

The American School in London

K2: Semester 2 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the second 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.

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, 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

By the middle of the year, kindergarten children have developed the language, writing and literacy skills and concepts that enable them to approach reading with excitement and confidence. Children are grouped into small guided reading groups and continue to practice reading texts at their level. Attention is paid to an individual child's reading skills as well as his or her social/emotional maturity and disposition towards reading. Using big books and familiar texts, we continue to teach reading skills and behaviors, including recognizing high-frequency words, one-to-one matching, noticing patterns, using cues in pictures and texts, and participating in conversations about books.

Writing

Our writing program seeks to develop students who naturally and joyfully choose to write as a form of expression. By the second half of the year, kindergarten students see themselves as writers and bring their knowledge and skills to write for many purposes. We value the learning and practice of the conventions of writing (e.g. handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc.) as well as the behaviors and dispositions of writers (e.g. thinking like a reader, exploring genres, experimenting with illustration techniques, etc.). This semester, students focus on narrative writing and continue to develop their sense of story elements through oral storytelling and rich children's literature.

Math

The K2 math curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, with an emphasis on sense making and flexible thinking. Children work both independently and with peers to develop their reasoning skills through a range of games and activities. They are encouraged to use mathematical language to record and share their thinking. In the second semester, our focus will be on numbers under 100, graphing and data, measurement with non-standard units, and analyzing 2D and 3D shapes. In addition, math continues to be embedded into daily routines.

Project Work

Project work is an opportunity for a class to pursue an in-depth investigation of a topic using inquiry. During project work, we explore the world around us using close observation, recording (often with observational drawings), experimentation, data collection, and analysis. Teachers model the cyclical nature of research where questioning leads to research and findings lead to further questioning. Our 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 can I find the answer to my question? What have I learned? Project work is different from a theme or topic based curriculum, in that the learning and discovery emerge from the children's questions and findings rather than being a series of lessons or content that is taught in a given sequence. This type of inquiry-based teaching engenders creativity, ownership, excitement and intellectually rich children's work and thinking.

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.” 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

The K2 PE program provides the children with opportunities to challenge themselves in their fundamental motor skills and movement patterns. The children practice and refine their visual tracking skills individually and to a target through the use of balls and catching implements. In swimming, they begin to explore water safely and be comfortable in the deep end. The children are also expected to change independently and manage their belongings with minimal adult support. Through cooperative games and challenges, the children learn to practice good social interaction and good sportsmanship.