

# LITTLE PIM

FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND FUN



**PARENT GUIDE**



*"Thank you for choosing Little Pim and welcome to the exciting journey of foreign language learning with your child."*

*Little Pim's* method is total immersion. The entire DVD is in the foreign language, with optional subtitles for parents or caregivers. Phrases and sentences are broken down into simple parts and reinforced through periodic repetition. The pace is set for a young brain, with bright colors and easily recognizable objects for optimal learning. *Little Pim* teaches vocabulary in context, illustrated by colorful images of real children playing, eating, and interacting.

Please use this Parent Guide to support giving your child the amazing gift of a second language. It includes information and tips for the best possible learning experience. In addition, a resource section directs you to books, articles and websites for supplemental information.

### **Enjoy!**

Julia Pimsleur Levine  
Founder and President, Little Pim Co.

**Watching *Little Pim* together is a great way to make foreign language learning fun. To reinforce language and boost learning, use these tips.**

### **How to use *Little Pim***

Each *Little Pim* DVD is broken up into seven five-minute episodes. Because we know babies and toddlers have short attention spans, *Little Pim* was designed to allow you to start and stop after any of the episodes. As your child gets older, he or she may enjoy watching the entire 35-minute DVD in one sitting. You can pause the DVD at any time and interact with your child to help reinforce the new vocabulary.

### **As you and your child watch the DVD, repeat the words and phrases aloud.**

When you know the vocabulary, you can comment on what is happening or predict what comes next. Interacting with the DVD is an effective way to engage your child.

**Learn with your child and make it fun.** If you practice along with your child it will keep them motivated and engaged.

**Model, don't correct.** If your child makes a mistake be affirming and then model the correct word or pronunciation.

**Enroll your child in a language playgroup.** If you do not have access to one, start one yourself! Find other parents with children who are learning the same language as your child, and get together weekly for songs, stories, and play in the foreign language.

**Engage your child in the foreign language whenever you can.** Use his or her favorite toys or everyday objects to talk about vocabulary you have learned. For example, use the new words as you cook, or pretend that his or her stuffed animals are having a tea party.

### Why should my child learn a foreign language?

There are numerous benefits of learning a second language early in life. Children who are consistently exposed from a very young age to the sounds of a foreign language are more likely to achieve native or near-native fluency in adulthood. Research shows that children who learn more than one language have a much easier time learning other languages later in life. These children are shown to have more advanced language skills — even in their mother tongue — than monolingual children. Multilingualism has been linked to superior reading and writing skills, as well as advanced analytical and social skills. Bilinguals also have an advantage over monolinguals in education and employment.

### If my child is past preschool, is it too late?

It's never too late to introduce your child to a foreign language. It's best to start early, but children of all ages learn languages more easily than adults and receptivity to new languages remains very high until six or seven years old. While *Little Pim* is specially designed for babies, toddlers and preschoolers, many older children enjoy watching *Little Pim* and learning new words.

### How often should my child watch Little Pim in order for it to be effective?

Any amount of daily exposure to a foreign language is helpful. Be consistent. Try to expose your child to the sounds of the foreign language every day. The *Little Pim* DVD is specifically designed to be viewed in 5-minute episodes. Even if you have time for only one episode, your child is hearing and reinforcing her new vocabulary.

### Will my child be confused?

Your child is perfectly equipped to handle one or more foreign languages without affecting his mother tongue. Countless people grow up in multilingual environments: many Africans, Swiss, Belgians, Canadians and Indonesians learn two or even three languages from birth.

### Why is it easier for children to learn a foreign language than for adults?

During the first years of life, children's brains are uniquely equipped for learning language. Children's ways of assimilating language are distinctly different from adults, especially in pronunciation. There is overwhelming evidence that adults perceive the same sound differently than infants. Infants are significantly better at detecting different sounds and hearing nuances in the sounds of foreign languages with clarity and accuracy.

### What if I don't speak a foreign language?

The *Little Pim* series can be used by people with no prior experience in a foreign language. Each DVD includes optional English subtitles for parents or caregivers.

**Your teacher in the Little Pim series is Little Pim, who is a young panda. Known for their distinctive black and white fur, pandas come from China and love to eat bamboo all day long. Little Pim is no ordinary panda though. He has a special talent: speaking foreign languages! Here are some fun facts you can learn with your child about pandas:**

**Pandas eat 20 to 40 pounds of bamboo each day!** To obtain this much food means that a panda must spend 10 to 16 hours a day foraging and eating.

**Newborn pandas can fit in the palm of a human hand.** At birth, the cub is 1/900th the size of its mother! Except for marsupials (such as a kangaroo), a baby giant panda is the smallest mammal newborn relative to its mother's size.

**A baby panda is called a cub.** They are very playful and like to climb, roll and tumble with each other.

**Scientists do not know why pandas are black and white.** Some think the bold coloring provides camouflage in their snowy, rocky surroundings, as well as up in shade-dappled trees.

**Giant pandas have lived in bamboo forests for several million years.** It is estimated that as few as 1,600 pandas remain in the wild today. Pandas are found in the temperate forests of China.

**Pandas are an endangered species.** Thanks to recent efforts to protect pandas, more than 180 pandas live in zoos and breeding centers around the world, mostly in China.

**Giant pandas do not hibernate, unlike other bears.** Their bamboo diet does not fatten them up enough to sleep through the winter. Since bamboo grows year round they don't need to hibernate.

*Little Pim* is the creation of a mother, Julia Pimsleur Levine, who is also an award-winning filmmaker, an experienced language teacher, and the daughter of Dr. Paul Pimsleur, a renowned language professor whose revolutionary audio teaching method made him a household name in foreign language learning. Julia grew up in a multi-lingual home and achieved fluency in French by the age of six through immersion and play. In addition to French, she speaks conversant Italian, Spanish and some German.

*"My father studied how young children learn a second language and why they have an innate ability to learn second and third languages effortlessly," says Pimsleur Levine, president and founder of Little Pim Co. "Thanks to technology that was not available when he did his research, I can now bring foreign language learning to children everywhere."*

Pimsleur Levine explains her motivation for creating the *Little Pim* series: *"When my son was born three years ago, I wanted him to be bilingual and to have the same advantages I had in learning a second language from an early age. I searched for videos to reinforce the French I was teaching him at home, but found very few age-appropriate, high-quality products. I had high standards as a former filmmaker and language teacher myself. I wanted him to watch something that was entertaining, educational and with high production values. Something I would want to watch with him."*

Pimsleur Levine worked for almost two years with an award-winning team of animators and filmmakers bringing *Little Pim* to life.

Study after study shows that up until age six, the human brain is optimally equipped for learning and producing language. *Little Pim* was specifically created for this age range to take full advantage of language learning potential.

Babies hear their mother's voices before birth and know the rhythm of their native language as newborns. Once born, babies can understand and discriminate the sounds of every language in the world. Infants detect different sounds and hear the nuances in foreign languages with perfect clarity and precision. The sound elements of language are called *phonemes*, and repeated studies show that adults perceive phonemes differently than infants.

Why do babies have this language advantage? Because evolutionarily, humans need language as soon as possible. The sooner an early human could learn to talk, the greater his chance of survival. He could quickly respond to life-saving commands such as *Stop!* or *Run!* After language acquisition is set in motion, the brain devotes its energy to other things, and unused functions weaken.

As they become tuned to their native language (or languages), children gradually lose the ability to tell the subtle sounds in foreign languages apart. Their innate ability gradually declines, and by six or seven years of age, the most advantageous window of opportunity has begun to close. When people are introduced to new foreign sounds later in life, they can no longer hear the difference, thus making it much harder to imitate these sounds.

Babies gain understanding long before they can speak and benefit from having a rich language environment. That is because babies learn to talk by listening. Research tells us that the more words babies hear, the faster they learn to talk.

**Frequent daily exposure to words and active social engagement helps the brain pathways that foster language learning to develop more fully.**

*Little Pim* offers your child exposure to new words in a foreign language at the

same time he or she is learning in their a native language. *Little Pim* helps build the foundation for your child's future foreign language learning.

Children need to hear language in relation to what is happening around them. It must capture the child's attention, thus the motherese — speech with rising and exaggerated contours — is very effective when speaking to one's baby or toddler. In addition, provision of language materials such as books, objects and pictures for naming help to support language learning. *Little Pim's* voice mirrors motherese and the series uses sharp and colorful images of objects and actions, allowing young viewers to connect the sounds they hear with actions and objects in real life.

## WEBSITES

### [www.littlepim.com](http://www.littlepim.com)

New products, games and the *Little Pim* store.

### [www.multilingualchildren.org](http://www.multilingualchildren.org)

A wealth of information, support, and resources for parents raising multilingual children.

### [www.multilingual-matters.com](http://www.multilingual-matters.com)

Publishing house with books in the areas of multilingualism and second/foreign language learning. They also publish a newsletter for bilingual families.

### [www.cal.org/earlylang](http://www.cal.org/earlylang)

Ñandutí is a comprehensive resource on foreign language teaching and learning in grades preK-8 produced by the Center for Applied Linguistics.

### [www.biculturalfamily.org](http://www.biculturalfamily.org)

Network of families worldwide who are raising bilingual children. This site offers support and resources in the form of a website and e-newsletter.

### [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)

The National Network for Early Language learning is an educational community providing leadership in support of successful early language learning and teaching.

### [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)

Offers accessible and sensible information on early language including topics like “Books and Babies” and introducing a second language.

## BOOKS, ARTICLES ABOUT LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Anderson, Staff. *Growing Up with Two Languages: A Practical Guide*. Routledge, 2004.

Baker, Colin. *A Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters Limited, 2000.

Caldas, Stephen J., *Raising Bilingual-Biliterate Children in Monolingual Cultures*. Multilingual Matters Limited, 2006.

Eliot, Lise. *What's Going on in There?: How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life*. Bantam, 2000.

Harding-Esch, Edith, and Philip Riley. *The Bilingual Family: A Handbook for Parents*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Karmiloff, Kyra and Annette Karmiloff-Smith. *Pathways to Language: From Fetus to Adolescent*. Harvard University Press, 2002

Tokuhama-Espinosa, Tracey. *Raising Multilingual Children: Foreign Language Acquisition and Children*. Bergin and Garvey, 2000.

# LITTLE PIM



For more foreign language learning and fun visit our website  
[www.littlepim.com](http://www.littlepim.com)

## PARENT GUIDE

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