

UAB Spanish Camp

Characteristics of Elementary School Foreign Language Learners

AGES 2-4

- Absorb languages effortlessly
- Imitate speech sounds well
- Respond best to activities related to their own interests
- Have a short attention span
- Respond best to concrete experiences and to large-motor involvement

AGES 5-7

- Learn best through concrete experiences and immediate goals
- Respond well to stories and dramatic play
- Learn through oral language
- Can develop solid oral skills, pronunciation and intonation if they have a good model
- Have a short attention span
- Need structured and specific directions and regular routines

AGES 8-10

- Open to people different from themselves
- Benefit from a global emphasis in language study
- Begin to understand cause and effect
- Work well in groups
- Need concrete learning experiences
- Learn well from imagination and stories

AGES 11-14

- Experience dramatic developmental stages
- Reach a cognitive plateau
- Change interest rapidly
- Feel a need to assert independence
- Develop their own self-identity
- Respond well to new opportunities to learn about subject of interest