



BRITISH
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
OF CHICAGO, SOUTH LOOP
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM GUIDE

2024-25



At BISC, South Loop, our Early Years program consists of Nursery (Pre-School) and Reception (Pre-Kindergarten)

THE CURRICULUM

The International Primary Curriculum is thematic, creative, and employs specific goals for learning in each subject as well as for personal development. The curriculum applies a global approach that helps children connect learning to where they are living now and view learning from the perspectives of people in other countries. To aid learning, teachers choose the following themes. They ensure a varied and exciting curriculum that follows an appropriate progression of skills and helps children to reach their highest potential.

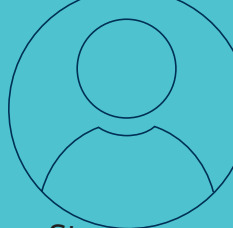
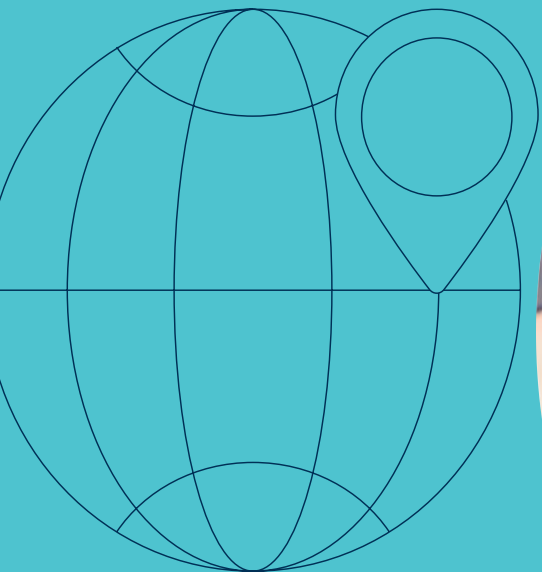
Children in Nursery and Reception will learn through a number of different themes throughout the year. These rotate on a two yearly cycle to ensure different learning experiences, and may change depending on the interests of the students. An example of the topic themes they may follow include:

- All About Me
- Under the Sea
- Space
- Once Upon a Time
- Plants & Growing
- Transport
- Animals & Minibeasts
- Magic!

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development, and care of children in our Nursery and Reception program. It ensures children's readiness for Primary School and provides a broad range of knowledge and skills that form a strong foundation for future progress throughout the rest of their school career and life. EYFS integrates four guiding principles that shape learning:

1. Every child is a unique child, constantly learning and resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured;
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.



Areas of Learning and Development

Prime Areas

As part of Early Years Foundation Stage, children play, explore, create, and think critically through activities shaped by seven Areas of Learning and Development. We use these inter-connected areas to promote children's individual interests and unique learning needs. The Prime Areas are crucial to igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building the capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Learning is strengthened and applied in the specific areas. The activities, stories, and games through which learning takes place in each area are challenging, exciting, and fuel progress towards learning outcomes. Through a mix of child-initiated and adult-led experiences that are relevant to the children's lives, we also encourage effective listening and positive behavior.

Communication & Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all 7 areas of learning, and forms the foundations for both language and cognitive development. Children experience a rich language environment and develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves while speaking and listening in a range of situations. We also spark interest in reading and writing. Children study French and Spanish as part of this area, learning greetings and introductions, and how to speak about colors, numbers, food, and transport. Children also explore the associated cultures.

Physical Development

This area of learning focuses on both fine and gross motor skills, enabling children to pursue happy, healthy, and active lives. Children enjoy opportunities to be active and interactive, they develop coordination, control, and movement. They also learn basic principles of health and self-care, including the importance of physical activity and healthy food choices.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

This area is fundamental to every child's cognitive development and involves helping children develop a positive sense of themselves and others. They adopt social skills and learn about making relationships. We also learn how to manage feelings and demonstrate appropriate behavior. The overarching theme is self-confidence and self awareness.

Specific Areas

Literacy

Development here involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters, and to begin to read and write. Children have access to a wide range of reading materials, including books and poems.

Mathematics

This area provides children with chances to improve skills in counting and understanding, and using numbers. They calculate simple addition and subtraction, and learn to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. This area supports children's understanding in different situations by providing opportunities to explore, practice, learn, and talk.

Understanding the World

Children make sense of their physical world and community by observing and learning about people, places, technology, and the environment. Learning is based on first-hand experiences that involve making predictions and decisions, and taking part in discussions.

Expressive Arts & Design

Here children use their imagination and work with various media and materials. They share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through art and music, take part in movement, dance, and role play, and explore design and technology. Through these activities, children learn to value their own ideas and those of others. This area particularly supports children's curiosity and desire to play.

Assessment

Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what children know, understand, can do, and feel at different stages in the learning process; this information guides teachers in instruction. Assessment is an ongoing and daily part of school life, and the formative comments children receive develop their understanding of the skills and knowledge required to be successful in each course. At BISC South Loop, the aims and purpose of assessment are to:

- Provide information to enhance and improve learning and teaching
- Provide information for target-setting for individuals, groups, and cohorts
- Share learning goals with students
- Involve students in self-assessment
- Help students know and recognize the standards for which they are aiming
- Raise standards of learning
- Identify possibilities for academic intervention
- Inform parents of their child's progress

Academic Reports

Academic reports describe children's academic and social development and list targets in all subjects for the child to concentrate on before the next report. Nursery and Reception teachers communicate with families about children's achievement and progress in two academic reports, in October and June.

There are regular parent consultations with teachers scheduled during the school year. Sign-ups are facilitated with the child's class teacher, and details are communicated in the weekly parent newsletter. Parents may also meet with teachers outside of the consultation dates.

Early Learning Goals

The level of development children are expected to achieve by the end of Reception is defined by the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). These help provide a wide range of rich experiences for your child and ensure your child's readiness for their continued learning journey in Year 1 and beyond.

Seesaw

In addition to academic reports, we also use an online learning journal for children throughout Primary School. Seesaw enables you to see exactly what your child is learning each day. For any given activity, the teacher will take a photo or video of your child's participation and upload it along with a written observation, which is sent directly to your smart-phone. Seesaw can also be accessed online or on a tablet.



QUESTIONS?

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