

Who We Are

Our school has 7 classrooms: 2 full day and 2 half-day Dual Language Education rooms, 1 full day and 1 half day Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) room and 1 dedicated half day special education instructional room. The TPI classroom is dedicated to providing English as a Second Language instruction for a classroom of children who speak various languages other than English.. Our teachers are Illinois State Board of Education certified with Special Education and Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsements. Additionally, many of our teachers have Masters degrees in addition to a Bachelor's degree.

Additional Focus

We are dedicated to the promotion of play. Research has shown that young children learn best when given the opportunity for unstructured play. We are also passionate about nature based play and education and our students spend time outside investigating and playing.

Dual Language Schools in the Southwest Side

Elementary Schools

::Calmeca Academy of Fine Arts
3456 W. 38th Street
(773) 535-7000

::Academy for Global Citizenship
4647 W. 47th Street
(773) 582-1100

::Whittier Dual Language School
1900 W. 23rd Street
(773) 535-4590

::Telpochcalli Elementary School
2832 W. 24th Blvd
(773) 534-1402

::Azuela Elementary School
4707 W. Marquette Road
(773) 535-7395

::Edwards Elementary School
4815 S. Karlov Ave
(773) 535-4875

High Schools

::Back of the Yards College Preparatory
2111 W. 47th St
(773) 535-7320

Velma Thomas Early Childhood Center

A Reggio Inspired, Dual Language Preschool

3625 S. Hoyne Ave
Chicago, IL 60609
(773) 653-4193



Our **Mission** is to provide an education that honors the unique image of each child and strives to appreciate and nurture a diverse community of learners. We will foster authentic relationships through communication and collaboration with children, families, staff and members of the community. Within these partnerships, we will strive to prepare inquisitive, self-motivated lifelong learners.

Our **Vision** is we believe young children are engaged, active learners who construct their knowledge. Teachers are researchers who collaborate with colleagues to develop a cohesive environment. We believe that authentic relationships are the foundation of, and the prerequisite for all learning, development, and change. We believe in the importance of engaging parents and empowering them to be advocates for their children.

What is Dual Language Education?

Dual language Education (DLE) is a type of bilingual education where students are taught in two languages throughout the course of

their academic careers. DLE programs foster bilingualism and biliteracy.



Students are able to speak, read and write in two languages and utilize academic language beginning in preschool and continuing throughout their lives. DLE programs also foster an increased awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and encourage high levels of achievement through instruction in two languages.



Dual Language at Velma Thomas

The DLE program at Thomas is called a one way program with the program geared towards children who are native Spanish speakers as well as heritage speakers (children with a cultural and language connection to Spanish). We follow an 80/20 model of instruction with 80% of the day in Spanish and 20% in English. In the DLE classrooms teachers make a clear and consistent separation of languages using visual and auditory signals. Children are encouraged to respond in the target language through modeling and are also able to respond on the language of their choice. Finally, one of the most important aspects of our DLE program is our work to elevate Spanish language and culture for children and families to see their funds of knowledge reflected in the school community.

Ways to Support Children with Dual Language Development

- Encourage your child's interest in language
- Read with your child in both languages every day

- Provide all learning materials in the home, including educational videos, in both languages
- Check out books from the public library in both languages
- Talk with your child's teachers about specific ideas for supporting your child!



Through Dual Language Education, children will:

- Develop mental flexibility
- Feel pride in their family culture
- Develop a strong connection with culture through language
- Over the long term, enjoy greater academic achievement than their monolingual peers
- Have the ability to communicate with a greater number of people
- Have more economic opportunities in adulthood
- Transfer skills learned in one language to the other

***It is important to note that the benefits of Dual Language Education are gained through long term exposure, 7- 8 years at minimum, for students to enjoy the full scope of the benefits.**