

Language Policy

Escola Crescimento



**escola
crescimento**

Juntos, para todos os futuros.

Our MISSION.

To act with professionalism and commitment in the development of ethical people, capable of creating solutions to face life's challenges.

Escola Crescimento has a significant presence in the local educational scene, contributing to the formation of internationally minded children and young people, prepared to act as global citizens. Our educational practices are engaged, innovative, and committed to the integral formation of students, promoting an education connected to the real world.

Our methodology continuously evolves to meet the educational demands of the new generations. Guided by the BNCC, our practices value both individual and collective needs, fostering the development of creativity, empathy and respect. We seek to promote globally recognized values, while enhancing the academic and moral growth of each student.

The Language Policy at Escola Crescimento

The school is advancing in the implementation of broad English language immersion, which covers Early Childhood Education through the 2nd grade of Primary Years, in addition to being in the candidacy process for the IB through the PYP. In this context, our approach to language becomes even more attentive and strategic.

Our Language Policy is built based on the **IB Standards and Practices**, in collaboration with our educational team. We recognize education as a dynamic and constantly evolving process. Therefore, our language guidelines not only consolidate our values and educational commitment but also remain open to continuous updates and improvements, ensuring their relevance and alignment with the needs of the school community.

Language Philosophy

Language is present in all learning and serves as an essential vehicle for inquiry and meaning-making. It provides an intellectual framework that supports conceptual development and critical thinking.

At Escola Crescimento, our language philosophy is guided by the mission of shaping ethical students who are prepared for life's challenges. However, we strive to go beyond that by encouraging them to embrace their identity, value their mother tongue (Portuguese), and develop a strong command of the English language. To achieve this goal, we provide high-quality education with an international perspective within a local context that fosters respect for both global cultures and national culture.

To achieve this, we have established the following objectives:

- **Learning the language** – Promoting authentic, inquiry-based learning while developing listening, speaking, reading, writing, and media literacy skills.
- **Learning about the language** – Deepening the understanding of its structure and functionality.
- **Learning through the language** – Integrating language skills so that students use language as an essential tool for understanding, thinking, and reflecting on the world.

Our commitment is to ensure that students from Early Childhood Education to the 2nd grade of Elementary develop fluency and proficiency in both their mother tongue and English, fostering a bilingual environment that respects and values the linguistic diversity of our school community.

Based on this context, which recognizes and encourages linguistic development, we believe that our students will intentionally use this skill to connect with the world, expanding their interactions in a global setting that fosters cultural exchange and the construction of new perspectives.

Linguistic Profile of the School Community

At Escola Crescimento, the school community is predominantly composed of Portuguese-speaking individuals as their mother tongue.



English is introduced as an additional language through an immersive approach starting in Preschool and expanding up to the 2nd grade of Primary Years.

The school recognizes and values the linguistic diversity of its students and their families, fostering an environment of respect and inclusion for the different languages and cultures within the community.

English Immersion at Escola Crescimento

[...] bilingualism is a positive force that promotes children's linguistic and cognitive development, enhancing access to reading and writing when both writing systems are corresponding and improving executive processes, in general, for all bilingual children in problem-solving tasks that require attention and control. These executive control skills are central to intelligent thinking." (BIALYSTOK, 2017, apud LAGE, 2024, p. 172)

Our bilingual program follows the principles of the PYP, fostering language development in an integrated manner within the curriculum. Language instruction at the school is based on the following principles:

- **English language immersion from Preschool**, creating an authentic environment for natural language acquisition.
- **Development of the mother tongue (Portuguese)** as a foundation for building critical thinking and cultural identity.
- **Integrated language instruction through the Programme of Inquiry (POI)**, connecting language learning with the development of investigative and communicative skills.
- **Multilingual strategies**, including the intentional use of translanguaging (alternating between languages to support learning).
- **Emphasis on oral and written expression** across different contexts and text genres.

A careful approach to language allows children to develop with confidence, respecting their individual pace and enabling them to use the language functionally in both academic and real-world contexts.

English immersion is being implemented gradually, starting in Preschool and covering classes from PK1 (1 year old) to K1 (4 years old). The expansion of this model will continue through to the 2nd grade of Primary Years, with completion expected in 2028, considering the progressive nature of the process. The program is structured in a bilingual format, where students spend 50% of their learning time in English and 50% in Portuguese, with specialized teachers for each language, ensuring a consistent and enriching experience in both languages.

Students who enter the school at the Primary Years are supported by the Focus Group, a practice that groups students by proficiency levels and directly addresses the specific difficulties and strengths of the group. Periodically, these skills are reassessed to ensure that the interventions from the team are always aligned with the children's needs.

For new students who enter the school without proficiency in Portuguese, the Focus Group is one of the support options for their language development. After assessing individual needs, the teaching team determines the best approach, which may include personalized support or small group sessions.

Language in Early Childhood Education

The development of students' language skills is encouraged from early childhood. In Early Childhood Education, children participate in transdisciplinary projects and units conducted in both languages of instruction, Portuguese and English. These experiences aim to create an environment conducive to vocabulary expansion and provide various interaction opportunities, promoting natural and meaningful learning.

The "*Ciranda da Leitura*" project enriches language development by offering continuous exposure to literary stories. Literary storytelling plays a key role in the development of attention, memory, cognition, orality, interaction, imagination, and idea organization, while also directly contributing to the literacy process.

Literature is a valuable resource for transforming and enriching the life of the reader. Early contact with books stimulates children's imagination and allows them to see themselves as characters in stories, fables, and fairy tales, facilitating the expression of their ideas and emotions.

The project takes place both in the school environment and at home, providing children with a continuous and meaningful experience with literature. Weekly, they have access to a literary collection appropriate for their age group, from which they choose a book for reading. After this moment, they record their perspectives on what they have read, promoting reflections and enhancing their interpretation and expression skills.

In the school context, the teacher plays an essential role in motivating students towards children's literature, creating opportunities for the joy of reading to develop in a meaningful and lasting way.

At the K1 and K2 levels (4 and 5 years old), we assess graphic skills and writing hypotheses, integrating these aspects into the routine intentionally. In this way, the daily planning incorporates structured moments for literacy, promoting the development of essential skills for language construction.

The routine is strategically organized, combining large group moments where children reflect on and share their prior knowledge. Circle time is a valuable opportunity to create meaningful learning situations, explore the Approaches to Learning (ATL skills), and connect activities to the PYP inquiry program.

Playtime also plays a key role in language development. Valuing this moment in the school routine means providing children with new opportunities for inquiry, stimulating agency, and encouraging authentic communication in a social interaction context.

Moreover, curricular components such as music, physical education, and sports (ballet and judo) are essential for the holistic development of students. Led by specialist teachers, these moments enhance both oral and non-verbal language, as well as strengthen motor, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills that impact overall learning.

This integration across different areas of the curriculum enables rich and consistent experiences, promoting an environment where language expands naturally and meaningfully, aligned with the principles of the PYP.

Language in the Early Years

The theme of reading has been a constant focus of various studies and debates among education professionals due to its importance in shaping citizens capable of facing the challenges of the modern world with

autonomy.

Thus, the involvement and responsibility of educational institutions in proposing numerous strategies to develop and expand reading practices are increasing, aiming to prepare students to meet this challenge.

In 2013, Guided Reading was adapted and implemented in the 1st and 2nd grade classes of Escola Crescimento's Elementary School, aiming to expand and enhance the work already developed in the early years of elementary education.

In the 1st grade classes, where the literacy process is the core focus, Guided Reading takes place three times a week, scheduled in advance according to the Portuguese Language curriculum plan.

In the 2nd grade classes, where students have reached a more advanced level of reading comprehension, Guided Reading takes place twice a week, also scheduled in advance according to the Portuguese Language curriculum plan.

The key distinguishing feature of this practice is the opportunity for more individualized instruction and interventions, as the teacher works with small groups of students. These groups are formed based on the specific needs of each student. Consequently, in a heterogeneous classroom, it is possible to foster skill development according to each group's level.

While the teacher conducts Guided Reading with one group of children, the rest of the class engages in a parallel activity that promotes student independence and autonomy. This parallel activity is not random; it consists of carefully planned tasks carried out under the supervision of the classroom assistant.

Among our objectives with this practice are: developing in 1st and 2nd grade students the skills and knowledge necessary for them to read increasingly complex texts with autonomy and independence; enhancing students' comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary; providing opportunities to learn various reading strategies; promoting independent and high-quality reading; and addressing the needs of all reading levels within the class.

We also focus on discourse genres studied in the classroom. For students to build knowledge about how language functions, they must have numerous opportunities to read and write individually or collectively, using different socially circulating texts. Specific genres are selected for each grade level to be explored in depth, allowing students to produce spontaneous writings and rewritings under teacher guidance. These writings are organized in portfolios, enabling students to track their own progress over time.

In order to support students in acquiring and refining their communicative abilities, the teacher places special emphasis on reading and comprehension through actions that ensure the following objectives:

- Developing readers and writers who actively engage with texts, rather than merely decoding the writing system;
- Understanding the importance of different text genres and their connection to social use;
- Cultivating reading habits, valuing reading as a source of information, learning, leisure, and art;
- Recognizing and utilizing writing as a source of information and enjoyment, understanding that everything can be represented graphically;
- Striving to become a true user of reading and writing.

On this journey of learning, our school is committed to developing readers who go beyond decoding and good prosody in oral reading. Our goal is to shape critical, competent, and proficient readers who can comprehend, make connections, and form their own perspectives based on what they read.

Furthermore, we aim to nurture readers who are sensitive and empathetic, considering different points of view; who are collaborative and reflective; who have an aesthetic appreciation; and who are capable of transforming their reality through their reading experiences.

The Argentine researcher Delia Lerner (2002, p. 28), a specialist in the didactics of the Portuguese language, discusses some of the challenges schools face in developing readers. According to her, the challenge is to shape individuals who are eager to immerse themselves in the possible worlds that literature offers, willing to identify with those who are similar or show solidarity with those who are different, and capable of appreciating literary quality.

Embracing this challenge means abandoning mechanical and meaningless activities that distance children from reading by making it feel like a mere school obligation. It also means incorporating situations in which reading certain materials is essential for the development of

ongoing projects or—equally important—providing the pleasure that naturally arises from engaging with authentic and valuable texts.

With this in mind, in our pursuit of authentic and valuable texts as the cornerstone of the literary journey, we have chosen to focus on both traditional and contemporary tales. This genre, which has captivated and transcended generations for centuries, has the power not only to evoke a wide range of emotions but also to create opportunities for discussion, debate, and deliberation. It fosters identification and, in doing so, allows children from Early Childhood Education through the Early Years to define their own values, desires, and aspirations while building a rich and high-quality literary foundation.

It is important to recognize that organizing part of the readings conducted by teachers aims to ensure that specific literary content is covered throughout a child's schooling, while also guaranteeing diversity in book selections and a structured progression between them. Expanding each child's literary repertoire through a carefully curated and thoughtfully planned selection, guided by all professionals involved in their reading development, is one of the key ways to fulfill the purpose of this literary curriculum: the comprehensive formation of lifelong literary readers.

The journey through traditional tales was designed to ensure that students experience diverse aesthetic encounters throughout their schooling, considering a varied corpus that guarantees a progression in both complexity and artistic approaches at each stage. Our goal is to cultivate readers who develop an appreciation for literary texts, understanding their characteristics and enhancing their reading skills and literary knowledge through engagement with traditional narratives. This, in turn, allows them to analyze the artistic resources used by authors in crafting their works, enabling a deeper and more meaningful comprehension of what they read.

We chose traditional tales because they offer countless opportunities for imagination, for engaging with the dilemmas faced by characters, and for understanding that such conflicts are an inherent part of life. These are human issues presented symbolically, which each reader can interpret and internalize in their own way.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Language development assessment is continuous and aligned with IB practices. This includes:

- Observing and documenting the development of speaking, reading,

and writing in both languages.

- Using portfolios, rubrics, and student self-assessment to reflect on their language learning journey.
- Conducting formal and informal assessments to monitor progress and plan interventions when necessary.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

We value the teacher's role as a mediator in the educational process and as a provider of intentional support for student development. To fulfill this role, it is essential for educators to understand each student's learning process and their zone of proximal development, ensuring appropriate challenges and necessary support so they can gradually progress in their learning journey.

This concept highlights the importance of different levels of learning support. Therefore, teachers use a variety of assessment tools to continuously analyze students' knowledge and skills, plan the next investigative steps, and help them reach their full potential.

Understanding students' proficiency levels is essential. This is achieved through assessment portfolios, formative assessments, and continuous observation, allowing educators to map each student's development and recognize individual differences in learning styles and linguistic experiences.

Pedagogical work is carried out collaboratively among teachers and the entire school team, with a commitment to creating an environment that fosters citizenship within a democratic, ethical, and constructive perspective.

To strengthen language learning in both Portuguese and English, the following strategies are emphasized:

- Establishing essential agreements to promote a respectful environment between students and teachers.
- Using visual support, such as word walls, name lists, activity displays, and instructional cues to expand students' linguistic repertoire.

- Applying diverse literacy strategies, tailored to different learning styles, including guided stations where teachers provide positive and constructive feedback.
- Diversifying work dynamics, encouraging interactions in large groups, pairs, individual activities, and small groups with varied compositions.
- Ensuring clarity in learning expectations, with teachers sharing objectives and goals with students.
- Continuously encouraging students to express themselves in multiple ways, fostering communication and critical development.

TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Escola Crescimento invests in the continuous professional development of its educators to ensure the effective implementation of its language policy. This includes:

- **Training in bilingual teaching methodologies** and inquiry-based learning approaches.
- **Professional development in assessment practices** and additional language teaching strategies.
- **Collective reflection on language use** within the school environment.

DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW, AND UPDATE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

The Language Policy was developed by the school leadership team, composed of the Head of School, division leaders, the PYP coordinator, and pedagogical coordinators, in May, with the purpose of articulating

our beliefs about language as a central element in the teaching and learning process. Our goal is to share this valuable perspective with the entire teaching team, students, families, and all those who identify with our educational approach.

To ensure that the concepts outlined here effectively reach our entire community, the document will be published on the school's website and made available in the coordination offices of each educational division.

The Language Policy of Escola Crescimento is a dynamic document that reflects the principles of our pedagogical practice and is in constant evolution, aligned with the needs of our school community, the guidelines of the national curriculum, and the principles of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP).

We understand that language — in all its forms and uses — is fundamental to meaning-making, identity development, and the promotion of intercultural understanding. For this reason, the policy is reviewed every two years to ensure it remains meaningful, coherent, and aligned with our educational values.

The review process is collaborative and participatory, involving coordinators, teachers, students, and families. We believe it is essential to listen to diverse perspectives to understand how language is experienced, valued, and promoted by all members of the school community. This collective input informs decision-making and strengthens a culture of inclusion, respect, and continuous learning.