



**Information
for educators**

**Language, culture,
understanding.**
It all starts
in preschool.

**Early Learning Languages
Australia (ELLA) program**

ELLA is an Australian Government initiative.

www.ella.edu.au





Introduce a new language at your preschool.

You'll be amazed at what unfolds.

What is ELLA?

'It has been one of the best learning experiences of my 25-year teaching career. I am in awe daily of how quickly the children learn and have loved this learning.'

– Educator at a preschool using the ELLA program

ELLA is a fun and easy digital language program for preschool children. The program is an Australian Government initiative designed to encourage more students to study language in later school years. ELLA inspires children by driving a genuine interest in a new language and culture.

ELLA is an evidence-based program that was implemented successfully by preschools across Australia over two years of trials. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from educators, families and children engaged with the program. ELLA was then made available to all eligible Australian preschools in 2017. See the FAQs below for more about eligibility.

ELLA aligns with the Australian Government's screen time recommendations for young children, with a maximum of 40 minutes per week across multiple small sessions.



Meet the Polyglots

In the apps, children meet a cast of characters called the Polyglots, who introduce the children to words, sentences and songs in another language through play-based learning.

The apps draw on the interests and activities of young children, such as celebrations, cooking experiences, art activities, building and role-play. The apps are designed to be engaging, educational and collaborative. Their development has been guided by experts in languages, early childhood and technology.

How does ELLA work?

'We regularly hear children singing songs from the apps such as the heads-shoulders song, colours, the greetings – they say the fruit names and when using the apps you can hear them repeating the names. Parents say they hear them at home using the language.'

– Educator at a preschool using the ELLA program

The play-based program introduces children to learning a new language via interactive tablet apps. The apps are free, simple to use, and can be easily incorporated into your preschool.

Your preschool selects one of these languages for the children to learn: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese or Spanish (and Hindi and Modern Greek from 2018). You do not require language training to use the apps, and you can learn the language alongside the children in a collaborative way. You are supported by a liaison officer, a step-by-step program guide, an educator app providing implementation advice, and a responsive helpdesk.

'I have really enjoyed learning alongside the children. I love that I am no longer the expert. There is so much collaboration.'

– Educator at a preschool using the ELLA program

ELLA also creates opportunities for you to enrich the language and culture in the apps. You have the opportunity to broaden the learning experiences into your program through other activities such as cooking, stories or music, or by inviting family and community members to share their cultures at the preschool.

Tablet devices are required for the program. Registrations have finished for 2017, but if your preschool is located in a disadvantaged area and you would like to join the ELLA program in 2018, you may be eligible for an Australian Government support payment of \$500 to help purchase tablet devices for the program.

What are the benefits of ELLA?

'Older children are helping our younger Chinese children who cannot speak English in day-to-day routines, such as meal times, and now have a common language to communicate with them.'

– Educator at a preschool using the ELLA program

Participating in ELLA is beneficial not only for the children, but also for their families and educators.

Children can expand their knowledge of how language works and apply these skills to other literacy tasks, such as listening carefully to sounds in words. These skills can be used when the children learn to read and write. ELLA also helps to develop foundation skills, such as learning colours, counting and greetings.

Playing with the apps helps children to develop and use cognitive and social skills. They can share the tablet devices and their knowledge, and interact with and help each other. Language learning improves memory, concentration and critical-thinking skills. Using the apps also increases the children's digital skills.

'The children are mimicking Indonesian words very quickly and picking it up easily. Words, sentences, phrases or sounds, it doesn't matter. They're happy to say it all and LOVE IT! They use it during mealtime quite often: if one child starts, the rest will join in and then all of a sudden we have an Indonesian class. They switch between two languages as they play.'

– Educator at a preschool using the ELLA program

ELLA can also create opportunities to celebrate culture and diversity, share home languages, and strengthen links between families and your preschool. Families have found their children are also using the language at home, and while out and about.

'I took him to a Lebanese restaurant, and he ordered his drink in Arabic (like the character does in the app, I think), and he used Thank you and Bye. And the waiter said his pronunciation was very good. Amazing.'

– Family from a preschool using the ELLA program

Educators have also reported gaining confidence in incorporating language learning and digital technology into their programs, and ELLA has supported the acceptance and awareness of other cultures.



What do you get when you join ELLA?

When your preschool joins ELLA you get access to:

- **nine apps** in your preschool's chosen language: Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi (from 2018), Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek (from 2018) or Spanish. Each app includes fun, age-appropriate, play-based language learning experiences
- a **liaison officer** to support you in implementing ELLA
- a responsive **helpdesk**, available weekdays
- a step-by-step **program guide**
- **educational reporting and 'I can' statements**, which can be used to share children's learning with families
- background information on the **language and culture**
- **posters** to promote ELLA at your preschool
- regular **newsletters** to keep you informed and to offer tips on how to make the most of ELLA
- an **Educator App**, for background information and practical advice on implementing ELLA
- a **Family App**, for families to try one of the learning experiences at home and to learn more about ELLA.

Remember, if your preschool is located in a disadvantaged area, for the next funding year (2018) you may be eligible for an Australian Government support payment of \$500 to help purchase tablet devices for the program.

For more information visit the ELLA website: www.ella.edu.au. To be alerted when applications for ELLA 2018 open in late 2017, provide your email address to ella@esa.edu.au.



FAQs

Is my preschool eligible to use ELLA?

Preschools will need to agree to terms and conditions in order to be part of the program, and must offer a preschool/kindergarten program provided primarily to children in the year before school, delivered by a degree-qualified early childhood teacher, and have internet/WiFi connection. Only children enrolled in a preschool/kindergarten program are eligible to use the apps. Refer to the ELLA website for more information: www.ella.edu.au.

Is ELLA free?

Yes, the apps are free, although tablet devices are required to use ELLA. If your preschool is located in a disadvantaged area, you may be eligible for an Australian Government support payment of \$500 to help purchase tablet devices for the program. Refer to the ELLA website for more information.

Are the apps hard to use?

The apps are simple to use and can be easily incorporated into your preschool program. You will also be supported by a liaison officer, a step-by-step program guide, an educator app providing implementation advice, and a responsive helpdesk.

Do I need language training to use ELLA?

No. You do not need language training. You will be able to learn the language alongside the children in a collaborative way.

What about screen time limits for young children?

The children are expected to spend up to a maximum of 40 minutes per week on the ELLA apps across multiple small sessions. This aligns with the Australian Government's screen time recommendations for young children.

Won't learning multiple languages overwhelm the children?

Research shows young children can learn several languages at once. If a child speaks another language at home, they can continue to learn their home language, English and the ELLA program language all at once. There are intellectual, literacy, social and cultural benefits to learning multiple languages.

What about privacy and online safety?

The children's privacy and safety will be protected when using ELLA. On the tablet devices each child will be identified by their first name only and a photograph. Data on the children's usage of the apps will be collected; however, it will be stored securely, and when it leaves the preschool the data will be de-identified, meaning that particular data will not be linked to a particular child. Regarding online safety, the ELLA apps work within a closed system in your preschool – the apps are not available to the public and are not able to be used to communicate with anyone.

Can the children's families participate in ELLA?

Families can download the Family App from the App Store (for Apple devices) or Google Play (for Android devices) to try one of the learning experiences at home and learn more about ELLA.