

BREAKING DOWN BOUNDARIES

EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO BE CURATORS OF THEIR OWN LEARNING.



Experimenting with food at the child-friendly La Cucina kitchen

Learning can happen anywhere, at any time and with anyone at Odyssey The Global Preschool (Still Road). "Learning is extended beyond the four walls of the classroom, through learning journeys, use of technology, and children's involvement in real-world experiences," says Centre Director Ms Chan Pei Min. The preschool, which received the 2022 ECDA Outstanding Centre for Teaching & Learning Award, believes learning without boundaries is crucial to nurturing confident and independent learners.

CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE

Each classroom has learning spaces equipped with multi-sensory resources to support children's exploration in specific areas. For example, at the Ray of Light, they



The Ray of Light is an exploratory area that blends art and science concepts

“My children have taken part in diverse activities, from making crafts out of recyclable items to going on a rock-climbing excursion. By doing things rather than just reading about them, they will remember these skills and lessons for years to come.”

MS SHALINI ARUL, mother of two, aged 6 and 3

can discover the interplay between light and shadow using an overhead projector and small loose parts, while also arranging those parts to make unique art pieces. Beyond the classroom, there are specialised rooms such as the La Cucina kitchen, where children can experiment with ingredients, learn where they came from, and come up with food presentation ideas.

"Children construct their own knowledge and make independent discoveries at these learning spaces when they interact with each other, problem-solve and use open-ended materials creatively," says Ms Pei Min. "Through these experiences, they

develop 21st-century competencies such as collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking skills."

A BALANCING ACT

The child-led learning is supported by teachers who listen actively and engage children in conversations. "By listening to children with respect and showing interest in what they say, teachers develop a better understanding of the children and ask meaningful questions. This in turn motivates children to express themselves and go deeper in their learning," says Ms Pei Min.

Teachers are trained and mentored to embrace the centre's open learning approach. They are involved in curriculum meetings, collaborative planning sessions, and learning circles to discuss and share good practices and strategies. ●



TAKE NOTE!

Ms Pei Min shares three tips for planning learning activities beyond the classroom.

- **Safety first.** Check that premises and weather conditions are safe. Make sure learning materials, especially those containing loose parts, are safe and age-appropriate.
- **Don't rush it.** Allow ample time for children to interact and revisit experiences or materials to make their own discoveries. Hurrying the process may dampen a child's sense of wonder and curiosity.
- **Make modifications.** If children do not respond to the materials given, introduce other loose parts or manipulatives. If a learning experience does not go as planned, reflect on what could be done better.

Visit youtu.be/gfY6nVxZKPC or scan here for more on the preschool's 'learning without boundaries' approach.

