

# CAISL EARLY CHILDHOOD Program Overview

## INTRODUCTION

This curriculum overview document should be read alongside the Early Childhood Handbook and CAISL's Family Guide for a complete overview.

CAISL's Early Childhood program serves children aged from three to six years old. It provides them with a learning environment designed to stimulate students' natural curiosity in a safe and secure social setting. The curriculum, and the methods of instruction used, encourage active exploration and interaction with materials, peers and adults, allowing for healthy physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.

Different areas of the curriculum are usually combined and delivered in multi-disciplinary units of study, providing students with a more holistic experience of the themes covered in class.

Course descriptions for each of the major academic areas are outlined below.



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# LANGUAGE ARTS

## EC3 English

In the Early Childhood Program for three-year olds, students listen to a variety of literature, becoming more familiar with the English language. They participate in a wide range of activities that include exploring dramatic play, large and small group language games, and teacher-directed activities. Students are read to frequently and are provided with opportunities to engage in group discussions as well as storytelling in order to develop their oral language skills. These are also developed through the memorization of songs and rhymes. Students are encouraged to develop an awareness of the importance of print through the use of journals. They are introduced to the letters of the alphabet by recognizing their names and then learning the letters in their names. Students also have the opportunity to form letters using different materials. They listen to a variety of stories related to a theme and engage in short discussions making connections to their experiences. Students start to repeat common daily phrases and questions. They acquire new vocabulary through stories, class discussions, and retelling personal experiences. As the year moves along, students engage more and more in dialogue.

## EC4 English

In the Early Childhood Program for four-year olds, students listen to a variety of literature, becoming more familiar with English vocabulary. They participate in a wide range of activities that include exploring dramatic play, large and small group games, and teacher-directed activities. Students are read to on a daily basis and given the opportunity to engage in class discussions. They are able to enhance their oral skills through the memorization of rhymes, songs and poems. Students continue to practice the alphabet and recognize letters in their environment. Through the use of themes and learning centers, students learn about their environment and begin to develop the skills of reading and writing. They are provided with a literacy-rich environment where literacy-related play, art activities, and language games are encouraged. Using journals, the students relate their experiences and explain ideas and events that are meaningful to them. They begin to understand the importance of the written word. Students start to experiment with writing and using letters to represent the written language.

## K English

In Kindergarten, students are immersed in a language-rich environment. Reading skills are taught through themes, letters of the week, and leveled books with sight words. Letter names and sounds are taught so that the children are able to use a phonemic approach to reading. Students are read to on a daily basis. With prompting and support, they ask and answer questions about key details in a text, retell familiar stories, and identify characters, settings, and major events in a story. Students actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

Kindergarteners write in journals and are encouraged to use their personal experiences, skills and knowledge to write short narratives. A basic knowledge of punctuation is expected by the end of Kindergarten. Students use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely-linked events, relating them in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

In Kindergarten, students develop listening and speaking skills through a morning message, show and tell, stories, and poems. They participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts in small and larger groups. Students ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood. The children are encouraged to become confident speakers and respectful learners.

# FINE ARTS

## EC3 Art

## EC4 Art

## K Art

Early Childhood artists explore and develop three artistic processes: Create, Perform, and Respond. The course is designed

to offer children many opportunities to create art in their own ways. This is done simply by making materials available, presenting questions or projects designed to stimulate their ideas. Kindergarten artists are introduced to the art elements (line, shape, color and texture) to understand what these are and how they can be used in their own work. Emphasis is placed upon child's physical and mental development and on the creative process rather than on the finished product. EC 3/4 and Kindergarten artwork is displayed throughout the year around the school building.

EC3 Music

EC4 Music

K Music

Young musicians start to explore three artistic processes: Create, Perform, and Respond. They explore these processes through their voices, bodies, and instruments. Free play, creative movement, and games are utilized for students to become more comfortable with their musical environment. There is also a strong emphasis on learning Nursery Rhymes, not only to develop musical skills, but also to enhance vocabulary and linguistic ability. Themes in music are planned to coincide with units of study in the homeroom class. The students perform multiple times a year for in-school assemblies and occasional "informances", during which parents are invited to watch and participate in a music lesson.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

EC3 IT

Students acquire age-appropriate technology and media skills while making strong connections, usually linked to units of study in the homeroom class. Utilizing the Bee-Bot, a programmable toy, they use directional commands to move the Bee-Bot in a simple path.

EC4 IT

Students acquire age-appropriate technology and media skills while making strong connections, usually linked to units of study in the homeroom class. Students use the Bee-Bot, a programmable toy to sequence simple steps, to move the Bee-Bot to destinations on mats that tie in with curriculum content.

K IT

Students acquire age-appropriate technology and media skills while making strong connections, usually linked to units of study in the homeroom class. Students use a programmable toy to develop algorithmic thinking while planning the shortest journey and using directional commands to move the robot to routes where more than one path is available to use. Students also use drawing/painting tools to illustrate thoughts, ideas and stories. Basic operations and concepts are covered during class time.

## MATH

EC3 Math

EC3 students are introduced to number recognition, identifying and quantifying numbers through the use of a variety of concrete materials within 5. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between numbers and quantities to 5 and connect counting to cardinality with a variety of hands-on activities.

They use numbers (0-5) including written numerals to represent quantities and counting objects.

The EC3 students identify, compare, and sort two dimensional shapes and objects, in different sizes, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, and other attributes (e.g., color, size, and shape).

#### EC4 Math

EC4 students are introduced to number recognition, identifying and quantifying numbers through the use of a variety of concrete materials within 10. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between numbers and quantities to 10 and connect counting to cardinality with a variety of hands-on activities.

They use numbers (0-10) including written numerals to represent quantities and counting objects. Students also demonstrate an understanding of addition and subtraction by using objects and fingers within 10.

EC4 students analyze, compare, and sort two dimensional shapes and objects, in different sizes, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, and other attributes (e.g., color, size, and shape).

#### K Math

Kindergarten students use numbers (0-20), including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems, such as counting objects in sets. Through hands-on activities students learn the relationship between numbers and quantities and connect counting to cardinality.

They develop understanding of addition, subtraction, and strategies for addition and subtraction within 20. Students develop an understanding of whole number relationships and place value, including grouping in tens and ones.

Kindergarten students learn to analyze and compare two dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles, circles, rectangles and hexagons as well as three dimensional shapes such as cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres in different sizes and orientations.

Through hands-on activities, students use basic shapes and spatial reasoning to model objects in their environment and to construct more complex shapes.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

#### EC3 PE

EC3 Physical Education curriculum promotes the first contact with physical activity. This first approach is done through fun activities in a safe and controlled environment. Students are introduced to activities that will let them apply their locomotor skills, physical capacities, and motor abilities. Class activities will be mostly space awareness games, ball-handling skills, obstacle course or gymnastic skills course. All these activities will be performed at an introductory level. At this age group, most of all, we value the child's comfort and safety in class.

#### EC4 PE

EC4 Physical Education curriculum is an extension of the previous grade level and is intended to create the conditions for students to build self-esteem and confidence in their abilities. Students will already be familiar with the class activities and can be role models for the younger colleagues performing with them. Class activities will be those of the previous grade level (space awareness games, ball-handling skills, obstacle course or gymnastic skills course) although the expectation for performance is higher. The main goal of EC4 P.E. is to create the habit of participating in a regular physical activity from an early age.

#### K PE

The Kindergarten Physical Education curriculum provides a chance for students to be involved in a structured physical activity. Class organization rules will be put in place. Kindergarteners will be exposed to formal P.E. classes and will learn how to participate properly and safely. Class activities will include tag games, team games, and competitive situations. Students will continue learning ball-handling skills, the obstacle course, and the gymnastic skills course. This will help students learn how to deal with a game situation with a winner and a loser, respecting their classmates and rules.

# PORTUGUESE

## EC3 Portuguese (NATIVE & FOUNDATIONS)

The *Língua Portuguesa* and Portuguese as an Additional Language curriculum aims to expose students to oral language through a hands-on, active approach to discovering writing. The learning process happens through the exploration of rich and diverse texts, storytelling, plays, movement, art and traditional games. In a mixed program, the work with children is developed in both Portuguese and English, respecting the cultural diversity of the students. At this stage of development, all the students, both native and non-native speakers, are integrated in the class. It is in this climate of free interaction and different methods of communication that the child will develop an awareness of the language, verbal expression and early writing. In the same way, the approach to Portuguese culture is dynamic, reflecting each child's interests, ideas and different forms of expression.

Students who are not native speakers of Portuguese are also exposed to the language in the classroom, where the emphasis is on listening to and repeating simple vocabulary words and understanding simple teacher instructions. They have a different curriculum and are assessed accordingly.

*No EC3, o programa de Língua Portuguesa tem como objetivo a exposição à linguagem oral, a abordagem lúdica à escrita e à promoção da cultura portuguesa. Esta aprendizagem será feita com a promoção de contextos comunicacionais ricos e diversificados, através do relato de histórias, canções, jogos de movimento, jogos tradicionais e atividades de expressão plástica. Sendo um programa bilingue, o trabalho com as crianças é desenvolvido nas duas línguas, com respeito pela diversidade cultural de cada criança. Nesta faixa etária, os alunos nativos e não nativos estão todos integrados na mesma aula. É neste clima de interações e de comunicação, que a criança irá desenvolver a consciência linguística, o domínio da expressão verbal e a exploração da escrita. Da mesma forma, o contacto com a cultura portuguesa é feito de uma forma dinâmica e participativa, refletindo os interesses, as ideias e diferentes formas de expressão de cada criança.*

*Os alunos que não têm a língua portuguesa como língua materna são expostos a um novo idioma através de um leque variado de atividades lúdicas: canções, poemas, abordagem às tradições culturais e dias festivos. Estes alunos têm um currículo diferente e os critérios de avaliação são diferentes dos seus colegas cuja língua nativa é o Português.*

## EC4 Portuguese (NATIVE & FOUNDATIONS)

The *Língua Portuguesa* and Portuguese as an Additional Language curriculum for EC4 has the goal of reinforcing oral language, creating rich and diverse communicational contexts. Interactions with classmates and adults, in small and large group settings, allow children to develop a growing awareness of phonics and word meaning, creating progressive complexity in their speech. The learning process happens through the exploration of rich and diverse texts, storytelling, plays, movement, art and traditional games. Another goal of the EC4 program is the ludic approach to writing, such as drawing as a way of expression, attempting or learning how to write their name. Reading readiness happens through their interpretation of images, sequencing pictures, and identifying letters and sounds. In the same way, the approach to learning about Portuguese culture is dynamic, reflecting each child's interests, ideas and different forms of expression. Students who are not native speakers of Portuguese also listen to and repeat simple sentences, interpret stories and learn about Portuguese festive days and traditions alongside their classmates. They have a different curriculum and are assessed accordingly.

*O programa da Língua Portuguesa do EC4 pretende aprofundar o domínio da linguagem oral, através da promoção de contextos comunicacionais ricos e diversificados. As interações com colegas e adultos em pequenos e grandes grupos, permite desenvolver a consciência fonológica, sintática e da palavra, criando progressiva complexidade no discurso oral. O reconto das narrativas inventadas pelas crianças, as canções ou pequenas peças de teatro, são meios de proporcionar a aquisição de um maior domínio da linguagem oral. Outro dos objetivos do programa do EC4, é a abordagem lúdica à escrita. O desenho como forma de escrita, as imitações do código escrito, o nome como uma das primeiras reproduções, são alguns exemplos da emergência da linguagem escrita. A introdução à leitura, não de uma maneira formal, faz-se através da interpretação de imagens, da organização de sequências ou da identificação de letras ou sons. O contacto com a cultura portuguesa é feito de forma lúdica e participativa, com abertura aos interesses e diferentes formas de expressão de cada criança.*

*Os alunos que não têm a língua portuguesa como língua materna são expostos a um novo idioma através de um leque variado de actividades lúdicas: canções, poemas, abordagem às tradições culturais e dias festivos. Os alunos são encorajados a interpretar histórias e a repetir frases simples. Estes alunos têm um currículo diferente e os critérios de avaliação são diferentes dos seus colegas cuja língua nativa é o Português.*

### K Portuguese (NATIVE & FOUNDATIONS)

In the *Língua Portuguesa* and Portuguese as an Additional Language curriculum for Kindergarten, students experience the Portuguese language and culture through the exploration of the traditions, history, culture and geography of Portugal. The approach to writing is based on a literacy perspective, as students recognize that reading is based on interpretation of the written word and accompanying images, and that the printed word conveys meaning, even without knowing how to read formally. The opportunity to imitate or reproduce writing allows children to explore letters of different sizes (uppercase and lowercase), spaces between words, and punctuation marks. In addition to these imitations, through drawing, children tell stories, describe events, invent and write everything they want to convey “in their own words.” In Kindergarten, we integrate all the students, creating a community of learners who all participate in learning activities that are designed to be diverse and inclusive.

Students who are not Portuguese speakers also extend their language learning through exposure to Portuguese stories, history and geography. They practice early reading and writing skills in the target language and extend their vocabulary through topic-based learning. They have a different curriculum and are assessed accordingly.

*O vivenciar e o explorar das tradições, dos factos históricos, culturais e geográficos referentes a Portugal, proporcionam o ensino e a divulgação da língua e cultura portuguesas. A abordagem à escrita situa-se numa perspectiva de literacia enquanto competência global para a leitura, no sentido de interpretação e tratamento da informação que implica a ‘leitura’ da realidade, das ‘imagens’ e para saber para que serve a escrita, mesmo sem saber ler formalmente. A oportunidade de imitar ou reproduzir a escrita faz com que as crianças possam explorar letras de tamanhos diferentes (maiúsculas e minúsculas), espaços entre as palavras e sinais de pontuação. Além destas imitações, através do desenho, as crianças contam histórias, descrevem acontecimentos, inventam e escrevem tudo aquilo que querem transmitir “por palavras suas.” No Kindergarten temos a integração de todas as crianças fazendo crescer uma comunidade de amigos, onde se realizam actividades em que todos tomam parte, para uma educação que se pretende diversificada e inclusiva. Os alunos que não falam Português também desenvolvem a sua aprendizagem através da exposição a histórias portuguesas, história e geografia. Praticam as suas capacidades na leitura e escrita no idioma destinado e aumentam o seu vocabulário através da aprendizagem baseada em unidades. Estes alunos têm um currículo diferente e os critérios de avaliação são diferentes dos seus colegas cuja língua é o Português.*

## SCIENCE

EC3 Science

EC4 Science

In EC3 and EC4 we focus on learning in the following major areas of Science:

- Physical Science
- Life Science
- Earth and Space Science

Through exploring the world around them in thematic units, students learn science-related vocabulary and concepts. Units include interdisciplinary themes such as Color and Matter, Energy, Animals and Plants, Weather and Climate and the Sun and Moon. Student interest is stimulated through observation and questioning, comparing and contrasting, measuring and recording findings, and making predictions, inferences and generalizations based on their knowledge and findings.

## K Science

In Kindergarten we focus on learning in the following major areas of Science:

- Physical Science
- Life Science
- Earth and Space Science

Interdisciplinary thematic units in Kindergarten include Forces and Interactions, Animals, Plants and Habitats and Weather and Climate. Through hands-on investigations and studies, students are encouraged to ask questions about the world around them, define problems, plan and carry out further investigations and develop and use models.

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## EC3 Social Studies

This curriculum has four main areas of study:

1. Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry
2. Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
3. Communicating Conclusions
4. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

The EC 3 Social Studies Curriculum allows the students to gain a better understanding of self-concept and build self-confidence through positive interaction with others. They will begin to recognize the importance of understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. Through themes such as community helpers, cultures, friendship, and recycling, students will develop important social skills that will help them become dynamic and accountable members of society. Through active discussions, learning activities and role-play, students are given the opportunity to imagine themselves in multiple roles in society and to examine situations from another individual's perspective. Through dramatic play, interactive learning activities and daily routines, students acquire sharing and cooperative skills, a notion of positive behavior, mutual respect and the importance of rules.

## EC4 Social Studies

This curriculum has four main areas of study:

1. Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry
2. Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
3. Communicating Conclusions
4. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

The EC4 Social Studies curriculum helps the child to see him/herself in a variety of roles—as an individual, as part of a family, a student in school, and as a member of a wider community. This is accomplished through active, thematic learning. The students will develop an understanding of peer group relationships and will participate in activities to develop the skills necessary for working and interacting with others. They will participate in activities which will help them become aware of a variety of different cultures and how these cultures are alike and how they are different.

## K Social Studies

This curriculum has four main areas of study:

1. Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry
2. Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
3. Communicating Conclusions
4. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

In Kindergarten, the Social Studies curriculum gives the children an awareness of community, historical events, and celebrations from around the world. These are taught through stories, activities, field trips, and other opportunities that arise through the teaching of themes.

Students will recognize the need for rules for daily living and fair treatment of others. They will identify needs and wants, and how people have to work in order to obtain what they need or want. Students will begin to understand the concept of maps and globes, which they will use to locate the countries that are representative of the students in the class. Combining civics with geography, students are introduced to the concept of a country, and locate on a map countries that are representative of the students in their class.