



isabella & ferdinand

SPANISH LANGUAGE ADVENTURES

Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos!

We are looking forward to creating a wonderful language learning partnership with your family and are delighted to be working with your child at Isabella & Ferdinand Spanish Language Adventures. Our goal is to provide excellent Spanish language instruction in a rich, communicative, and meaningful environment. We also pride ourselves on creating a stimulating program that is fun for children of all learning styles and levels. We hope this will be helpful information for you.

Thematic-based Learning

Isabella & Ferdinand provides thematic instruction and planning in the classroom. Each session will be designed around a central cultural theme, which will be taught in each class implementing specific learning techniques and taking into account many styles of learners, ages and proficiency levels.

In our first session, our central cultural theme is the **Golden Age of Spain**. We will begin with the country of Spain, learning about flamenco, the letter “Ñ”, paella, Don Quixote and “toros” (bullfighting). From this point of embarkation, we set sail on the famous voyage of Christopher Columbus to the Americas thanks to the patronage of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain. We will arrive in the Dominican Republic, learn about the Taíno Indians and enjoy the islands and the discoveries the Europeans made there. Our voyage continues to Mexico with Hernán Cortés and children will experience Aztec culture in an Aztec market. Our adventures then take us back to Spain and the age of knights in shining armor, princes and princesses, and the beautiful paintings of Diego Velazquez.

Our themes are organized around meaningful experiences with the Spanish language and theme-related tasks. These experiences prepare students to use the Spanish language for a variety of purposes beyond the classroom. Brain research has demonstrated that manipulation of vocabulary and grammar in a drill setting is less efficient than the meaningful use of language in rich contexts. In our classroom, for example, children will learn about Spain by listening to the story of “Ferdinand the Bull” in Spanish (accompanied by hand gestures, visuals and acting by our teachers for our students who are new to Spanish), singing songs in Spanish, playing a game involving catching the letter Ñ, acting out a bullfight, dressing up as flamenco dancers and watching a live flamenco show, making theme-related arts projects, learning how to use castanets and exploring the magic trunk of painter Diego Velazquez. Through these types of activities, rather than through rote drills, learning occurs at various levels in a variety of ways – always building upon previous lessons.

Isabella & Ferdinand “Learning Gems”

The Isabella & Ferdinand “Learning Gems” is an educational system we have developed to ensure consistent teaching and to advance Isabella & Ferdinand’s core curriculum using a variety of learning activities throughout our lesson plans. We know that some children learn best by observing and listening, others by acting, singing, drawing and painting, others by being read to or examining pictures, maps and paintings, and some by talking and interacting with other students. Many children prefer one or more of these learning styles – some do



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wonderfully with all of them. We have designed the Isabella & Ferdinand Learning Gems so that many different styles of learning will exist evenly in the classroom, especially playing to the strengths of children who may not be very auditory/verbal since language is, in essence, a very verbal function! At the end of each session you will receive a progress report on your child's participation via email. We hope this evaluation will be a helpful tool in determining your child's progress in his or her class. We value your children as individual learners – and as unique language learners. Each child will develop their knowledge of the Spanish language at a different rate and our goal is to foster and encourage that process in every way we can.

Isabella & Ferdinand Community of Learning

We will send you periodic emails with information on special activities planned for every session both at our location and at other arts and educational institutions in Washington DC highlighting Latin American and Spanish arts and culture. Isabella & Ferdinand is a proud member of the New York branch of the prestigious Instituto Cervantes—the preeminent authority on Spanish language and culture. By organizing activities such as our recent trip to GALA Theatre to see the play Don Quixote or a special puppet show and concert in Spanish with the talented Gaby Moreno singing from our CD Olé & Play! at the Mexican Cultural Institute, we seek to foster a community of learning that does not stop after the child leaves the classroom. And remember, as studies have shown, the more you expose your children to Spanish-based activities, the more quickly they will increase their fluency and comprehension in the language.

We are very excited to bring our program to you this year. Please do not ever hesitate to contact us directly with any questions, suggestions, comments or concerns. We look forward to a year full of Spanish adventures and fun!

Thank you—Gracias!

Pilar O'Leary
Principal, Co-founder

Alexandra Migoya
Principal, Co-founder



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