

The American School in London

K1: Semester 1 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the first reporting period, these are the ideas, concepts, and skills your child will have learned. We acknowledge that all children learn at different paces, and that it takes the students different lengths of time to master skills and concepts. Your child's teacher will update you on their initial social, emotional, and academic progress at October conferences and provide a more formal report card in February.

Social and Emotional Development

We are a play-based program and value the deep learning and development that occurs during children's play. Learning to play and work together in harmony is one of the most important goals in kindergarten. Children are explicitly taught conflict resolution strategies and are supported to solve social conflicts verbally. We expect children to manage and take responsibility for their own behavior. We focus on the values of empathy, respect, tolerance and sharing throughout the year.

Approaches to Learning

Our class environments and curriculum are designed to promote curiosity, flexibility and creativity. We encourage students to become independent learners, to make appropriate choices and to seek help from peers and adults when needed. We expect students to put forth their best effort, yet be willing to take risks and to learn from their mistakes. Our aim is to foster independence and promote problem solving strategies. The organization and care of work, materials and personal belongings is also a part of being independent in kindergarten. We encourage children to use language to communicate when they need help and to articulate their thinking.

Gross and Fine Motor Development

Gross motor skills are important to enable children to perform everyday functions at school. These include maintaining an upright sitting posture, navigating classroom and play spaces safely and having appropriate levels of movement. Children are also building their stamina to sustain appropriate mental and physical energy throughout the school day. Fine motor skills are necessary to succeed with academic tasks (e.g. cutting, drawing and writing) as well as to complete self care tasks such as independent dressing (coats, packing bags) and eating (managing lunch bags and food). We support the ongoing development of children's sensory systems in music, movement and physical education lessons and provide opportunities for "messy" play.

Speaking and Listening

Communication is a fundamental skill for both academic and social success. Across the curriculum, we focus on developing children's receptive, expressive and nonverbal language skills. Receptive language skills in kindergarten include engaged listening for increasingly longer periods of time and being able to hear, remember and follow 2 to 3 step directions. Expressive language skills include speaking clearly to ask questions and articulate thinking and effective communication to solve problems and have needs met. During play times the ability to move flexibly between listening and speaking is an important social skill. Nonverbal communication skills enable children to understand meaning and emotion from the body language, facial expressions and gestures of others.

Reading

This semester the children explore literature throughout the day. They engage in read alouds, big books and shared reading experiences. The children also explore text through our morning message, poems and environmental print.

Writing

We encourage the children to be risk takers in their writing development through storytelling, acting, drawing and writing. The writing process is modeled through daily routines and shared writing.

Math

This first semester, children focus on a deep conceptual understanding of numbers 0 - 5 through activities and games that use math in meaningful situations. Other foundational concepts such as patterning, graphing, sorting and classifying are addressed. Our math curriculum is guided by the Common Core State Standards, which teaches children practical ways to apply these concepts.

Project Work

Project work is an opportunity for each class to pursue an in-depth investigation of a topic using inquiry. In the first semester, our project work is science-based, and we explore phenomena from the local natural world (e.g. plants, mini-beasts, seeds, etc.) using close observation, recording (often with observational drawings), investigations, data collection, and analysis. We ask children to notice patterns, to think about cause and effect and to design models to show their understanding. Project work depends and thrives on *wonder*. We wonder: *What do I see when I look closely? How can I show what I see to others? What would happen if...? How did this happen? and What have I learned?*

Creative Arts

The Kindergarten Creative Arts program has always been holistic and conceptual in nature, but now with the Early Childhood playground as our outdoor classroom, we are excited for the potential learning opportunities provoked by such a nurturing and purposeful space where we can truly embrace learning through play, nature and the arts under the umbrella of "Community Ecology." This year we will also have access to the Creative Arts room which will be used as an art studio for more focused engagements with materials. We are influenced by the systemic and ecological approach of Reggio Emilia whereby projects evolve from the children's own interests and curiosity about the world around them. Children express themselves through their 100 languages and are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss their creative work whether individually or in a group as they develop skills in collaboration, reciprocity, exchange, interconnection and interdependency. Visual Art, drama, music, movement and Spanish are explored through provocations, play, guided storytelling and circle games.

PE

In the first term of K1 PE, the children explore how to move safely by stopping, starting and responding to signals and music. They practice balancing, walking, running, skipping, leaping and hopping in and around navigating space. The children are introduced to risk-taking and problem solving through spy training challenges. Kindness and caring for their peers is expected as the children begin to develop their emotional wellness. Listening and staying on task are important indicators of self-control and increased maturity.