Our Global Curriculum
Washington, DC Campus

Early Learning

Whittle
SCHOOL & STUDIOS
Early Learning

At Whittle School & Studios, we believe that children have limitless potential and seek to belong, learn, solve problems, and create. Joyous exploration, creative expression, personalized pathways, and community contribution are the key features of our program. It is our wish that ELC students love learning and continue to develop their ability to care—to care for truth and learning; to care for their health and well-being; and to care for others, for the world around them, for nature, and for the good that they can bring.

Our ELC curriculum is based on the Reggio Emilia philosophy, which views children as infinitely capable, teachers as co-constructors of learning, and families as close partners. A Reggio-based approach follows the interests of children. For example, a teacher who noticed that students loved moving their bodies in creative ways could build a series of learning opportunities out of that interest: that teacher might show students videos of acrobats or modern dancers in action, bring in a specialist to lead a creative movement class, or ask the children to make acrobatic shapes out of clay. Each experience builds upon and reacts to the developing needs of the students.

ELC SAMPLE DAY SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00-8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Studios Care Program</td>
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<td>8:00-8:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Mind &amp; Body</td>
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<td>8:45-9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td>9:30-10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Project Work</td>
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<td>10:45-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Outside Exploration</td>
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<td>11:30-12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch &amp; Storytime</td>
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<td>12:30-1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Rest (three- &amp; four-year-olds) or Workshop Time (five- &amp; six-year-olds)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30-2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Special Classes (Gardening, Movement Music or Physical Literacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Community Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30-6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Dismissal and Extended Day Program</td>
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We focus on the holistic development of the child—guiding a personalized connection to World of Knowledge, World of Self, and World of Humanity.

We value teacher learning as much as student learning. We encourage teachers to construct personalized professional development pathways and encounter the world with the same curiosity, interest, and wonder as the children they teach.

The physical environment teaches. Daily, we use the broader physical and digital world as our classroom for inclusive and culturally dynamic learning.

With Reggio Emilia inspiration, we use emergent, project-based curriculum to co-create with children, observing and listening to them, and constantly evolving learning experiences. Students and teachers together self-reflect and iterate.

At this age, the primary emphasis is on the spoken language and its cultural context, with a view to enabling students to participate actively and comfortably in a Chinese cultural environment. Students will have daily exposure to spoken Chinese through activities, stories, rhymes, songs, and games.

We engage families as partners to develop joyous learning at school and at home, and to help strengthen the network of support.
THE DAY BEGINS
Students who participate in the extended day program (a flexible option for parents who may need additional care hours before or after the traditional school day) will join their classmates arriving from home at this time. When the day begins outside, they will engage in a variety of activities of their choosing, such as climbing, building, or drawing. When the day begins inside, they will have time to explore—perhaps returning to a book in the library area or engaging with new materials related to a current project. Children will talk with friends, reconnect with the teachers, and begin to settle into their day. Upon entering the classroom, students will put away their belongings, including their coat, and backpack.

COMMUNITY MEETING
At approximately 9:00 a.m., the morning community meeting will begin. A well-structured morning allows children to create their own pathways for success by activating the curiosity, creativity, and sense of comfort needed for the rest of the day. During the meeting, children play a game to get to know one another better, talk about yesterday’s experiences, and make plans for what we will do together today. At the beginning of the school year, the focus of the day might be getting to know a new area of the classroom, such as the mini-atelier, which features a variety of tools for expressing themselves creatively. They could also venture out on a tour of the building—perhaps to meet the food service team and learn how they prepare the delicious lunches.

PROJECT WORK
During project work time, children spend time deeply exploring the world and are immersed in rich language learning either in English or Chinese. Let’s assume that the first project takes advantage of the school’s unique building and is related to construction and architecture. The areas of the room will be set up to inspire their thinking on this topic. In the block building area, there will be photographs of the Whittle School & Studios building and neighboring structures, in addition to a wide variety of materials with which to build. In the classroom library, there will be books about construction, architecture, homes, neighborhoods and more. In the mini-atelier there will be projections of different buildings from around the world on a wall with tracing paper, a light box with clay, and measuring tools. Children will be able to choose where they want to work.

OUTSIDE EXPLORATION
We believe that connection to the natural world, free play and collaboration time with peers, and learning outside of the classroom are all integral to holistic development. We will be going outside every day and will make sure that every child has the necessary boots and gear so that outdoor exploration is fun, warm, and safe, no matter the conditions. The typical outdoor time will include a variety of options—group games in the Chinese language, free play, nature exploration, gardening and more. Some days we will take walks into the neighborhood, exploring Rock Creek Park or the University of the District of Columbia rooftop garden.
LUNCH AND STORY TIME
Lunch will be a great time of day for social emotional learning and enjoying conversation with friends in a family-style atmosphere. Depending upon the final schedule, this may include immersive conversation in Chinese. We plan to invite older students, Chinese speaking parents, and our Chinese language teachers to join us for lunch. English-speaking parents will be welcome as well—they will just have to join in the Chinese-language learning. At the end of lunch, there will be an opportunity for story time as a way to transition before rest time.

REST AND REFLECTION
We anticipate an approximately one-hour rest period for our three- to four-year-olds. This time will be personalized to meet the needs of the children.

WORKSHOP TIME
This will be time for the five- and six-year-olds to deepen their learning from the morning, work in small groups, assess progress and set goals, and explore personal projects. Personal projects enable children to further explore their passions, and build confidence and independence.

ARTS AND MAKING BLOCK
This will be the time of the day when our specialized teachers, including music, movement, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math combined), will provide a variety of experiences, mainly in Chinese, based upon a rotating schedule.

CLOSING MEETING
For about 15 minutes at the end of each day, teachers and students will reflect on the day, sing a closing song, and discuss the exploration we will continue the next day.

STUDIOS AND STUDIOSCARE
Studios and StudiosCare will be available to provide a variety of options for children and their families outside the school day hours. Studios will include such offerings as dance, language, making, gardening, and sports. The StudiosCare Program will provide a family-like environment in multi-age groupings with time for outdoor exploration, a snack, and a variety of individual and small group activities.

“Joyous exploration, creative expression, personalized pathways, and community contribution are the key features of our Early Learning Center. It is our wish for our early learners that they love learning and continue to develop their ability to care—to care for truth and learning; to care for their health and well-being; to care for others, for the world around them, for nature, and for the good that they can bring.”

— STEPHANIE FITZGERALD
HEAD OF EARLY LEARNING CENTER
WASHINGTON, DC CAMPUS