

ASD Immersion Family Guidebook



Immersion Essentials: Supporting Language Acquisition



Turnagain Elementary School continues to be a great place to learn and grow! Our learning community is dedicated to fulfilling its mission, that all students will grow academically, form healthy relationships, and acquire real-world skills in a safe learning environment. Turnagain is home to an amazing neighborhood program as well as unique Russian Immersion Program - offering a 50/50 daily model (half the day in core subjects like reading, math and social emotional learning in English, and the second half of the day learning literacy, science and social studies in the Russian target language).

Turnagain students are continually involved in learning that stretches their imaginations and engages them in collaborative efforts. Our students excel at demonstrating their engagement during the school day and beyond. We are fortunate to have students, staff, and families who are willing to come together and support our students' educational efforts in meaningful and memorable ways. Our learning community is intentional in its sharing of cultural practices and celebrations. We are fortunate to have strong family and community support. Hopefully, this guidebook will provide some foundational information to help you navigate alongside your learner.

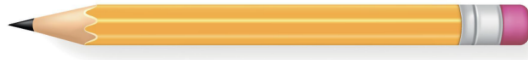
We are grateful that you have selected Turnagain Elementary as a great place to learn and grow. We are fortunate to be part of your learning journey, and look forward to the many adventures ahead. Please feel free to reach out to our amazing staff as questions arise throughout the year.

In Service,

Christine Dennis

Proud Principal, Turnagain Elementary School

Language Acquisition Pathway



Here are a few *frequently asked questions* and responses to help families and students on their literacy and language acquisition journey

Why Immersion? Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience.

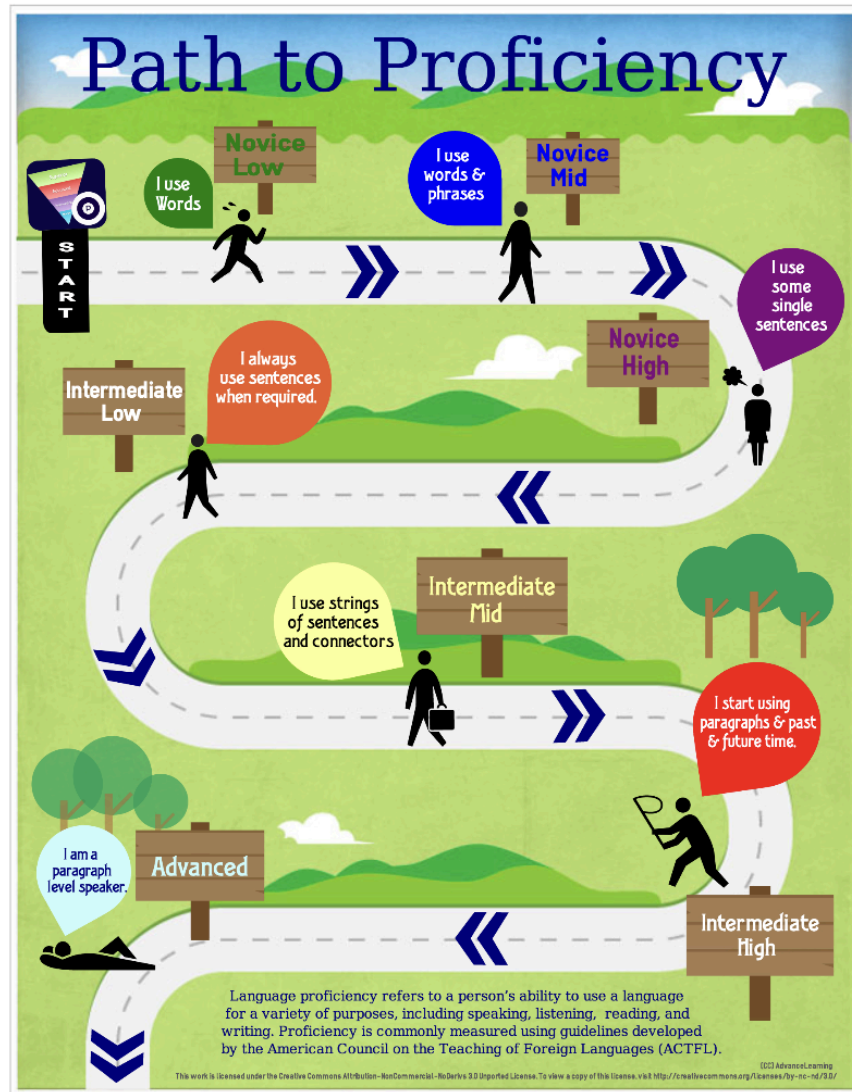
Immersion-based learning involves surrounding students with a language to boost their literacy, increase academic achievement, develop thinking skills, and explore a culturally sensitive outlook. Dual language immersion programs facilitate the development of biliteracy over an extended period of time; the ability for students to speak, listen, read and write in two languages. Becoming biliterate opens the door for communication with those of other cultures and prepares students to enter a world of globalization.

Are some languages more difficult to learn than others? Languages balance out so that each language has some things that are easy for that language and some things that are hard for that language. This is true of learning your first language, as well as a second language. No language is more difficult than another and each language presents its own easy and hard “stuff.” (VanPatten & Simonsen, 2022)

How long will it take for my child to learn a second language (L2)? Acquisition takes time. The average child spends about 14,000 hours engaged in language acquisition by the beginning of kindergarten. Some aspects of language aren't in place until the learner hits middle school, or even later. L2 acquisition also takes time. Research shows that development spans years, with thousands of hours involved, as in the case of L1 acquisition. Language develops in an ordered way - this is not a fast-moving phenomenon. Instead, it is slow and steady which is why our ASD Immersion Program offerings span from grades K-12.

Are there stages of language acquisition that will help us know if progress is being made? As your learner experiences language acquisition, he/she will travel through stages in the acquisition of particular structures or features. Proficiency levels are not focused on linguistic features but instead on three things: what learners can talk about, the context in which they can talk about it, and how well they can talk about it. Proficiency levels are about what learners can do with language in the context of an oral testing situation. The guidelines are not a description or explanation of acquisition; rather, they are descriptors of performance at a particular point in time. (Van Patten & Simonsen, 20220)

Is there a visual to help make the concept of proficiency development more clear? Language acquisition is a journey that develops over time. Your child will progress through this development. Language itself unfolds in particular ways over time independently of learner differences. The graphic below shows the language acquisition levels and some examples of reaching higher levels of proficiency:



In the graphic, there are several checkpoints along the path (i.e. wooden signs); do these have learning targets that will help my child understand the skills needing to be developed? Learning targets are an important part of language acquisition and biliteracy development. Learning target statements help families and students understand what student behaviors are focused on during lessons (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing). Learning targets help inform grading, instructional pacing, and class assignments.

Learning targets are written in student-friendly language, posted, and discussed during lessons, so students are aware of what skill is being developed. These learning targets help students to discuss “what” they are learning in class so they can speak to their success. Here are a few examples of learning targets at each level of proficiency (left to right):

Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice High	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid
I can understand memorized or familiar words when they are supported by gestures or visuals in authentic spoken texts and/or conversations.	I can identify some basic facts from memorized words and phrases when they are supported by gestures or visuals in authentic spoken texts and/or conversations.	I can understand familiar questions and statements from simple sentences in authentic spoken texts and/or conversations.	I can identify the main idea in short straightforward authentic spoken texts and/or conversations.	I can identify the main idea and key information in short straightforward authentic spoken texts and/or conversations.
<u>informational/fictional Texts</u> I can identify memorized or familiar words when they are supported by gestures or visuals in informational/fictional texts.	<u>informational/fictional Texts</u> I can identify some basic facts from memorized words and phrases when they are supported by gestures or visuals in informational/fictional texts.	<u>informational/fictional Texts</u> I can identify the topic and some facts from simple sentences in informational/fictional texts.	<u>informational/fictional Texts</u> I can identify the topic and related information from simple sentences in short informational/fictional texts.	<u>informational/fictional Texts</u> I can understand the main idea and key information in short straightforward informational/fictional texts.
I am using practiced or memorized words and phrases with the help of gestures or visuals. I can: Introduce myself, Express my likes and dislikes, Name very familiar people, places, and objects	Using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases, and simple sentences. I can: Present information about myself, my interests, and my activities, Further, express my likes and dislikes, Present on very familiar and everyday topics	Using simple sentences most of the time. I can: Present personal information about my life and activities, Express my preferences on familiar and everyday topics of interest, Present on familiar and everyday topics,	Using simple sentences. I can: Present personal information about my life, activities, and events, Express my preferences on familiar and everyday topics of interest and explain why I feel that way, Present on familiar and everyday topics	Using sentences and a series of connected sentences. I can: Tell a story about my life, activities, events, and other social experiences, State my viewpoint about familiar topics and give some reasons to support it, Give straightforward presentations on a variety of familiar topics and some concrete topics I have researched,

Does the ASD Immersion Program have proficiency targets that are consistent across immersion programs?

Yes! At various times throughout the year, data is gathered and used to celebrate student success toward developing language acquisition proficiency. The table below provides a vertical picture of progress across grade levels. (Please note, your child's journey may vary in progress; however, these are the goals across our Immersion Programs.) Starting in second grade, students have the opportunity to take a STAMP assessment which provides critical information (nationally recognized) on the progress your learner is making in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As your learner progresses through each grade level, they will be able to see their progress toward becoming biliterate. During their Junior and/or Senior year in high school, they can even apply for the Seal of Biliteracy!



Anchorage School District
Language Immersion Programs
Proficiency Targets (updated May 2019)
Grades 2-6 use STAMP 4Se; Grades 7-12 use STAMP 4S











Chinese, Japanese, Russian

Grade	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
K	Novice-Mid (2)	Novice-Mid (2)	Novice-Low (1)	Novice-Low (1)
1	Novice-High (3)	Novice-Mid (2)	Novice-Mid (2)	Novice-Mid (2)
2	Novice-High (3)	Novice-High (3)	Novice-Mid (2)	Novice-Mid (2)
3	Intermediate-Low (4)	Novice-High (3)	Novice-High (3)	Novice-High (3)
4	Intermediate-Low (4)	Intermediate-Low (4)	Novice-High (3)	Novice-High (3)
5	Intermediate-Mid (5)	Intermediate-Low (4)	Intermediate-Low (4)	Intermediate-Low (4)

What does a learning day look like for students in a 50/50 immersion model?

Families and students are often curious what type of daily routine their learner will experience in a 50/50 immersion model. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade spend their day learning both, in English, and the target language. Here is an example of an immersion student schedule:

Example Schedule Content: 8:00-11:00 am	Examples of Classroom Activities
 <p>Target Language: Literacy 45 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop key vocabulary • Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing • Reading Text • Exploring Songs, Poems, Plays Traditional Stories • Enrich in the Culture

 <p>Target Language: Social Studies 30 min.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop key vocabulary • Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing • Engaging in group and partner projects • Reading text • Use of maps & data sets
 <p>Target Language: Science 30 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop key vocabulary • Listening, speaking, reading, writing • Engaging in group and partner projects • Reading text • Nature walks & field trips
 <p>Lunch/Recess: 45-50 minutes</p>	
 <p>Specials: Music, Library, Art, Health, Physical Education: 30-60 minutes</p>	
 <p>Language Arts: 60 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, & comprehension • Listening, speaking, reading, writing
 <p>Mathematics: 45 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in mathematical discourse • Develop the standards of mathematical practice • Enhance academic vocabulary
 <p>Social Emotional Learning: 15 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address five areas of competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making

How can my family support our learner - especially if we do not know the language ourselves?

There are many ways to support L2 acquisition throughout your learner's K-12 experience. Here are several suggestions to explore and consider during the elementary school experience:

Learn with your child

When discussing a school day with your child, ask them to tell you a new word or phrase they learned in their second language classroom. Tell them that you would like to learn from them. Kids love taking on the role of teacher and filling in their family members on how to pronounce new words and phrases.

Engage in activities in the target language outside the classroom

Kids who get to encounter their target language outside of school are more likely to build a stronger love for it. Experiences like cooking traditional food can turn the language into a real part of their lives. Explore *Eastern European Deli Market*, visit food stands at the Farmers Market, etc. When you travel around the state, visit Russian historical sites and learn about Russian history in Alaska. Don't forget to look for community events that are organized by the Russian Community.

Encourage curiosity

Motivate your child to question the world around them. Curiosity is a core competency of global leadership as global citizens have a genuine desire to learn about and experience the world. If your child is curious about a certain area in English, encourage them to explore it in Russian. You can join them and help them in that effort.

Develop study habits

When kids know how to study effectively, they'll be less likely to experience frustration. Allocate a special place at home for completing homework assignments. Establish a schedule that works for your family to complete the assignments. Break down assignments so your student is less overwhelmed. Take homework time as an opportunity for you to learn from your child.

Use technology

Switch the apps they use to Russian language, and watch as they instinctively begin to engage. If your child is a fan of video games, change the language when they play! They'll have just as much fun while learning new target language words along the way.

When it comes to online videos, your child can watch age-appropriate content in their target language. Turn on Russian *or* English captions and let them watch videos about anything they like, whether it's animals, space, dinosaurs, etc.

Support your child's teacher and school

Join your school's PTA or a parent group specific to the language program; our Russian Immersion Program is supported by the group, MIR Parents (Mission Is Russian). This is a great way to get to know our school community and stay informed about school-related extracurricular activities and family events. Volunteering at PTA/MIR events helps to support our school community and commitment to your child's education.

For more information, please check out our ASD
World Languages and Immersion Programs at
<https://www.asdk12.org/worldlanguages>

If you have site specific questions, please feel free to
reach out to your child's amazing teacher, or contact
our knowledgeable front office staff at 907-742-7200.

We are looking forward to another memorable
school year!



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