

Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program

Information for primary school educators

ELLA is a fun, digital, play-based language learning program for children in preschool. The aim is for children to recognise the different sounds and concepts of a language other than English through the introduction of words, sentences and songs in age-appropriate experiences and practices. Early experience in language learning is an important platform for encouraging language learning in the later years of education.

Preschools involved in this project have chosen one of the available languages to incorporate into their educational program. The ELLA apps are designed to provide children with early language learning experiences and are aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Australian Curriculum (Foundation to Year 2).

The ELLA apps

- The ELLA apps are designed to be engaging and educational.
- The design and development of the ELLA apps was guided by experts in languages, early childhood and technology.
- Children play together as they explore the apps, sharing ideas and helping each other.
- Learning experiences within apps are play-based and draw on the interests and activities of young children; for example, a sandpit, cooking experiences, art activities, building and role-play.
- Educators and children learn together – an effective and collaborative learning method.

What are the benefits for children of participating in ELLA?

There are many benefits to learning another language in the ELLA program.

- Children 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 will be used when children learn to read and write.
- Language learning increases memory, concentration and critical thinking skills.
- Children use social skills when they play with the apps. They share the tablets and their knowledge, and they interact and help each other.
- The apps provide opportunities for children to increase their digital skills.
- The apps create opportunities to celebrate culture and diversity, to share home languages, and to strengthen links between families and the preschool.
- The skills and understandings developed through ELLA can be extended in children's language learning experiences at school, whether this be continuing with the same language or transferring to a new language.

The ELLA program is funded by the Australian Government and managed by Education Services Australia.

Want to find out more? Visit the ELLA website: www.ella.edu.au

Key Italian language included in the ELLA apps

Each of the ELLA apps engages children in play-based activities in different contexts to provide meaningful opportunities to hear and use language. There are also many cultural elements included in the apps.

Below is a brief description of each app and some of the key words and phrases that children are introduced to.

App 1: *The Polyglots in the Playroom*

When exploring *The Polyglots in the Playroom*, children become familiar with language relating to greetings, introductions, farewells and expressing likes and dislikes.

Through engaging with App 1, children will begin to develop skills to:

- sing the 'Hello' song in Italian
- say some simple greetings in Italian. For example:

Ciao!	Hello!
A dopo!	See you later!
Pronto!	Hello! (on the phone)

- introduce themselves in Italian. For example:

Mi chiamo (name)!	My name is (name)!
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App 2: *The Polyglots at the Beach*

The Polyglots at the Beach provides a playful environment and opportunities to explore the language of colours. While playing above and below the water, children are encouraged to interact with the language of colours, sea creatures and expressions of preference.

Through engaging with App 2, children will begin to develop skills to:

- name some colours in Italian. For example:

Azzurra/Azzurro	Blue
Verde	Green
Arancione	Orange
Rosa	Pink
Rossa/Rosso	Red
Gialla/Giallo	Yellow

- express some likes and dislikes in Italian. For example:

Mi piace il rosso!	I like red!
Non mi piace il giallo!	I don't like yellow!

App 3: *The Polyglots at the Birthday Party*

The Polyglots at the Birthday Party is an opportunity to explore the language of numbers through counting candles, singing songs, making cakes and saying how old children are.

Through engaging with App 3, children will begin to develop skills to:

- count to ten in Italian

Uno	One
Due	Two
Tre	Three
Quattro	Four
Cinque	Five
Sei	Six
Sette	Seven
Otto	Eight
Nove	Nine
Dieci	Ten

- say how old they are in Italian. For example:

Ho (age) anni!	I am (age)!
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- say happy birthday in Italian

Buon compleanno!	Happy birthday!
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App 4: *The Polyglots at the Zoo*

The Polyglots at the Zoo features animals in an open-range zoo and introduces children to words for foods and drinks, and phrases for being able to say they are hungry and thirsty, for asking politely and saying thank you.

Through engaging with App 4, children will begin to develop skills to:

- name some fruits in Italian. For example:

Una mela	An apple
Una banana	A banana
Un'arancia	An orange
Una fragola	A strawberry

- say I'm hungry/thirsty in Italian

Ho fame!	I'm hungry!
Ho sete!	I'm thirsty!

- say thank you in Italian

Grazie!	Thank you!
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- make simple requests in Italian. For example:

Vorrei un succo di mela.	I'd like an apple juice.
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App 5: *The Polyglots at the Circus*

The Polyglots at the Circus takes children to the magical space of a circus, providing them with the opportunity to experience language related to parts of the body.

Through engaging with App 5, children will begin to develop skills to:

- name some body parts in Italian. For example:

La testa	Head
Il braccio	Arm
La gamba	Leg
Il piede	Foot

- say some parts of the face in Italian. For example:

L'occhio	Eye
L'orecchio	Ear
La bocca	Mouth
Il naso	Nose

- say something hurts in Italian. For example:

Mi fa male la testa!	My head hurts!
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- use some adjectives in Italian. For example:

Grande	Big
Piccolo	Small

App 6: *The Polyglots at the Park*

The Polyglots at the Park features games and activities that encourage children to actively engage in learning verbs and adverbs relating to actions.

Through engaging with App 6, children will begin to develop skills to:

- respond to some simple instructions in Italian. For example:

.....	Cammina!	Walk!
.....	Balla!	Dance!

- use some adverbs in Italian. For example:

.....	Veloce	Fast/quickly
.....	Piano	Slowly

App 7: *The Polyglots in the Town*

The Polyglots in the Town provides an opportunity for children to use familiar language developed through apps 1–6 in a range of experiences in the town.

Through engaging with App 7, children will begin to develop skills to:

- name some shapes in Italian. For example:

.....	Un triangolo	A triangle
.....	Un quadrato	A square
.....	Un cerchio	A circle

- recognise the meaning of some words written in Italian

- say goodbye in Italian

.....	Arrivederci	Goodbye
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Connections with the Australian Curriculum for Italian

The ELLA apps provide an engaging and enjoyable resource to support children in the initial stages of learning Italian.

The statements below are taken from the Achievement Standards of the Australian Curriculum for Italian. They capture some of the elements that children will have learnt by the end of Year 2 – after three years of learning Italian at school.

The ELLA apps provide opportunities for children to engage with the following statements from the Australian Curriculum. Children's abilities and levels of achievement will be influenced by a range of factors.

- Children use Italian to communicate with their educator and peers through action-related talk and play.
- Children demonstrate comprehension by responding both verbally and non-verbally.
- Children imitate simple words and phrases.
- Children respond to familiar games and routines such as questions about self (for example, *Come ti chiami?*).
- Children produce learnt sounds and formulaic expressions (for example, *Non mi piace*), or partial phrases, often providing only part of the required response in Italian or using a key word to convey a whole idea.
- Children experiment with and approximate Italian pronunciation, for example, producing vowel sounds and 'c' and 'ch' pronunciation with some accuracy.
- Children differentiate between statements and questions according to intonation.
- Children know that Italian is the language used in Italy.
- They know that simple sentences follow a pattern, and that nouns require an article and are gendered either masculine or feminine.
- Children know that languages borrow words from each other and provide examples of Italian words and expressions that are used in various English-speaking contexts.
- Children identify similarities and differences in the cultural practices of Italians and Australians.
- Children understand that they have their own language(s) and culture(s), and that they are also learners of Italian language and culture.

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