

EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

GETTING STARTED GUIDE



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Welcome to the Early Childhood Language Program

Congratulations on being part of this Victorian first: the Early Childhood Language Program.

Purpose of this guide

The *Getting Started Guide* is designed to support teachers and educators to implement the Early Childhood Language Program in their service. It includes:

1. Advice on delivering the program, including [promising practices](#) for language learning.
2. Information about [professional learning](#) and program delivery support.
3. Information about accessing [resources](#) to deliver the Early Childhood Language Program, including a guide to suppliers and information about the [Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre and fka Children's Services](#).

Earlier advice issued to services includes information related to staffing and funding requirements. You can refer to this guide or talk to your manager about the program mode and requirements for your service.

Program overview

The Victorian Government has allocated \$17.9 million over four years (2019-2022) for the Early Childhood Language Program. It consists of two program modes: the *Learn Languages at Kindergarten Program* and *Bilingual Kindergartens*.

- *Learn Languages at Kindergarten Program* involves children learning in another language for up to three hours a week. This will be offered at around 150 kindergartens across Victoria.
- *Bilingual Kindergartens* involve children learning in another language for half of the kindergarten program (i.e. 7.5 hours a week). This will be offered at 10 kindergartens across Victoria.

This program is for children in the year before school¹ and for services operating a funded kindergarten program.

¹ Children participating in Early Start Kindergarten may also be included in the Early Childhood Language Program.

Delivering the program: a guide to getting started

Children will continue to be encouraged to learn through play, exploration and problem solving in another language.

Delivering a quality program

A quality language program exposes children to the many benefits of learning additional languages at a young age². These include:

- Increased reading and writing skills
- Cognitive flexibility
- Strengthened brain development
- Improved problem-solving skills.

A quality language program should also reflect children's views and actively seek their feedback on learning experiences in the kindergarten. It should be based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child and take into account their individual differences.

A language program is a part of a service's educational program and practice and will be considered as part of the regular service monitoring and Assessment and Ratings process conducted by the Department of Education and Training (the Department) Quality Assessment and Regulation Division.

Applying the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)

The VEYLDF is the approved learning and development framework for services in receipt of kindergarten funding in Victoria. Just like the regular kindergarten program, the Early Childhood Language Program must be delivered in line with the VEYLDF. The VEYLDF sets out principles for practice and an approach to early childhood learning. For the Early Childhood Language Program, elements such as play, child agency, and responsive teaching should feature in the same way that they do in all early childhood programs.

Teachers and educators should design the Early Childhood Language Program to reflect the context of their kindergarten and to incorporate learning experiences that arise from respectful and responsive interactions with children as well as collaboration between service staff, families and the wider community. The language should be woven into everyday learning experiences and incorporate children's interests, thereby giving children a wide range of opportunities to experience the language purposefully and in context.

This guide provides an opportunity for services with existing language programs to reflect on existing program delivery and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. The [promising practices](#) outlined in this guide provide examples of how to do this, and the suite of [professional learning](#) will provide further support.

Professional learning

The Department will provide fully funded professional learning for early childhood language teachers delivering the Early Childhood Language Program and those supporting the program.

² Clarke, P. (2009). Supporting children learning English as a second language in the early years (birth to six years). Melbourne: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
Goldfeld, S., O'Connor, M., Mithen, J., Sayers, M., and Brinkman, S. (2014). Early development of emerging and English-proficient bilingual children at school entry in an Australian population cohort. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 42-51.
Kersten, K. (Ed), 2010, Early language and intercultural acquisition studies (ELIAS): Final report. Brussels: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.
Lo Bianco, J. (2015). Multilingual Education across Oceania. In W. Wright, S. Boun and O. Garcia, *The Handbook of Bilingual and Multilingual Education* (pp. 604-617). Wiley-Blackwell.

The suite of professional learning will include:

- A language methodology course
- Access to networking
- Program guidance advice.

The language teaching methodology course explores practices specific to children attending a funded kindergarten in the year before school, and how to plan and deliver the program aligned with the VEYLDF.

Services that have accepted a place in the Early Childhood Language Program have made a commitment to supporting early childhood teachers and educators responsible for delivering or supporting the program to participate in professional learning.

Professional learning will commence in mid-2019. The Department will provide further information as it becomes available.

Learning 'in' another language

The Early Childhood Language Program centres on children learning 'in' another language as opposed to learning 'a' language. Learning 'in' a language integrates the new language into the children's experiences and routines. Exposure to language content and vocabulary occurs in meaningful ways and in context through these rich and complex experiences. It also occurs at the same time as wider learning³.

Learning 'a' language involves children being taught a new language in doses and as the specific content of learning.

The table below provides an example:

Learning a language	Learning 'in' a language
During a group session, children are taught French vocabulary for the names of fruit, for example, "la fraise", "la pomme", "la poire".	The language teacher carries a platter offering fruit, asking each child "est-ce que tu veux manger la fraise, la pomme ou la poire?"

Promising practices for language learning

The Department has identified a number of promising practices to use in language programs and build on children's interests. These include:

Language program: planning and delivery

Learning in another language in kindergarten offers unique opportunities for children. The play-based pedagogy of early childhood can be an effective way to support language learning because it can create a space where language is used for genuine two-way communication. The Early Childhood Language Program should actively use play to expose children to the language.

The use of worksheets and formal written activities are not consistent with a play-based approach to early childhood education. While 'group times' including all children are a useful component of an early years language program for activities such as songs and stories, it is recommended that these make up a small proportion of the Early Childhood Language Program.

Small group activities and routines should feature in program delivery for experiences such as games, cooking or project work. Play should be the primary focus, with the highest allocation

³ Lo Bianco, J., Nicolas, E., Hannan, S., (2019). Bilingual Education and Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood Education: Synthesis of Best Evidence from Research and Practice (p. 15). Commissioned by the Department of Education and Training, unpublished.

of language teacher or educator time utilised to support and guide children’s learning at these times.

Figure 1 provides an approximate guide to planning the program and how to use the time of the teacher or educator with language skills.

High quality early childhood language programs implement learning approaches where bilingual educators combine adult-led learning, child-directed play and guided-play, while supporting children’s language learning.

It is important to note however that not all children will engage with the language program in the same way. Promoting children’s agency means respecting when children wish to participate in language learning and when they choose other experiences. There may be days when a child does not engage with the language program at all. This is completely acceptable and language teachers should not expect to teach all children the same content in the same session. The language used should be responsive to children’s interests and relate to the play the children are engaged in⁴.

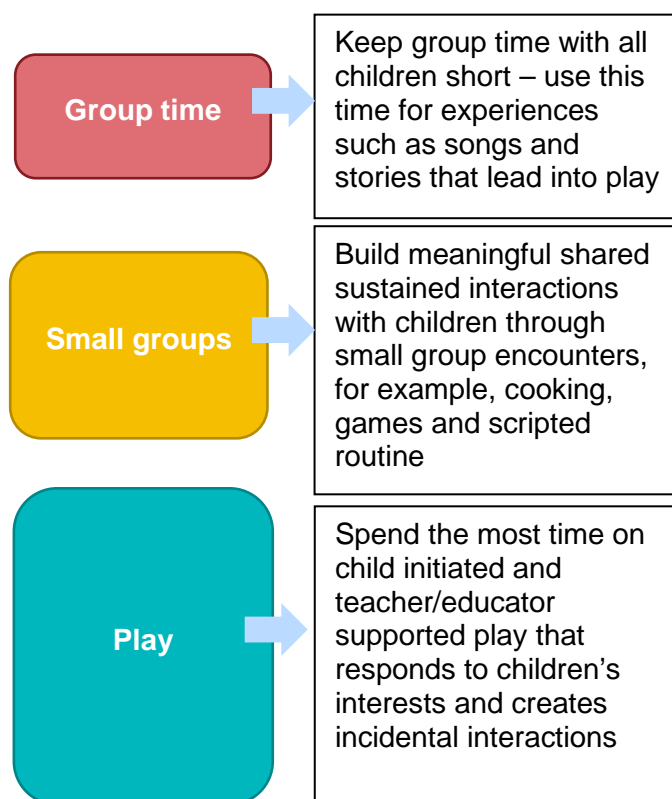
Language immersion

The Early Childhood Language Program seeks to provide children with ‘need to communicate’ situations in everyday life settings. The key role of language teachers and educators is to communicate with children as much as possible in the new language and to support children to understand what they are talking about. The next step is to provide opportunities for children to respond, show they comprehend and to start to speak themselves. The closer these interactions are to natural communication, the more effective they are for language learning.

Teachers and educators are encouraged to use English as little as possible and communicate transitions as well as routines through the language being learnt to greatly increase language exposure. Routines and transitions that can be communicated in the language include arrival and departure, lunch and snack times and packing up. Images and written signs around the kindergarten can be written in both English and the language to help create a bilingual visual environment.

Encouraging other staff in the kindergarten to learn the new language can help to embed the language across the program, particularly at times when the

Figure 1: Allocating teacher or educator time



Natural interaction example

In a Greek Easter egg painting experience, children ask for their egg using Greek language before they start painting it. This creates a natural language interaction between educators and children, and increases children’s motivation to understand the language.

⁴ This is particularly important for multilingual children who are currently in the process of learning English. For these children, it is important to support and encourage use of their home language. Supporting home language use can contribute to building a child’s self-esteem because it demonstrates the value of their language. The Department has produced a number of posters to encourage parents to communicate with their children in the language they know best. More information can be found at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/speak-language-you-know-best.aspx>

language teacher or educator is not present. Where multiple educators in the kindergarten speak the language, speaking the language to each other and to the children will model language use and introduce new vocabulary to children.

Linguistic resources – songs, books and props

Songs can be a strong feature of the language program. Songs with accompanying actions and gestures can be useful, especially when the actions can be used in other contexts. Ideally songs used in language programs contain simple language and are easy to remember. Singing can include voice only or recorded media such as CDs. Songs can be developed especially for the program if needed, for example translating an English song such as “Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”.

Teachers and educators can build on the structure and vocabulary of songs to extend into other contexts. Reusing language elements learnt in songs in different environments can reinforce initial memorisation for children and extend learning.

A collection of high quality story books in the language can be used during group times. Books should be carefully chosen to reflect the children and their interests and be engaging and age appropriate.

Props support comprehension in both planned and spontaneous interactions. Props such as felt sets, clothes and instruments can be specially created, assembled, or pre-purchased.

Games

Games can be used as intentional learning opportunities to introduce and reinforce words or phrases. Examples include memory and attention games such as: *What is Missing?* (scaffolding participation and memory); the *Nose Game* (focusing attention and recognising who is looking at whom); and vocabulary games such as *Duck, Duck, Goose*; *Simon Says* or completing a puzzle as a large group or in small groups.

Dedicated language spaces

To assist language immersion, kindergartens can use their allocated resource funding to create a designated language area(s). These areas can provide [resources](#) associated with the language program such as books, board games and props for role play and imaginative play. Documentation and displays can include reminders of experiences that reflect the language program, for example, drawings with words written in the language.

Cultural experiences

Cultural events and celebrations can be used as part of the program to provide contexts for language use and for cultural learning. They can also be used to create links between the Early Childhood Language Program, families and the wider community. Cultural activities can include celebrating festivals acknowledging musical traditions, engaging in traditional dance and exploring costumes, craft and cooking. The allocated resource funding may also support these cultural experiences.

Repetition

Repetition is an intentional teaching strategy that can help to revisit parts of language and reinforce meaning. Regular repetition of words and phrases is important and can be built into the program naturally when opportunities arise. Teachers and educators can repeat the same experiences in a different order, as well as reusing the same language in different contexts to extend learning.

Scripted routines

A scripted routine⁵ is an instruction or cue to a child that highlights an expected response. Scripted routines can be used in everyday interactions to provide an opportunity to learn a phrase embedded in context.

Another way of giving children a structure to learn new vocabulary is to repeat the same sentence with different words. For example, the lyrics of the children's song *The Wheels on the Bus* has two words in the sentence that can be replaced with different words.

The first verse is 'The **wheels** on the bus go **round and round**'. The next verses swap in pairs of words, for example 'The **people** on the bus go **up and down**'.

The circle game '*I went to the market and bought _____*' is a memory game that uses a repeated sentence with words that change.

Interactions – from incidental to emergent

When language teachers and educators interact with children outside of planned whole group or small group sessions, this creates incidental interactions that are natural and build language understanding. These can be adult-initiated or child-initiated. They could include interaction around self-help activities.

Emergent interactions can be flexibly incorporated into the program to align with the broader early years program and with experiences taking place outside the times allocated for language learning. These experiences can emerge from the interactions and collaboration of language teachers with other educators, the children, and families.

Scripted routine example

A kindergarten group learning in Italian is going outside to play. Teachers hand out hats to the children and use this an opportunity to elicit a standard response from the children:

Teacher: Di chi è questo capello?

(Whose hat is this?)

Child: Mio

(Mine)

⁵Hannan, S. (2016). *My Italian kindergarten: an investigation of preschool language teaching*. PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Resources and collaboration

Resources for the program

Each service has been allocated a one-off payment of \$1,000 to purchase age and [language appropriate resources](#). These may include games, books and props for children's role and imaginative play. A suggested list of suppliers is provided at [Attachment 1](#). This list is not exhaustive and services can source resources from other suppliers. The funding could also be used to purchase relevant experiences that support program delivery. The funding is not for equipment such as tablets, multi-media players, etc.

Using resources such as books, props and games is an excellent way to support the language program, for example using puppets to complement oral story telling. Props can be used to create opportunities for language use and support comprehension by illustrating the meaning of the language being used. Props can be created or assembled - examples include puppets and real life objects.

The \$1,000 per service funding allocated for resources can also be used to facilitate [cultural experiences](#), excursions or incursions to support the language program.

Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)

LMERC is a division within the Department that provides a specialised library for educators across all sectors and for all age groups, based in Carlton. Membership to the library is free and resources are available to be borrowed for up to 12 weeks. The LMERC library holds a variety of materials suitable for the early years, including teacher reference materials and practical teaching resources for language teaching.

The physical collection also includes monolingual and bilingual board books, picture books, folktale and nursery rhyme kits (including puppets, picture books, games and ideas for teachers), story card sets and resources such as musical instruments, games, clothes, decorations, food sets and puppets from cultures around the world. The online catalogue provides access to many digital resources including links to online sites. Further information is provided at [Attachment 2](#).

fka Children's Services

fka Children's Services (fkaCS) offers a variety of services to support cultural inclusion and children's cultural and linguistic rights. To learn more visit www.fka.org.au or contact fkaCS on 03 9428 4471 or at fkacs@fka.org.au for more information.

The Department is currently working with fkaCS to develop teacher and educator resource packs that will be distributed to services from mid-2019. These packs will include resources in your service's chosen language and pedagogical guides to help teachers get the most out of their resources.

For some languages that are less widely spoken, it may be difficult to source suitable books. In these circumstances, services may purchase English language picture books and undertake a translation. This can be done orally, or the teacher can paste the translation into the book. It is also possible to purchase picture-only books and use these to support improvised story telling in the language.



The **Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre** is located at Level 1, 189 Faraday Street, Carlton.

Ph: (03) 9349 1418

Email: lmerc.library@edumail.vic.gov.au

Online catalogue:

<http://lmerc.softlinkhosting.com.au>

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9-5pm and one Saturday per month.

Working and planning with other professionals

Planning for the Early Childhood Language Program can take into account the current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests of each child. To support continuity in the kindergarten program and in language learning, planning can be conducted collaboratively with non-language teaching kindergarten staff. Teachers and educators delivering the Early Childhood Language Program and existing kindergarten staff are encouraged to share their ideas, resources and experiences to support ongoing program delivery.

As part of supporting program delivery, services may allocate regular planning sessions for all staff members who will be present while the language teacher or educator is delivering the program. Points for discussion include how the team can:

- Engage all staff in the language program to support the language teacher or educator
- Support other teachers and educators learning the new language (at the same time as the children), to use the language in conversation while the language teacher or educator is not there. For example, saying “Hailō” and “alavidā” (hello and goodbye, Punjabi)
- Prepare for the language teacher or educator’s visit by writing down questions to ask them. For example, after children find a caterpillar in the garden, writing a note to the language teacher to ask what the word for caterpillar is.

The Department will facilitate networking opportunities throughout the program. More information will be provided during 2019 on key dates and activities.

Engaging families

Families need to be aware of the program, its benefits and why the kindergarten is participating. Families that are new to kindergartens in 2019 may not be familiar with the program, and all families should receive regular updates about how the program is progressing and be encouraged to participate. This guide includes a [template for a parent information flyer](#) that can be customised and shared with families to give them relevant information about the program and how they can support their child’s language learning ([Attachment 3](#)).

The Department has translated this information flyer into ten commonly spoken languages of families in the program. Translated materials are available at www.education.vic.gov.au/eclanguages

Engaging families can be especially beneficial if parents also speak the language being learnt. Signage around the kindergarten and communication with parents could be translated to create an immersive language learning environment. Sharing songs or vocabulary learnt in the kindergarten with families can help support their child’s language learning at home. This can be done verbally at drop off and pick up times, or through other media such as photos or videos.

Further information

We look forward to working with you to deliver the Early Childhood Language Program to kindergarten children across Victoria. If you require any further information or would like to share any ideas or suggestions please contact the Early Childhood Languages Team at EC.Languages@edumail.vic.gov.au or visit the [website](#) – www.education.vic.gov.au/eclanguages

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Language resource suppliers

Abbey's Language Book Centre

<https://www.languagebooks.com.au/>

Level 1/131 York St, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9267 1397

E-mail: language@abbeys.com.au

Very large collection of resources in languages taught in schools. Some resources in community languages. Good source of general language teaching resources.

Asia Bookroom

<http://www.asiabookroom.com/>

Phone: (ACT) 02 6251 5191

E-mail: books@AsiaBookroom.com

A great range of resources about Asia.

Bookery (EAL & languages)

<http://www.bookeryeducation.com.au/>

9 Victoria St, Fitzroy, VIC

Phone: 03 8417 9500

E-mail: info@bookery.com.au

EAL and languages. They cover most languages taught in schools and some resources in community languages.

Child's play

<https://www.childsplay.com.au>

Multicultural and multilingual resources. Story bags and story kits with stories and related puppets and games in English and other languages, traditional tales, board games.

China Books

<http://www.chinabooks.com.au/>

2nd Floor, 234 Swanston Street,

Melbourne, VIC 3000

Phone: (03) 9663 8822

E-mail: info@chinabooks.com.au

Specialist in China and Chinese language materials.

Ciao Italia Bookshop

<http://www.ciaoitaliabookshop.com.au/>

Email: admin@ciaoitaliabookshop.com.au

For more info, please contact, Alessandra Corbino on 0404 608 202

Global Kids Oz

<http://www.globalkidsoz.com.au/>

Phone: 1300 32 00 65 (free call)

E-mail: Culture@globalkidsoz.com.au

A wide selection of mono-lingual and bilingual, multicultural books, games, music and realia.

Global Language Books

<http://www.globallanguage.com.au>

Phone: (02) 9899 8943

Cultural diversity, bilingual material, multicultural education. Resources in a large range of languages. Bilingual dictionaries and reading material. Books, games, DVDs and interactive resources.

Intext Book Company & Language International Bookshop

<https://www.languageint.com.au>

13-15 Station St, Kew East, VIC 3102

Phone: 9857 0030 or E-mail:

customerservice@intextbook.com.au

Languages resources in most languages taught in schools and general language teaching resources.

Kaleidoscope Bilingual Children's Books

<https://kaleidoscopebooks.com.au/>

Supplier of bilingual books and books that celebrate diversity.

Phone: 0432 083 017 or 0402 311 072

Koorie Heritage Trust

<http://shop.koorieheritagetrust.org/>

E-mail: info@koorieheritagetrust.com

Supplier of books relating to Aboriginal Australia.

LOTE Bookshop

<http://www.lote.com.au>

3 Charles St, Coburg North, VIC 3058

Phone: 1300 656 623 (free call)

03 9355 7017

A range of language learning material especially for children - books, CDs, DVDs, CD-ROM, games and posters. Specializes in sourcing foreign language learning material that caters for both teacher and student.

Orange Beehive

<http://theorangebeehivemultilingualestore.blogspot.com.au>

<http://stores.ebay.com.au/Orange-Beehive-Multilingual-eStore>

Phone: 0413213265

Email: orangebeehive@optusnet.com.au

Importer of Arabic, Italian and Greek picture books

Puppet Pals: Multicultural Resources

<http://www.bubbaboutique.com.au/products>

Fair trade puppets and other multicultural realia. Realia, books and games from countries around the world. Fair trade sources.

Readings

<http://www.readings.com.au>

E-mail:

customerservice@readings.com.au

Readings is an independent retailer of books, music and film, with five shops operating in Melbourne. Readings often have good collection of culturally diverse picture books and fiction.

Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL)

<http://www.vaclang.org.au>

70 Hanover St, Fitzroy VIC 3065

Phone: (03) 9600 3811

Email: info@vaclang.org.au

Koorie language resources, information about language projects and apps.

Yarn strong sista

<http://yarnstrongsista.com>

Phone: (03) 9338 3492

0423 262 774

Email: info@yarnstrongsista.com

Aboriginal stories, games and realia. They also provide support and information for educators (Pre-School to Post-Secondary) who aim to deliver an Indigenous inclusive curriculum.

Attachment 2: Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre

LANGUAGES AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE: A DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING LIBRARY FOR TEACHERS

The Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC) loans resources in all formats to Victorian educators across all sectors K-12.

Early childhood teachers, assistants and bilingual playgroup facilitators are able to join the library free and make requests by phone or email for pick up at the library.

Long loan periods of up to 12 weeks make it easier for teachers to utilise the resources and return them. We are open all through the school holidays.

SAMPLE RESOURCES



The LMERC collection includes resources in all formats including: teacher reference books, big books, puppet kits, toys, realia, bilingual picture books.



TO JOIN

Visit the library and complete a membership form to receive a library card for immediate use.

To join online, go to <http://lmerc.softlinkhosting.com.au> and click the register button on the top right hand side. Fill in the form. You will be sent a library card.

LOAN PERIODS

Students - 10 items for 2 weeks

Teachers - 20 items for 4 weeks.

All borrowers can renew items a further two times to extend loan to 12 weeks for teachers and 6 weeks for students.

Renew online at:

<http://lmerc.softlinkhosting.com.au> or email: lmerc.library@edumail.vic.gov.au

HOURS

Monday to Friday 9.00AM to 5.00PM. Open during school holidays (apart from public holidays). LMERC also opens once per term on a Saturday from 10.00AM to 2.00PM. Check the homepage for details.

<http://lmerc.softlinkhosting.com.au>

LMERC NEWSLETTER

A newsletter is produced once per term with information about new Languages, EAL and Culturally diverse resources at LMERC and online, professional learning opportunities and events. To subscribe send an email to lmerc.library@edumail.vic.gov.au

LMERC CONTACT DETAILS

Level 1, 189 Faraday Street, Carlton

(03) 9349 1418

LMERC at DET:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/suport/Pages/lmerc.aspx

Library catalogue and homepage:

<http://lmerc.softlinkhosting.com.au>

E-mail: lmerc.library@edumail.vic.gov.au

Attachment 3: Template parent information sheet

Our kindergarten is participating in the Victorian Department of Education and Training's Early Childhood Language Program!

This program was funded \$17.9 million by the Andrews Labor Government. It is a four year program overseen by the Department of Education and Training and run by kindergartens.

Why is learning a language other than English important for my child?

Education experts have found that there are many benefits to starting to learn additional languages at a young age. This includes helping your child to think, explore, problem solve and support their pre-reading and pre-writing learning.

Learning in another language will give your child a richer understanding of how languages work. If your child already speaks the language being delivered, it can strengthen their self-esteem and cultural identity.

By encouraging diverse language skills in our kindergartens, Victorians can build stronger local communities and prepare children for a more globalised and connected world.

Will learning in another language affect my child's English language development?

Learning another language helps your child to improve their overall literacy and understand how language in general works.

If you speak a language other than English at home, it will help your child to develop their language skills overall.

How will the program be taught?

Your child will continue to be encouraged to learn through exploration, problem solving and play in another language.

Children will learn through an intentional teaching approach, promoting understanding through actions, engaging them through play, art, music and stories, and increasing their vocabularies along the way.

Use of the language will be woven into everyday learning and activities, giving children a wide range of opportunities to use the language themselves.

How was this language chosen?

The choice of which language to teach was guided by communities, kindergartens' interests and the availability of qualified staff and in some cases, to support continuity of language learning at primary school.

We will provide you with regular updates about the program and for those interested, the opportunity to use the language at home too.

For more information about the program, please visit

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/eclanguageprograms.aspx>