



LITERACY AND LANGUAGE

The Kindergarten program nurtures children's literacy and language skills in an integrated environment where they speak, listen, read and write in a variety of contexts and engage with prints. Children are given plenty of opportunities to make conversations on print material, to add their own inputs in the same and develop grammar and vocabulary in the same context.

The age groups for the Kindergarten program are 3.5 - 4.5 in Year 1 and 4.5 - 5.5 in Year 2.

In the Early Literacy program the children are introduced to print letters and cursive letters using in-house resources and letter kits similar to the Movable alphabet box in the Montessori. They also use pre-writing exercises, sight words, vocabulary cards, picture/story reading, letter recognition games, sequencing activities. Students develop phonemic awareness by matching and manipulating sounds with the help of the letter kits. Students combine letters as sounds which are blended to form words. Students eventually attempt to read simple stories.

Listening to and reading stories begins the awareness that spoken words have a written representation and words convey meaning. The program cultivates a love of reading and an appreciation of the written word using both fiction and nonfiction.

Writing is a key form of communication, through the program. They recognize basic sight words and decode simple word families as well. Early writing exercises like tracing and writing individual letters solidify sound/symbol correspondence. Children are encouraged to illustrate stories and make illustrated journal entries about topics of their interest. Grammar concepts like nouns and verbs assist them in writing/speaking simple sentences.

Opportunities like show and tell enable students develop confidence and communication skills. A variety of rhymes and poems and other non-fiction texts are also many such multiple opportunities in the curriculum, allowing children to become confident speakers and learn to converse fluently with their peer group, staff and teachers.

Storytelling and Puppetry -The inclusion of additional storytelling classes into the reading program for Pre-Primary grades is quite unique. The broader goal is to benefit the healthy development of a child's verbal skills, imagination, values, cognitive dexterity, and creative skills. The use of voice modulation, expression, gestures, characterization, dramatization and pace achieves the objective of creating a love for reading.

Teachers make use of this tool extensively to supplement storytelling classes. Puppets are also used as mascots for reading class to allow children to associate concepts quicker and assimilate them better. Another important aspect of using puppets in Pre-Primary is the obvious dramatization or characterisation route where they are assigned specific characters to help bring a story alive to a class.

Puppet time at school is both entertaining and captivating for all age groups from the Montessori toddlers to the upper kindergarten students. Children believe and relate to them on multiple levels; they enter and explore the fascinating inventive world that puppets create.



NUMERACY AND MATHEMATICS

At Ekya, Math instruction follows the three-step approach – concrete to pictorial to abstract – and spirals lessons throughout the years, to connect current lessons to prior and future learning. Concepts are introduced through hands-on investigation, then translated to paper-and-pencil images, and finally, into numerical and symbolic algorithms.

Rather than memorizing isolated facts and procedures, students build skills in critical reasoning and communication and a deep conceptual foundation:

- Create, recognize, and extend patterns
- Deconstruct and reconstruct numbers in many ways
- Use non-standard forms of measurement
- Sequence and identify causality between events
- Identify, describe, compare, and compose shapes

Children are provided opportunities to engage with real life problems or mathematical situations involving numbers, number-operations, measurements and the like. They are encouraged to use skills of reasoning to work on those problems.



PPM – KINDERGARTEN LEARNING AREA SPECIFIC COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

QUEST

How is my city special to me? Do birds have ears? These are some of the important relevant questions that the pre-schoolers are curious about; learning by inquiry and thinking purposefully with direction and interest is the purpose of the Quest program.

This is the perfect opportunity for the students to be engaged with scaffolded interactions, discussions and conversations that will begin to set them off on an inquiry cycle. The Quest classroom aims to keep the thirst for new knowledge and information alive with various sensorial and stimulating experiences.

Students are taken through the journey of guided inquiry in the classrooms with themes that are chosen at the beginning of the term. Various subjects like science, social science, and the arts are chosen for the inquiry cycle. Multiple skills and personal development opportunities are thrown into the classroom discussions to help students enjoy the experiences that a Quest classroom has to offer. Each unit of inquiry is covered for a period of five weeks with activities, interactions, collaborative discussions and individual portfolio assignments. Often, students come forth with new perspectives and ideas that further extend the unit of inquiry to new dimensions and areas. Investigation and working on a problem are important aspects of the quest curriculum. Children get an opportunity for sustained engagement on a science or social phenomena and to develop their unique response to the world that they are a part of.



ARTS

Visual Arts: The creative arts classes are filled with new and familiar experiences of dabbling and working with different art materials and resources. Little children enjoy working with materials that include crayons, oil pastels, watercolors and acrylic paints. A step by step progression of fine and gross motor skills are planned for the students to build up their hand eye coordination skills and later build more complex skills while working with different techniques and creative processes while continuing to help students use their creativity and imagination to express their thoughts and ideas on different mediums.

The art classes encourages students to enhance their social, emotional and cognitive skills as students are encouraged to think on their own and implement their ideas on paper in group formats and independently.

Students are made familiar with the elements of art and are given opportunities to apply different artistic techniques in their work. Students dabble with paint and crayons to create their own masterpieces representing their individuality and creativity throughout the school year.

Performing arts is integrated into the curriculum at the pre-primary level to target multiple skills on the personal and interpersonal level of the students. While participating in the performing arts classes, students begin to learn basic locomotor movements and skills that harness multiple areas of learning like mathematical skills, sensorial skills, visual skills and higher order thinking skills. Students begin to appreciate themselves and learn to work collaboratively with their peers for the activities that are designed. A session in performing arts might include a range of activities and lessons designed to target specific skills like pantomimes, physical movement classes, role- plays, activities to instil imagination and creativity, enjoying songs and rhymes and making sense of different stimuli presented to them.

Students begin the year with basic movement classes, collaborative activities, skills that help them to be more expressive and creative while learning to be independent thinkers and risk takers. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively for activities to hone new skills and abilities that include listening and speaking activities, dramatic play and enjoying other kinesthetic activities.

The Atelier is a unique feature of the Ekya Early years program. The Atelier space helps students learn through experiences designed around the natural world. Inspired by the Reggio Emilia, The Atelier is a place of research, invention, and empathy, expressed in many unique ways.

Students engage and explore materials that address multiple cognitive skills like memory, concentration, attention and problem solving skills. The materials include natural and recyclable materials and miniature objects that are a result of the child's imagination. Students engage in cooperative games that help them engage socially in conversations with their peers. Teachers facilitate and engage the students with meaningful conversations while at the atelier space.

Drawing, coloring, craft work, singing, dancing and enacting roles are integral aspects of the arts curricula. Besides developing children's aesthetic qualities, they also nurture their abilities to think and develop an interest in the beautiful world of arts.

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PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Play is the child's work. Play programs at school give teachers and students the chance to play together in a safe and stimulating environment. Play time for the students includes opportunities to play outside the classrooms in the playground, play area or sand pit. Students' physical and gross motor skills are encouraged during free play as both young boys and girls indulge in activities that peak their interests by choosing activities like building sand castles, walking on the sand, running around the playground or climbing the play equipment.

Conversations and interactions among the students are the most animated in the play area as students discuss, share and communicate with their peers about multiple topics of interest to them. Kinaesthetic movements that are planned for the students during play time enhance their movements and ensure the students benefit on multiple levels from these experiences.

Besides getting ample time to play and develop their mind and body; the early year's curriculum also ensures that children learn and practice certain healthy and safe habits of a lifetime. During lunch time and in various day long routines, there are times allotted for discussing these concepts with children and they are oriented to follow safe and healthy lifestyles.

SOCIO EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPROACH TO LEARNING

Show & Tell in the early childhood classroom has numerous benefits for young children. These activities help in building self confidence, exploring their physical, emotional and mental strengths and vulnerabilities and working their way around to strengthen it further. Along with building effective communication and listening skills that are essential, students also work on their intra personal skills for better interpersonal interactions, which is the core of our social existence. It encourages emotional development in the student, as he or she shares their interests, favourite objects, important people, and exciting experiences with their peers.

Students begin to learn the importance of body language, active listening and eye contact with their audience, selfcare and to acknowledge others opinions. Show and tell activity acts as a platform through which public speaking is introduced. They understand time and the restrictions it brings to a speaker and how hence it is very important to think, reflect and prepare in advance for a show and tell experience in the classroom.

Students also learn about turn taking and patience while enhancing their spoken language skills.

Each activity that children partake in irrespective of whether it is Math or games or dance or lunch time, the emphasis is not on completion of the activity but on how children are learning, what their thought processes are, how they are approaching various situations and working with people or materials. These are some aspects that cut across all disciplines and are integrated into the system of the early years, thereby providing a holistic environment for learning and development of children in these crucial years of life.



