



EC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Marymount’s Early Childhood Program is designed to stimulate curiosity and wonder in young children and is based on excellence in practice for two-year-olds. We are delighted that our EC students will have access to our Forest School learning space. Under the expert guidance of our Early Childhood faculty, two-year-olds are encouraged to develop their independence and confidence through inquiry and play-based learning with a wide range of materials and manipulatives for hands-on experiences in early language, math, science, art, dance and music. Our program is designed to cultivate a love of learning as well as build a strong sense of community and belonging. A successful two-year-old program hinges heavily on the important partnership between home and school: this collaboration is its cornerstone.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>EC PROGRAM</u></p> <p>Social/Emotional Development Imaginative Play Discovery Learning Outdoor Learning Early Language Early Math <u>Enrichment Activities</u> Dance Outdoor Classroom Forest School</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Marymount International School Mission Statement</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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PLAY

Play is an essential component in the early years curriculum. Through play children make sense of their world and learn the vital skills they need to build on as they grow and develop as unique individuals. Play is the cornerstone of the curriculum, and play enriches a child’s language, thinking and conceptual understanding. Well planned and appropriately supported and extended play has been proven to have long term benefits for future academic success. Sensory exploration is a child’s way of examining, discovering, categorizing, and making sense of the world. These experiences take place both inside and outside the classroom. Utilizing the outside space is vital in the early years. Some of the activities planned include exploring loose parts, water play, sand play, playing with dough, clay and making mud pies.

IMAGINATIVE PLAY

It is as two-year-olds that we develop the capacity for imaginative play and through this experience children make sense of their world. Activities such as the home corner, dressing up, small world toys and dolls are some examples of this, but the list is endless. This is an area of the curriculum that has great potential for learning social skills and developing oral language.



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 practice negotiation skills, turn taking, sharing, problem-solving 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:** practicing 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 nods.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM/ FOREST SCHOOL

The EC students have access to a state-of-the-art Outdoor Classroom every day. The students change into appropriate waterproof suits and appropriate footwear to ensure they are prepared for all weathers. Two to three-year-olds must move and explore the world with their whole bodies. Carefully organized, safe and challenging play spaces, both inside and outside, are embedded into the EC program. The learning is planned to develop student knowledge, skills and understanding which are integral components of the inside and outside provision.

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. Developing concepts will be the key and 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.

The learning benefits of discovery learning outdoors are:

- Encourage active engagement
- Extend and model oral language
- Promote curiosity, autonomy, responsibility, and independence
- Develop creativity and problem-solving skills
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the natural world
- To develop and improve gross and fine motor skills.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our routines promote social and emotional development and establish a stable and nurturing environment. Children gain a better understanding of self and build self-confidence through positive interaction with others. They learn about their feelings and those of others, fairness, conflict resolution, and appropriate behaviour through a series of role-playing activities.



EARLY LANGUAGE

The nature of the two to three-year-old child is that s/he is striving to become a better communicator. The two-year-old program recognizes this by prioritising language development. The children will be immersed in a rich language environment where adults model best language practices and encourage the children to communicate by their interaction with them. The staff will build on the child's home language and emphasis will be placed on repetition and reinforcement. All activities are opportunities for this work, but examples specific to oral language in this area of learning are:

- action songs and rhymes
- stories and simple picture books
- imaginative play

EARLY MATH

Math is more than just numbers. Developmentally, two-year-olds begin to sort and categorize naturally. Through carefully planned and supported play, children will be given time to develop early Math concepts. Some examples of the provision are:

- puzzles, block play
- bead threading/sorting activities
- matching games
- number songs and rhymes

ART

Most of the work will focus on exploring materials and finding out how they can be used. The children will be given opportunities to paint, draw, use glue and develop concepts through open-ended, child-centered activities. The teaching objectives will focus more on the experience of activities. The students may not produce an end product at this stage.

The learning benefits of open-ended art:

- **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 AND DANCE

Songs and rhymes and access to activities involving rhythm provide for the development of memory and pattern, coordination, and an understanding of mathematical concepts.

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.

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 have for children.

Early Childhood Sample Schedule

08:30	Welcome and breakfast	*Outdoor Discovery Classroom when weather permits.
09:00	Dance	** Nappy change if needed
09:30	Inquiry-based language activities.	
10:30	Outdoor Classroom*	
11:00	Forest School	EC Kit (Provided by parents):
11:30	Lunch**	1. Nappies (if needed)
12:15	Storytime / small group time.	2. Wet Wipes
12:30	Sleep	3. Nappy Cream
14:45	Snack**	4. Two complete change of clothes
15:00	Story Time and Closing Circle	5. Toothbrush and toothpaste
15:20	Dismissal	6. Rain boots