

MANDARIN LEARNING AT CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

Research shows that between the ages of 0-3, the brains of young children are uniquely suited to learning a second language as the brain is in its most flexible stage. Exposing children to a second or third language at this age allows them to optimize their learning potential. In fact, bilingually exposed infants excelled in detecting a switch in language as early as 6 months old. At this age they can learn a second language as easily as they learn to walk and learn their primary language.

The children at Canberra's CAECC are putting this into action with daily exposure to, and learning of, Mandarin. Children acquire language through interaction which is why the educators at CAECC speak to the children in Mandarin most of the time while engaging them in play, singing and dance, storytelling and other activities. The children also learn from each other through play and the repetition of the language skills they are learning from their educators.

The children at CAECC are all encouraged and empowered to learn Mandarin language skills, just like any other skills, at their own pace. Some children may be verbalising the language at home and others will be starting to understand the words of their educators. No matter where they are on their learning journey, all of the children at CAECC are benefitting from the exposure to a second language at a time when their young brain is most receptive to the opportunity.



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

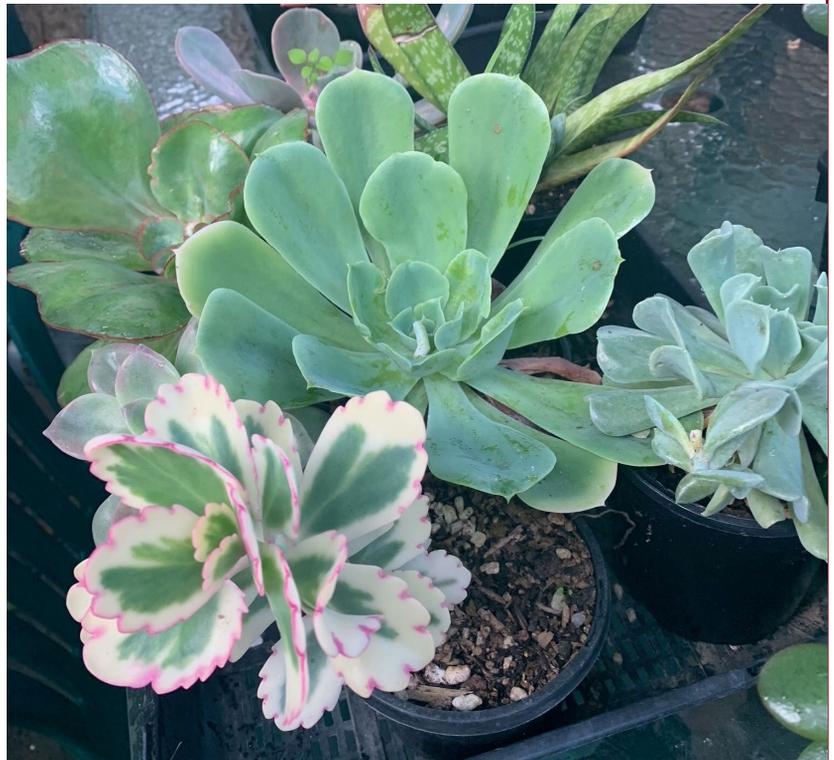
It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the year already. It has been wonderful to see a buzz in the Centre and all the wonderful learning taking place due to the hard work and dedication of our amazing educators.

With the winter weather well and truly knocking on our door, it's a timely reminder of the importance of ensuring all children and staff are protected against pesky illnesses like flu. We are fortunate to have access to a range of services in the ACT that offer free flu vaccinations for children from 6 months to 5 years.

As you are aware the Centre held a plant sale during May. A big thank you to Annette for her hard work preparing her amazing succulent collection (right) for the plant sale. A special thank you also to all our families who purchased some succulents. All monies raised from the sales will go towards providing the children with more educational resources.

Stay warm!

Charlotte Foster
Vice-President, ALMA



NEW ALMA MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Matthew Robertson and family
- Jingyu Yang and family
- Imkan Ali and family
- Tzu-Lin Fu and family
- Fang Lu Lim and family
- Jing – wen Ou and family
- Daniela Rogerio and family
- Lana Head and family
- Feng Hong Lim and family

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

We are keeping busy and warm at the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre.

We have had several incursions recently. The tooth fairy visited and explained to the children all about oral health and healthy foods. Following on from this the educators had a professional development session “Nourishing little minds” run by Nutrition Australia. During this session, the Educators were exposed to many learning activities that encourage children to eat healthy foods. These methods were put into practice and the Infants and Toddlers room tasted many fruits and vegetables. This also gave them an occasion to use the Mandarin words for the fruits and vegetables, a further inclusion of Mandarin learning in all our daily learning experiences and routines.

Also visiting the Centre, Greg Dymock, with his swag full of instruments, delighted the children and educators with his music and movement performance. The children had the opportunity to experience through music and movement the sounds of instruments from Australia, Africa, the Middle East, Italy, Greece, Brittany, Ireland, Hawaii, China, Spain, America and the universal kitchen (the spoons).

The preschool room children have been learning Chinese poetry, Through poetry, children will hear repetition, alliteration, rhythm, meter, and rhyme. This is another way for our children to be exposed to the musicality of the Chinese language. They will learn new Chinese words and phrases and unconsciously pick up the rise and falls of the language.

We celebrated the recent Dragon Boat Festival with many activities including making a Dragon Boat with boxes and the children playing Chinese drums. Part of the celebration also involves eating and making of 粽子, zongzi (sticky rice/glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo leaves. Our lovely Educator Qiuping made them to offer to our children.

I leave you with this quote “the benefits of being bilingual go beyond the ability to communicate in another language. Bilingualism give children an broader perspective of the world”.

Annette Chemin
Director, CAECC

ALMA ACTIVITIES

Mandarin Community Tutoring Project

We currently have several adult learners – with various levels of Mandarin from beginner to quite advanced – looking to meet native speakers in the Canberra area to practice and improve their language skills. In return, the Mandarin speakers can make more local contacts and friends, share their knowledge of Chinese language and culture, practice their English skills, and/or learn more about teaching Mandarin.

If you are a fluent speaker of Mandarin – or know a native speaker - who has a couple of hours to spare each week and would be interested in taking part in this volunteer project, more information is available on the [Mandarin Community Tutoring page](#) of the ALMA website.

Mandarin radio program on community radio 2XX

Our weekly program aims to promote the use and learning of Mandarin in the ACT area, especially among young families, and to inform the Chinese speaking community about local events and other information of interest.

Tune in to 2XXfm on 98.3 every Friday evening at 7pm to hear a children's story in Mandarin, some music and fun songs. The program is presented bilingually by Mandy from ALMA and Xiaohui from the ACT Chinese Australian Association. The program can also be accessed online at www.2xxfm.org.au. Past programs can also be accessed through the 'On Demand' link at the same web address.

We welcome recordings of your children singing a song or reading a short story or poem in Mandarin for inclusion in the program. Hearing themselves on the radio is a great way to encourage children to speak and practice the Mandarin they are learning at home, preschool or school. Just send the recording (MP3 preferred), with a transcript if possible, to canberraalma@gmail.com.

ALMA gratefully acknowledges community radio 2XX and the Community Broadcasting Foundation for supporting this weekly Mandarin language program.

OTHER NEWS

Illustrated bilingual book of poetry

Long-time ALMA supporter Mimi Zhang launched her latest book 'Windows' on 2 April 2022. Written in Chinese, each poem has a corresponding English version. The poems are inspired by Mimi's life experiences and are richly illustrated with photos taken by Mimi around the world. Limited copies are available for purchase for \$25. For more details, contact Mimi at mzhang@iinet.net.au



China in the World (CIW) at the ANU 中华全球研究中心

The Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) provides a wealth of interesting news, discussions and information about all things Chinese. Most events are free and open to the general public.

For more information see <https://ciw.anu.edu.au/> and to join their mailing list to keep up to date with activities email: ciw@anu.edu.au

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALMA NEWS?

Please email items for the next newsletter to canberraalma@gmail.com by 15 August 2022.