

# Hablo Espanol? Speekee language programme teaches children Spanish

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Immerse children in a second language when they're young, and they'll find it as easy as 'uno, dos, tres' for life. That's the message from the creators of Speekee (<http://www.speekee.co.uk>)®, a Spanish language course that has parents, children and teachers singing its praises.

The Speekee programme is a total-immersion Spanish learning experience for children aged two to nine and is ideally suited to parents who have little experience of Spanish themselves. With no English spoken at all, this 'like you're really there' method uses real Spanish children in Spanish locations, puppets and plenty of catchy songs (<http://www.speekee.co.uk/parents/>) that you'll find yourself singing along to within minutes.

It includes 10 episodes on three DVDs - a total of three hours of easy Spanish learning – a bonus DVD of all the songs, a 34 track song CD for in car-use and a comprehensive parent guide book with Spanish dictionary. Each episode also features a cultural section so children learn about Spanish culture and not just the language.

"Other language products on the market simply dub the same dated cartoons into multiple languages, often resulting in songs that don't rhyme, words that sound garbled and storylines that are difficult to follow," explains Dr Aaron Forshaw, one of the founders of Lingua4, the company behind Speekee. "The best way to learn a language is to be surrounded by it. We've tried to replicate the experience of being in Spain as much as possible with our DVDs. The activities parents can do with their children afterwards help to reinforce what they've learnt."

While 2011 is meant to be the year in which all primary schools offer a modern foreign language to children aged seven to 14, children who are exposed to a foreign language from as young as two find it easier to grasp new languages in later life. Sadly, the number of British children choosing to learn a foreign language at secondary school is dropping. The people behind Speekee hope to change this.

"Spanish is spoken by about 500 million people worldwide and is one of the world's fastest growing languages. It is the second most used language in international communication and is significantly easier to learn than most other languages. And with Spain being such a popular holiday and emigration destination for Brits, it's the ideal language for children to learn," says Forshaw.

Feedback from parents has been glowing. Laura Loughlin and her daughter Lucia (<http://www.speekee.co.uk/parents/testimonials.php>) aged 5, who moved to Spain, have been using Speekee to help Lucia transition from her UK to Spanish school, but it's ended up helping the entire family. "The vocab is so good that my husband and I have learnt it too. It's been fantastic for all of us. Lucia really gels with the Spanish children and it's much more authentic than other products we've tried," says Laura.

Liz Bolton (<http://www.speekee.co.uk/parents/testimonials.php>), mum to a three and five year old, says that her children took to Speekee straight away, despite her not being able to speak any Spanish herself. "The guide book is really useful as I can look up what they're saying, while my children just like

copying what the children on the DVD are doing and they love listening to the CD in the car," she says.

Teachers can also buy the programme for in class use with extensive lesson plans and resources available. Kevin Ward and Lorena Prado from Holmleigh School (<http://www.speekee.co.uk/teachers/casestudies/holmleigh/>) in Hackney use it for pupils from nursery through to year four. "Regardless of age, the children are all excited and engaged with Speekee. They love it because it's visual, fun and very interactive. They get instantly involved with the characters on screen and lose their inhibitions," they say.

The Speekee programme costs £95 (£275 for a school license) but the home edition is available for a special offer price of £49.95 during January as an added incentive to those who want to make learning a new language a New Year resolution. It is available from [www.speekee.co.uk](http://www.speekee.co.uk) or call 01422 820263 to find out more. Parents who home school their children and who are interested in using the school teaching aids should contact Speekee to ask for details.

~ENDS~

Notes for Editors

Speekee was created by Lingua4 Ltd in 2007 after founder Dr Aaron Forshaw and his wife Jan bought a Spanish language product for their daughter and were very disappointed with it. They teamed up with Emma Bell and Jim Porter, two Spanish language teachers based in Arcos de la Frontera, Spain. Together they created the curriculum and wrote the scripts, while Jan wrote and produced all the music in the DVDs, while bringing her experience as an Education Services Director to the table. Speekee is now used in schools throughout the country, and internationally too.

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