

PPM – MONTESSORI LEARNING AREA SPECIFIC COURSE DESCRIPTIONS MONTESSORI (3 year program)



LITERACY AND LANGUAGE

In the Montessori Program, students are introduced to materials and exercises that foster coherent language experiences based on visual and auditory experiences, vocabulary development. Language is enriched using fiction and non-fiction resources in order to equip children with reading and writing skills.

The environment consists of a mixed age group that is from 2.5 years to 5.5 years. The Sub-Juniors are engaged in activities that develop fine and gross motor skills through tactile equipment. The Juniors (3.5 to 4.5 years) and Seniors (4.5 to 5.5 years) learn to understand that sounds make words, and words are combined in patterns to make meaningful sentences. This is developed through exposure to phonics, sight words, digraphs, picture books and the like.

Pre-writing material like Sand Tracing tray, using tweezers and tongs, threading of beads, Peg puzzles and Cylinder blocks, Pink tower are used to prepare them with the grip and control required to begin writing.

Listening to and reading stories begins the awareness that spoken words have a written representation and words convey meaning. The Movable alphabet box used in the program aids in helping students combine letters as sounds which are blended to form words. Students eventually attempt to read simple stories. Through multiple opportunities in the curriculum, children become confident speakers and learn to converse fluently with their peer group, staff and teachers. The program cultivates a love of reading and an appreciation of the written word using both fiction and nonfiction. They are introduced to rhymes and poetry that enhances their interests in language learning.

Writing is a key form of communication, through the program. Concepts in grammar like nouns and verbs are integrated in stories or poems and assist them in writing/speaking simple sentences.

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

Montessori Mathematics leads to the discovery of natural laws and patterns that ultimately have the power to control the environment. Montessori identified a specific "sensitive period" during the years 3 - 6 for the development of concepts such as quantity, size, counting and measurement. As in all Montessori curriculum areas, mathematics instruction proceeds from concrete to abstract as the children move through all the 3 years. Montessori's process employs concrete materials and carefully constructed "works" to aid in the child's development of an awareness of mathematics and mathematical thinking. Knowledge is displayed through performance and through the child being able to explain and process concepts. Children apply their knowledge to a variety of real life tasks such as graphing the daily temperature, cooking, and computing the height of a tree to even measuring the classroom. These experiences contribute to an understanding of mathematical concepts through practical applications.

At Ekya, an additional Math instruction is provided and involves the use of 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. They are provided opportunities to talk about mathematics and to explore many concepts by processes such as:

- Creating, recognizing, and extending patterns
- Deconstructing and reconstructing numbers in many ways
- Using non-standard forms of measurement
- Sequencing and identifying causality between events
- Identifying, describing, comparing, and composing shapes.



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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 about self and the natural and social world 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 encourage 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.

Montessori Juniors: Students begin the year with basic skills like scribbling, drawing within a provided space, learning how to use and take care of different art materials, colouring with purpose, free drawing experiences and targeting structured skills as well.

Montessori Seniors: Students identify their primary and secondary colours and are encouraged to use lines, patterns and shapes in individual drawings and group art work. 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 - 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.

Both forms of arts- visual and performing are also opportunities for children to strengthen their cognitive as well as aesthetic capacities.

Let's add Atelier here too i.e. in the same heading of Arts

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.



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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.

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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. Kinesthetic 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, free and structured games activities, it is also ensured that children eat well and drink sufficient water during the day. Daily routines are structured such that children get opportunities to talk about and practice personal hygiene and safety and grow as healthy individuals

SOCIO EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPROACH TO LEARNING

Show and Tell lessons in the early childhood classroom have 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, self-care and to acknowledge others opinions. The 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.

The Early Years program is built such that children develop social-emotional aspects as well as learn how to learn in all learning areas viz. language, math, quest, arts and physical education. Thus, each activity that children are a part of emphasises that children work collaboratively with each other, work with interest and enthusiasm, ask questions and make an effort to solve problems independently. Integration of activities like show and tell in the curriculum also serves as enhancing children's life skills.



