How will my son or daughter benefit from learning a language?

<http://learning-languages.tki.org.nz/>

www.ilep.ac.nz

A document for parents



## How language learning can benefit your child

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| SpeechMark_LeftRed I think one of the most satisfying things watching a child learn languages is the added creativity it gives them - it helps them think differently, approach problems differently, and the sooner they start the more enjoyable it seems. I wish I’d had more opportunities when I was younger.   * C Wallace, parent, Auckland | SpeechMark_RightRed |

Learning Languages has been a defined Learning Area in the New Zealand Curriculum since 2007. Many students are curious about learning another language, or have tried it, but language learning is still not seen as an essential part of the curriculum in the way that Science or Mathematics are.

Why should you encourage your son or daughter to study another language? They will benefit in the following ways, whether the language being learnt is important in New Zealand or more useful overseas:

### Economic benefits

* The cross-cultural and communicative competence coming from language learning will be an advantage for students who go on to study or work overseas, where competition for jobs is more fierce
* Students who develop some proficiency in a different language will be able to play a role in local tourism and growing New Zealand’s export business

### Learning benefits

* Learning a language gives students a better understanding and practical grasp of their first language
* There are cognitive benefits that come from learning languages – learning a language will help with students’ study in other Learning Areas
* Students experience the huge personal satisfaction and fun of being able to communicate in another language

### Culture and identity benefits

* Learning a language gives students an understanding of another culture and of a different worldview. It allows them to learn how to be outside their cultural ‘comfort zone’ and to develop positive attitudes to difference
* Students will also become more aware of their own worldviews and cultural identities

### Social and societal benefits

* Learning a language helps students learn the Key Competencies of Relating to others and Managing self, as well as giving them the confidence to make mistakes and take risks
* Cross-cultural skills will be necessary for all New Zealanders as our country continues to diversify culturally and we welcome increasing numbers of tourists, students and migrants from other countries.