



AISL

American International
School of Lagos

**Early Childhood
Program Guide**

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Early Childhood Program Overview

The Early Childhood Program at AISL is a nurturing and dynamic environment where children are empowered to explore, discover, and express themselves. Inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy, our approach values children as capable, curious, and full of potential. Learning is deeply rooted in relationships, creativity, and hands-on experiences that encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and self-expression.

Our multi-age classrooms (ages 3-5) provide a supportive and engaging space where, during a designated time of the day, children move freely between two combined classes, developing agency as they choose their learning experiences. For the rest of the day, they remain in their own classrooms, engaging in group activities and other structured practices that foster collaboration, critical thinking, and deeper exploration. While educators ensure that all children have opportunities to engage with a variety of learning experiences, students take an active role in managing their own learning, making decisions, and navigating challenges from their earliest days at AISL.

Teachers act as facilitators, carefully listening, observing, and documenting children's learning to guide curriculum planning in meaningful ways. We believe that children's voices matter, and because they feel heard and seen, they always have something to say. Their ideas and interests shape our units of learning, fostering a strong sense of ownership and engagement.

At AISL, we embrace an emergent, play-based approach that balances child-led exploration with teacher-scaffolded experiences. Learning emerges through open-ended inquiry, collaboration, and play, ensuring that each child's unique path is honored and supported. Through this approach, children develop the confidence, independence, and problem-solving skills they need to engage with the world around them.



Learning Principles

At AISL, we design learning experiences for our students, even our youngest learners, that are based on learning principles that have emerged from the studies of learning conducted from the fields of neuroscience and cognitive psychology. The following learning principles underpin the various experiences and essential features of our early childhood program.



Play-Based Learning

Play is central to children's learning and development. In our Reggio-inspired classrooms, play is seen as a powerful tool for **exploration, communication, and meaning-making**. Teachers provide a balance of structured and child-initiated play experiences to support emerging language, mathematical thinking, and socio-emotional skills. Throughout the day, children engage in various types of play:



Artistic Play

Children express themselves creatively through drawing, painting, sculpting, and working with mixed media. This open-ended exploration fosters self-expression, fine motor development, and a deep appreciation for the arts.



Language Play

Children engage in storytelling, dramatic play, and word exploration through rhymes, songs, and role-play. They develop language skills by experimenting with sounds, sentence structures, and creative expression.

Construction Play

Using a variety of natural and recycled materials, children design, experiment, and create structures that reflect their ideas and problem-solving skills. This type of play fosters creativity, spatial awareness, and collaboration.



Inquiry-Based Learning

Children are encouraged to ask questions, make predictions, and explore their surroundings through hands-on investigations. Teachers support them in developing theories, experimenting, and reflecting on their discoveries.



Collaborative Learning

Learning happens within relationships. Children engage in group discussions, problem-solving activities, and collaborative projects that strengthen their social connections and communication skills.



Nature Exploration

Nature is an integral part of our learning environment. Playing with nature elements fosters creativity, independence, and a connection with the natural world as children engage in open-ended exploration.

Interests

Children's interests and ideas shape the learning process. They engage in real-world projects, work with diverse materials, and participate in meaningful conversations that deepen their understanding and agency.



Documentation

Teachers and instructional assistants continuously observe and document children's learning experiences. These reflections guide curriculum development and provide insight into each child's growth.



Specialist Classes

While early learners spend most of their day with their homeroom teacher, they also engage in specialist-led experiences that enrich their learning journey:

Performing Arts

Through movement, music, and dramatic expression, children explore their creativity and develop confidence in their abilities to communicate and perform.

Physical Education

Children develop coordination, balance, and motor skills through movement-based activities, including games, obstacle courses, and aquatic experiences.



Language Acquisition

The children have a chance to partake in world languages across the year. This is not academic based teaching but a chance to have the children listen and join in with songs and play simple games, to support the children in choosing the correct World Language choice for World Language classes in Kindergarten onwards. This rotates across the year with all the World Language teachers to ensure the children also have a chance to interact with each World Language teacher.

Library

Children cultivate a love for literature by listening to stories, exploring books, and engaging with digital media in ways that encourage curiosity and comprehension.

Mindfulness and Child Protection

With the guidance of the school counselor, children practice mindfulness techniques that promote self-awareness, emotional regulation, and well-being. They also engage in child protection lessons, learning essential skills for personal safety and advocacy.

At AISL, we honor childhood as a time of exploration, wonder, and growth. Our Reggio-inspired approach nurtures confident, creative, and compassionate learners who are prepared to engage with the world around them.

Early Years Evaluation (EYE)

The Early Years Evaluation is an assessment used to identify the skills of children aged 3-6 years as they prepare for and make the transition to school. The EYE Direct Assessment (EYE-DA) is an age-normed

individually administered direct measure of the developmental skills of pre-kindergarten students. The evaluation takes about 30-45 minutes per child. The individual child report is used to connect and engage with families in the learning process of their children. The traffic-light display of results is intuitive, easy to understand, and increases family engagement and collaboration. Students are assessed at the beginning of the year (pre-assessment) and the end of the year (post-assessment). The EYE is an assessment for learning, it communicates children's strengths and challenges across their developments. It supports intentional, targeted student learning and quantifies pedagogical documentation.

