

Leapfrog Kindergarten Curriculum



(A registered charity and a member of the Hong Kong Pre-School Playgroups Association)
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Philosophy

Our educational philosophy is based on a developmentally appropriate play-based curriculum, based on the UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum. Teaching includes programs that promote children's active exploration of the environment so that children have the opportunity to explore, reflect, interact and communicate with other children and adults. We encourage a mixture of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. We believe that children should be treated as individuals and be allowed to learn at their own pace and developmental level.

Since our foundation, Leapfrog teaching and learning philosophy has been learn-through-play. We believe the following about play:

"Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support, and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally." (EYFS, 2007)

"Providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play is an important way in which teachers support young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge." (EYFS 2007)

The four main principles (based on the EYFS) of the HKPPA play-based curriculum are:

- A Unique Child - this aspect recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Positive Relationships - this aspect describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or key people in their lives.
- Enabling Environments -this aspect acknowledges that environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's learning.
- Learning and Developing - this aspect recognises that children learn and develop at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

The EYFS has six areas of learning. These are broken down into individual learning outcomes for the children.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (includes respecting and valuing self and others)
- Communication, Language and Literacy (includes pre-reading and writing skills as well as the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings)
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (including number work, shapes, weighing and measuring, etc.
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World (opportunities to investigate and take part in practical experiments with a range of materials)
- Physical Development (opportunities to improve their coordination, balance and fine motor skills as well as gaining an understanding of healthy eating and using all their senses)
- Creative Development (through Art, Music, Role-Play, Design and Technology, etc.)

At Leapfrog Kindergarten, each student spends 15 hours a week - 3 hours a day - engaging in purposeful activities that are related to their age, stage of development and interests.

There are three teacher-led circle times during the sessions. The first one is based on a range of assorted, practical numeracy tasks, such as grouping, matching or identifying shapes and dates. The second is usually a story-time, often based on a current theme, or chosen by the children themselves. This circle time is held immediately before our snack. The final one is just before the children leave, when we offer a review of the day's events and sing some songs.

Each day the teacher will lead a phonics-based activity that is geared to the children's level of attainment.

Much of the remainder of the session is spent in 'free choice' activity, with the emphasis on learning through play. There is always a variety of choices available, including daily art and craft (again, frequently linked to a specific 'theme'), puppets, home corner, 'office' or outside play. Music and Movement is a further activity.

Parental Involvement

Leapfrog was established in 1994 by a group of parents as a branch of the Hong Kong Pre-School Playgroup Association (HKPPA). HKPPA promotes learning through play and encourages parent participation. Research shows that there are clear benefits for children when parents become actively involved in their children's learning and development from an early age. Ever since the beginning, a committee of parents has been running Leapfrog, and have becoming greatly involved in their children's education, working under the close guidance of the qualified and experienced teachers at Leapfrog. Some parents have special skills, qualities and talents to offer, whilst others become involved in sharing everyday games and activities with the children, meaning that we can have more variety on offer each day.

Our Aims

Our overall aim is that children who attend Leapfrog will experience a warm, friendly and purposeful atmosphere which is geared towards their needs, abilities and interests, and which will lay the foundation for future learning. This will be achieved by setting standards aimed at improving quality and consistency for all children, and building on the founding philosophy of the school - that parents and professionals can work together in harmony and mutual understanding in achieving these aims.

Method

Each day, we set up a range of activities, both inside and out, which we know through our observations, will interest and engage the children. Some activities are adult-led, and require a specific response from the children in order to achieve an 'end result'. These might include art and craft or musical pursuits. Others areas, such as the Home Corner, facilitate more of an imaginative, child-led response. Three circle times guide the children more formally in their numeracy and literacy learning, and split the sessions into two well-defined play times, with plenty of opportunity for free-choice.

Themes

Much of our work will be based on a variety of topics throughout the year. The topics will incorporate discussions, stories, songs and rhymes, role play and art and craft. We will keep parents informed about the exact timing of the themes in the monthly newsletters. The length of the topics may range from one day to a whole month.

Outlined below are the themes for the next school year, with specific objectives outlined for each theme in both K1 and K2.

Myself and my Family (August)

K1

- have a sense of personal identity, and form friendships with other children
- talk freely about their home and community
- make connections between different parts of their life experience
- remember and talk about significant past and present events in their own experience
- show care and concern for others
- show interest in the lives of people familiar to them, developing an understanding of changes over time
- show interest in different occupations and ways of life

K2

- have a positive self-image and show that they are comfortable with themselves
- have a developing awareness of their own needs, responses, views, feelings and culture
- find out about and identify some features of living things
- appreciate the need for personal hygiene and recognize the importance of keeping healthy and those things which contribute towards this
- respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel
- present events in their own lives and those of their families to others, and enjoy joining in with customs and routines

Moon Festival (September)

K1

- show an interest in their world, commenting and asking questions

K2

- feel a sense of belonging to their own community and place
- observe, find out about and identify features in the place in which they live

Letters (September)

K1

- show an interest in letters around them
- ascribe meanings to marks that they make
- manipulate objects with increasing control

K2

- hear and say the initial sound in words and know which letters present some of the sounds
- link sounds and letters, names and sounding of the letters of the alphabet.
- explore and experiment with texts
- begin to form recognizable letters, most of which are correctly formed

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Colour, Shape and Sounds (including Mid-Autumn Lantern Festival) (September)

K1

- explore colour, and begin to differentiate between colours
- show an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes, using them appropriately for tasks and making arrangements with objects, and by talking about these
- show an awareness of similarities in shapes in the environment, and talking about the shapes of some everyday objects
- enjoy rhyming and rhythmic activities, showing awareness and recognition of rhyme and alliteration
- tap out simple repeated rhythms and make some up, exploring how sounds can be changed, eg louder, more quickly, etc.
- create 3D structures and make enclosures, for example by stacking wooden blocks

K2

- explore what happens when they mix colours
- choose particular colours to use for a purpose
- explore colour, texture, shape, form and space in two or three dimensions
- use language such as 'circle', or 'bigger' to describe the shape and size of solid and flat shapes
- talk about, recognise and recreate some simple patterns
- explore the different sounds of instruments
- recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns and match movements to music
- explore and experiment with sounds, words and texts

Food, Shops and Shopping (October)

K1

- show an interest in number problems
- use some number names and number language spontaneously and accurately in play, sometimes matching number and quantity correctly
- based on first-hand experience, enjoy role play with peers, using available props such as play money to support this
- show awareness of own needs and healthy practices with regard to eating
- show interest in different occupations
- notice what adults do, imitating what is observed and then doing it spontaneously when an adult is not there

K2

- interact with others, negotiating and taking turns in conversations
- use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences
- use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking ideas, feelings and events
- attempt writing for different purposes, such as lists and instructions
- in practical activities and discussion, begin to use the vocabulary involved in addition and subtraction
- show understanding of the importance of keeping healthy with regard to good eating practices

Halloween (October)

K1

- Explore and experience, using a range of senses and movement, in music, dance and art

K2

- understand that the seasons and festivals occur regularly each year
- use their imagination in art and design, music, dance, imaginative role-play and stories

Animals (November)

K1

- show curiosity and interest in the features of living things, talking about and describing what they see and experience

K2

- identify some features of living things
- look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change in respect of living things
- explain their own knowledge to others asking questions and using non-fiction texts to develop their own understanding

Advent and Christmas (December)

K2

- have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people
- understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect

K1

- recognize special times in their lives, anticipating specific events and talk about these

Chinese New Year (January)

K1

- seek and delight in new experiences, with a positive approach to activities and events
- talk about and describe past and future events of significance
- comment and ask questions about where they live, showing an interest in the world generally
- imitate and create movement in response to music and develop a repertoire of actions by putting a sequence of movements together

K2

- have an awareness of and an interest in cultural and religious differences
- enjoy joining in with customs and routines
- understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs that need to be treated with respect
- begin to know about their own cultures and those of other people

Transport and Machines (January)

K1

- show curiosity and interest in the features of objects, why things happen and how things work
- investigate various construction materials, joining them to build and balance
- demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of blocks, construction sets and small world activities

K2

- investigate objects by using all of their senses as appropriate
- find out about and identify some features of objects
- ask questions about why things happen and how things work
- build and construct with a wide range of objects selecting appropriate resources and techniques to join and assemble materials.

Valentine's Day and Hearts (February)

K1

- feel safe and secure, and show a sense of trust
- show care and concern for others
- express feelings about a significant personal event
- capture experiences and responses with music, dances, art activities and words

K2

- enjoy joining in with customs and routines
- use language to clarify feelings

Numbers (February)

K1

- show curiosity about numbers by offering comments or asking questions
- use some number names spontaneously

K2

- recognise numerals
- say and use number names in order in familiar contexts

Use Your Imagination! (February)

K1

- show increasing confidence in new situations
- describe main story settings, events and principal characters
- use a widening range of words to express or elaborate on ideas
- suggest how a story might end
- explore and experience, using a wide range of senses and movement
- create movement in response to music
- engage in imaginative play and role play

K2

- be confident enough to try out new ideas, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group
- enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language and readily turn to it in their play and learning
- use language to imagine experiences
- express and communicate ideas and thoughts through role play
- use their imagination in art and design, music and dance

Easter, Mardi Gras and Eggs (March)

K1

- enjoy joining in with family customs and routines
- have an awareness of cultural and religious differences

K2

- enjoy participating in customs and routines
- understand that they can expect others to treat their cultures and beliefs with respect
- find out about and identify some features of events they observe

Houses and Homes (April)

K1

- look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change
- construct with a purpose in mind, using a variety of resources
- observe and find out about and identify features of the place in which they live
- feel a sense of belonging to their own community and place

K2

- make connections between different parts of their life experience
- show curiosity and interest in the features of objects
- investigate various construction materials
- comment and ask questions about where they live
- show interest in different ways of life
- use available resources to create props to support their role play

Summer (May)

K1

- notice differences between features of the local natural environment
- develop an understanding of growth, decay and changes over time
- show curiosity and interest in the features of living things

K2

- understand the seasons of the year and their regularity
- identify, observe and find out about features of the natural world

Water (June)

K1

- explore the concept of relative capacity between containers of different shapes and sizes
- Show understanding of cause/effect relations, eg If we put this water into the freezer, what will happen, and why? If we drop this stone into the water, what will happen and why?

K2

- investigate, using the senses as appropriate
- identify, observe and find out about features of the natural world

We also incorporate a range of 'Interest' boxes regularly into our day-to-day planning. These include boxes of construction materials such as Duplo, a 'Discovery Box' of magnifying glasses, mirrors and magnets, a Musical Box, Baby Box, Office Box, Shopping Box, etc.

Daily Literacy Circle Time

Literacy Circle Time is a daily event. Our stories are often based on the current theme, or the children may re-enact a story themselves, using puppets. 'Show and Tell' is a weekly event.

K1

- use gesture, intonation, rhythm and phrasing to make their meaning clear to others, questioning why things happen and giving explanations
- respond to simple verbal instructions, also knowing that information can be relayed in the form of print
- develop vocabulary, connecting ideas and using increasingly complex sentences, eg recall past and anticipate future experiences
- listen to stories with increasing attention and recall
- anticipate and describe main story settings, structures events and principal characters, using illustrations to guide them
- hold books the correct way up, turning the pages carefully and understanding the concept of a word

K2

- maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate
- speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control, showing awareness of the listener
- use talk to organize, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events
- enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language, and readily turn to it in their play and learning
- respond to stories, songs, rhymes and poems with relevant comments, questions or actions, and begin to make up their own
- retell narratives in the correct sequence, drawing on language patterns of stories
- show an understanding of the elements of stories, such as the main character, sequence of events, 'beginnings' and 'ends'.

Phonics

As part of the implementation of the Communication, Language and Literacy area of learning, Leapfrog Kindergarten follows a synthetic phonics programme called 'Get Reading Right'. We spend about 10 minutes each day on structured phonics tuition.

It is important to remember to use the sound that each letter makes, rather than the name of the letter. Capital letters are not introduced unless we are using them at the start of a name or a place.

K1

The first set of sounds consists of;

s - m - c - t - g - p - a - o

When they are ready, they will start to make simple words using those letters.

Practising at home with the correct set of letters will help to reinforce your child's learning. However, reading stories aloud together and just talking to your child about anything and everything are also extremely important pre-reading activities.

- hear and say sounds in words in the order in which they occur
- link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet
- use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words
- read and write a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently
- use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognizable letters, most of which are correctly formed

K2

We spend about 10 minutes each day on phonics based on the 'Get Reading Right Scheme'.

It is important to remember to use the sound that each letter makes, rather than the name of the letter. Capitals are not introduced unless we are using them at the start of a name or a place.

The children are arranged in groups and we focus on building up their skills.

- hear and say sounds in words in the order in which they occur
- link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet
- use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words
- read and write a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently
- use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognizable letters, most of which are correctly formed

The first set of sounds consists of;

s - m - c - t - g - p - a - o

When they are ready, they start to make simple words using those letters.

The second set of sounds consists of;

r - l - d - b - f - h - i - u

When the children are confident using these letters, words can be made using both sets together. The third set of sounds consists of;

v - w - y - z - j - n - k - e

The letters in all three sets may then be combined in order to create a wider range of words.

The fourth set of sounds consists of: ff, ll, ss, zz

There are two more sets of sounds, which we will move on to if and when we feel the children are ready.

- Practicing at home with the correct sets of letters will help to reinforce your child's learning. However, reading stories aloud together and just talking to your child about anything and everything are also extremely important pre-reading activities.

Numeracy

Each day we all spend some time looking at the calendar and identifying the day, the month and year. We take it in turns to count the number of days that have passed in the month so far.

The emphasis is on the practical activity, with a visual stimulus in order to aid understanding. The children may also record their responses on the whiteboard when they feel ready for this.

Practicing these skills at home, for example when cooking, will help to reinforce the work that is being done at Kindergarten, and will help to develop your child's understanding of mathematical concepts. It is also great fun!

K1

- show curiosity about numbers and number problems by offering comments or asking questions
- use some number names and number language spontaneously and accurately in play
- sometimes match number and quantity correctly, particularly recognizing groups with one, two or three objects
- compare two groups of objects, identifying when they have the same number
- separate items in groups, realizing that the total number remains the same
- play with 2D and 3D shapes, making arrangements, and sustained constructions and showing awareness of the similarities of shapes in the environment generally
- start to use some mathematical language, eg 'first', 'enough', 'over', etc.

K2

- say and use number names in order in familiar contexts
- count reliably up to ten everyday objects and recognize the numerals from 1 to 9
- use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems in practical activities and discussion
- begin to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting, and finding one more or one less than a number
- use language such as 'greater', 'smaller', 'heavier' and 'lighter' to compare quantities, 'circle' or 'cube' to identify flat and solid objects, and 'above' or 'below' to describe position
- talk about, recognize and recreate simple patterns

Art and Craft Activities

These sessions are set up every day, and they are usually linked to the current theme, book or season. Play dough and sand are also available on most days.

K1

- use language and other forms of communication to share the things they create
- explore and experience, using a range of senses (colours and textures) and materials
- start to create 3D structures

K2

- express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings by designing and making, using a widening range of materials and suitable tools
- explore colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions
- use a range of small and large equipment safely and with increasing control

Daily Music and Movement

Each day, the children participate in musical activities, with a combination of live and recorded music. This involves learning different lyrics and movements to accompany the songs.

K1

- explore, experience, imitate and create movements and sounds using a range of senses in response to songs, music and dance
- sing familiar songs and make up new ones
- tap out simple repeated rhythms and make some up themselves

K2

- move safely, with confidence, imagination and control
- express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings in movement
- using a variety of songs, instruments and music and movement styles
- recognize and explore how sounds can be changed, sing simple songs from memory
- recognize repeated sounds and sound patterns and match movements to music

Physical Games and Outdoor Play

Daily opportunities are offered for physical games and outdoor play. There is a wide range of freely available outdoor apparatus, such as climbing frames, slides, play houses, tricycles, cars, space hoppers etc. We play chasing games such as 'Tag', traditional circle games, such as 'The Farmer's in his Den', and organised team games and relays.

K1

- move freely with pleasure and confidence, judging and negotiating space and pathways successfully, and respecting other children's personal space in their play
- demonstrate a level of control and balance, and the ability to push and pull equipment
- persevere in repeating some actions or attempts when developing new skills
- observe effects of activity on their bodies

K2

- show an awareness of space around themselves and others, moving with control and coordination
- travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment
- recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active

Role Play Area

We have a well equipped role play-area where a special selection is made available to the children. The toys are seasonal, based on themes or occasional availability of interesting resources.

K1

- notice what adults do, imitating what is observed and then doing it spontaneously when the adult is not there
- use available resources to create props to support role play
- engage in imaginative play and role play based on their own first hand experiences

K2

- be confident when trying out new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group
- work harmoniously as part of a group, taking turns in conversations, and understanding that there needs to be agreed values and codes of behavior
- use language to imagine and re-create roles and experiences
- express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings

Home Toy Days

On Fridays, the children may bring in a toy of their own from home. We feel that this:

- encourages the children to select and take responsibility for their own property
- allows the children to share personal possessions and play together appropriately
- purposefully enriches the children's everyday vocabulary when discussing new items in the classroom

From time to time, we may hold a 'themed week', in which all the items must be, for example, red, or have wheels. The children then have the opportunity to make comparisons and explore the concepts of 'same' and 'different'.

Assessment

At Leapfrog, assessment involves analyzing and reviewing each child's development and learning in order to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Our assessment is formative, in terms of observations, photographs, examples of children's work, and relevant information from parents.

The EYFS profile is the summative assessment, containing information gathered over a whole school year, and also includes their written report. Reference is made to each of the six areas of learning referred to previously;

- Personal, Social and Emotional
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

Our observations help us to determine each child's progress through the developmental landmarks defined by the EYFS, in terms of reaching the 'Early Years Goals'.

During the Autumn term we will email the parents the first two parts of our assessment reports on the Kindergarten students. The third part of the report is printed out and sent home with a selection of the child's artwork, writing and photos. The termly report is also emailed home to parents. Within the school year we expect parents to return the portfolios for us to add on the next terms report. At the end of the school year the portfolio should contain three detailed reports and a collection from the whole school year. After the school year the portfolio is for the student to keep.

Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, U.K. (2008)