

What a joy it is to hear your child say "is it a school day today mummy?" and when the answer is yes, "Yipee!"

From the moment our family enrolled Jacques at Alpha International Montessori School (AIMS) in Vientiane, we received nothing but care and consideration from the staff at all levels. The welcome from support staff is just as lovely as that from teachers and the way Jacques responds to a "Sabaidee" as he runs through the playground-garden entrance shows that there is true affection on both sides.

Montessori schools are not day care or play schools. They take your child's education seriously. This is not to say that there is not a lot of fun to be had, but there are Montessori ways or methods which encourage self-investigation, self-initiative and self-confidence. I also attended a Montessori school as a child and have very fond memories of this time. The team of educators at AIMS are particularly keen to share an understanding of these methods with parents to explain and encourage supportive practices in the home and have held parent education nights to do so. Their enthusiasm for Montessori is the reason the school was set up and drives its ongoing development – which is why they will soon offer the **first Montessori Elementary level in Laos**.

As a contractor, previously based in Vientiane for 3 years but now travelling back and forth from Australia, I am particularly indebted to the school for its flexibility in allowing Jacques to attend each time we return. He knows the routines and fits straight back in and more importantly really enjoys his time at AIMS.

There are lots of schools to choose from in Vientiane – do your own investigations as we did. We chose AIMS and couldn't be happier.

