

Model D, schooling in the Basque language: Most frequently asked questions by mothers and fathers

The birth of your sons and daughters marks a new stage in your life, full of joy and excitement, one in which you experience many moments of happiness. Yet it also brings new responsibilities, always thinking about the wellbeing of your sons and daughters and in giving them the right tools to allow them to achieve their full potential in the future. Many decisions need to be made, such as the choice of the language model at school. And this is also of interest for those of you who have recently come to live in Navarra. Here are the most frequent questions that come up with regard to linguistic immersion in Basque at school, also called "Model D".

How does linguistic immersion in Basque work? What languages are learned?

In the linguistic immersion model, Basque is the teaching medium. Schoolchildren learn the language through the teaching of the curriculum subjects in Basque.

Success is based on the following: it is an intensive program in which the necessary amount of time is given to each language, it is forward-looking and great attention has been given to methodology.

Obviously, today we are talking about plurilingual education given that, in addition to mastering Basque and Spanish, the objectives of this model include having a good understanding of a foreign language as well as valuing the languages of the immigrant population of the educational community. So, on completion of their primary education, schoolchildren will have mastered Basque and Spanish and obtained a good level in English.

Therefore, Model D relates to an educational process in which, for example, schoolchildren will learn to read in one language and then will subsequently apply this knowledge to the rest. The contents of the curriculum and language learning will go hand in hand.

So, will they also learn Spanish?

Yes. Basque is the main language at school but children also learn Spanish, which is taught as a specific subject. Moreover, the presence of Spanish in the different social spheres will be sufficient to complete the learning process.

As I can't speak Basque, how can I help with homework?

Homework is an individual assignment which boys and girls must do by themselves.

The key lies in getting children to develop good study habits (setting a time schedule, making sure that there is a suitable area to study, having reference material on hand, etc.) and in ensuring that there is good communication between the school and family. If more specific help is required at any particular time, then children can be asked to explain what the problem is and help them to find the response or solution, yet without doing the homework for them.

And, of course, you can always make use of online translators. [This video](#) explains how to use [elia.eus](#) (formerly itzultzailea.eus) and [Google translate](#), which, in addition to the online option, has its respective Apps and these are really convenient: so, if the homework is on paper, it's as simple as taking a photo of the text to be translated.

All the same, although these translations can prove really useful, you do need to bear in mind that they're not always exact and, like all automatic translators, they may contain errors. Even so, they are generally sufficient to understand the wording of an exercise.

If the language used at home is different, and is neither Basque nor Spanish, won't this be too much?

No. In fact, it's a great opportunity for children to learn yet another language. Boys and girls cope well in multilingual contexts. They may need slightly more time to speak in all the languages, but the end result is what is most important and not learning everything as soon as possible.

It's always important to know the official languages of the place of residence. In Navarra these languages are Basque and Spanish. Through schools and social relations, boys and girls can learn these languages, being tools which will help them in the future in their cultural, working and social life.

People of different origin, with different cultures and languages, are constantly coming to Navarra. The transmission of the mother tongue can continue in Navarra and it is important to do so, given that it gives the generation growing up here the cultural references of their family and allows them to maintain relations with those relatives remaining in their country of origin. Moreover, the mastery of the mother tongue provides a solid base for the subsequent good learning of other languages.

Those coming from outside Navarra and who have learned Basque often state that this has opened doors to them and helped them to better understand Navarra and to have more opportunities. Languages can be learned at any age, although children learn far more readily than adults. In any case, there are nothing but added benefits: the opportunity to learn more languages and to discover all the richness of learning Basque as well.

I don't know any Basque at all. How can I help the learning process of my son/daughter?

There are a host of [online resources](#) and era.eus is continually evolving so that you can have them on hand. You can also enquire at the [Basque service](#) of your town or city, as well as enjoying the host of opportunities offered by the [cultural agenda](#). And, of course, if your sons and daughters are enrolled at school in the Basque language model, they will gradually form a network of friends with whom they can practice the language.

It's true that, if you don't know Basque, it's normal to think that *"I'm not going to be able to pass on Basque to you!"*, but what you can pass on to your sons and daughters is a really positive attitude to this language, so that they can see that it's also of interest to you, that you're trying to learn words, that you're enjoying this language, that you really value the fact that they're learning it.... All this is in your hands.

Which is my school of reference? If my local school doesn't offer the D model, what can I do?

The School Map indicates which [school offering the D model](#) corresponds to each family based on place of residence.

If your local school doesn't offer the D model, there is the possibility of requesting the Department of Education to open a new line.

To do so, you need to complete an [application](#) and send it by recorded delivery to the attention of [Director-General for Education](#). The possibility of opening a new D model line will be considered, taking into account, among other factors, the number of boys and girls for which this new line is requested. The greater the number of requests made, the easier it will be to meet your request.