

Early Years Overview

The Early Years at Vientiane International School includes children from three to six years old.

In the Early Years at VIS we believe...

- ❖ Early childhood is a unique time when children are developing their views of themselves, others, and the world around them.
- ❖ Children are full of wonder and curiosity.
- ❖ Learning is a journey –exploring, playing, questioning, and discovering should be savored and enjoyed.
- ❖ Children have their own ideas and are capable of constructing meaning through encounters with their environment and the people in it.
- ❖ Building relationships within a supportive community is a foundational part of learning and an essential element in developing the whole child.

At VIS, we nurture a love of learning through play-based inquiry and intentionally designed learning experiences in a safe and joyful environment.

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme

As an IB World school we follow the curriculum and principles of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (the [IBPYP](#)). The PYP framework supports a play-based curriculum for early learning, creating an environment for children to develop social, communication, research, thinking, physical and self-management skills. Our programme aims to develop the whole child and fosters international-mindedness through an inquiry-based and student-centred approach. The Primary Years Programme framework is organized into six transdisciplinary themes: Who We Are, Where We Are in Place and Time, Sharing the Planet, How We Express Ourselves, How We Organise Ourselves and How the World Works. The transdisciplinary themes are explored through units of inquiry which are designed to develop conceptual understandings of big ideas.

Play

“Play provides benefits for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development for students from all socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds...” (IBO)

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We believe play is foundational to children's development and is the means by which they discover and experience their world. Through play, children develop attitudes of the IB Learner Profile by collaborating, making judgements, learning how to learn and developing independence and autonomy with the support of teachers. During play children develop vital social and self-management skills as they become contributing members of their communities. A child's interests and personal experiences are expressed, explored and enhanced through play. Through play, children begin to develop their view of themselves as learners, their sense of autonomy and identity and build confidence in making decisions.

Communication, Language and Literacy

In the Early Years we aim to develop a love of literacy. Children are immersed in a language-rich environment and provided with daily opportunities to explore and engage in authentic speaking, listening, reading and writing experiences. A strong foundation in communication, language and literacy begins with building oral language skills which empower children to be effective communicators, build relationships, make meaning and express themselves. At VIS, we value the cultural and linguistic diversity of our community. The development of a child's home languages are foundational to conceptual understanding and future language learning. We, therefore, promote and celebrate the many languages in our Early Years community.

Mathematics

Mathematics is a universal language. Children in the Early Years are given the opportunity to develop mathematical thinking, skills and conceptual understanding through real-life experiences, games and the use of manipulatives. Children are encouraged to problem solve, explore and make sense of their world using mathematical reasoning. Children use what they know while also integrating new learning across the concepts of number, shape and space, measurement, pattern and function and data handling. Children are challenged to engage with relevant and meaningful questions or provocations that build their understanding of mathematical concepts.

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Social and Emotional Learning

We place great value on the well-being of all members of our local and global community. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is fundamental to early childhood development and vital for establishing and sustaining a healthy and balanced life. This important aspect of the curriculum supports children's ability to build and maintain positive relationships with others, develop empathy and self-regulation skills, and learn to value one's own identity and respect the identities of others. Inquiry through play is connected to children's social emotional learning and the development of their understanding of the world as they explore, discover, question and interact with the social and physical world. Through play, children construct meaning and define themselves as members of a learning community.

Movement and Physical Development

Physical health and development is an important part of well-being. Young children learn about the world around them when they actively engage all their senses. With this in mind, we provide a wide range of sensory exploration opportunities. In the Early Years, in addition to regular swimming lessons, children are invited to engage in movement opportunities integrated into curriculum areas and during outdoor play sessions. Open-ended exploration and targeted skill-based activities are designed to support the development of both gross and fine-motor skills. We encourage children to challenge themselves physically in our safe and supervised environment.

The Learning Environment

We believe our learning environment is fundamental to the child's learning experience and is considered the third teacher (in addition to their relationships with parents and teachers). The environment is designed to enrich all aspects of a child's development. We believe that the learning environment should be safe and secure but also challenging so that it encourages a healthy level of risk-taking. We value indoor and outdoor learning spaces that provide authentic, open-ended learning opportunities and materials. We aim to develop environments that are responsive, connected to students' interests, and inspire curiosity and creativity. Children thrive when they spend time outside in open natural spaces and have

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the opportunity to develop their full physical potential. Time spent outdoors can promote emotional wellbeing and a deeper appreciation of nature.

Teachers as Researchers

Through listening to and observing children closely, as well as documenting the process of their thinking, understanding, and learning, teachers work collaboratively to be responsive (through learning engagements and provocations) in support of learning for all students. The philosophy of the PYP encourages children to wonder and to ask questions, and we strive to create an environment to support this way of thinking and being.