

Emergent Curriculum Philosophy Statement



We believe that all children are naturally strong, capable learners worthy of our trust and support. We look to each child to help guide us in their learning. We value and respect children and believe that their theories and ideas are an important source of curriculum.

Because of these beliefs, all London Bridge Centres have adopted an “**Emergent Curriculum**” approach to learning. We believe this approach is the most developmentally appropriate and is most consistent with our understanding of how children learn.

The Early Years is the time when children develop self-esteem, a sense of belonging and a sense of self worth – the essential skills that form the foundation on which all learning is built. We believe that the Emergent Curriculum philosophy, with its emphasis on the capabilities of the child, is the best way to enhance the growth of these skills.

An Emergent Curriculum Philosophy is one that builds upon the interests of children. We do not separate the curriculum into discreet blocks of time for math, language, etc. Rather, children learn about themselves and the world around them through investigation and discovery, and through art, dramatic play, and social interactions. Important areas such as literacy and numeracy development are introduced and woven through all activities, taking place in each of the traditional early learning domains and activity centres.

Within our Emergent Curriculum Philosophy, there are four essential elements. These are:

- ❑ **The Environment**
- ❑ **The Role of the Educator**
- ❑ **Observation and Documentation**
- ❑ **Project Work and Project Practice**

The Environment

Quality Early Years Environments are inspiring! Within the Emergent Curriculum Philosophy, the environment itself is viewed as a teacher, inviting children into action and guiding them into individual and small group play. Environments foster creativity, promote wonder and encourage each child’s natural curiosity and desire to explore and learn.

Effective Early Years Environments do not just happen – they are the product of a planned and thoughtful approach to learning that reflects the skills, needs and interests of the people, both adult and child, that occupy that space. Great attention is given to the look and the feel of the classroom. Everything in the environment is meaningful and has a purpose.

The Role of the Educator

In an Emergent Curriculum Environment, Early Childhood Educators are not only nurturers, they are partners, facilitators, observers and co-learners who have a deep understanding of developmentally appropriate practices.

Educators understand individual differences and arrange their room so that children can explore at their own pace. They make available a wide range of materials and activities in order to allow children to make their own choices. And they work hard to match their curriculum to the strengths and interests demonstrated in the children. Educators understand that the early childhood experience is about learning, not teaching. The Educator must learn about the child from the child herself (himself) and from the family of the child. The Educator watches, listens and reflects on what is happening in order to reinforce the child’s learning and appreciation of an experience. Lastly, and most significantly, the Educator facilitates the building of relationships between children, families, communities and themselves.

Observation and Documentation

We learn best about children by watching them in action and taking note of the learning that they are experiencing. Observation and documentation are therefore one of the most important roles of an Early Childhood Educator.

The purpose or objective of observing and documenting children's experiences is to:

- Deepen Educators understanding about each child's thinking and development
- Help Educators make informed decisions
- Take each child's work and feelings seriously, and to give value to them
- Help children to reflect on and make sense of their own experiences
- Make learning visible to parents and the community

Observation and documentation is demonstrated through:

Individual Portfolios - *A collection of items that reveal different aspects of an individual child's growth and development over time.*

Posted Observations of Children's Day-to-Day Experiences - *Demonstrated through photographs, children's own work, anecdotal and narrative notes etc.*

Project Narratives - *Posted images, descriptions and children's work as it pertains to a certain Topic of Investigation.*

Project Work and Project Practice

"A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about."

The Project Approach in an Emergent Curriculum philosophy is based on the belief that children learn by doing and by experiencing hands-on learning. From a developmental perspective, the very young children in London Bridge's care are at a "sensory-motor" stage of learning, and the Emergent Curriculum philosophy of learning through exploration has shown to be the one of the best ways to support this early developmental stage.

While Infants, Toddlers and young Preschoolers do not do "projects" in the traditional sense, they are building the skills they will need for project work later in life. Educators plan encounters that provoke curiosity and lure the children into discovery. The process in which these research, analysis and problem solving skills are enhanced is referred to as "Project Practice".

In a project, Educators provide the children with opportunities to explore, observe and investigate their world using all of their senses. Topics may range from investigating pizza to exploring shadows - there are unlimited possibilities as every child's world is filled with an abundance of things to investigate as long as the project topic is something that is relevant to their understanding of the world and appropriate for their level of development.

Within a project, children learn to formulate their own questions and conduct their own investigations with the guidance of the Educator. Projects themselves are grounded in play. Art, drama, storytelling and hands on exploration are the groundwork for discovery. Throughout the process, the Educator also pays close attention to each child's achievements, thereby supporting the formation of self-esteem, confidence and a strong social-emotional foundation.