

THE ISF PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Our Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Education at The ISF Pre-School is based on the belief that effective learning takes place in a supportive and nurturing environment that provides mutual trust and respect. The ISF Pre-School aims to provide children and their families with a learning environment where they feel a sense of belonging, where they feel comfortable and familiar with the school's routines, customs, and regular events, and where they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behavior.

The ISF Pre-School has a holistic view of child development where the child is seen as a whole person with a desire to learn and to be active in the learning process. The focus is on the individual child as a learner and the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that the child brings to their experiences.

During early childhood, young children's patterns of learning can be varied and unpredictable. Our learning tasks, which take into account the interests and needs of children, are designed to be engaging, relevant, interesting, challenging but achievable and meaningful to the learner. A premium is placed on providing all children with the opportunity to further develop knowledge and an understanding of their own cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of others.

Introduction to the Curriculum

The curriculum and supplementary programs implemented at The ISF Pre-School have been selected and developed to take into account contemporary research-based understandings of how children learn, and the optimum conditions for learning to take place.

The underlying values of The ISF Pre-School Curriculum are based on the ISF's *Eight Virtues + One* adapted for pre-school children. Drawing on the essence of Chinese and Western thinking, these values are incorporated into the International

Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). The IEYC has been developed into a bilingual program of study and forms the basis of the integrated and topic-based approach to teaching and learning. The ISF Pre-School delivers the curriculum through two principal languages of instruction: Putonghua (70%) and English (30%). This arrangement articulates into The ISF Academy's Foundation Year bilingual immersion program.

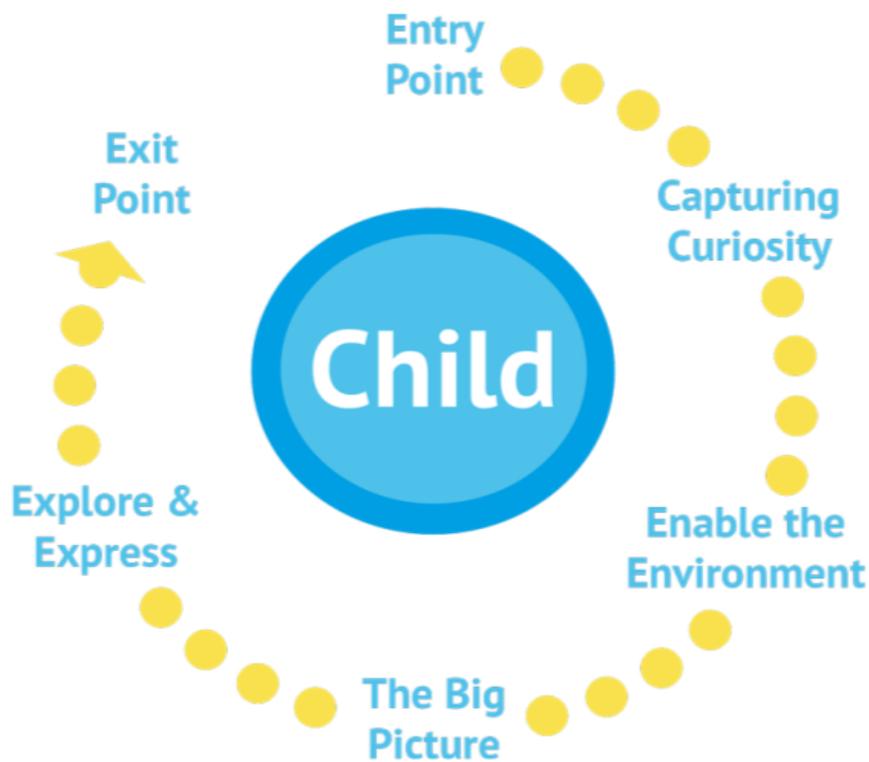
The International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC)

The International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) forms the basis of The ISF Pre-School curriculum. It supports the six key areas of learning through holistic enquiry and play-based approaches encompassing all curriculum areas. Developed by an international team of curriculum experts, the IEYC provides support for teachers so that three main aims can be achieved. They are:

- To help children learn the subject knowledge, skills and understandings they need to become aware of the world around them.
- To help children develop personal qualities they need to take an active part in the world throughout their lives.
- To help children develop an international mindset alongside an awareness of their own nationality.

The IEYC's integrated, thematic approach to teaching and learning capitalizes on young children's interests and their desire to explore, ask questions, and find the answers. The IEYC Process of Learning captures children's natural curiosity as a starting point and, within an enabling environment, balances child-initiated and teacher-scaffolded learning.

The IEYC Process of Learning



Learning happens through thematic units which are designed to last for several weeks to allow more in-depth inquiry. Built into each unit of work are the IEYC Personal Goals, which are personal qualities and learning dispositions we believe are essential to enable children to be at ease with the continually changing context of their lives. The eight Personal Goals include enquiry, resilience, morality (principled), communication, thoughtfulness, cooperation, respect and adaptability.

Six Key Learning Areas

Developed in accordance with the recommendations set out by the Curriculum Development Council and recommended for use in pre-primary institutions by The Education Bureau HKSAR 2006, The ISF Pre-School Curriculum covers the following six key learning areas:

- Language and Early Literacy Skills
- Early Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- The Arts
- Physical Fitness and Health
- Self and Society

Language and Early Literacy Skills

The following principles guide the theory and practice of Language Learning in the ISF Pre-School:

- The languages of instruction at The ISF Pre-School are Putonghua and English.
- In view of the cultural and linguistic diversity of The ISF Pre-School community, students are educated and encouraged to be inclusive and communicate in languages that are understood by all members of the Pre-School community.
- Students learn to read and write Chinese using traditional characters.
- Cantonese is a language of wider communication in Hong Kong. The ISF Pre-School is committed to celebrating the Cantonese language and culture.

At The ISF Pre-School, the role of the teacher is to provide all students with the opportunities and support they need to develop the early literacy skills. This will lay the foundation for them to develop as motivated, confident, and competent readers and to achieve the following aims:

- Develop their interest in reading;
- The attitude of demanding meaning from what is read;
- Develop independence through the systematic introduction of emergent reading strategies; and
- Bring each child into contact with books and other reading materials that will enrich their experience.

Early Mathematics

The ISF Pre-School promotes holistic teaching and learning which capitalizes on young children's motivation to learn in a self-directed manner. It promotes a view of mathematics as a positive, self-motivated, self-directed problem-solving activity at the time children first develop their mathematical beliefs and feelings. High quality learning is often incidental and informal, but not unplanned or unsystematic. As with the development of literacy, young children's mathematical development does not follow a linear pattern. Their play and interests are the first source of young children's mathematical experiences.

Using a variety of strategies, The ISF Pre-School teachers help develop mathematical knowledge by building on young children's everyday activities, incorporating their cultural backgrounds, languages, mathematical ideas and strategies. The learning environment is planned so that it is conducive to mathematical explorations with the inclusion of a range of specific mathematical activities and designated areas in the classroom containing manipulative materials and blocks for construction, math games and puzzles, and a shopping area.

Science and Technology

At The ISF Pre-School, the children's interest in science and technology is stimulated through designated science areas containing a variety of resources, displays, science-related investigative tools and materials. The emphasis is on a fully integrated curriculum with the children's developing scientific knowledge and understanding extended at each year level.

Children learn important scientific skills and methods through hands-on experience with the objects and materials in their environment. Participation in a stimulating science and technology program with opportunities to use tools and simple measuring devices, make comparisons, and collect and record information fosters young children's ability to learn these skills.

The Arts

Participation in an Arts program that encompasses Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts helps young children acquire a range of creative and artistic talents and skills and develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of their cultural heritage and that of other cultures. The goal of The ISF Pre-School Arts Curriculum is to help young children develop practical knowledge, understanding and ideas in the four main disciplines of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, and to be able to communicate their knowledge and ideas in each of the disciplines.

Dance

Dance is used by individuals and groups to communicate, express and interpret ideas, experience, and feelings. The ISF Pre-School curriculum capitalizes on young children's natural sense of rhythm and desire to explore and move in different ways.

Drama

Drama is integral to young children's play. Drama helps us to understand ourselves, our own particular culture, the cultures of others, and the world in which we live. The ISF Pre-School drama program enables young children to express their emotions, understandings, ideas, and experience in a variety of roles and contexts. As young children start to mature, drama enables them to enrich their lives through imagination, humor, and more abstract thought.

Music

Music is a fundamental form of personal and cultural expression. Through unique ways of organizing sounds, music influences the way we see the world, and how we express our feelings and ideas about our perception of ourselves and our place in the world. Music education provides learners with opportunities for self-expression, to make sense of sound, and to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of natural and technological environments.

Visual Arts

Visual arts inform our cultural identity and enable us to communicate, learn about ourselves, and our relationships with others. Through participation in a varied visual arts program, young children will learn to communicate information, express ideas, and link social and cultural actions and beliefs.

Physical Fitness and Health

At The ISF Pre-School, a premium is placed on the physical fitness, health, and safety of children at all times. A holistic approach to the development of young children requires balanced social skills, health and physical education programs delivered in an environment where the children's social skills development and their physical and emotional health are promoted. Key learning areas for all children include:

- A growing awareness of their bodies and how to take care of them;
- Movement and gross motor skills development; and
- Fine motor skills development.

Self and Society

At The ISF Pre-School, *the Eight Virtues +One* provides the foundation for the child's self-image and the enhancement of their interpersonal and communication skills. Through participation in positive learning experiences in a supportive environment where they are treated with respect by positive adult role models, children learn about their own value and understand the feelings and needs of their peers. Key learning areas for all children include:

- Social skills and emotional development;
- Development of independence, confidence, and sense of personal worth;
- Ability to take increasing responsibility for themselves and others;
- Development of positive interpersonal relationships;
- Awareness of personal safety; and
- Environmental and community awareness.

Assessment and Reporting Processes

Effective assessment procedures are critical to effective teaching and learning. Teachers can best meet the needs of individual learners when they are able to establish, through a range of diagnostic and formative assessment procedures, the next step required to be taken in the teaching process. Teachers at The ISF Pre-School use a range of informal observation and assessment strategies to systematically monitor and record the children's progress towards meeting selected learning outcomes in all areas of development. Children's progress and achievement is reported to parents in the following ways:

- Portfolios
- Progress reports
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Student Exhibition

Parental Involvement

There are many ways that all parents can be involved in their child's learning—both at home and at school. The ISF Pre-school encourages parental involvement through sharing relevant expertise and ideas. At The ISF Pre-school, parents are strongly encouraged to support their children and school in implementing school policies. In particular, we would like parents to:

- Reinforce the *Eight Virtues + One* in daily life;
- Ensure that your child has the best attendance record possible;
- Ensure that your child is equipped for school with the correct uniform, sports uniform and resources;
- Ensure your child is healthy and fit to attend school;
- Inform the school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect your child's performance or behavior at school;
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general; and
- Participate and support school events and class activities.