



Early Years Programme: Bilingual and International Tracks

The International and Bilingual Programmes at Canadian International School of Hong Kong offer our youngest learners the opportunity to grow academically and socially in an intercultural community. Optimizing a child's natural curiosity, our dual-language programmes will help guide your child's language and cultural fluency in a nurturing but rigorous learning environment.

Starting in Early Years 1, your child will experience the best of Eastern and Western traditions as they develop their love of languages and cultures. Whether you are looking to enrol your child in our Bilingual Programme or our International Programme, both provide a cross-cultural learning experience that teaches our youngest learners to care deeply for the world around them.

If you have any further questions after reviewing the Frequently Asked Questions, please contact the Admissions Department @ admissions@cdnis.edu.hk.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the bilingual programme structured?

50% of the class time will be in English and 50% of the class time will be in Mandarin Chinese. Students will be immersed in the target language for the entire school day. The English and Chinese teachers will teach on alternate days. All classes will also have a bilingual educational assistant, who remains with the same class and switches language each day.

What is the learning approach for the bilingual programme?

Our Early Years 1 (EY1) and Early Years 2 (EY2) half-day programmes (7:50am-10:20am or 11:50am-2:20pm) are designed to provide our youngest students with a holistic and balanced introduction to school life. The programme offers a varied and "hands on" approach to all aspects of learning, providing a strong foundation for future academic and social success. Students participate in learning engagements and experiences that promote continuous growth in their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.

Early Years 1 Programme <small>(starting August 2022)</small>	
International Track	Bilingual Track
1/2 Day	
80% English 20% Mandarin	50% English 50% Mandarin
AM Class (20) PM Class (20) (TBD)	AM Class (20) PM Class (20)
Traditional Characters	
1 English Teacher 1 English EA and 1 Chinese EA	1 Chinese Teacher 2 Bilingual EAs
80 new students admitted	

Celebrating the Past, Inspiring the Future

What will the full day bilingual programme in EY2 look like?

It will follow the same structure as EY1 in terms of alternating days in the target language to provide 50% Chinese, 50% English immersion. The extended day will also allow for opportunities for students to engage in an even wider range of learning engagements in the target language. We will continue to apply developmentally appropriate practices in both languages throughout the day. There will be designated times for lunch, recess and rest.

Is there a full day international programme in EY2?

Not currently.

Will the bilingual track run all the way through to primary and secondary divisions?

Not at this time, since this is a pilot programme we will be evaluating it over the next two years as we roll it up into our Preparatory classes. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the school will decide if the bilingual track will stop at Prep or continue to run through grades 1-5.

Which Chinese characters (traditional or simplified version) are introduced?

During these pilot years, the EY bilingual classes will align with the whole school Chinese Studies curriculum. We will introduce traditional characters for this character recognition stage.

Can my child switch between the International and Bilingual tracks?

Yes, students who are in the International track in EY1 can change to the bilingual track in EY2 or the other way around. The same would apply from EY2 to Prep.

What if a spot becomes available in the Bilingual track during the academic year? May my child switch tracks?

Priority will be given to our current students or those who originally expressed an interest but were not able to secure a seat. That being said, it is important to remember that changing classes mid-year can be difficult for young children as they have already formed relationships with their teachers and understand the expectations of the current class.

Is the Bilingual programme only for students who have prior exposure to the Chinese language?

No, all students are welcome to join the bilingual class from EY1 to Prep. The programme is for all families who wish their child to become bilingual.

Early Years 2 Programme <small>(starting August 2022)</small>		
International Track	Bilingual Track	Bilingual Track
1/2 Day		Full Day
80% English 20% Mandarin	50% English 50% Mandarin	50% English 50% Mandarin
AM Class (20) PM Class (20) (TBD)	AM Class (20) PM Class (20) (TBD)	Full Day Class (20)
Traditional Characters		
1 English Teacher 1 English EA and 1 Chinese EA	1 Chinese Teacher and 1 Bilingual EA	
30-50 new students admitted (TBC)		

Preparatory Programme <small>(starting August 2023)</small>				
International Track	International or Bilingual Track (TBD)	Bilingual Track		
Full Day				
80% English 20% Mandarin	TBD	50% English 50% Mandarin		
Prep A (20)	Prep B (20)	Prep C (20)	Prep D (20)	Prep E (20)
Traditional Characters				
1 English Teacher 1 English EA and 1 Chinese EA	TBD	1 Chinese Teacher 2 Bilingual EAs		
15-20 new students admitted				

Is EY1 too young to start a bilingual programme?

Starting school is a transition, especially for those who have not experienced a school environment before. Learning to go to school and understanding school procedures and routines is a major change, but it can happen in any language. The sooner a child is exposed to other languages, the more comfortable they will be and ultimately will attain higher levels of proficiency in both English and Chinese.

Will my child be able to speak English in class until they learn enough vocabulary to communicate in Chinese?

Yes, students will be able to speak and respond to their teachers in English during Chinese days until they have enough vocabulary to respond in Chinese. However, their Chinese teacher will be speaking in Mandarin Chinese the entire time and will use gestures and tools to convey the messages.

If my child is a Cantonese speaker, will it be a problem in a bilingual classroom? As a parent, do I need to speak Mandarin at home to support?

As mentioned above, we welcome all students with any type of language backgrounds, so Cantonese speaking background is no different. We believe that continuing to support your child's mother-tongue is equally important. There is no need for parents to switch to Mandarin at home. That being said, exposing them to Chinese books and visual/audio stories in Mandarin as much as you can is highly recommended.

What if I don't speak Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), how will I be able to support my child at home?

The most important thing you can do at home is read to your child in your mother tongue. Reading in any language supports the acquisition of reading skills such as fluency, vocabulary building and comprehension.

If you are aiming to have your child follow this bilingual track beyond early years, maximising exposure to Chinese beyond the classroom setting is vital. One way you can do this is by using tech tools that are available to allow them to get access to games, stories, shows and movies in Chinese daily. You could also join playgroups in your neighborhood that speak Chinese to immerse them as much as you can. To be able to listen and speak Chinese with comfort is the first step to this bilingual journey. The reading and writing will follow. Doing many of these activities together with your child will definitely help too.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Admissions Department @ admissions@cdnis.edu.hk.