



6<sup>th</sup> November, 2008  
For immediate use

## Babies are best for bi-lingual learning

**Brainchild of local Sydney Mum- Mandarin Stars, launches program to promote bi-lingual skills amongst tots and pre-schoolers!**

**6<sup>th</sup> November, 2008, Sydney** – Whilst few parents deny the importance of their school age kids learning a new language – research now shows it's the little tots that we should be investing in when it comes to learning!

Research shows that learning another language not only helps increase the power of the brain and opens up new ways of thinking, but that young children reign supreme when it comes to language acquisition.

According to experts such as Dr. Mandy Scott from the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University, kids - particularly those aged under five - benefit most from learning a second language.

“Children who know and use two languages are often more creative and flexible in their thinking – they can “think outside the square” because they are accustomed to using different ways to think about the same ideas or problem,” Scott says. “In addition to the cognitive and educational benefits, learning another language has cultural and social benefits because it gives children a wider view of the world and an understanding of more than one culture. This will become more and more important in our increasingly globalised world”.

And while French and Spanish might have been the choice of parents past, it seems that Mandarin now reigns supreme amongst parents eager to give their kids a head start. Over the past five years the number of non-Chinese people learning Mandarin has soared to 30 million world-wide<sup>1</sup>.

In response to this, mother of two and businesswoman, Dawna Leung, has established Mandarin Stars - an innovative educational concept designed to introduce the Mandarin language to children at their most receptive age – before school.

“The program has been created by experienced educators and bilingual teaching staff and features immersion in the Mandarin language to develop confidence and familiarity” says Dawna. “Children have an incredible ability to

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<sup>1</sup> Source: BBC News

learn a second language at an early age. Just how quickly they do learn is relative to how much they enjoy the process at this young age – which is why our program is all about having fun. It's not academic or intensive – we make learning all about play which all children respond to."

As part of the program, children of all nationalities aged between one and five participate in a structured playgroup environment with music, movement, singing, dramatic play, art and craft, story telling games and more in a truly multi-cultural setting.

"We focus on activities that build vocabulary and conversational skills in Mandarin in a fun, interactive, learning environment. The program has been developed so that children will enjoy learning and playing in Mandarin and as a result, be inspired to continue to learn Mandarin in the future as they grow and develop."

The 90 minute playgroups are now available in Chatswood, with additional classes being launched over the coming weeks in Newtown and Bondi.

**- ENDS**

For more information, interviews and photographic opportunities:

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