



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING MY CHILD LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE AT AN EARLY AGE?*

The world economy is thoroughly interdependent. No country can produce all the goods and services it needs to exist autonomously. Therefore, children who learn multiple languages today have the best opportunity to become business and political leaders tomorrow. Foreign languages aren't "foreign" anymore. Domestic US employers will continue to value employees who can speak both English and other languages.

### *WHICH CHILDREN EXCEL AT LANGUAGE WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN?*

The earlier a youngster begins to study another language the better. Early exposure emotionally conditions a child to feel comfortable listening to the sounds of an unfamiliar language. Early exposure gives youngsters a head start learning the basic processes involved in storing and retrieving meanings and sounds. Developing language skills is like developing sports skills: learning one sport makes it easier to learn a second.

### *CAN A SIX-MONTH-OLD GET AS MUCH OUT OF A LANGUAGE PLAYGROUP AS A THREE-YEAR-OLD?*

Yes. Just because a six-month-old is not speaking, does not mean he is not understanding. Children begin communicating their needs as soon as they are born by crying and gurgling, then pointing and gesturing, babbling, and finally speaking. Very little time passes between pointing and speaking. Time and time again we see tangible evidence that young minds are very powerful machines. LWFC teachers are familiar with a phenomenon: When two-year-olds who have been enrolled since they were six to ten months are placed in a class with newly enrolled two-year-olds, the experienced students learn the new session's materials significantly faster than the novice students. Why? Because the seasoned students know the class routine, and have already developed better verbal processing skills.

### *AT WHAT AGE SHOULD I ENROLL MY CHILD?*

A child begins volunteering his first words between eight to fifteen months because that is the amount of time a student of any age typically needs to absorb, mimic, and store the number of sounds and meanings needed to speak a language. But, infant learning isn't restricted to mimicking gestures. Their minds are also programmed to mimic sounds and understand word meanings as well. When a baby begins to utter recognizable words it doesn't signify that his mind has suddenly turned "on." His mind has been storing every sound, Spanish, French or English since he was born. So we need to systematically expose youngsters to as much language enrichment as we can and give them time to assimilate.

### *HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN? HOW DO THEY LEARN TO TALK?*

Listening to the basic sounds of a language is step one. First a child understands, then he speaks. A child is recording and brain mapping a language's sound while he is mimicking it. Learning a language begins when a baby begins absorbing and retaining its basic elemental sounds in utero. Using Headturn Preference, scientists noted that infants prefer listening to the language they heard while in their mother's womb. For example, infants born to French-speaking mothers turned their heads more toward French recordings than toward recordings of other languages.

A child's mind is like unformed wax: It is up to parents and caregivers to mold it. Genetics determine basic brain circuitry, but it is external factors, like enrichment, stimulation, and education that develop skills. This is called brain mapping. What a child hears, sees, touches, and feels make up the knowledge he absorbs and the amount of knowledge he absorbs dictates his ultimate abilities. We know how to speak a language because we hear it, learn its meaning, and brainmap its patterns.

### *IS ONE DAY A WEEK ENOUGH?*

Families are welcome to enroll their child in more than one class a week. However, this is not absolutely necessary. The LWFC's Songs & More Workbook/CD set (plus LWFC Story Book that the older children also receive), are meant to be played, sung along to, and repeated for about 5 to 10 minutes a day at home. Short, daily practice reinforces vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence basics being introduced in that session. But, don't let children use their at-home materials for more than 10 minutes a day - otherwise what is meant to be a fun exercise may turn into a chore. It helps when parents page through their class book with them. This helps kids develop an emotional attachment to their class and it is a good way for parents to enhance the learning experience.

*Adapted from the Language Workshop for Children Parent's Guide, written by Francois Thibaut, Founder, The LWFC, Pioneer in Early Language Acquisition*