

A photograph of two young children, a boy and a girl, standing in front of a large red door. They are both wearing white diapers and have colorful paint smeared on their bodies. The boy is on the left, reaching up with his hands to press green paint onto the door. The girl is on the right, also reaching up. The red door is covered in various colorful handprints and smudges. The floor is made of large, light-colored tiles, some of which are also covered in paint. A small bowl of paint sits on the floor between the children.

Parent Hand Book

Dear Parents,

Welcome to SmartKids International Pre-Schools & Kindergartens, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam (operating since 2006 under MOE license 2584/GP).

Our bright and cheerful purpose built pre-schools/ kindergartens offer flexible high quality early development programs for children from 18 months to 6 years old in an English speaking environment with children from over 40 nationalities.

Our group leaders are all qualified foreign experienced early-years workers who take pride in their profession, ensuring an excellent start to your child's development.

Please take the time to read our "Parent Handbook" which offers the necessary information about your child's day at the Pre-School /Kindergarten, our philosophy with a child-centred approach and regulations.

Your support and understanding is vital to the developmental programs we offer. We warmly welcome your questions, feedback and involvements in all aspects of your child's development and our kindergarten.

I look forward welcoming you and your child to become part of the "SmartKids" family.

Kind Regards,

JOKE (YOKO) OTTER VAN ZUIJLEN
Pedagogue/ Principal



OUR FACILITIES

Our Pre-Schools / Kindergartens are special designed and purpose-built for and based-on young children.

Rooms are bright and spacious with air-conditioning and high end air-purifiers and we will be strict in a limited amount of children per room. Each room is equipped with a child oriented bathroom and is well resourced with lots of toys and educational materials.

SmartKids has a large shaded yard with an abundance of facilities for outdoor play such as: sandpit, playground, playhouse, swing, climbing frame, riding materials, toys and non-permanent "swimming" pools.

ENVIRONMENT

SmartKids is committed to create a safe, comfortable, creative and inspiring environment for young children to explore, experiment and learn.

We focus on the holistic (total) development of each individual child and we combine Montessori, Steiner and Reggio Emilia philosophies into the delivery of our curriculum and developmental programs.

SmartKids works with a well-planned Early Learning Goals, optimized for the individual development of your child within a group-surrounding, where both indoor- and outdoor- play are key elements.

We believe that "school readiness" means that a child not only has developed all the academic skills necessary for success in school but that each child has a passion for and love of learning, nurtured by enthusiastic, knowledgeable parents & teachers.

SmartKids is a place where children **PLAY TO LEARN.**



ADMISSION

Our admission procedures

- During an initial visit, parents /guardians will be extensively informed about our philosophy, individual care and early Learning Goals, facilities, policy and procedures and terms and conditions.

We have a very open approach on how we run a class as we understand that it is important that you as a parent feel comfortable with the surrounding you leave your child behind. We always offer the possibility for you to spend (part of) a morning in a group; to see how we work and feel the welcoming and friendly atmosphere we offer our children.

- Application:

Parents/ guardians are requested to complete and sign the admission-agreement and admission-form and pay their enrolment fee, in order for us to reserve your child's place in the kindergarten. We further require a copy of the passport and vaccination booklet of your child and the contact details of the people who you have authorized to pick -up your child.

- Admission:

After we have received the tuition fee, your child is ready to start our settling-in program.

This settling in program is a staggered approach to get every day a little longer and more independent in the new class environment. It is our aim to make the transition from home to school as relaxed and smooth as possible for both child and parents.

We understand this takes more time/involvement for you as parent but remember it's a huge step for your child (probably for the first time) to stay behind without parents.

Each child and parent responds differently to this separation, we therefore work with a settling-in program that suits your child best.



MEDICAL PROCEDURES

All staff will get an annual first aid and CPR training specially focussed on young children.

For all children a medical form is to be filled out upon admission and parents are asked to keep the administration updated of any changes.

When a child is sick ($>37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$), they should be kept at home and parents should inform the teacher or reception with a clear description of the illness.

Children with communicable diseases must be kept at home in all instances and SmartKids needs to be informed.

If a child becomes sick or injured at the Kindergarten and needs to go home, parents will be contacted immediately for a timely pick-up. If necessary the children will be kept apart from the class in a quiet (medical) room under supervision of qualified staff.

In case of medical emergency, the child will be brought to an aligned international clinic and parents will be notified of this by phone a.s.a.p.

When a child returns to the kindergarten after an illness, it is assumed that the child is fully recovered and is able to join in all activities (swimming, outside play etc.).

If parents request the staff to administer medication, SmartKids will only do so if this is medically acceptable and only with clear doctor's advice and prescription, and if mistakes in providing the medication cannot have an adverse effect on the child's health.



WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BRING?

HAT

Please bring a hat for outside play.



A CHANGE OF CLOTHING AND SWIMMING COSTUME

Please put some spare clothes and a swimming costume every day in the child's bag in case of "accidents", messy play or water play.



NAPPIES

If your child is not yet toilet-trained, bring some nappies or leave a pack in the group.



This program is a guide only and may vary from group to group.

Time

08:00 - 09:00



Description

Free and structured play and activities in the group.

For the parents, this time can be used for an update/chat with the staff, while enjoying a cup of coffee/ tea.

08:30

All children in class.

09:00

Tidy-up + toilet time.

09:15

"Circle" time (songs, games, talking about themes, etc.)

09:30

Snack time.

10:00

Outside play and/or activities inside (Sandpit, music, painting and drawing, modelling and constructing, investigating, dramatic play, puppets, singing, dancing, games, exercising, play ing with clay and dough.)

11:15

Tidy-up + toilet time, circle time.

11:30 - 12:00

Lunch, half day children will be picked up.

12:15 - 13:45

Sleeping / Quiet time.

14:00

Activities (outdoor weather permitting or indoors).

14:45

Snack time.

15:00

Pick-up time.

With the dubious air quality, we measure every day (multiple times per day) the air quality in the garden of the facility. Based on the air quality we decide how long the outside play will be for that day. Our children are also made aware of these circumstances as we have used this situation as part of the children emergent learning opportunities.

All classes re equipped with High-End Air-purifiers to offer the children a safe surrounding to play and learn in.



GROUPS

SmartKids offers childcare for children from 18 months to 6 years old. We work with 3 different groups:

Play Group

This is an unstructured session for children from 12 months to 3 years old. One parent/caregiver will stay and play with their child for 1,5 hours. This is an opportunity for children and parents to get introduced to our kindergarten, be exposed to a new inspiring surrounding, socialize with other children and get feedback from each other about typical child issues.

Early-Childhood groups (max. 18 children) "Kiddies"

This structured program caters for children from 18 months to 3.5 years old and offers a half- or full-day program, without parents. We maintain a minimum of 3 mornings, in order to get used to a social gathering with group rules and boundaries. The children are age appropriately introduced to new challenges and learning opportunities, The vertical group structure provides strong learning (peer pressure) and supports opportunities, introducing groups behaviour, respect and communication practice.

Kindergarten groups (max. 18 children) "BigKids"

This is an early learning program for children from 3.5 to 6 years old. This group offers a half- or full-day program with integrated special activities, based on the pedagogic principles for this age group. With minimum of 5 mornings, these programs are preparing the children to easily enter any international school worldwide. The play-based, experimental and emergent learning applied, creates and enticing and inspiring environment where the children enjoy going to school, stand-up and express themselves as leaders/ strong characters.



Parent / School Communication & Cooperation

SmartKids feels its important that School and Parents are both aligned. The school (group) surrounding is vastly different from the home (individual-care) surrounding. SmartKids therefore feels its important to frequently communicate with the parents. This will happen on daily basis during drop-off and pick-up and our "SEESAW" online communication topped with bi-annually parent-teacher session with an extensive written report on the child's progress and learning targets.

Parents are always welcome in the group and are invited to join and help in some of the activities.

None-alignment between school and home will lead to confusion and frustration and eventually delayed development of your child.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

At SmartKids, we believe that children with additional needs should have a fair chance in the society and therefore also be able to attend our Kindergarten.

We are convinced that exposure to children with additional needs, adds to the social and emotional development of all children.

In determining how SmartKids will be able to serve a child with additional needs, we will have to request for detailed information from the parents and health providers, previous care centres and special needs specialists. Related to the child's participation in SmartKids the main criteria will be the level of impact on the group.

Whenever we observe that SmartKids can not meet the additional need required, we will inform the parents and try to find suitable alternatives outside SmartKids.



PEDAGOGIC VISION

Over the years, SmartKids management has developed its own vision on childcare. This is visible in all facets of the service. This includes areas of human resource management, policy with respect to accommodation and of course in the way we care for the children.

Vision on Child care in our Pre-Schools/ Kindergartens

By sending a child to a kindergarten, parents decide to choose for childcare in a group. For children this means a new surrounding and new opportunities compared to the home situation.

For children a kindergarten is a place to meet other children and to get to know each other, to play together, to eat, sleep, experience new things together and to learn to respect others. It is also a place to socialize and to enjoy experiences that are different from those at home.

The environment in the SmartKids is specially designed- for and based-on children and offers much wider opportunities to play and explore than at home. In the SmartKids special attention is given to the development of each child; in language, creative play, training in special skills, independence, showing respect to others, exploring their own abilities and to adapting / adjusting to rules and regulations. SmartKids therefore offers parents a supplement to the home situation.

The pedagogic objective of SmartKids

SmartKids has defined its pedagogic objective as: "To promote positive development of children, by bringing them, under professional care, together in groups, in special child oriented surroundings, in close cooperation with parents."



VALUES

A child must be able to explore and develop. SmartKids is therefore much more than a day care centre where children are kept happy or active. In SmartKids children **PLAY TO LEARN**; they develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning and they are individually observed, guided and challenged.

To design a basis for the pedagogic vision, SmartKids has formulated some values. These values are the framework for all pedagogic activities and form the overall atmosphere in SmartKids.

- Each child is a unique individual being and needs to be accepted and appreciated as such.
- Each child is entitled to a caring adult who responds positively to the needs of a child. A child needs nutrition, sleep, attention and affection.
- Every child has an urge and a right to explore his or her opportunities to develop him/herself as a free-thinking and independent person.
- To develop, it is essential that a child feels trusted and safe and has an awareness that the "teacher" is there if and when the child needs him or her. This builds self-confidence, which stimulates the urge to take-on new challenges.
- Confidence and independence grow by developing self-help skills. It's important that by (maybe) failing and falling back, there is someone who understands the child and allows /encourages the child to try again.
- Each and every child is entitled to respect. This means that the child is taken seriously and can count on understanding and tolerance.
- A child has a copying nature and therefore the staff presents a positive role model in all their actions.
- In the kindergarten each child will be given the necessary individual attention. The individual is not to suffer at the expense of the group, nor is the group to suffer at the expense of the individual.



EARLY LEARNING GOALS (CURRICULUM)

SmartKids offers a warm, safe and child centred environment in which young children can develop and explore.

Learning through play

We work with a well-planned program, where both indoor and outdoor play is the key, to optimize the children's development in areas such as:

Social / Emotional development

A strong emphasis is placed on creating a positive, warm, nurturing environment in which children learn to develop confidence and a sense of identity. Co-operation with others is an integral aspect of learning and growing, and forms the basis for participation in learning activities. In a safe and secure setting, each child develops a sense of belonging and an awareness of the welfare of others.

Language, Communication skills and Literacy

From an early age, children possess the ability to learn languages and communicate with others, and often have a rudimentary awareness of written languages. Children will be encouraged to develop keen listening, speaking, (sometimes reading and writing skills) through group activities, reading books and talking and learning about the world around them.

Mathematical Understanding

Through the repetitive use of practical activities, children observe, probe, question and think about the surrounding world, and gain an understanding of mathematical concepts using objects and experiences from their daily lives.

Physical Development (gross and fine motor skills)

Children will be taught by the teacher's example, the importance of valuing one's physical health and well being, as well as maintaining a physically healthy lifestyle. As physical development is a crucial part of a child's overall growth, activities and exercise will focus on developing balance, rhythm, co-ordination and muscular control.



Creative Development

Wide ranges of artistic forms are employed to facilitate each child's need to express their thoughts and feelings, including music, drama, yoga, visual arts and dance. Musical concepts such as rhythm and beat, as well as voice and body expressions are introduced, while puppetry and pantomime are used as theatrical forms to act out ideas. Expression through visual arts will involve the use of various materials such as different kinds of paper, clay, paint, play-dough, goops, crayons, pencils etc.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

This area helps children to explore and consider the world around them. It builds on children's natural curiosity and desire to touch, feel, and ask questions about their environment.

In this way we provide the children with the opportunity to experience life events and situations, to understand these and to process them. The child should be able to find opportunities for development in all areas and care- fully grow to meet the requirements of life.





RESPONDING TO

At SmartKids the staff have their own way of responding to daily circumstances. Some of the clearer defined SmartKids House-rules detailed below, give you a good impression on how we interact with the children.

Positive Communication

The word NO we don't know in SmartKids. Corrections or behaviour change are responded to with a positive twist, so children always feel guided rather than negatively addressed.

Nappy Training

Every child develops in his or her own way and their own speed. This also applies to toilet training. A child is trained when ready for it. In the Early-Childhood group we start with nappy training with regular toilet stops. (Seeing other children going to the toilet will stimulate children to imitate this behaviour). The staff is alert to the child's reaction and will frequently offer the use of the toilet. The staff will reward the child with every step taken towards becoming trained. Abandoning the nappies will only be done in close coordination with the parents. Parents provide the nappies and creams for their children. Children in nappies will be changed when they are dirty and at toilet times. The staff will work closely together with the parents to support the process of toilet training.

Eating and Diet

If the child has no specific diet, SmartKids will provide a standard lunch. We can cater for children with allergies or vegetarians.

Meals & Snacks

Snack times and lunchtime are an integral part of the day and include pleasant, positive activities, paying attention to others, time to talk and time to learn simple table manners. This time is important as it promotes an atmosphere of togetherness and a moment for calming down. The children also learn a lot, from washing their hands, making a choice of what to eat, tasting new dishes, drinking themselves, eating with a fork to brushing their own teeth.



Morning and afternoon snacks and lunch are provided by and home cooked in the kindergarten. They are served in the group and this time is supervised and guided by the teaching staff. The children are encouraged to try everything that is served, but at the same time they are allowed to make their own choices.

Children are encouraged to eat on their own: they are not spoon-fed. Our experience is that children who are difficult eaters at home do eat at the kindergarten.

Snacks:

Fruit, cheese and crackers, vegetables, juice, milk and healthy biscuits.

Lunch:

A Hot meal is served daily with a variety of Western and Asian dishes. Furthermore brown bread is served with a choice of ham and cheese, pate or salami, spread-able cheese and or marmite.

Water is available at all times during the day.

No (milk) bottles or brought-in food will be given to children

Sleeping / Quiet time

After lunchtime the children go for a nap. This daily routine starts with as much undressing by themselves as possible, depending on the age. The child gets his/her teddy or comforter from their private basket and is lovingly put to rest. The children sleep on a mat put out in the classroom and each child is provided with his/her own blanket, sheet and pillow. During sleeping time the teaching staff always supervises the children.

The older children have a reduced sleeping time. But as a day at the kindergarten is more tiring than a day at home, even the short or non-sleepers need time to calm down. Starting from 3.5 years old the sleeping-time will be gradually reduced to zero, with the transfer to the comprehensive school in mind. In this period they can relax in the soft corner, play games at a table or read books.

Treats

A child will have many treats offered (birthdays, farewells etc). We strive to avoid sweet treats.



Parties

In our pre-schools/kindergartens we will celebrate several International and Vietnamese special days. Besides that, all birthdays and farewell parties will be made a particular day to remember. Birthdays are an important celebration for a child and it is part of the program to celebrate each child's birthday. Children like to be the point of focus for one day, with a hat, songs and treats etc.. Depending on the rules of the group, parents will be invited to participate in these celebrations. Smart-Kids does not allow children to distribute gifts or goodie bags during these parties.

Correction and Praise

As mentioned, the staff will support the child with an individual adapted approach. For a child it is important to know their boundaries. This is possible through clear and consistent rules stated in a friendly manner, and through the regulations performed by the staff. SmartKids prefers the positive approach of praising the child for good behaviour. The word "punishment" does not exist at SmartKids. Corrective action can be done in different positive ways providing a distraction or a warning (but not from a distance nor with an overpowering voice). Additional non-verbal communication is essential when using corrective action. The staff will correct when the group or classmates are negatively impacted. This involves a rejection of the action, not of the child. Staff will avoid interaction in a conflict between children as long as they don't hurt or endanger each other. Often these conflicts are quickly resolved because no adult gets involved. If a conflict cannot be quickly resolved, staff will lend a hand by suggesting some arrangements and agreements i.e.: "you play now with the dolls and you will play later" or stimulate sharing. In doing so, the staff will consider the individual characters of those involved. They will stimulate the shy children to be more assertive and will calm down the more dominant children. If warnings are not successful and the child continues to demonstrate non-conforming behaviour, the staff will respond more firmly. A very effective way is the use of a "Chair", where the child will be confined to for a brief time. This forces the child briefly away from the group activity and often results in a rapid change of attitude and more conforming behaviour.





Tots and Teddy bears

A pacifier or teddy bear is for many children their most precious support to take to bed or to find comfort in during cheerless moments. During their time at SmartKids, the children will be trained to distance themselves more and more from these. The child will learn to put it in her/his private cubby until bedtime. The child will therefore not be blocked in his or her play and language development. The private cubby is in or near the group and should the child, need the pacifier or bear, the staff will have this comforter at hand.

Goodbye Mummy & Daddy and see you soon!

Children are often tearful when Mum or Dad leave for the first time; tears are a part of pre-school / kindergarten life. It is a big step for children and parents. However tears usually stop within five minutes of Mum/Dad's departure!

If you are happy to leave your child then, in the nicest possible way, the staff is happy for you, too. If, on the other hand, you feel you would like to remain with your child, then please do so. Please do not just "sneak" out while your child is otherwise occupied - saying goodbye and reassuring him/her that you will be back soon to collect him/her, is important. Also, as difficult as it may be, it is advisable to go if you say that you are going. Changing your mind when the tears start will only make the parting longer and harder. One of the most frightening things for a child is being left in a strange environment and feeling deserted. Please reassure your child that you are going to do some shopping etc. and will be back to pick him/ her up. Upon collecting the children, the parent needs to realize that the child might be active and thus will be frustrated if this play needs to be abruptly finalized. Dropping the children off and picking them up are also important moments for parents and staff to exchange information.



Thank you for choosing SmartKids.

We endeavour to provide your child (ren) with a safe and happy environment,
where they play and learn along with other children.

If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to contact the
Location manager

By post - ✉

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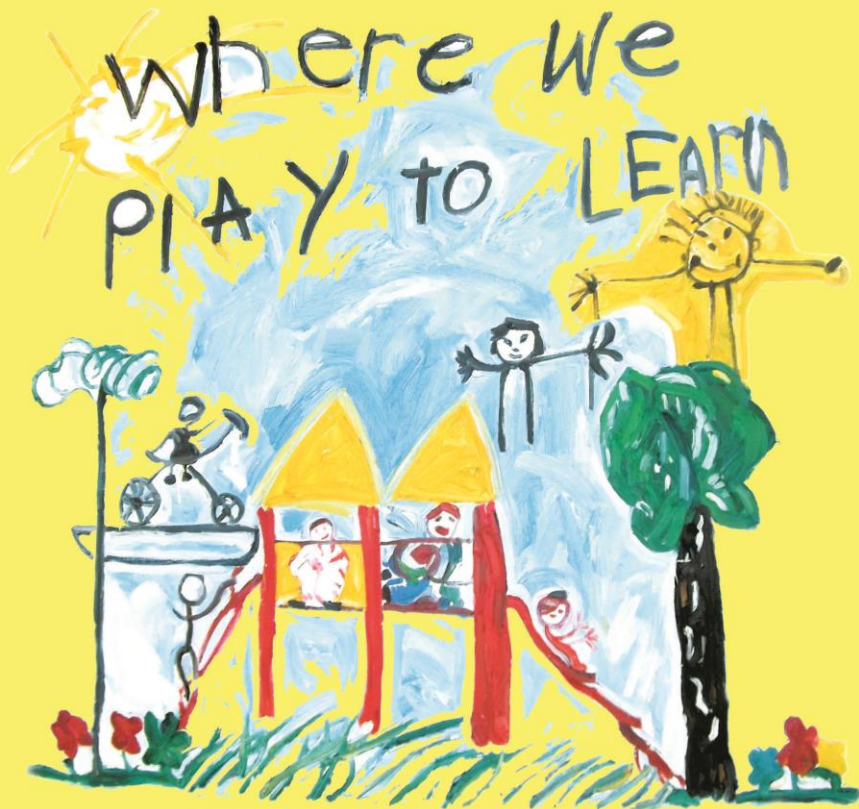
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