



**Early
Years**

Early Years Programme

Early Years education at ISA begins in Nursery (2-3 years old) and continues through our Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten grade levels. We believe that these years of education are amongst the most crucial in a child's overall development. Our Early Years (EY) programme, and our approach to Early Years education, is engaging and interactive to provide the best possible learning environments for children to develop in the areas of:

- Learning Playfully
- Relationships
- Environment
- Student Agency
- Learning Dispositions

By focusing on these areas ISA ensures that our EY programme is wholly child centred, and at all times driven by the needs of our young students.



'Experiences during the early years lay the foundation for all future learning. A rapid rate of development during the early years occurs in the physical, emotional, social and cognitive domains. The brain and body develop faster than at any other point in a child's life.'

'Inquiry in the Early Years', IB (2019)

Learning Playfully

It is through play that our EY students create learning opportunities. Play can take many forms, from free play amongst children themselves, to co-opted play between children and their teachers. In all its forms play allows young learners to naturally and actively construct meaning from their interactions with their peers and the world around them. These meanings are continuously built upon and revisited as experiences grow. At ISA, we endeavour to provide space for our students to enjoy authentic, valuable and varied types of play, with a focus on building up positive and strong relationships with their teachers.

Relationships

Research has shown that the self-regulation and language skills that are learned, both socially and emotionally, through relationship building in early years are the most important predictors of children's future academic success and personal wellbeing. Maintaining positive relationships is a fundamental part of our EY programme, for both our students and our staff. Our school leaders aim to engage and empower our EY teachers, and in so doing improve the learning experience of their young learners.

Environment

At ISA we are immensely proud of our EY facilities and spaces. The EY centre on our campus is part of, but separate from, the rest of our school and it provides a safe, welcoming home for our young learners in Nursery, Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten. The physical environment of the EY centre includes the classrooms, playgrounds, EY kitchen, library, gym, music room and art atelier. Each of these spaces is purpose-built, and they have been thoughtfully designed to encourage play and build relationships in a safe and secure way.

Student Agency

We believe that it is important that EY learners feel a sense of ownership over their own learning. By promoting student agency at a young age we can encourage our early learners to become more at ease with being independent, comfortable at negotiating and compromising together in play, and confident in asserting themselves.



Learning Dispositions

The Early Years teaching teams understand the importance of developing learning dispositions such as curiosity and an inquiring mind within all of our young students. These dispositions or attitudes relate directly to the learning process and the positive self belief that our young students develop about their learning abilities. The importance of developing attributes such as open mindedness, empathy and being reflective are central to the IB philosophy and the Early Years programme.

Specialist Teaching Teams

The Early Years teaching team is enhanced by experienced and knowledgeable specialists both within the homerooms and in subject areas. All students in Pre School, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten attend Physical Education, Music, Library and Art taught by experienced subject experts. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students also attend Dutch language lessons taught by language specialists. All grade levels are also assigned an IT teacher, a counsellor, English as additional language (EAL) teachers and support teachers who liaise and co teach within the homerooms.



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