



## EC1 PROGRAM INFORMATION

Marymount’s Early Childhood Center provides our young students with a solid educational foundation. It offers a dynamic, challenging international early years program and provides students with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to become successful and happy learners. The EC1 program includes regular access to engage in Forest School learning. The Forest School approach is one of the most important educational developments in the world today and is changing the way people think about education and about our connection to nature. The students in EC1 are given regular access to our state-of-the-art Outdoor Classroom which offers engaging, challenging learning opportunities to consolidate and extend the classroom learning. The EC1 program is based on excellence in early years practice and up to date international educational research. The learning is divided into units, and collaboration between home and school is the key to the successful implementation of our curriculum. The wellbeing of the students underpins every part of the practice and particular attention is given to providing students with adequate time to play, reflect and flourish. Students in EC1 engage in the following academic program and enrichment activities.

<p><b><u>EC 1 PROGRAM</u></b>          Imaginative Play          Outdoor Classroom/          Discovery Learning          Early Literacy &amp; Mark Making          Social Studies          Early Math</p> <p><b><u>Enrichment Activities</u></b>          Art          Music          Dance          Physical Education          Forest School</p>	<p><b>Marymount International School Mission Statement</b></p> <p>Marymount International School Rome is a private, Catholic, English-speaking, co-educational school that aims to further the mission of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. We welcome students of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds and offer an excellent program of studies and extracurricular activities. We seek to guide students towards the achievement of their full potential by empowering them to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively and learn continuously. It is our goal that a Marymount student should desire to celebrate God’s love, respond generously to the needs of our world, and promote justice and dignity for all.</p>
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<b>Early Childhood 1 Sample Schedule</b>			
8:30 - 8:45	Welcome	12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
8:45 - 10:00	Inquiry Based Learning	12:30 - 13:00	Small Group Math and Language Activities
10:00-10:15	Morning Meeting / Snack	12:30-13:30	Outdoor Classroom/ Optional Rest Time
10:15-10:45	Music	14:00 - 14:30	Dance
10:45- 11:30	Forest School / Discovery Learning	14:30-15:00	Art
11:40 - 11:55	Story	15:00-15:20	Story / Songs / Snack - 15:20 Dismissal



## EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

In EC1 extending and supporting the children's speaking and listening skills are an essential part of the curriculum. Every opportunity to extend oral language is given maximum teaching time. Children are given time to participate in songs, rhymes and group meeting sessions. Through this focused work students become familiar with phrases, extend their vocabulary, and develop confidence in their ability to communicate their thinking. We firmly believe that building on the home language is the most effective way to encourage confident speakers of English, and interlingual teaching and learning projects are built into the program. This work is a collaborative process between home and school so communication is essential to ensure that students make progress.

Literacy in the early years includes talking about books and print in the environment as well as sharing books and reading stories. Young children need to develop the building blocks for literacy. These skills include the ability to speak, listen, understand, watch and draw. The language and literacy areas of our EC1 classrooms include skills such as experimental writing, oral language, awareness of the conventions of print, recognition that written words carry a meaning, vocabulary and comprehension. Our children have access to a wide variety of writing materials and writing instruments, including different weights of paper, markers, crayons and pencils. The students will be encouraged to begin "writing." These early writing attempts may look like scribbles but are a precursor to writing. The students are given opportunities to develop their hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills through practicing to hold a pen, deciding what grip suits them best, which hand feels most natural and through making small controlled movements using the pen.

### **The learning benefits of early literacy are:**

- Literacy development is a crucial piece of a child's overall development
- It is the foundation for doing well at school, socialising with others, developing independence, and working on more complex literacy activities in later years
- Before children can read and write, they need to learn about sounds, words, language, books and stories

## EARLY MATH

In our setting, children are considered able to direct their own interests and learning through free investigations with stimulating and natural materials. There is always an emphasis on a multi-sensory, tactile, hands-on approach. The students are physically learning through moving and touching objects in creative play. Most of all, mathematics learning should be real, relevant and relatable to the child's experience. The learning objectives are open-ended so students engage with materials and the mathematical content at their level of understanding.

### **The learning benefits of early math exploration are:**

- Learning to count using a stable order principle
- Consolidating 1:1 correspondence
- Sorting and classifying objects
- Understanding the concept of one more and one less
- Exploring pattern
- Introduction to number sense 0-10
- Introduction to addition 0-5



Blocks are a valuable asset to our math program and the essence of open-ended materials.

### **They allow children to:**

- Express their own creativity while making designs, constructions and sculptures
- Require children to think creatively, problem solve, negotiate and invent
- Learn different techniques in building and joining
- Become aware of shape, form, concepts of balance, stability and symmetry through trial and error as they construct their buildings
- Encourage a child to think 3-dimensionally, especially with the addition of a mirror
- Blocks naturally teach children about angles, height and perspective.

### **IMAGINATIVE PLAY**

Imaginative play is essentially when children are role-playing and are acting out various experiences they may have had, or something that is of interest to them. Through role play children are experimenting with decision making on how to behave and are also practising their social skills. Role play may appear to be a very simple activity, yet within it, young children learn practical life skills such as dressing themselves, or how to cooperate and share with others.

### **The learning benefits of imaginative play are:**

- **Understanding the world:** children can identify with the adult world and role play their understanding and interpretations
- **Social Development:** children can practise negotiation skills, turn taking, sharing, working out problems and experimenting with solutions
- **Emotional development:** understanding and expressing feelings through the re-enactment of certain experiences. Taking on roles that encourage discipline and empathy
- **Encourage imagination:** Children can be anyone and do anything in the pretend world.
- **Language development:** practising listening, looking, being spoken to and speaking with other people, developing an understanding of what is being communicated through body language such as smiles and nodding.

### **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM**

Being able to explore and make discoveries in the Outdoor Classroom is enjoyable, creative, challenging and adventurous. At Marymount we are fortunate to have access to a state-of-the-art Outdoor Classroom.

### **The learning benefits of outdoor experiences are:**

- To improve social skills, behaviour, physical and psychological health
- To have a great impact on children's skills in areas, such as independence, investigative skills, and questioning
- To develop and improve gross and fine motor skills.



## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

Social studies learning begins as children make friends and participate in decision-making in the classroom, then it moves beyond the school into the neighborhood and around the world.

Pre-school gives children their first sense of community outside the home, and every activity lends itself to learning the concepts underlying social studies. Through pretend play children learn to accept differences, deal with their emotions, and resolve conflicts.

The students develop a sense of personal responsibility by performing a variety of jobs in the classroom and learn community responsibility by cleaning up after projects and taking pride in having a neat classroom. Teachers encourage children to reflect on their experiences and learn from them by asking thought-provoking questions and initiating discussions.

Teachers help children to understand their neighborhood: the homes, banks, firehouse, police station, restaurants, movie theater, church, synagogue, mosque, senior citizens center, schools, playgrounds, and parks. Children will listen to stories about neighborhoods and discuss similarities and differences between their neighborhood and the one in the story.

They will learn about the importance of community helpers and learn to observe their surroundings.

Particular attention is given to multiculturalism. Children will take an active part in projects through which they can become aware of other cultures traditions.

The students go on visits to observe the community and consolidate the learning introduced in the classroom.

## **ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **FOREST SCHOOL**

Our outdoor space is an essential asset in this component of the program. The main goals of forest school in early years settings include encouraging curiosity and exploration with all of the senses, empowering children in the natural environment, and encouraging spatial awareness and motor development. The children will have regular and frequent time to explore the natural world through guided discovery with a qualified Forest School Educator. Developing concepts will be the key, and the staff will observe and document the students' growth as they make connections, carry out investigations and build up their understanding of the world. Emphasis will be placed on natural materials and exploring how things work and connect:

- Exploring is a natural and critical part of children's early learning
- Children's curiosity about the natural world is a powerful catalyst for their work and play
- With the appropriate guidance, this natural curiosity can be extended
  
- This early science exploration can be a rich context in which children can use and develop other important skills, including working with one another, basic large and small motor control, language, and early mathematical understanding
- Students interact with the world by exploring and manipulating objects, asking questions and being guided and supported as they look for scientific explanations to support their thinking



## ART

The principle idea behind the emphasis placed on children engaging in art is that there are multiple ways of knowing, and thus multiple mediums for the expression of ideas that must be provided to allow every child a voice with which to communicate their understandings, thoughts and feelings. Finding a way to express oneself, through artistic means, leads to self-discovery.

Children need time to explore at their own pace, and educators encourage exploration by offering opportunities to engage in open ended art.

### The learning benefits of open ended art are:

- **Art Promotes Creativity:** Creativity is the ability to think outside the proverbial box, to string two unrelated ideas together in a new way. Solutions to major problems and breakthroughs of all kinds are linked to creativity.
- **Art Encourages Neural Connection:** Art is an activity that engages all the senses - sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste - depending on the activity.
- **Art Builds Fine Motor Skills:** Gripping a paintbrush, drawing dots and lines, mixing colors, cutting with scissors, controlling a glue stick or squeezing a glue bottle, kneading and rolling playdough, tearing paper - all of these tasks require increasing amounts of dexterity and coordination. As children engage in art activities over time, their fine motor skills improve.
- **Art Develops Problem-solving Abilities:** Open-ended, process-oriented art is nothing but an endless opportunity for making choices, coming to conclusions, second-guessing decisions, and evaluating results. Children become more comfortable with uncertainty and remain flexible thinkers, which is key for creativity and confidence. The more experience they have with a variety of materials and techniques, the more likely they are to try new combinations and ideas.

## MUSIC

In EC1 the child's natural desire for communication is developed through carefully planned music lessons. The lessons include a focus on movement, attention and eye-hand coordination associated with playing musical instruments.

- Music is a language, and children are oriented toward learning language.
- Music evokes movement, and children delight in and require movement for their development and growth.
- Music's melodic and rhythmic patterns provide exercise for the brain and help develop memory.
- Music is perfectly designed for training children's listening skills.
- Music is a creative experience which involves expression of feelings and releasing of emotion.

Students engage in musical activities designed to spark their natural creativity and curiosity, develop their individuality and self-confidence and allow them the opportunity to express themselves and communicate through

the medium of sound. EC1 students are introduced to the lesson structure and begin to use their bodies, voices, and musical instruments. They become familiar with seasonal music of autumn, Christmas, winter, spring and summer.



## DANCE

Children move naturally. They move to achieve mobility, they move to express a thought or feeling, and they move because it is joyful and feels wonderful. When their movement becomes consciously structured and is performed with awareness for its own sake, it becomes a dance. Physical development is one of the most obvious benefits dance classes for children. They are learning a great range of motion, body awareness, balance, muscle strength, coordination, and endurance. Movement patterns require the child to use their entire body to reach a level of

fitness that is unparalleled by other activities. Through dance classes, the students begin to understand that the possibilities of movement are endless and fun to explore.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In EC1 the Physical Education classes focus on developing competence in body control and coordination; participating in activities such as jumping, climbing, running, hopping, balancing, throwing, catching and kicking a ball. Socially, the children will learn to listen, to stand in a line, to take turns, participate in team games, and gain more confidence in their abilities. Research has shown that early childhood physical education is important and improves more than just physical wellness. It also assists and improves mental and emotional development in children too.