



**inter-community  
school zurich**

EST. 1960

# Nursery Programme

The Inter-Community School is committed to providing a supportive and enabling learning environment in which all members of the community are challenged to achieve their individual potential, encouraged to pursue their passions, and expected to fulfil their responsibilities.



Our Nursery, Preschool and Kindergarten learning environments offer children in the preschool years an exceptional opportunity to build foundational skills and a love for learning which will help them grow as inquisitive learners.

### **Pedagogical Approach**

#### **Our pedagogical approach**

We follow a holistic pedagogical approach that focuses on the child's independent growth and their readiness for the future. Using elements of the Reggio Emilia and Montessori curriculums, we develop a learning structure suitable to the child's needs and cognitive abilities. We respect every child's cultural and social background, encouraging multicultural integration and caring.

An individualised learning programme to assess, track and subsequently inform parents of each child's progress is prepared by the Nursery teaching team. Activities for each child are designed and shared with parents through various channels. Each day a range of stimulating activities and resources support the children as they build their foundation of skills and knowledge in a secure environment designed with the child's well-being as the priority.

#### **Our image of the child**

The ICS Nursery child is independent, competent, confident and caring. We seek to nurture, integrate and respect children so they may become healthy and happy individuals. We achieve this by creating a trusting atmosphere where children are listened to and their needs addressed.

We believe that children are eager to learn from a very young age. The Nursery programme is designed to inspire and encourage the natural curiosity of children. Children's natural capacity to learn, their curiosity and their eagerness to share new experiences are recognised and further developed with careful teacher observation and record keeping.





### **Developing young minds**

We focus on supporting the groundwork for the ICS Nursery child's growth into a healthy person that is able to take care of themselves, be empathetic and think constructively. Teachers follow a holistic pedagogical approach to enrich the child's learning process, allowing for both child-led and teacher-structured activities to take place within the classroom. We encourage parent participation and community integration whenever possible.

The Nursery programme is designed to gently support children as they develop friendships, discover independence and explore learning in a nurturing and caring environment. We establish routines to guide the children through their daily activities recognising the individuality of each one, helping them to express their needs and to recognise boundaries as they discover the rules and etiquette as members of our Nursery community.

### **Principles for Pedagogical Action**

The ICS Nursery emphasises nurturing in both emotional and intellectual areas. Every child has different circumstances that must include the process of collaborative support from both the family and teacher in order to achieve personal wellbeing and academic success.

We believe each child is unique and full of potential, bringing curiosity, joy and a desire to learn. We believe children are active participants in their education, each encouraged and supported to reach their individual potential. We place emphasis on supporting children to develop a sense of belonging, of sustained engagement and curiosity, along with an intrinsic motivation to learn. We believe children need time to think, to explore and to reflect on their learning. We see each child as a unique individual on their own learning journey.

### **Activities with the children**

We offer a base in various areas that provide a basis for future development in subjects such as Maths, Science, Reading & Writing, Creative Thinking, Arts, Independent Wellbeing, Technology and Sports. Children at an ICS Nursery Level will be supported in all areas and will be monitored on their achievement by pedagogical milestones. Children at this stage will be learning groundwork for Pre-K education through play and relationship building. Our main focus is to nurture a confident child who is ready to learn, grow and integrate into society.

Our classroom teachers in the Nursery play a pastoral as well as an educational role. Our behaviour guidelines ask students to have respect for themselves and for others. We believe that children learn best in a nurturing environment where they feel supported. We offer an environment where the child can, as an individual, develop their personality in a safe and secure environment. Teachers in the Nursery support children to deal with their feelings by building strong emotional bonds with them.

## Language Skills



### German/English Bilingual Strand

Children in the nursery are encouraged to speak English and/or German throughout the day. A dedicated German teacher oversees the German/English bilingual strand in the Nursery & Preschool Programme. Both languages are used throughout the day to support learning. There are German speaking Teaching Assistants to support children's German language acquisition in all of the learning environments. Excursions into our local community provide children with opportunities to use the German language connected to their learning at school.

### Mother Tongue Languages

We also help and encourage students to maintain and develop their mother tongue, as this is important for their cultural identity and cognitive development. We recognise that having mother tongue skills also helps students in learning additional languages. The Primary library contains a wide range of books and resources in many languages that ICS families can borrow. ICS considers itself a multilingual environment.



### Literacy Skills

Language and communication are enhanced through activities and play. Children are encouraged to explore, negotiate, problem-solve, role-play, discover and share as they develop their ability to think critically. Listening to stories, questioning, observing and commenting allow children to begin to formulate their own stories using words, gestures and objects. These activities develop the child's oral language development as well as their awareness of the printed word. During the morning circle time, various themes are introduced and serve as the basis for a range of activities designed to help children inquire, discover, explore and express their feelings. Recognising that sounds are identified through letters and recognition of letters in the alphabet are skills which will be built throughout the nursery years.



### Numeracy Skills

Purposeful teacher guided activities encourage children to discover and construct mathematical meanings through play where concepts such as sorting and organising or building and designing are featured. The approach is concrete, using experiences or objects from the child's world to help them master difficult abstract concepts. Experiences with numbers are built into the child's daily learning experiences based on their readiness. Number sense from counting, number identification, addition and subtraction, recognising patterns through comparing and sorting, identifying shapes, comparing sizes through lengths and weights and making simple estimations to form graphs are some of the mathematical concepts that the children in natural and age appropriate ways through the purposeful play-based approach to numeracy in the Nursery.



### **Social Emotional Skills**

The child's social and emotional development as well as their physical well-being is supported through activities that focus on developing an awareness of the similarities and differences between children. The child is encouraged to interact with peers and share ideas as the seeds for collaborative activities are planted. Selfcare is explicitly taught as children are encouraged to identify and express feelings. Children will be encouraged to work independently or with others as they develop their ability to create, cooperate, negotiate and problem-solve.



### **Scientific Skills**

Scientific activities are designed to engage the children in playful learning. Hands-on exploration activities tied to the nursery theme of the month are readily available. The activities arouse the child's natural curiosity and interest in nature and invite them to explore and discover. Regular excursions to the outdoors, to the ICS research garden, play in the mud kitchen and other places of interest in the neighbourhood encourage further investigations in the classroom setting.



### **Creativity Skills**

A wide range of materials and resources are offered for self-expression in the Nursery programme. The aim is for children to build confidence and to gain the ability to express their feelings in meaningful ways with others. Sharing, taking turns, listening and responding are all part of the Art, Music, Drama and Dance Programme in the Nursery curriculum. Photography, experimenting with voice and instruments, field trips, working with wire, clay, paper, wood and water are some of the activities included in this section of the curriculum. The child's enjoyment

with such activities is used to further discover how to cooperate and learn with others as well as develop, practice and improve coordination and motor skills. Ample time for spontaneous self-directed play is given so that the child can experiment and interact creatively with others.

### **Settling-in Period**

During the settling-in period the children's parents will be asked to start out by slowly introducing their children into the new learning environment.

Children begin the familiarisation period during the morning free-play activities at morning welcome in the presence of their guardian. As the child gets acquainted with their environment and the ICS Care Team, the parent will be asked to leave the room for small amounts of time. When the Care Team feels the child is ready, they will attempt Circle Time without the guardian and start the integration process by extending the time of detachment from the guardian until the child is ready to attend a full nursery session.

Settling-in periods vary from child to child. Some settle into their environment in a matter of days. Some have a longer process that can last a month or more. It is important for the guardian to be caring but firm during the settling in process and reassure the child that they will see them soon and to have fun. Settling-in periods are as much of a process for the child as they are for the guardian. If the person in charge of the child has any doubts or insecurities the Head of the Nursery will be available to attend to their needs and guide them through the familiarisation period.

We will not set maximum or minimum times that children must attend Nursery during the familiarisation period as this will depend completely on the needs of the child. We will collaborate with the family to determine the optimal settling in time for each individual child.





## Daily Routine and Transitions

### Routine of the Daily Schedule

We will offer a carefully planned routine schedule for the children to provide them with a balance of structured activities, rest time, quiet play, indoor and outdoor play. Children will be provided with cots to rest after lunch.

Nursery Full Day Programme (approximate times)	
Morning Welcome/ Free play	8:00
Children's Morning Meeting	8:45 - 9:15
Snack	9:15 - 9:30
Indoor or Outdoor Learning Activities including play/physical activity/research garden/pond (cognitive development, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, independent wellbeing)	9:30 - 12:00
Family Style Meal	12:00 - 12:30
Rest time followed by reading and quiet learning.	12:45 - 14:00
Snack	14:00 - 14:15
Indoor or Outdoor Learning Activities including play/physical activity/research garden/pond (cognitive development, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, independent wellbeing)	14:15 -16:00
Free play/Reflections on the day	16:00-17:00





ICS Inter-Community School Zurich  
Strubenacher 3  
8126 Zumikon  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 44 919 8300  
Website: [www.icsz.ch](http://www.icsz.ch)

ICS is fully accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) as well as the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

