



SMARTKIDS THAO DIEN TALK

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A NEW YEAR — THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

We started the New Year with a great dragon dance, in our beautiful Tran Ngoc Dien location, which was visited by all children and staff. After a good rest from staff and children during our Chinese New Year break; we have already started our last 5 months of the year.

We look forward to having more and new children in all our groups. Of course the coming months we will also be confronted with the fact that families are moving on to other countries and children will move to other schools.

But for now everybody is looking forward to an exciting term!

WHO ARE WE? - WE ARE CURIOUS!

This is our focus for term 2, in all our locations.

Children are naturally curious and they will explore and be encouraged to ask questions about their world, how and why things happen. They will discover topics such as "the weather", "measurement", "scientific elements", and cause and effect.



Parent teacher meetings (from 10th -14th of March)

The teachers will soon attach a schedule on their doors, to arrange a private meeting with each child's parents.

This is an opportunity for the teachers to share observations of your child and to inform you about how your child is developing in SmartKids. It is also an opportunity to ask any questions you may have concerning our child.

Children are not involved in these meetings. Please arrange a babysitter to pick up your child or watch your child during the meeting.

THE POWER OF PLAY

Play is fun and important to young children's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. Through play, children learn problem solving, interpersonal skills, communication, and other skills integral to success in school and life.

Play is also important because it involves you. Perhaps nothing is more essential and rewarding than the enjoyment your child experiences from time spent playing with you.

From day one, children are eager and determined to understand how the world works. They do this through play, using all the "tools" they have at their disposal.

Watch your child at play, and you will see the kind of concentration, passion, and creative excitement that artists and scientists bring to their projects.

Playing with your child is not only fun, it's one of the most important ways you can nurture your child's development. There are no rules when it comes to play. You don't need fancy toys. In fact, you are your child's favourite toy.

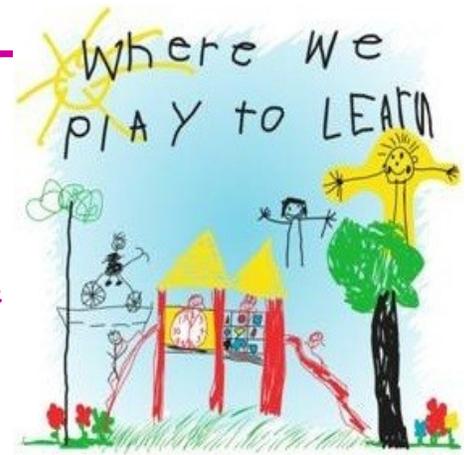
Every child is unique. Your child may have special skills or special needs. Follow your child's lead. Your child will let you know what interests him/her. When your child sees the pleasure and delight you take in his /her discoveries, she/he'll want to play more and more.

Play will benefit you, too. Being spontaneous and having fun can relieve stress and create positive memories for both you and your child. And when your child is engaged and having fun, she/he is learning!

Play is truly the work of childhood.



From: www.zerotothree.org/play



In SmartKids our whole philosophy is focused on "learning through play".

Teachers join in children's play: Teachers are delighted when they see that children discover things. Through the relationship they develop with your child and their positive encouragement, the children become eager, lifelong learners.

The teachers see what your child is trying to do or figuring out and they help your child in this process: For example to learn the difference between floating and sinking while your child is playing with boats in a bowl filled with water.

The teachers provide the support your child needs to accomplish a goal: (your child might need to be lifted up to touch an interesting object, or someone to stand behind him, to help him to go up the stairs/down the slide, maybe someone to provide more blocks to make a taller tower, help your child to finish a puzzle).

The teachers will present new challenges when your child is ready: Teachers are continuously challenging your child; they get new toys or toys from other groups, they introduce different or more difficult games, they give children tasks in order to develop independence.

The teachers are spontaneous and have fun while they are working with and taking care of your child: play is for the teacher and your child a joyful, exciting time!

That's why all teachers in SmartKids love their job!

The children's favourite dish of this month is:

FISH STEW WITH CUCUMBERS AND MUSHROOMS

Ingredients:

- Basa fish fillets
- Cucumbers (peeled and seeds removed), cut into cubes
- Pinch of salt and pepper, cooking oil
- Some spring onions, normal onions and garlic
- Mushrooms, washed and cut
- Light cooking cream, milk

Directions for preparation:

- Fry chopped onions and garlic in oil until softened. Add the fish and cook until it is cooked.
- Then mix all ingredients together in the pan and cook/simmer for about 10 minutes until everything is soft/cooked.
- Add spring onions and add pepper and salt to taste, add the cooking cream and or milk.
- Serve with brown and or white rice.



MILESTONES FOR 4 TO 5 YEARS OLD CHILDREN (pre-school age)

Cognitive Development:

- Children are able to focus their attention more accurately, have increased concentration, and are less influenced by distractions.
- Their intensity of questions increase as children develop a strong curiosity for the world around them, learning through observations and social interactions, engaging in dramatic play, taking on pretend character roles and recalling events correctly.
- Children are learning the rules of behaviour and the reasons behind them.
- They can follow simple rules and enjoy helping.
- Children increase their memory skills - are able to retain two or three pieces of information while acting on them.
- They are able to describe pictures in detail, identify and name primary and secondary colours, name most letters of the alphabet and numbers, and can begin to copy and write them.
- They will understand various concepts such as opposites (e.g. big/little), positional words (middle, end), time, sorting, grouping and matching, order and process, and counting chronologically.
- They have reached a higher level of concentration enabling them to complete and engage in more challenging tasks, such as using objects and materials to build or construct things, (e.g. block tower, puzzle, clay, sand and water).
- A genuine understanding of numbers develops - they will begin to consider concepts such as shapes and colours in more detail.

Social and Emotional Development:

- They begin to interact effectively with others, develop friendships and 'best friends' (with a preference for same sex friends).
- Their play becomes more innovative and organized, and they are able to understand and follow rules, and be cooperate with one another(wanting to please friends).
- They enjoy imaginative play with other children, and compare their physical selves as well as their abilities with others.
- They have developed an understanding for other's feelings and become more sensitive. They can comfort someone when hurt.
- They show increasing independence and will also want to be given more responsibility and enjoy helping out with chores.
- They model the behaviour they observe and need to be encouraged to say please and thank you or even lend a helping hand.
- They understand what is good and bad behaviour and need to be told that what they are doing is right for re-assurance. For those around a preschooler it's important to show socially acceptable interactions.
- They like to give and receive affection from parents or other care takers.

Physical Development (Gross motor skills):

- They make big progress in gross motor skills such as running, jumping, skipping, balancing or hopping on one foot, walking backwards, balancing and climbing.
- Their movement becomes agile and more controlled.
- Their learning ability begins to increase enabling preschoolers to take part in a variety of activities. They can easily throw, catch and kick a ball, do somersaults, begin to skip rope, use outdoor equipment confidently and with increased agility, and begin to ride a two wheeler bike.
- They are more confident with activities that involve gross motor skills.
- They are aware of their strength and their balance and co-ordination are much greater.
- They eagerly take part in games that encourage their kicking, catching and throwing skills, and participating in positive playing experiences.
- They enjoy learning simple rhythm and movement routines.
- They can dress and undress with little help.

Language Development:

- They enjoy talking and are happy to tell their ideas or what they're thinking.
- They combine words with gestures and facial expressions to make their stories more believable and interesting. Words begin to flow easily and with little effort.
- They are clearer in their speech, they can participate in conversations, can understand a sequence of events, answer simple questions, and are able to retell stories with a larger more descriptive vocabulary.
- They will have an endless amount of questions (when, how, why), and understand concepts (same and different, comparatives -fast, faster, fastest, and time - morning, afternoon, night).
- They seek more detailed information about events or topics that interest them.
- Their attention span is extended and they can pay attention when listening to a story.
- They understand between two and three instructions.
- Their speech and language becomes more complex from this age because of their broader vocabulary and a greater understanding of grammatical concepts while speaking.
- They are able to express their ideas and feelings in detail, and enjoy talking (and at times will never want to stop).

(Adapted from <http://aussiechildcarenetwork.com>)