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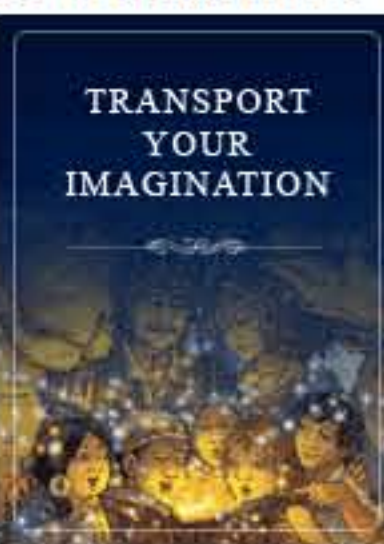
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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

"Kids Love Spanish": A Great Vocabulary Builder For Ages 2-5



Kids Love Spanish is a series of seven Spanish-instruction DVDs created by two California sisters, Krisse Brock Kelly and Julie Brock Campbell. Kelly has Masters degrees in Bilingual Education and Administration and has worked as an elementary-school teacher (including teaching a bilingual kindergarten class) and assistant principal, and both have pursued interests in Spanish since high school. Kids Love Spanish DVDs are priced at roughly \$20 per title or \$100 for a seven-DVD boxed set.



Languages: Spanish.

Materials and format: DVDs are sold individually or in sets. Each DVD is approximately 30 minutes.

Scope and methodology: *Kids Love Spanish* DVDs cover

simple Spanish vocabulary in seven thematic groupings - Basic Words, Alphabet & Numbers, Family, Food, Colors & Shapes, Animals, and Basic Phrases. All content follows the same basic format: A word is stated and shown onscreen, and then is repeated many times by children of different ages and by adults as well. Midway through each word's roughly 1:15 sequence it is translated ("*Hermana* means 'sister' in Spanish") and gets used in an English sentence or two. ("She is his *hermana*." In this sense each DVD and the series as a whole is highly repetitive and remains a basic introduction to simple vocabulary.

Impressions: The Kids Love Spanish series straddles the professional and the amateur in both production values and methodology. The creators (two sisters) set the tone by personally performing song-and-dance numbers at the beginning and end of each episode (a Charleston and song to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and an alternate theme sung to the tune of "I Want Candy"). A profusion of novelty fonts and font effects unreasonably complicate the visual display of vocabulary words.

Get past these flaws without your mind clamping shut, however, and you may agree that *Kids Love Spanish* is a strong contender for vocabulary building, especially when watched with parents who repeat words and help use that vocabulary in daily life. The repeat-for-1:15 format, which at first seemed redundant, ended up looking like a stroke of genius to us, as it offers all of the benefits or repetition without any of the monotony. Every repeated word is spoken by a different person, and watching a dozen different children pronounce each word, all with slight variations of emphasis and pronunciation, provides strong prompts for speaking among young viewers.

Within these formal constraints, many words are also explored with a surprising thoroughness that reinforces comprehension. In the series' treatment of *casa*, for example, two children are shown standing in front of their own houses, one identifies an outdoor play house as a "casa," and the narrator comments on a shot of a dog in a doghouse. Examples like these add variety and interest, and may help communicate concepts more thoroughly as well.

Kids Love Spanish productions are billed as appropriate for "children of all ages." But based on the degree of repetition, the emphasis on nouns and adjectives as opposed to dialogue and plot, and the overall tone, we believe Kids Love Spanish productions are most likely to be effective for children ages 2-5, who are still mastering some of the same concepts in English, and are the most likely to be moved by their bright colors and occasional goofiness. We also recommend Kids Love Spanish be accompanied by significant Spanish-language exposure and interaction, and passed on to others as soon as mastery of the materials is achieved.

Where to Buy: On the [Kids Love Spanish website](#) or on [Amazon.com](#). The company's website offers discounted prices and partial set discounts, while Amazon offers free shipping on orders of \$25 or more.

For its production quality and "fun factor" for early language exposure, Kids Love Spanish is one of our Language Week Top Picks.

POSTED BY JEREMIAH MCNICHOLS

LABELS: LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE WEEK, VIDEO

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