

# KidsLoveSpanish

Uno, Dos, Tres



PHOTO BY HOWARD KUFLIK

## Hola, Buen Amigo (Hello, Good Friend) ¿Entiende Ud. español? (Do you understand Spanish?) ¡Sí!

By *Kristine Hedlund*

Spanish is on the rise, which is truly not surprising. Spanish is currently No. 3 in terms of speakers among the more than 5,000 languages spoken in the world today. Only Mandarin Chinese and Hindi are spoken by more native speakers. English comes in fourth with 330 million native speakers in the world, compared to over 346 million for Spanish.

The majority of South Americans speak primarily Spanish (aside from Brazil); it's also the official language of 22 countries. In addition, Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the United States. Also in the US, more and more opportunities are increasing for those who are fluent in both Spanish and English due to the rapidly increasing Spanish-speaking population. This means that the ability to speak both Spanish and English will continue to become more valuable to people who live in the United States. And because of Arizona's proximity to Mexico, this becomes an even greater factor in the world of business.

Merrill Swain, a leader in the field of foreign language learning, believes that early immersion students enter into the process of learning a second language at a time when it does not compete with other interests, as it is an integral part of their normal school activity. Older students, on the other hand, quickly recognize that learning a second language involves considerable time, dedication and effort, and they consequently prefer to spend their time and energy elsewhere.

Is any of this surprising? Absolutely not. We have heard these statistics for years. If you want to attend college, you must learn a second language. If you scan the Help Wanted ads, you will see an increase in the demand for bilingual applicants. Several corporations will offer a higher pay grade for bilingual employees. So, where do we start, and how do we better prepare our children for a multi-cultural future?

Julie Brock Campbell and Krisse Brock Kelly, two Mompreneurs and sisters, noticed a void in the market for Spanish educational tools and decided to create their own DVD series, geared towards children. By using repetitive teaching methods, bright colors and engaging music, these DVDs, entitled Kids Love Spanish, equip children with essential building blocks for future language acquisition. Campbell states, "I have found that knowing a second language has given my children greater overall confidence and has really boosted their creativity."

The DVD series includes seven different educational DVDs that teach introductory Spanish to children of all ages. "Because we couldn't find a dynamic Spanish series that engaged the entire family, we created our own," says Kelly. This all said with a great deal of experience to back it up. Daughters of an asparagus farmer, the sisters grew up speaking Spanish with their family in a small agricultural town that borders Mexicali, Mexico, in El Centro, California. Both sisters studied Spanish throughout school and studied abroad in Mexico and Chile; Krisse later became a bilingual teacher and vice-principal.

Now residing in Arizona, Julie and Krisse have seen much success with their engaging program. Kids Love Spanish was recently commended for its creativity and quality by the Scottsdale Parenting Group and last May received the Platinum Award from the Family Review Center.

The series' entertainment factor greatly lends to its success. Children enjoy watching kids their own age, including Julie's son, Brock, pronounce the Spanish words and use them in every day situations. They also get a kick out of learning Spanish from "Cacto," the DVDs' animated mascot. "Our kids love the DVDs," claims one enthusiastic parent. "We recommend them to all parents, no matter how young or old your children are."

The "Kids Love Spanish" Box Set is now available and includes Volumes 1-7: Basic Words, Alphabet & Numbers, Family, Food, Colors & Shapes, Animals, and Basic Phrases. The set can be purchased at [www.kidslivespanish.com](http://www.kidslivespanish.com) for \$99. ■

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