



American Overseas School of Rome

AOSR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OVERVIEW

AOSR's pre-kindergarten program is founded in research and standards based developmentally appropriate practices. The curriculum focuses on all areas of development- social/emotional, fine/gross motor skills, cognitive skills, language/literacy and creative expression- through an integrated approach. Differentiated instruction and a variety of learning styles are incorporated, thereby allowing each child to take full advantage of daily activities and learning opportunities.

Social and Emotional Development

Children are taught to take care of themselves, each other and the school environment. Respect, kindness, caring, honesty, responsibility, fairness and trustworthiness are the foundation for building positive relationships. Each day is filled with many opportunities to develop social skills such as working collaboratively in groups, cooperating with teachers and peers, building cultural understanding, sharing, resolving conflicts and taking turns. Well-developed social and emotional skills ensure that children can learn to their highest potential.

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Children develop large motor skills (i.e. bending, twisting, walking, running, etc.) through active and interactive opportunities both in the classroom, on the playground and in physical education classes. As children experience the environment with their bodies, coordination and balance are enhanced. In the classroom, the development of fine motor skills is essential preparation as children begin to experiment with writing. Children use their hands to explore various materials, thereby building strength, dexterity, accuracy and stamina.

Cognitive Development

Students develop an understanding of concepts and reasoning skills through hands-on experience with their environment. Teachers guide the children in inquiry, investigation and reflection. They support the development of skills such as cause-and-effect thinking, anticipation of logical consequences, brainstorming and problem solving. Concepts in the areas of social studies, math and science are learned through relevant, engaging and developmentally appropriate activities.

Language and Literacy Skills

Language Arts offers children opportunities to speak, listen, reflect and comprehend their world. Basic literacy skills develop through meaningful learning experiences. Language and literacy are integrated throughout the day in a variety of activities including reading stories and poems, singing songs, morning meeting, playing games, imaginative play, conversations, drawing, writing and creating artwork. Children are supported and encouraged as they begin to demonstrate interest in pre-reading and pre-writing skills.

Creative Expression

Creativity and aesthetic appreciation are encouraged daily through art, dramatic play and music. Separate weekly music classes also introduce children to various instruments, as well as provide opportunities for dance and movement.

Art is an integral part of children's learning and a great variety of materials and media are used in the classroom. Different types of materials allow the children to create, exercise abstract thinking and expand their repertoire of techniques for self-expression.

Technology

Various forms of technology and interactive media are integrated into the curriculum to support the children's learning and development. As appropriate, these tools are used to enhance the materials, activities, projects and interactions already present in the pre-k classroom.

Special Classes

Music: Two lessons per week
Physical Education: Two lessons per week
Art: Two additional lessons per week with the ES art teacher

OUR REGGIO EMILIA INSPIRED PRE-K PROGRAM

In addition to the foundational concepts explained above, the world-renowned Reggio Emilia Approach largely inspires the planning and implementation of curriculum within our program.

In the following chart, the basic principles of a Reggio Emilia Inspired Program are outlined, as well as how they relate to common early childhood principles that our program upholds and to AOSR's Profile of a Graduate.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE REGGIO EMILIA INSPIRED PRE-K PROGRAM AT AOSR	CORRELATING EARLY CHILDHOOD GUIDING PRINCIPLES	AOSR PROFILE OF A GRADUATE
<p>1. Children have potential and possess the capability to construct their own learning. Children demonstrate curiosity and are interested in engaging in social interaction, establishing relationships and interacting with their environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child centered exploration -Learning through play -Building relationships to foster learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Succeed Academically -Think Critically -Communicate Skillfully -Collaborate Purposefully
<p>2. Children are viewed as active collaborators within a system of relationships with peers, teachers, parents, the environment, the school community and wider society. When working with peers, small groups provide opportunities for children to construct new knowledge together while learning to listen to and communicate with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Building relationships to foster learning -Collaborative group work -Embracing diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborate Purposefully -Be Globally Minded -Live as Ethical Citizens -Demonstrate Resilience and Balance
<p>3. Children are natural communicators and should be encouraged and allowed to communicate through diverse means, including a variety of materials and media. This concept is best illustrated by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, in his poem <i>The Hundred Languages of Children</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differentiated instruction -Open-ended investigation -Embracing diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communicate Skillfully -Cultivate Creativity
<p>4. The classroom environment is of utmost importance in a Reggio Emilia inspired program and should provide a welcoming sense of belonging. Natural furnishings and colors in light and plant filled rooms encourage real-life, authentic interactions. Children's work and projects fill the room creating a personal space that recounts the process of the children's thought and exploration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Environment as the third teacher -Child centered approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cultivate Creativity -Communicate Skillfully
<p>5. Teachers are partners in the children's learning. By observing and listening to children, teachers nurture and guide them in their explorations. Short and long-term, inquiry based projects allow the curriculum to emerge as the children explore their interests. Teachers view their</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inquiry based learning -Learning by doing- focus on process, not product -Child initiated and teacher guided/supported -Child centered exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Succeed Academically -Think Critically -Cultivate Creativity -Collaborate Purposefully -Communicate Skillfully

<p>role as one of continual research and learning in collaboration with both children and colleagues.</p>		
<p>6. Documentation is an essential component of communication within the classroom. Teachers document the learning process by transcribing children's discussions and comments about their work. Along with photos, this documentation allows both teachers and parents to better understand the children and their process of learning. Detailed documentation also shows the children that their work and efforts are valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child centered approach -Child initiated and teacher guided/supported -Focused, open-ended investigation -Learning by doing- focus on process, not product -Building relationships to foster learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Succeed Academically -Communicate Skillfully
<p>7. Parents are considered as partners in their child's education and are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning experience. Parental involvement is a critical aspect of creating a learning community for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Building relationships to foster learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Succeed Academically -Demonstrate Resilience and Balance

INTEGRATED UNITS OF STUDY

Projects within a Reggio Emilia Inspired program vary in length and can be both child and teacher initiated. The following table outlines some general themes and topics teachers typically investigate with the children throughout the school year. All areas of development are integrated into these units. It is also important to note that while the children in pre-k 3 and 4 might be exploring the same topic, activities and projects are designed in accordance with the developmental levels of the children, thereby providing an enriching and motivating experience for all ages.

THEMES AND GUIDING QUESTIONS	TOPICS
School Environment <i>-How can we be safe and responsible in our classroom?</i> <i>-Who are the people at our school and how can they help us?</i> <i>-What is important to tell others about myself and what makes me special?</i> <i>-How can we work and play together in the pre-k?</i>	Our Classroom
	School Community
	Introducing Ourselves
	Our Classmates
All About Me <i>-How can I use my five senses to explore the world around me?</i> <i>-What is important to tell others about my family, my home, and where we come from?</i>	Using My Senses to Explore
	My Family
	My Home
Our Place in the World <i>-Why is it important to take care of the world around us?</i> <i>-What can we do in pre-k to help the environment?</i> <i>-Where are we living in the world? What is unique/ special about our neighborhood and the city we live in?</i>	Incorporating recycled materials and objects into our work and play
	Our community and our city
Our “group mascot’s” place in the world* <i>-Why are other living things an important part of our world?</i> <i>-What can we do to protect other living things?</i>	Possible topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forests or deserts ● Ponds ● Oceans ● Trees ● Plants
<p>*AOSR has adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as the guide for science instruction Pre-K through grade 12. The NGSS identify scientific and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and core ideas in science that all students should master in order to prepare for success in college and 21st-century careers. The NGSS provide a strong science education that equips students with the ability to think critically, analyze information, and solve complex problems. Pre-K will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Plant and Animal Needs * How Animals and Plants Can Change Their Environment 	

ASSESSMENT

Observation and Anecdotal Records

Learning is assessed during the school year through regular observation and the use of anecdotal records. Teachers observe students on an ongoing basis and record pertinent information for all areas of development. Analysis of this information enables the teachers to determine each child's skill levels and thereby plan curricular activities to promote growth in specific areas.

Documentation

The documentation of the children's learning process, including transcriptions of discussions and comments about their work is also used as a form of assessment. Along with photos, this documentation allows teachers to better understand the children and their process of learning. Detailed documentation also enables children to self-assess and see how their thinking and learning change over time.

Progress Reports and Parent Conferences

Written reports are provided for parents in January and in June in the form of a progress report. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in November and, if necessary, again in March. Student-Led Conferences take place in the spring, during which students guide parents in a classroom visit and share a personal portfolio of their work from the entire school year.