

March 6, 2006 8:46pm



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## Chinese: The New French or Spanish

GREENWICH, Conn., June 1, 2005



Chinese language students in Greenwich, Conn. (CBS)

**(CBS)** What could possibly pack the classrooms on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in tony Greenwich, Connecticut?

Out of the mouths of babes comes the answer, reports **CBS News Correspondent Richard Schlesinger**.

These kids are starting early -- learning what many people believe will be the language of international commerce when they get older -- Chinese.

Christopher Dunn is 4-years-old and can already count to ten.

Christopher's 7-year-old brother Alex and his 10-year-old twin sisters Mary Carolyn and Madeleine are all studying Chinese because their parents, Ray and Callie, believe a nation of one billion people is bound to affect the kids' lives.

"The way the world is developing, China's becoming so much more important," said Ray Dunn.



### QUOTE

**"The way the world is developing, China's becoming so much more important."**

**Ray Dunn, parent whose children are learning Chinese**

"The way the world is developing, China's becoming so much more important," said Ray Dunn.

"What else can you say?" Schlesinger asked Christopher.

"Grape," he replied

"How do you say grape?"

A putao (pu-toe).

There are close to 200 students in this school this year, including children adopted from China, and there's already a waiting list for next year when Christopher will be back.

"I don't really know hard words," Christopher said. "When I'm in my brother's class or my sisters' class..."

"That's the hard words class," Schlesinger noted.

Christopher agreed.

His older sisters are already reading and writing Chinese.

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**Spelling Does Count**

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In the past, these kids might have been urged to learn French or Spanish. But that was when the U.S. was focused on Europe and China was in the economic dark ages. It's not any more.

The Chinese have been teaching English for years in public schools, so Christopher Dunn's generation has to catch up.

"I know a lot of words," says Christopher.

And by the time he's an adult, the U.S. and China still might not be on the same page, but at least they could be speaking the same language.

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