KIS Early Years Program of Study

AGES 2 - 6

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EARLY YEARS PHILOSOPHY

Our Early Years Program at KIS is progressive, creative and inspiring. We teach and nurture the ***whole child*** through playful developmentally-appropriate interactions and experiences.

Children thrive when their interests are respected and honored and as a school we provide a holistic learning environment, where children are empowered with authentic opportunities to inquire, discover and collaborate. Our early learning experience is designed with unique experiences where children work rigorously on developing strong foundational skills, enriched with a balanced approach that prepares them to be internationally-minded global citizens.

Early Learning

The Early Years program at KIS adopts a student-centered approach with a focus on play-based learning. With the IB at the center of our curriculum, our inquiry-based learning approach offers children meaningful opportunities to collaborate, socialize, problem-solve,and understand the world around them. Through inquiry and intentional teaching, the children engage in transdisciplinary experiences across subjects such as math, science, music, art, physical education and Russian.

All students have access to a team of professionals who advocate for and support their academic, social, and personal growth. KIS's student support services include the School Counselor, Learning Support Teacher, English as Additional Language Services (EAL) as well as a Speech and Language Therapist.

LITERACY

LITERACY IN THE EY

Literacy in the Early Years is about building a **strong foundation for language** development, communication, and a lifelong love for reading. Through activities like storytelling, singing, and recognizing letters and sounds, young children begin to develop key skills in **listening, speaking, reading, and writing**. Early literacy experiences not only support academic growth but also foster creativity and curiosity, helping students make sense of the world around them.

At KIS, we nurture a **strong love for reading and writing** from as early as age two through six, guided by the Kansas State Standards. Through activities such as read-alouds, role play, literature connections with our units of inquiry, and author studies, we engage young learners in meaningful reading experiences as they develop strategies to understand and analyze text.

We **empower children** to use writing as a creative tool to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, emphasizing purposeful writing and fostering a lifelong passion for literacy. We use mini presentations, music, art, and other creative mediums to help children strengthen their verbal communication and oral development skills. By engaging in these activities, they learn to express themselves clearly and confidently.

We also focus on developing their viewing and presenting skills, teaching them to interpret media literacy and present ideas effectively through various modes of communication, helping them grow as well-rounded communicators. Throughout the year, students work with various genres,including narratives that tell stories, informational pieces that convey facts and knowledge, and opinion pieces that allow them to **express viewpoints.**

NUMERACY

Numeracy in the Early Years at KIS involves **exploring key mathematical concepts** that lay the foundation for understanding numbers and their relationships. This includes counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, as well as measurement, data, and geometry. All of these areas are aligned with the **Kansas State Standards,** ensuring that students build a solid mathematical foundation that supports future learning and problem-solving skills.

At KIS, math concepts are taught experientially, allowing children to explore and understand mathematical ideas through hands-on, practical activities. This approach helps them deepen their knowledge by making **real-life connections,** enabling them to apply math in meaningful ways during their daily lives. Through interactive learning, students gain a strong foundation in problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

THE ARTS

In the Early Years at KIS, the arts encompass both performing arts, through **music and role play, and visual arts.** Students engage in a dynamic process of creation and appreciation, exploring their imagination and creativity by experimenting with different mediums and studying various artists. They also perform and create music, fostering self-expression while building a deeper understanding of the artistic world around them.

Our students learn to **analyze, interpret, and appreciate** works of art and music—both from renowned artists and their own creations, as well as those of their peers. We teach the arts in a way that fosters critical thinking and cultural responsiveness, encouraging children to engage deeply with different forms of expression while developing an appreciation for **diverse perspectives and cultures.**

A day in the Early Years program consists of homeroom time where much of the **integrated learning** occurs. Teachers use that as an opportunity to delve into the units of inquiry and teach explicitly literacy and math concepts.

Homeroom classes consist of a homeroom teacher, teaching assistants and at scheduled times, the EAL teacher and the Learning Support teacher. Single subject classes such as art, music and PE are taught by teachers specialized in their respective subject areas.

Breakfast, lunch and snack breaks are spread throughout the day as well as a dedicated 40 minute block time for outdoor play/recess breaks, allowing for social interactions and building on physical activity.

A DAY IN THE EY

08:00 - 08:30	Arrival
08:30 - 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 - 09:40	Homeroom Time
09:40 - 10:20	Homeroom Time
10:20 - 11:00	Recess/Outdoor Play
11:20 - 11:40	Homeroom Time
11:40 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 12:40	Mindful time/Storytelling Time
12:40 - 13:20	Specialist Time/Naptime (for younger students)
13:20 - 14:00	Specialist Time/Naptime (for younger students)
14:00 - 14:40	Specialist Time/Naptime (for younger students)
14:40 - 15:00	Snack
15:00 - 15:30	Free Play
15:30 - 16:00	Dismissal

MEASURING SUCCESS

Early learning plays a crucial role in building the foundational skills that shape a child's future educational journey. During these formative years, children develop essential abilities like **problem-solving, communication, social interaction, and critical thinking.** These early experiences foster a love for learning, curiosity, and resilience, setting the stage for success in later academic and life pursuits.

Learning in Early Years at KIS follows the **Kansas Developmental Standards** from Toddlers through Kindergarten. These standards are also aligned with AERO in Kindergarten with a particular focus on the **AERO Math Standards** as well as the NGSS.

We use a variety of tools to understand student progress in learning and development throughout the school year. The teachers use the information gained from these tools to inform their teaching and create developmentally appropriate learning opportunities to scaffold the students accordingly and help them master and develop the skills and concepts further.

As of November 2024, we have begun implementing the **GOLD** assessment tool to enhance our instructional practices. With GOLD, assessment seamlessly integrates into daily interactions with children, making it an authentic and effortless part of teaching rather than a disruption.

The tool's formative assessment model aligns with widely held expectations for children from birth through third grade, **supporting a whole-child approach** to learning and development. Additionally, GOLD has enabled us to align our Kansas Standards with its framework, ensuring consistency and clarity in our educational goals.

REPORTS & CONFERENCES

Reports are sent home to parents **three times a year** to share where their child is at in their development, and mastery of different skills and knowledge from different subjects. These subjects include English Language Arts, Numeracy, Physical Education, Russian Language Arts (only for Kindergarten students), Visual Arts and Performing Arts.

We also hold three parent conferences a year. The first is the **Two Way Conferences** that are held in November where parents and teachers meet to discuss students' progress and their needs and goals for the rest of the academic year.

Three Way conferences are then held in February, where parents come in together with the students to look at the goals the students have set for themselves and how they will achieve those goals.

Lastly, **the student-led conferences** are held in April where students get the opportunity to show the knowledge and skills that they have been working on throughout the year. Portfolios displaying a variety of work in different stages of completion from different subjects and units of inquiry, will be shared with parents by the students themselves.

KIS' Early Years Program is an **on-campus, purpose-built, flexible learning environment** for children aged 2 to 6. KIS is continuously reimagining the learning environment through personalized flexible learning spaces such as our sensory room, maker space, mud kitchen and other transformative learning opportunities beyond the classroom to foster collaboration and innovation while equipping our students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

KIS is an exciting place to be after school as well. Our Pre K4 and Kindergarten students have access to countless after-school activities in sports and the arts.

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