

***Parents as Partners in Their Children's Chinese Immersion Education:
Making Decisions and Providing Support***

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Mandarin immersion programs are growing in popularity. This Brief is written for parents who are considering such a program for their children and for parents whose children already attend one. The goal is to give basic information that will make both the decision process and the actual experience clearer for families and to offer tips on what parents can do and what resources they can find to make the most of the opportunity that Mandarin immersion offers. The Brief will also be useful for parents of children learning Chinese as a second or foreign language (e.g., in a FLES or other type of program).

The Brief first answers questions that parents can ask when making decisions about their children learning Chinese:

- What is good about being bilingual? Why do I want my child to be bilingual?
- Why study Chinese language and culture?
- What is Chinese language immersion education?
- How has Chinese language immersion education developed in the United States?
- What are helpful terms for understanding language immersion programs?
- What are challenges and benefits when choosing Chinese language immersion?
- What are questions to ask about a program?

It then describes ways that parents can support their children who are enrolled in a Chinese immersion program:

- Equip yourself with a basic understanding of the Chinese language.
- Understand the levels of language proficiency that children will reach.
- Develop realistic expectations about language and general education outcomes.
- Heed the advice of immersion parents and educators.
- Know what to look for in your child's immersion classroom.
- Know where to find help and resources.

Giving a child the gift of bilingualism is something they will be able to use throughout their life. Choosing Mandarin immersion for your child is about giving them as many options as possible regarding what they will do with their ability, so that when they make their way in the world as adults, many doors will be open to them. You will have both added to the richness of their lives

and helped create citizens of the world who are comfortable moving between countries and cultures.

At the end of the Brief are web sites and other resources for parents and children engaged in the learning of Chinese and videos of Chinese teaching at one school, at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

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