

AIMS Programs

We use an International Montessori Curriculum and offer five programs;

Toddlers (1.5 to 2 years)

Twos (2 to 3 years)

Pre-school (3 to 6 years)

Lower Elementary (6 to 9 years)

Upper Elementary (9 to 12 years)

The children are offered a wide range of activities to cover all aspects of child development – intellectual, physical and social. Although each activity is a complete piece of work within itself, the activities are interrelated. Much care is taken to provide the children with achievable challenges throughout their time at the school, so that their self-esteem is nurtured and they are encouraged to even greater learning and exploration. The activities offered in a Montessori classroom are grouped as follows:

Areas of Learning

Practical Life

The objective of this activity is for the child to develop concentration, independence, co-ordination of movement and mastery of skills needed for everyday life.

Young children are attracted to activities that they see going on around them and that gives them independence and control of their own life.

As well as helping the child develop his/her physical co-ordination, there is the added advantage that the child learns to focus attention for the entirety of an activity. Completing a task properly helps the child to achieve a sense of fulfillment. Practical Life activities also focus

on developing the children's social skills within a mixed-age setting.

Practical Life activities are divided into the following:

- Exercises for increasing mastery and co-ordination of movement, e.g. pouring, spooning, folding, opening bottles and walking on a line.
- Exercises for the care of your environment, e.g. dusting, sweeping, washing up, and cleaning.
- Exercises for the personal grooming of the person, e.g. polishing shoes, tying shoe laces, and fastening buttons.
- Exercises for grace and courtesy, e.g. greeting people, saying please, excuse me, and thank you, blowing the nose, looking after others, and how to ask for help.

Sensorial Activities

The small child is vividly aware of the world, taking in impressions through all their senses. We have special sensorial materials which help to stimulate and train the senses, not only visually but also through touch, sound, taste and smell, thereby developing perception. An experience using one sense may often be reinforced by experiences gained through another sense – for example feeling a shape may reinforce a visual impression already gained

. Many of our materials reflect qualities of the environment such as colour, size, shape, texture, sound

, and weight. These help a child develop powers of observation, communication and exploration.

The sensorial activities also indirectly prepare the child for later maths and language work as they enable the child to order, classify, and categorise things with in their environment.

Mathematics

By introducing a wide range of mathematical principles in an original and exciting way we provide an excellent foundation for numeracy.

The Montessori mathematics materials enable even very young children to develop a natural appreciation of basic mathematical concepts and to avoid the mental blockages which so often occur with purely abstract concepts. The specially designed materials enable a child to gain very concrete ideas and sensory experiences of numbers, their quantities and mathematical operations. Many activities use self-correcting materials so that children know when they have made a mistake. Gradually the child can move confidently towards the completion of abstract mathematical problems. After mastering counting from 1-10, many children in Montessori schools then like to count with hundreds or thousands. Many Montessori-educated children often grow up with a love of numbers and mathematics.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Children have a natural interest in finding out how things work and creating their own models. Within the Montessori environment, children explore and develop their knowledge of peoples of the world, the environment and nature. We encourage the children to collect items of interest to display on the constantly changing nature table. This is an area where children can display their earth

treasures and gain an appreciation for the wonder of nature. Montessori extends a child's knowledge of history, geography, zoology, botany and science. Children gain an awareness of the world around them by exploring countries, customs, foods, climates, language, plants and animals.

Extensive work is done to ensure the children explore many cultures from around the world. We have a

globe, puzzle maps, flag maps and many other materials available for teaching

children to learn the names of continents and countries

around the world. At an early age children are able to learn about the land and water forms of the world.

Great emphasis is also put on the plant and animal kingdom, and children are encouraged to foster a love and appreciation for all living things.

Communication, Language and Literacy

Through practical life and sensorial materials the Montessori child has a great deal of indirect preparation for language work. Children develop all aspects of language and can become good readers and writers at an early age.

AIMS have two language areas, one for English and one for Lao. All the children are introduced to activities in both language areas.

Within the Montessori environment, we have activities that prepare children for writing. The children do pre-exercises for eye-hand coordination, for learning to concentrate, for recognising shapes and sizes, and for working with puzzles and crayons. We start by teaching our children the sounds inside

words and this

gradually and rapidly

progresses to word building, full recognition of words, and eventually total reading. New words are experienced by touching objects or performing actions so that children can connect the language to the real world. They learn the phonetic sounds of each letter and play games by breaking words into sounds.

Writing starts by feeling a letter, tracing its shape in sandpaper while saying the sound. Large cut-out letters allow children who are not ready to hold a pencil to make words. With picture

cards and phonetic words, children can match and copy words, learning at their own pace but stimulated by teachers.

Arts and Crafts

The children have access to a diverse range of materials with which to express themselves. Drawing, painting, crayon work, collage, working with clay, cutting, pasting, designing, modelling and many other activities help them to explore their imaginations, and to share their thoughts and feelings with others, and to develop their hand-eye coordination. Children interested in painting will find aprons, paper, paint and brushes ready to use. Life subjects observed in other areas of the school, for example a seed that the group has watched grow into a plant can inspire children to reproduce what they see in clay, paint or crayon.

Music and Creative Movement

'If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing'

Proverb from Malawi

Songs give children a way of expressing emotions, while singing provides language practice through new words and rhyming. AIMS children learn Lao and international songs, and dances from different countries. Various instruments allow the children to express themselves and become familiar with different sounds. A famous doctor from Japan said: "what does not exist in the cultural environment will not develop in the child" and our school places great emphasis on introducing many types of instruments and music styles.

Physical Development

Regular outdoor activity is needed to promote healthy growth in young children. Through practice they develop muscular control, co-ordination and awareness of others and the space

they move in. Children also have to think and use their judgement to solve problems when taking part in physical activities. It helps to build self-confidence and develop their imagination. They learn to use small and large equipment safely and with increasing competence with minimal supervision required.

Monthly Theme

Every month a learning theme is selected for circle times. For example, in July we may talk about 'Recycling', giving children a chance to learn about the environment and resources, about how paper is made, and also about how money can be earned from recycling.

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