

A bilingual future for Edinburgh's preschoolers?

A young Scottish linguist is transforming the language learning opportunities of under fives in Edinburgh.

Christopher Atha founded Future Bilingual in August 2021 with the aim of providing native-speaker led, immersive language learning experiences for preschoolers in the city.

A qualified secondary school languages teacher, he first saw how effectively young children absorb languages while working at a bilingual primary school in Madrid.

Atha was driven to found Future Bilingual after reading about the findings of a University of Washington [study](#) on second language acquisition in infants.

The study's co-author, Dr Patrica Kuhl, concluded: "Science indicates that babies' brains are the best learning machines ever created, and that infants' learning is time-sensitive. Their brains will never be better at learning a second language than they are between 0 and 3 years of age."

Future Bilingual is currently running Saturday morning classes in the Eric Liddell Centre in Morningside. These hour-long sessions are play and story based and the focus is on quality interaction with qualified and experienced native speakers with a tutor-child ratio of 1:3. All tutors are PVG scheme members, though parents and carers also attend the sessions.

Atha is gradually building up a database of French, Mandarin

and Spanish tutors in Edinburgh. In time he hopes to expand Future Bilingual's offering by taking the classes into other centres across Edinburgh, and, potentially, nurseries.

In the meantime, parents hoping to set up home-based, in-person language sessions for their preschooler are welcome to get in touch.

www.futurebilingual.uk



Future Bilingual tutors in action