlitz, children develop their language skills through songs, chants, games and role-plays. These activities give children the opportunity to gain experience with pronunciation and intonation through play. Important vocabulary and phrases are practiced in ways that are fun and children subconsciously store them in memory. For the same reason, we use the whole environment to teach and practice the language rather than limit teaching to desk and chair space.



3. Is my daughter learning anything in class? As, she won’t speak Spanish with me at home.

At Berlitz, all classes are conducted in the target language by native speakers. Therefore Spanish is the only means of verbal communication in the classroom. Our teaching method allows children to develop their skills gradually and naturally in a way that promotes their enjoyment of the language. They should not be expected to speak Spanish fluently from the start, but develop their listening comprehension first. This will then develop into reproduction of language that has been taught, and finally result in independent production. There is no set time limit in which to achieve this. All children develop various skills at different rates and progress can only be achieved by moving at their own pace. Bear in mind also, that for most children, the home is a place where they feel most secure and confident, where, they have a familiar routine. By suddenly talking to your child in a foreign language, they may begin to feel insecure,



even threatened by the possibility of change and therefore, reluctant to respond in that language. In this case, it is not advisable to force them to use Spanish. However, this is mainly a matter of approach. By playing with your child, singing with them the songs they have learnt in class or even by asking them to teach you Spanish, their confidence will increase and a steady rate of progress will be maintained. Finally, offer praise and encouragement for every effort made by your child and ignore any small mistakes he/she may make. These will disappear in time.

4. What results can I expect from Berlitz Kids Lessons?

For all our programs, we have a handout explaining the course objectives. Please feel free to ask your Program Manager for a copy. However, learning to speak a foreign language fluently and accurately is a long-term process and as our student-centered method enables each child to progress at his/her own pace, these objectives should be regarded as a guideline only.



5. I’m concerned about my daughter’s progress in phonics and reading

At Berlitz we do not teach phonics. Our focus is teaching children how to use the language as a verbal communication skill. However, some of our programs do assume that the student has acquired some key reading skills. In spite of this, we do not recommend that a child begin learning to read or write without having first reached a certain level in the spoken language and these schools will not be introduced to children below the age of 8. Nevertheless, stories are still great for language learning and all children enjoy being read aloud to.

6. My daughter has fallen behind her classmates in

Spanish lessons. Can you help?

While it has been acknowledged that learning a foreign language is of benefit to a child's general, academic performance, this should not be the main reason for considering language courses. All Berlitz students are assigned a tailor-made program according to their age and ability in the language and for various reasons, may not correspond to the academic curriculum of their school. The advantage of Berlitz lessons, however is that they do build children's confidence in using the language, lack of which may be a factor in your child's performance at school. And, while it is easy to make comparisons among groups of young children, they all develop different rates and by a certain age, will all have reached an equal level of fluency and accuracy, provided, of course they are given enough exposure.



7. What kind of homework do you give and how much?

Because of our focus on communicative activity, certain students will not be assigned homework. However, parents of Sesame Español students, may wish to acquire the handout "A Guide to Show and Tell", with which they can spend 10 minutes with their child practicing the language taught in class with dialogues and skits. Students on the English Parade and Snapshot programs will, however be expected to complete a modest amount of homework after each class. This is assigned to reinforce comprehension of the language covered in class and is an opportunity for the teacher to keep track of any areas that may need review.

8. My Son has an Interview at a private school. Can you help?

We are happy to devote a few minutes each lesson to practicing these techniques, however we do ask you to consider the following. Each school has its own interview procedure and criteria and it is not possible for us to know what they will expect from your child on the day. Therefore we require at least 2 months notice before the date of the interview and that you can provide us with some documentation from the school concerned that gives us an idea of what is expected. Please note also, that your child

will be assessed on his performance on the day of the interview itself and not on any preparation made prior to that. Any assistance we give your child is no guarantee of a place.

9. Group Lessons or Private. What's best for my child?

Whether your child takes group or private lessons is ultimately, your decision. However each approach has its own advantages for different needs. For younger children, the benefits of group learning are enormous. In fact research has indicated that group learning results in:



- i. **HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT AND GREATER PRODUCTIVITY**
- ii. **MORE CARING, SUPPORTIVE AND COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS**
- iii. **GREATER PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SELF-ESTEEM**

At Berlitz, we have found that by having interaction with their peers, the intimidation felt by some young children when alone with a teacher largely disappears, resulting in general progress and increased production. For older children, who have had more background in the language, needs and requirements are more specialized and wide-ranging and it may not always be possible to get a suitable group together that meets the needs of everyone.

