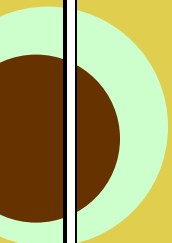
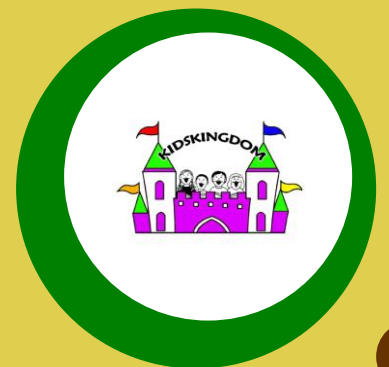


IMAN

PARENT'S HANDBOOK

Guide to Policies, Procedures & Programme



Contents	Page	Page
Foreword	3	
A. Corporate Profile		
Vision	4	
Mission	4	
Philosophy	4	
B. Administrative Matter		
KinderOrient: Orientation @ iMAN	5	
First Day of School	5	
Documents	5	
Transport Service	6	
Attendance, Punctuality & Early Release	7	
Field Education: Edu-Visits	8	
Personal Belongings	8	
Home-School Communication	8	
Priority Scheme for Enrolment & Re-registration	9	
Updated Particulars	9	
Corporate Print	10	
Birthday Celebration	10	
Issue Resolution	10	
C. Policies on Financial Matters		
Collection of Fees	11	
Modes of Payment	11	
Payment via GIRO / CDA	11	
Late Payment & Recovery of Outstanding Fees	11	
Withdrawal	12	
Transfers	12	
Discontinuation	12	
D. Safety and Discipline		
Fire Drill	13	
Accidents, Injury & Medical Emergencies	13	
Biting	14	
Discipline Philosophy	14	
Visitors	15	
E. Health, Hygiene & Childhood Illnesses		
Health Status of Child	16	
Health Guidelines by MOH	16	
Hygiene Practices	16	
Home Care for Sick Children	17	
HFMD & Chicken Pox	17	
Possible Closure of Centre during HFMD Outbreak	18	
Health Talk & Screening	18	
F. Staff Matters		
Our Educators	19	
Staff-Child Ratio	19	
G. Child Care Matters		
Child Care Centre Registration Services	20	
Operating Hours	20	
Age Groups	21	
Closure	21	
Attire & Personal Grooming	22	
Late Pick Up	23	
Daily Schedule for Infant Care	24	
Programme for Toddlers	25	
Daily Schedule for Child Care	26	
Student Care Programme	27	
Subsidy	27	
Daily Schedule for Student Care: AM Session	28	
Daily Schedule for Student Care: PM Session	29	
Trial Period	29	
Fee Structure & Subsidy	30	
Additional Financial Assistance	31	
Deposit	31	
Routine Care Items	32	
Shower	33	
Toilet Training	33	
Nutrition Practices	33	
Group Meal Time	34	
Food Allergies	34	
Nap Time	35	
Immunization Record	35	
Administration of Medicines Procedures	35	
H. Kindergarten Matters		
Kindergarten Registration	36	
Operation Hours	36	
Age Groups	36	
Session Hours	37	
Closure	37	
Attire & Personal Grooming	37	
Fee Structure	38	
Financial Assistance	38	
Nutrition Practices	39	
I. Curriculum		
Curriculum	40	
The Kindersmart Thinkers Learning System: Key Strengths	40	
Optional Programmes	42	
Assessment & Student-Led Conferences (SLC)	42	
Parent-Assisted Learning (PAL)	42	
Calendar of Event	43	
My Child's 1 st Day In School – How to Handle the 1 st Day Jitters	44	
Info @ A Glance	48	

Foreword

Welcome to Iman Kindergarten and Childcare!

Quality care is of vital importance to the growth and development of your young children who spend a substantial portion of their early years in our centre-based care.

This handbook is developed for all parents and guardians working in partnership with us in the care, education and development of our iMANites. It highlights our practices in areas such as physical environment, safety, health, hygiene, nutrition, curriculum, our administration and management.

The handbook reflects current understandings, values, and goals at the time of its publication. As in any profession, such bases for the guiding principles and practices are expected to be dynamic and changing in response to new knowledge in the field. Given this expectation of change, we will review this handbook periodically to ensure its currency and relevance.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to you for making us the preschool choice for your child. We hope that this handbook would pave the path for our journey together towards a great home-school partnership. We value your inputs and feedback.

Dr A. Syed Omar
Director of Education
Iman Kindergarten and Childcare

A: THE iMAN CORPORATE PROFILE

OUR VISION

We endeavour to be a *Centre of Excellence*, in leading the region as a provider of creative and joyful early childhood programmes with an emphasis on cultural values.

OUR MISSION

Our promise to stakeholders is to provide *quality yet affordable* early childhood education, and facilitate children's early learning experiences in all domains of development. Our biggest responsibility is to set them on the road to *school success* and become successful *life-long learners*.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our learning system is guided by the framework of the *Whole Child Philosophy* so as to nurture him holistically across different domains. Our educational philosophy recognizes the *multiple intelligences* of all children and emphasizes the development of their eight types of smartness: *Linguistic* (word smart), *Logical* (number/reasoning smart), *Spatial* (picture smart), *Kinesthetic* (body smart), *Musical* (music smart), *Interpersonal* (people smart), *Intrapersonal* (self smart) and *Naturalist* (nature smart).

iMAN has a powerful foundation of Dr. Howard Gardner's philosophy of education who proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. A professor of education at Harvard University, Dr. Gardner developed The Theory of Multiple Intelligences(MI) in 1983.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

KINDERORIENT: ORIENTATION @ iMAN

Welcome aboard! Orientation program is a vital component in making the transition from home to school enjoyable and exciting for both the children and their parents. It clarifies many areas of uncertainty and helps to develop a confident approach to learning. Here at iMAN, we believe that when parents are informed, their preschoolers benefit. Therefore, we welcome and encourage you to join us for KinderOrient, a special orientation program just for parents. Make a date with us for KinderOrient and collect an orientation pack containing useful reference materials.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (DATE: DAY:)

Parents of newly enlisted pupils are allowed to spend time with their children only on the first day of school. Crowding at the windows/doors to give instructions to the child is truly unnecessary. Parental cooperation in this area will help the children to be more independent.

All parents/guardians who send their children/wards to school daily are advised not to wait outside the centre so as to avoid unnecessary complaints regarding the noise and 'human traffic'. For those who are fetching the child personally, kindly ensure that the transition is fast and smooth.

Due to space constraint, only one parent is allowed to accompany the child on the first day of school for the first hour only. Your understanding and cooperation in these matters are greatly appreciated.

DOCUMENTS

Where relevant, parents are required to furnish iMAN with the following copy of documents:

- Completed Registration Forms, Parents IC & Child Passport Photo (2x).
- Child birth Cert / Re-entry Permit (if child is a permanent resident).

- Child's Immunization Cert. & Child's Health Booklet to verify birth order.
- Child's allergy status report (if applicable).
- Records of health assessment for/diagnosis of special needs (if applicable).
- Parents' NRIC / Citizenship Cert / Re-entry permit if parent or parents is / are Permanent Residents.
- Mother's and father's Letter of Employment stating current working status, designation, date of employment stating current working status, designation, date of employment and total no. of hours per month (mandatory) and latest pay slip stating the gross monthly income (applicable to child care centres only).
- For single parents, the relevant legal document must be given to show that the custody of the child is with the respective parent (e.g. Death cert of mother, divorce petition, custody papers, statutory declaration or police report stating that the child's mother/father has left home with no known contact or whereabouts).
- If there is a restraining order on one of the parents keeping him / her from picking a child up, a copy of the court ordered documentation must be on file in our office. Without it, we cannot deny a parent's access to his / her child.

TRANSPORT SERVICE

Should your child require school transport services, kindly contact our transport vendors. This will aid in the early planning of transport routes. You can opt for your child's transport fees to be deducted via the *Child Development Account (CDA)*. Please liaise with the transport vendors directly should there be any change in the transport arrangement. The centre should also be informed accordingly.

Do update the bus driver in advance of your child's absence from school. Please inform both the centre and the bus driver should you decide to fetch your child personally on a particular day. Kindly ensure that an adult will attend to the child at the transport drop off / pick up point.

ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY & EARLY RELEASE

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the centre if the child is unable to attend school. Absence will need to be substantiated with a medical certificate or written notification. Punctuality is important to ensure minimal disruption is made to the daily programme. Also, please be prompt in picking your child up as supervision is not provided beyond the normal school/care hours.

Should you require your child to be released earlier from the normal school/care hours, please complete the *Early Release Form* at our admin office. For security reasons, please provide us with the details of the individuals who will be fetching your child from our centre. He / she will need to produce his/her NRIC for our verification.

iMAN's preschool curriculum is a masterpiece! As a teacher myself, I am all for the idea of children doing 'self-marking' especially in KinderSoundSpell & KinderMath. I must say my daughter learns a lot more when she discovers mistakes by herself during the 'self-correction' exercise. I also like the idea of giving children, 'second & third chances' etc to arrive at the correct answers. Fiza sometimes struggled with her math concepts. With guidance, she usually got it right only after her second or third try. Despite that, she never felt like a failure as she still managed to experience the joy and sense of achievement of getting it all right even after a few the second or third try!

Madam Aishah, Parent of Nurhafiza (K2)

FIELD EDUCATION: EDUVISITS

iMAN organizes field trips i.e. *EduVisit* once a term and *Excursion* once a semester. Such *Outdoor Learning Experiences (OLE)* are designed to complement the lessons delivered in the classroom. This learning advantage allows the iMANites to experience meaningful education beyond the centre that will positively broaden the children's socio-cultural horizons. A nominal fee will be charged. While the centre will do its level best to ensure the safety of the children during such outings, the centre will not be held liable or / and responsible for any mishap in any way.

Unless indicated otherwise in writing, the centre assumes that permission is granted for the child to experience the outdoors and participate in any outing / outdoor activity in connection with the learning programme at the centre. Where appropriate, consent forms will be distributed to parents prior to the outings. Should your child be unable to participate in such experiential learning trips, we shall arrange for our staff members to provide care for him. However, when your child does not participate in such school outings, he / she is missing relevant learning experiences and opportunities.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please refrain your child from putting on jewellery as well as bringing cash, and valuable personal belongings to the centre. We shall not be liable for any loss of these items. Also prohibited, are such items as toy knives, cosmetics, video games, and iPods. You are encouraged to label your child's school bag, water bottle, nappies (where relevant) and other belongings for the purpose of identification.

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Your child will be given a *Communication Book* (or *Comm Book* in short) as a tool for parent-teacher communication. This book must be brought to the centre daily and will be checked by the teachers. Please also check your child's Comm Book regularly to be kept posted on school matters. You may wish to write to us on matters concerning your child's well-being. We will also update you on learning activities via Kidz Mail that will be attached to the pages of this book from time to time. We encourage you

to note down the receipt numbers of monthly school fee payment on the payment schedule table within the Comm Book. Please report loss of the Comm Book to your child's teacher. A minimal fee will be imposed for the replacement of the lost book.

Teachers will not be able to leave their classes to take calls from parents during teaching hours. Kindly leave a message for the teacher concerned including your name, the child's name, class and session. All calls and messages will be recorded in the log book for the staff reference. The teacher in-charge or the centre head will return your call and attend to your concerns. Parents are encouraged to schedule conferences with the centre head / teachers in advance to discuss your child's progress. Other mediums of home-school communication include: feedback forms, quarterly newsletters (Info iMAN), mass e-mail of school circulars and letters. Parents are also welcome to visit our website (www.iman.edu.sg) and the iMAN's blog and facebook account.

PRIORITY SCHEME FOR ENROLMENT & RE-REGISTRATION

Priority for enrolment shall be given for sibling registration on a first-come-first-served basis, subject to the availability of places at our centres. As such, you are encouraged to register your interest early to avoid disappointment. Re-registration exercise to confirm the child's placement for the consecutive academic year will begin from July of the current academic year. Upon payment, the centre will reserve the official placement of the child on the school register for the next academic year.

UPDATED PARTICULARS

Parents should update the centre of any change in their personal details including contact numbers, home and work address. This is essential in the event of any emergency. Working parents especially working mothers and / or single fathers are required to inform the centre of any changes in their employment status to ensure the continuous entitlement of subsidy or financial scheme from the government.

CORPORATE PRINT

Your child's photographs may be taken and used in our corporate print such as product items and advertorials. Other than pictures of the children, parents also need to note that children's work samples are also used for documentation, observation and media purposes. These shall be kept private and confidential in our intellectual property library for official use.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Birthday celebrations can be made via appointment and informed at least a week in advance so programme schedule can be adjusted accordingly. One family representative will need to sign in for a visitor's pass, and a total of 2 adults and 1 child will be allowed in class only, over a maximum duration of 20 minutes for the celebration. Please provide your own serviettes, paper plates and forks for the celebration. As we encourage iMANites to perform their fast, we are unable to allow birthday celebrations to take place in our premises throughout the fasting month.

ISSUE RESOLUTION

Parents should attempt to resolve any arising issue through amicable dialogue and discussions with the teacher involved and the centre head. If you are unable to resolve the issue in this manner, you may submit a formal complaint to the centre management so that the matter can be addressed accordingly. Displays of aggression or hostility are not appropriate.

C. POLICIES ON FINANCIAL MATTERS

COLLECTION OF FEES

Your child's fees are payable between the 1st and 7th day of each month for the current month. All fees paid are non-transferable and non-refundable.

MODES OF PAYMENT

Parents may pay their children's fees via cashless modes of payment such as NETS, Interbank GIRO, Baby Bonus NETS card, Child Development Account (CDA) and Crossed Cheque. We shall not be liable for loss of cash or cheque handed to your child for the purpose of fee settlement. Ensure that you are given our official receipt for your transaction via NETS, Baby Bonus NETS Card or Cheque. No receipt will be issued for fee deductions via GIRO or CDA.

PAYMENT VIA GIRO / CDA

If you are making your payment via GIRO or CDA, please be informed that deductions will be made on the 25th day of each month or the next working day should this fall on a Sunday or public holiday. Please ensure sufficient funds in your accounts.

Please also note that the dollar-to-dollar matching by the government to your savings in the CDA will take effect 30 days from your date of deposit. We reserve the right to make a second attempt to deduct the arrears in the following month. Should this too be unsuccessful, you will be asked to make your settlement in person over our counter through your Baby Bonus NETS Card. In the event of double deduction by the banks, parents are to alert the centre immediately.

LATE PAYMENT & RECOVERY OF OUTSTANDING FEES

You will be issued a reminder notice should we fail to receive your payment during our fee collection period. You will need to respond within 14 days of this reminder. If we do not hear from you at the end of 14 days, you will be issued a second reminder notice for immediate settlement of your child's fees. Should both our attempts to recover the arrears be unsuccessful, we will proceed to file your case for further

action with Small Claims Tribunal. A late payment fee of \$30 will be incurred at this juncture.

WITHDRAWAL

Should you wish to terminate your child's preschool arrangement with us, please note that your child's last day must be the last day of the month. Withdrawal is required to be submitted on the first day of the month. You will need to provide us with a written notice of withdrawal at least one month prior to your date of departure. Please forward your withdrawal letter by hand, fax or email. Alternatively, you may wish to complete a Withdrawal Form obtainable from our admin office.

Upon receiving your notice of withdrawal, our Regional Manager or Supervisor shall contact you for a follow up. You shall be asked to clear any outstanding payment. Your withdrawal application will then be processed. Refund of deposits, if any, shall be communicated to you within one month from your child's last day. Monthly fees are charged for a minimum of 30 days of advanced notice until termination date, regardless of whether or not the child has been attending school.

TRANSFERS

Should there be a change in your residential/work location and you wish to transfer your child to another branch of Iman Kindergarten and Childcare, please obtain a Transfer Form from our admin office. You will need to return the form to us at least one month prior to your date of departure.

All arrears in school fee payment should be settled at your child's current centre before the transfer. We will make follow up internal arrangements for your child's official records to be transported to your next centre of care.

DISCONTINUATION

We reserve the right and absolute discretion to discontinue your child from our services in the following cases:

- Non settlement of late fees despite written reminders.
- Disruptive behavior which may be considered dangerous to self and/or others.
- Special needs that require specialized attention beyond our means of provision.

D. SAFETY & DISCIPLINE

FIRE DRILL

Our centres hold fire drills termly. During the fire drills, the staff will evacuate all the children. Please do not be alarmed if you hear the drill or happen to be in the centre at a time when a fire drill is taking place. Our centres have a fire emergency plan posted on the wall in each classroom that shows evacuation routes and the steps to be taken in the event of a fire.

ACCIDENTS, INJURY & MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

We take every precaution we can to see that your child do not get hurt at the centre. However, preschoolers may not always display good judgment and look where they are going. As such, accident with children may just happen despite all efforts to prevent it. In case of emergency / accident, our staff will first attend to the injured child by administering First Aid, summon emergency transportation to the nearest clinic / hospital, notify the parent and complete an incident report. Each of our centres has a team of teachers who are first-aid certified and are trained to attend to minor injuries such as scrapes and small cuts. That said, parents can be rest assured our staff will put the children's safety first at all times, and that all our centres have proper procedures for ensuring this.

Expenses incurred under such a situation will be borne by the child's family. However, the centre will assist parents to file in claims for reimbursement under the Group Personal Accident (GPA) Policy for accidents sustained. This insurance premium is payable by parents upon enrolling your child and at the beginning of each academic year. Reimbursement claims are subject to policy terms and conditions.

While we will exercise all necessary care and precaution while the children are in the centre's care, we will not be held responsible for any mishaps, personal injuries and / or accidents and that parents will indemnify the centre against any such claims, lawsuits and damages.

BITING

Biting is an age-related concern that usually happens during the toddler years. While some children bite or bite often, others may never. Most incidents of biting are not done with malice.

The teacher will comfort and administer First Aid to the bitten child. She will clean the bite with an antiseptic wipe and cover the wound with band-aid. Ice may be applied to minimize bruising and swelling. The biter will be encouraged to comfort the bitten child and apologize if he / she is old enough to do so. The teacher will notify the parents of the child who did the biting and the child who was bitten. However, the name of the child doing the biting will not be revealed.

The child who bites will be carefully observed and a log to track the frequency of the biting will be maintained. This may help to identify precipitating events and prevent recurrences. Where possible, the teacher will take steps to separate the child who bites so as to control the situation. However, there are times when a child bites even though he has not been provoked or the child is too quick for a teacher to intervene.

If there have been a total of two or more biting incidents by the same child within a period, we will have a conference with the parents to discuss a home-school approach to remedy the situation.

DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

Discipline is not punishment. We at iMAN, believe, the goal of disciplining is to provide behaviour guidance to children. This way, iMANites acquire self-control and grow up to care about others and themselves. Physical punishment has no place in our programme. iMAN educators are made aware of the centre's discipline philosophy during their induction and regular staff training.

Redirection: Children who are misbehaving at a particular learning station will be guided to another area or activity station by the teacher.

Class Rules: This helps children to understand and recognize what appropriate behaviour is expected. The rules are few and simple to understand. For the younger children, the rules will be accompanied by pictures which describe the rule or expected behavior.

Time Out: Sometimes it becomes necessary to give the child time to regain control. If that is necessary, the child will be asked to sit in a chair quietly and will rejoin the class when he / she is ready. Time-out is usually brief in duration and will not exceed a minute per age in years. The time away from a situation may give the child an opportunity to calm down and think about how to change his / her behaviour. The teacher will advise the child on acceptable and positive behaviour after the time-out is over.

Parent Conferences: If a behavioral problem persists, the parent(s) will be scheduled a conference to discuss a team approach to remedy the problem. In rare cases, the centre may not be the proper placement for the child and alternate child care arrangements will be discussed.

Parents Involvement in School Discipline: In the event of disputes, quarrels or even fights among children, we seek your understanding to allow our teachers to handle the situation. We will do our best to resolve all issues amicably and work with parents if necessary.

VISITORS

Parents are requested to call the office to make an appointment prior to their visits. All visitors must register at the admin office and will be given a visitor's pass.

When I think of preschool education, I think of iMAN. iMAN is truly an icon in the preschool arena.

Mrs. Kamaruzzaman, Parent of Ryan (N) and Imelda (K2)

E. HEALTH , HYGIENE & CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

HEALTH STATUS OF CHILD

Before being enrolled at the centre, each child should have received the appropriate immunizations for his / her age. It is the responsibility of parents to declare the health status of the child to the centre during enrollment.

HEALTH GUIDELINES BY MOH

We are required to adhere to the Ministry of Health's (MOH) '*Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases in Kindergarten and Child Care Centres*' at all times. We are not equipped to provide care for sick children. You will be informed immediately to fetch your child should they fall ill during school / care hours. A sick child will be immediately isolated from other children until the arrival of his / her parent / guardian.

HYGIENE PRACTICES

Here at iMAN, *health check* is conducted daily upon the child's arrival. The child is also supervised with the use of *hand sanitizer* at our health check station. Staff members are trained to recognize the common signs of communicable diseases and in hand washing and disinfection procedures. A comprehensive cleaning procedure has been put in place to ensure that teaching materials, toys, mattresses, diaper area and toilets etc are cleaned and sanitized daily and weekly.

'My favourite thing is making my own chocolate bar. We learn that cocoa beans come from Africa. A big, big ship sends the cocoa beans to chocolate factories. Then they make it. Then they wrap the chocolate. Then they send it to the NTUC Supermarket. Then we go and buy it.'

iMANite, Nurul Elliza (K2) on her project-based learning experience, 'KinderResearch on Chocolates'!

HOME CARE FOR SICK CHILDREN

To be fair to your child and other children, all children who are ill should remain at home as they are in need of complete rest, parental care and medical attention. Children should not be brought to the centre if they have fever, cough, abdominal pains, vomiting, ear-ache, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, ulcers in the mouth, rashes, red spots and other flu-like symptoms. Children who are still on medication, in particular, those containing sedatives, should also remain at home.

If you are uncertain about the nature or management of an illness, do call or consult a pediatric professional to help you determine how sick the child is and what care the child needs. Parents are advised to be prepared with an alternative care arrangement in the event that your child becomes ill while you are at work.

HAND, FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD) & CHICKEN POX

If your child is diagnosed with infectious diseases such as *Hand, Foot and Mouth Diseases (HFMD)* or *Chicken Pox*, he / she should not attend school until a registered medical practitioner certifies that he / she may be permitted to return to the centre upon the expiry of the medical certificate.

A letter from the registered medical practitioner certifying that your child is fit to return to the centre is required when your child is on medication and displays slight symptoms of cough and cold. If a doctor is not prepared to certify that your child is fit to return to school, it is an indication that your child is still unwell and should rest at home. This is advisable because secondary infections could occur as your child's immune system is still weak.

Updates and advisory notes on communicable diseases will be posted on the centre's notice board and / or issued to parents via the school circular.

POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF CENTRE DURING HFMD OUTBREAK

We are required to inform MCYS / MOE and the Ministry of Health (MOH), once there are two or more cases of HFMD. These Ministries monitor the outbreak of HFMD and other infectious diseases in preschool centres closely. There are 2 possible types of centre closure during an HFMD outbreak:

i. Mandatory Closure

Where the situation warrants a closure of our kindergarten based on the strain of viruses and the number of cases, we may be advised to close in order to stop further transmission of the disease.

ii. Voluntary Closure

We may consider voluntary closure if we perceive a need to do so. However, this is subject to all parents' consent and the clearance from MCYS / MOE. MOH has advised that for a transmission to be stopped completely, the minimum closure period is 5 to 7 days. In view of this, we advise you to find alternative care arrangements for your children. We would conduct thorough cleaning and disinfecting of our premises, equipment, materials and toys during the closure period.

HEALTH TALK & SCREENING

Vision screening and dental talk are conducted in K1 and K2 levels respectively.

Qistina tells me about what she did daily in class. For example, there was one time when she arrived with her friends to find their classroom in chaos and windows covered with sticky tape as an introduction to a KinderProject on natural disasters. Obviously, her interest was immediately captured. Qistina also told me her 'reflexology experience' as part of the theme exploration on 'Go! Grow! Glow! I am really impressed with the creative fun & imaginative ideas iMAN has in store for the children!

Mdm Rohana, Parent of Qistina (K2)

F. STAFF MATTERS

OUR EDUCATORS

Team iMAN comprises selectively chosen teachers who are certificate-trained, diploma holders and university graduates in early childhood education. This is in accordance with the requirements of MCYS / MOE. All iMAN educators are certified in the following teachers training and development programmes:

- KinderSmart Thinkers Learning System
- Certification in iMAN Educators Training Programme (IETP)

To enhance professional development in preschool care and education, our educators have to complete 100 clock hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) every academic year and this is documented on every educator's training roadmap.

Every year, iMAN honours its staff who has been nominated for the *Best Educator Award* and *Classroom Excellence Award* at the inter-branch and the intra-branch levels based on their performances during lesson observations and classroom audits.

STAFF- CHILD RATIO

We follow the staff-child ratios stipulated by MCYS & MOE based on the children's ages.

I admire how cool the iman teachers are. My child can be cranky at times and yet the teachers have been so pleasantly patient with him and my requests. I, for one, sometimes take the dedicated and patient iMAN teachers for granted! I forgot that the teachers might have 20 progress reports to complete, 20 PAL booklets to mark 20 e-portfolios to send out etc, etc, etc. So let me say a big thank you to each & every iMAN teacher who has taught Rafique & helped him progressed tremendously in all areas. Well done teachers!

Mdm Maimunah, Parent of Danish Rafique (K2)

G. CHILD CARE MATTERS

CHILD CARE CENTRE REGISTRATION

Our child care centres are licensed by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) under the Child Care Centres Act (Cap 37A) and Regulations.

We are assessed by the relevant authorities to ensure that our centres meet acceptable standards in the following areas: physical environment, safety, health, hygiene, nutrition, staff training, qualifications, curriculum and administration.

SERVICES

The following are services rendered in our childcare centres:

Infant Care : For infants aged between 2 months and 18 months.

Child Care : For children aged between 18 months and 6 years.

Student Care : For children aged between 7 years and 14 years.

OPERATING HOURS

- **Full Day Programme:** Mondays to Fridays from 7.00am to 7.00pm and on Saturdays, 7.00am to 2.00pm.
- **Half Day Programme:** Mondays to Fridays from 7.00am to 1.00pm OR 1.00pm to 7.00pm and on Saturdays, 7.00am to 1.00pm.

AGE GROUPS

The following are the programme categories and their respective age groups:

- Infant Care (2 mths to 17 mths)
- Toddlers (18 mths to below 30 mths)
- Playgroup (3 years old)
- Nursery (4 years old)
- Kindergarten 1 (5 years old)
- Kindergarten 2 (6 years old)
- Student Care (7- 14 yrs old)
 - Before School Care (AM)
 - After School Care (PM)

CLOSURE

We are open throughout the year except on Sundays and gazetted public holidays. We close for an additional 5 ½ days annually for activities such as staff training and development, workshops and spring-cleaning. We observe half-days on the eves of New Year, Chinese New Year and Christmas. You will be notified early on the dates of our centre closure. For details, please refer to our School Calendar for the current academic year.

In the event of closure, there will be no refund of school fees, and / or any charges. The centre management will not be liable or required to pay compensation for any loss sustained as a result of or in any way arising out of closure of the centre.

Zaheed loves coming to school. He simply can't wait to get into 'KinderWow! What's Up!' lessons to see what he is going to experiment with next. I think the KinderDiGi helps a lot too. Zaheed finds KinderDiGi fun and exciting. I can see that he really enjoys the DST (Digital Storytelling) and the colourful 'computerized reading programme'. More importantly, I can also see his rapidly increasing progress in reading. KinderDiGi – a brave and innovative teaching strategy. Keep innovating iMAN!

Mr. Mohd Ehsan, Parent of Zaheed (K1)

ATTIRE & PERSONAL GROOMING

School uniform is compulsory for all iMANites. Please refer to the table below for details and costs:

School Uniform (3 in 1) Package Set	\$88.00
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formal Uniform (\$40) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Long Dress (Girls) / Vest & Long Pants (Boys) 2. PE Attire (\$40) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Polo T-Shirt & Long Track Pants 3. Casual Schoolwear (\$18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange T-shirt & Brown Shorts 	

Toddler, Playgroup and Nursery children: Put on their PE Attire (Polo T-shirt and Track Pants) every morning and change to their Formal Uniform or Casual Schoolwear (Orange T-shirt & Brown Shorts) in the afternoon.

K1 and K2 children: Put on their Formal Uniform every morning and change to their PE Attire (Polo T-shirt and Track Pants) or Casual Schoolwear (Orange T-shirt & Brown Shorts) in the afternoon.

iMANites should refrain from attending school in home clothes or partial uniform. If our school uniform is loaned to you in replacement of your child's soiled clothing, please wash and return it to us within 2 working days. You shall ensure that your child observes personal hygiene at all times. This includes putting on clean and neatly pressed attire. Boys should spot short hair above the collar. Long hair for girls shall be tied up neatly. Fingernails and toenails must be trimmed and clean.

Please provide the necessary change of clothing and towel in two ziplock bags, marked with your child's name. For safety reasons, iMANites are encouraged to wear proper footwear to prevent any accident from happening during outdoor play. Slippers are not allowed as they hinder walking and may cause danger during running and climbing.

LATE PICK UP

- Please fetch your child on time. A late fetching fee shall be incurred at \$5 for every 15-minute block of care after time of dismissal.

I was in the curriculum team that looked into the lesson planning for 'KinderEarth'. This unit of inquiry on environmental education began with a session of digital storytelling and KinderMeeting on green issues raised at the National Geographic Kids' website. Following that, the children participated in an eco-friendly dramatization that allowed the iMANites to playact and go on a variety of environmental adventures. Some were the animals, some were the loggers, some became the trees in the jungle and some iMANites became members of the Green Police Squad. It was amazing to discover the children's strong sense of mission to save the earth and protect the wildlife. I think, role-playing has enabled them to better understand each group's point of view and made them more environmentally-conscious. The children later brainstormed and came up with various green slogans. KinderEarth is part of iMAN's initiative to help raise environment-friendly kids. A wonderfully fun learning experience for both, iMANites and for us, the iMAN educators.

Ms Herma, Supervisor (iMAN Pasir Ris)

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR INFANT CARE

Time	Activity
7.00am - 8.00am	Arrival & Health Check
8.00am - 9.00am	Breakfast & Routine Care
9.00am - 11.00am	KinderFun Learning Experiences
11.00am - 12.30pm	Lunch / Shower
12.30pm - 3.30pm	Nap Time
3.30pm - 4.30pm	Snack Time
4.30pm -5.30pm	KinderGym : Music & Movement Activities
5.30pm - 6.00pm	Multi Sensory & Exploratory Learning Experiences
6.00pm - 7.00pm	Clean Up / Home Sweet Home

* Schedule may vary from centre to centre depending on children's needs.

PROGRAMME FOR TODDLERS (18MTHS - BELOW 30MTHS)

Our programme caters to the basic needs of toddlers which are met through their daily routines. The programme goals and objectives at iMAN provide opportunities for toddlers to:

- Learn about themselves
- Learn about their feelings
- Learn about others
- Learn about communicating
- Learn about moving and doing

Early learning is important. However, of greater importance I think, is to develop an early love for learning. And that requires lots and lots of fun to be added to learning. When a story is boring, the child yawns openly such that the learning that comes with the story is lost. Fun learning is critical for learning success during the preschool years, without which, learning for preschoolers becomes both, uninviting and unappetizing. Here at iMAN, fun is a serious business. We believe, fun is the very spice that gives early learning its fascinating flavour. As such, all our lesson plans are injected with a generous measure of learning fun. Making learning fun has always been a topmost priority in iMAN's brand of early education. Therein lies the secret of our learning success formula.

Ms Siti Rabi'ah, Supervisor (iMAN Kids Kingdom)

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR CHILD CARE (Toddler, PG, N, K1, K2)

Time	Activity
7.00am - 8.00am	Arrival , Health Check & Free Play
8.00am - 9.00am	Breakfast & Nature Walk
9.00am - 12.00pm	Core Programme Hours
12.00pm - 1.00pm	Lunch & Shower
1.00pm - 3.00pm	Nap Time
3.00pm - 3.30pm	Tea Time
3.30pm -5.00pm	KinderGym : Music & Movement Activities
5.00pm - 6.00pm	MI Learning Stations & Multi Sensory Learning Experiences
6.00pm - 7.00pm	Clean Up & Home Sweet Home

* Schedule may vary from centre to centre depending on children's needs.

STUDENT CARE PROGRAMME (BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL CARE)

Our Student Care caters to the specific and individual needs of the different age groups (i.e. 7 - 14 years old). We ...

- Provide care and meaningful supervision
- Organize holistic & growth-creating activities
- Guide students in their revision and completion of daily homework

SUBSIDY

Parents who place their children in our Student Care Centre can apply for Government Fees Assistance if eligible.

History of Kindergartens

Kindergartens owe their name and origin to Friedrich Froebel, philosopher and educator, who opened the first Kindergarten (children's garden) in Blankenburg, Germany in 1837. Froebel understood and respected the nature of young children and believed that they learned best through activity. He designed special playmaterials and introduced the ideas of associating actions with singing songs. In the mid-nineteenth century his ideas were brought to North America by German immigrants who set up Kindergartens for their children.

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT CARE: AM SESSION

Time	Activity
7.00am - 7.30am	Arrival / Health Check / Group Activity
7.30am - 8.15am	Breakfast
8.15am - 8.45am	Nature Walk / Outdoor Activity / Music and Movement
8.45am - 10.45am	Supervised Study
10.45am - 11.15am	Bath Time
11.15am - 11.45am	Lunch
11.45am - 12.00pm	Depart for School

* The schedule may vary from each centre depending to children's needs.

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT CARE: PM SESSION

Time	Activity
12.30pm - 2.00pm	Arrival / Health Check/ Bath / Lunch
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Rest Time
3.00pm – 4.00pm	Supervised Study
4.00pm – 4.10pm	Tea Break
4.15pm - 5.15pm	Supervised Study
5.15pm - 6.15am	Board Games / Puzzles / Indoor Play
6.15pm - 7.00pm	Home Sweet Home

TRIAL PERIOD

Parents can choose to enrol their child for a fourteen (14) day (including 2 Sundays) trial period initially. To do so, parents must register and pay the fourteen (14) days’ school fee in full. School fee paid for the fourteen (14) days initial trial period is non-refundable and non-transferable. No amount or part thereof of the fourteen (14) days’ school fee will be refunded upon early withdrawal. Should deposit be refunded, you will be required to pay a non-subsidized daily payment of \$35.00 for every taken attendance during the 2 weeks period for service rendered.

FEE STRUCTURE & SUBSIDY

	Childcare Fee (before subsidy) Foreigners and Singapore PR pay:	Childcare Fee (after subsidy)* Singapore Citizens pay:	
		Working mother	Non-working mother
Infant Care Programme			
Full-day Care	\$1000	\$400	\$750
Half-day Care	\$700	\$400	\$550
Childcare Programme		Working mother	Non-working mother
Full-day Care	\$570	\$270	\$420
Half-day Care	\$400	\$250	\$250
Before-and-after School Care	\$280	-	-
Emergency Care	\$35	-	-

* subjected to MCYS subsidy approval. Terms and conditions apply.

Subsidy will be given to you from the month the application is approved by MCYS. Upon approval, you will pay the monthly-subsidized childcare fee (childcare fee less the government subsidy) to the centre. It is your responsibility to inform us of any change in your employment status and the status of your child's citizenship promptly.

You will be entitled for childcare subsidy provided your child attends at least one day in the childcare centre for the last month. Please also refer to the centre's policy on withdrawal and liaise with the centre's supervisor directly on this matter.

Once MCYS has established that you have provided us with inaccurate or false information for child care subsidy claims, you will be required to refund MCYS all subsidies paid to you. Notwithstanding your full refund of subsidies paid to you, legal action may be taken against you for giving false information to MCYS.

Our fees are inclusive of toiletries, stationery, activity sheets and readers. You may provide special toiletries if your child has any medical need. You will need to provide the diapers and milk powder for your infant or toddler as individual infants and toddlers have different needs.

The above does not apply to foreigners. *Foreigners* do not enjoy subsidy entitlement and would have to pay the full fees.

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Parents who are in need for additional financial assistance, over and above the MCYS childcare subsidy, may apply under the Centre-Based Financial Assistance Scheme for Child Care (CFAC) through the Centre.

Parents may wish to discuss your needs with us; thereafter we will apply for CFAC from the Community Development Council (CDC) on your behalf.

DEPOSIT

Deposit of a month's fee is non-refundable and non-transferable. It will be used to offset the last month's fee.

ROUTINE CARE ITEMS

The following provides a guide to what you should bring for your child:

NO	ITEMS	REMARKS
1	2 ziplock bags for soiled clothes & towel	All levels
2	Clean milk bottle	Infant, Toddler, Playgroup and Nursery level
3	Milk powder storage	Infant, Toddler, Playgroup and Nursery level
4	Diapers (At least 4 daily)	Infant, Toddler, Playgroup and Nursery level
5	Baby / Wet Wipes	Infant, Toddler, Playgroup and Nursery level
6	Comb	All except infant care
7	Afternoon wear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal uniform OR ▪ PE Attire ▪ Casual Schoolwear (Orange T-shirt & Brown Shorts) 	All levels
9	Bath Towel	All levels
10	Tooth Brush & Mug	All levels
11	Water Bottle	All levels

SHOWER

Children are supervised during shower time. The younger children are showered by their teachers whilst Kindergarten children shower on their own with assistance and guidance from their teachers. Boys and girls are showered separately. For children with sensitive skin, do bring in your own bath and hair shampoo. Remember to label your items.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is an important milestone in a child's life. If children are not yet toilet trained, we recommend starting it after your child has settled in the centre. As consistency is the key to successful toilet training, it should be a joint effort between home and school. It would thus be most effective for parents and teachers to discuss and establish an appropriate time to start.

NUTRITION PRACTICES

The meals served in our centre shall include breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea. Our weekly menu is posted on the Parents' Notice Board for your information. We have been given a copy of the "Guide to Healthy Meals in Child Care Centres" which provides us with resources and information on planning nutritionally balanced meals. Should your child have special dietary requirements, do discuss them with our centre's supervisor.

NUTRITION

Milk is provided during breakfast and afternoon snack for all children. In addition, Infant, Toddler, Playgroup and Nursery children are given milk before naptime. Parents should provide a clean milk bottle and milk powder measured in milk powder storage container.

Nursery children will be weaned off the bottle by the middle of the year, after which they will be offered milk in a cup before naptime. As for infants, the centre will tailor the milk schedule to individual infant's milk schedule.

GROUP MEAL TIME

This gives children the opportunity to develop social skills. Children will develop good table manners, learning to serve themselves and use their utensils properly. Our monthly menus are posted on the Parents' Notice Board for your reference and convenience. Occasionally, we may add to or substitute the snack with an item the children would prepare as part of their cooking activity for the day.

Menu may vary once in a while due to the availability of sources. We will try our best to prepare special food arrangements for children with specific food allergies. Please discuss this with us. Parents can provide substitute (from home) if the menu is not suitable. Three meals will be served in the centre. Breakfast is served between 8.00am to 8.50am daily. It is advised for children having breakfast in the centre to arrive early. Lunch and tea are served between 11.00am and 1.00pm , 3.30pm and 4.00pm respectively.

Primarily white meat such as chicken and fish are served. Pork, mutton and beef are excluded for health and religious reasons. Foods are not prepared by the centre are discouraged. This is to ensure that children with dietary restrictions (either health or religious) do not consume such food whilst in the centre. Exceptions are made for birthday celebrations and special centre events. However, parents need to inform the class teachers on the food they wish to provide during these special occasions. Please exclude pork, mutton and beef. Only HALAL meals are served.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Parents must notify the centre of any food allergies or dietary restrictions their children may have. Children with special diets or dietary restrictions are allowed to bring in food from home. However, parents are requested to observe the centre's policy of not bringing in beef, mutton and pork. Snacks and confectionary are not to

be brought into centre, unless they are birthday treats of which the teachers are informed.

NAP TIME

Rest period is as scheduled and each will be provided with a separate cot for sleeping.

IMMUNIZATION RECORD

All children are required to be immunized and copies of up-to-date immunization records must be submitted together with registration form. Parents have to substantiate with valid medical documents should the child be excused of immunization. Parents should also update the centre of any specific disabilities and allergies and changes to medical information provided.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES PROCEDURES

The teacher will administer medication only if the parent / guardian has provided written consent. The *daily Medication Authorisation Form* is at the entrance counter must be completed each time medication is to be administered. Parents are advised to check medicines and other contents that have been placed in the children's bags to avoid any mix up.

The only medication that the centre is obligated to dispense is the medicine prescribed by a licensed physician. Homoeopathic and / or herbal medication and over the counter medications will not be administered without written clause by parents allowing the centre to administer it and centre should not be held responsible for any complications due to the medication administered.

Parents must provide staff with the medication in the original container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, medication name, the date of prescription, expiration date and administration frequency. Medication Authorisation Form will be maintained to record the instructions for giving medication, parental consent, amount,

the time of the administration and the person who administered each dose of the medication. Spills, reactions and refusals to take medication will also be recorded in the log book. Teachers cannot administer medication without the written permission of the parent / guardian.

H. KINDERGARTEN MATTERS

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Our kindergartens are registered with the Ministry of Education (MOE) under the Education Act (1985 Edition). We are assessed by the relevant authorities to ensure that our centres meet acceptable standards in the following areas:

- Physical environment
- Safety, health, hygiene and nutrition
- Staff training, qualifications and requirements
- Programme and curriculum
- Administration

OPERATING HOURS

Our kindergartens operate from Mondays to Fridays from 8.00am to 5.30pm and on Saturdays from 8.00am to 1.30pm.

AGE GROUPS

The following are the preschool categories and their respective age groups:

- Playgroup (3 years old)
- Kindergarten 1 (5 years old)
- Nursery (4 years old)
- Kindergarten 2 (6 years old)

SESSION HOURS

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Session 1 | 8.15am to 11.15am (3 hours) | Nursery / K1 / K2 |
| ▪ Session 2 | 11.00am to 2.00pm (3 hours) | Nursery / K1 / K2 |
| ▪ Session 3 | 1.45pm to 4.45pm (3 hours) | Nursery / K1 / K2 |
| | 1.45pm to 3.15pm (1 ½ hours) | Playgroup |
| | 3.15pm to 4.45pm (1 ½ hours) | Playgroup |

CLOSURE

We are open throughout the year except on Sundays and gazetted public holidays. The centres may also be closed on special days on the school calendar. You will be notified early on the dates of our school closure. For details, please refer to our School Calendar for the current academic year.

Our kindergartens follow the School Terms and Holidays for Primary and Secondary Schools. iMAN operates on a 5-day week. There are 4 terms per school year, each comprising 10 weeks followed by the standard school holidays as stipulated by the Ministry of Education.

ATTIRE & PERSONAL GROOMING

Your child shall put on his / her *formal uniform on Mondays and Wednesdays* and *P.E. attire on Tuesdays and Thursdays*. iMANites should refrain from attending school in home clothes or partial uniform. You may allow him / her to put on culture clothes on Fridays being our signature Culture Day.

Please also ensure that your child puts on his / her nametag and bus label (where relevant) for ease of identification. If our school uniform is loaned to you in replacement of your child's soiled clothing, please wash and return it to us within 2 working days. You shall ensure that your child observes personal hygiene at all times. This includes putting on clean and neatly pressed kindergarten attire. Boys should spot short hair above the collar. Long hair for girls shall be tied up neatly. Fingernails and toenails must be trimmed and clean.

For safety reasons, iMANites are encouraged to wear proper footwear to prevent any accidents from happening during outdoor play. Slippers are not allowed as they hinder walking and may cause danger during running and climbing.

FEE STRUCTURE

First Payment Upon Registration		
Break-down of First Payment	Deposit	\$150.00
	First Month	\$150.00
	Snacks (per annum)	\$100.00
	Registration*	\$50.00
	Insurance (one-time)	\$5.00
	Learning Kit (per annum)	\$255.00
	Uniform and PE Attire	\$70.00 per set
Total	\$780.00	

* Registration fee is non-refundable. Fees are correct at the time of printing.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Should you require kindergarten services but are unable to afford the fees, you can apply for financial assistance under the Education Trust Fund (ETF) managed by Yayasan Mendaki through us.

Please approach our admin office for further assistance. Application forms must be received before 1 January of each academic year. Your application is subjected to ETF's approval. Terms and conditions apply.

NUTRITION PRACTICES

Our snack menu shall be posted on the Parents' Notice Board for your information. We serve only nutritional snacks and plain water.

Snacks are provided in accordance with the "Guide to Healthy Meals in Kindergarten & Child Care Centres" which provides us with resources and information on planning nutritionally balanced meals for all preschoolers.

The snack menu is posted on the Parents' Notice Board for your information. The kindergarten menu changes daily. The menu may feature any of the selected items below :

Cereals / Porridge / Fruits / Sandwiches / Cream Rolls / Cakes / Biscuits / Macaroni Soup / Red Bean Drink / Barley Drink / Soya Bean Drink, etc. (Food items are subject to availability).

*As an early childhood professional, I must say that I agree fully with **Robert Fulghum**. He says ' **All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten**'. Most of what we really need to know about how to live and what to do, and how to be, we actually learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at the preschool.*

These are the things we learned during our Kindergarten days: Share everything ~ Play fair ~ Don't hit people ~ ut things back where you found them ~ Clean up your own mess ~ Don't take things that aren't yours ~ Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody ~ Wash your hands before you eat ~ Flush ~ Work and play ~ When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together ~ Be aware of wonder.

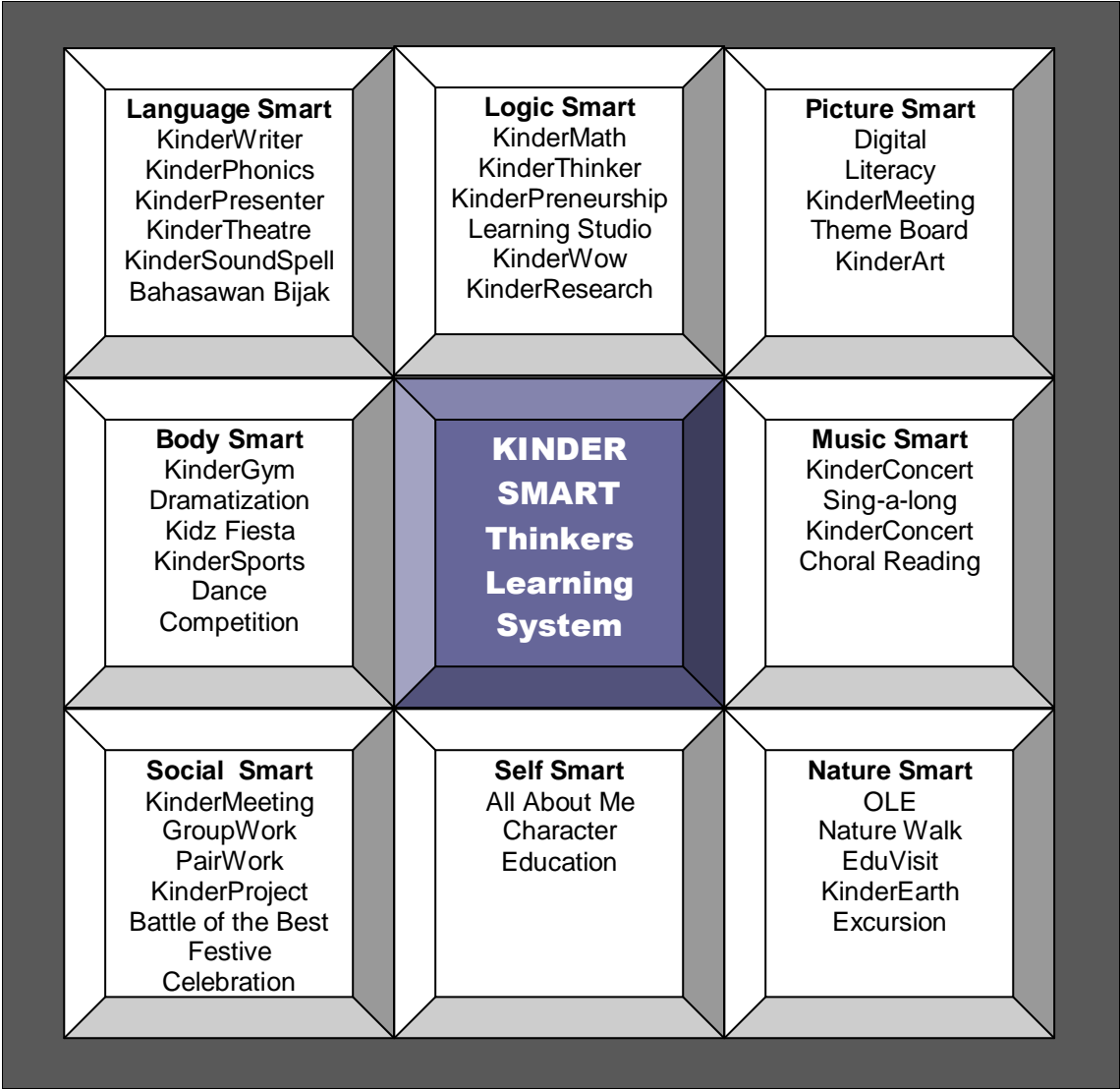
Everything we need to know in life, perhaps, is in there somewhere in the above-mentioned Golden Rules taught to us during our preschool years!

Ms SharifaH NurAida, Supervisor (iMAN Simei)

I. CURRICULUM

CURRICULUM

- We feature an outstanding and engaging programme: **The KinderSmart Thinkers Learning System**



THE KINDERSMART THINKERS LEARNING SYSTEM : KEY STRENGTHS & FEATURES

The **KinderSmart Thinkers Learning System** emphasizes on the development of the eight types of smartness (Multiple Intelligences), thinking skills and habits of mind.

Voices from the Field: Creatively designed by educational consultants from RSI, this programme is supported by research-validated curriculum frameworks from MOE & MCYS: Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (2008), Nurturing Early Learners : A Framework For A Kindergarten Curriculum In Singapore (2006) & Towards Best Practices - Good Practices Handbook for Child Care Centres (MCYS 2005).

Multicultural Education: Culture Day presents snapshots of children from various cultures and backgrounds. This international-minded curriculum feature heightens the iMANites' multicultural awareness.

KinderAction Learning: This feature enables iMANites to experience learning in action via EduVisits and hands on experiments during KinderWoW segment!

Literacy & Numeracy: The curriculum has a strong emphasis on the mastery of language and literacy and numeracy to build readiness for transition to primary school.

KinderDiGi: This digital feature supports curriculum implementation in 2 key areas i.e. as a teaching tool for teachers and a learning aid for children to maximize information processing.

Literature-based instruction: This feature uses children's literature to teach character education while it tells a story.

KinderBrain Learning: Resting on a firm foundation of the latest developments in brain research, our programme uses brain compatible instructional strategies like 'Kit Kat Break (Brain Break)' to optimize the learning impact.

Teaching-Learning Balance: The programme balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning. It is also multisensory in nature with many MI learning stations for children to visit. All in all, highly engaging!

'My mummy is very happy because I can do idea-webbing. I do it myself and my mummy said I am very clever!'

iMANite, Harris Zaki Mohd (K2)

OPTIONAL PROGRAMMES

We may conduct optional programmes with extra charge in addition to our kindergarten and childcare programme. However, it is important for us to assess the need, suitability and benefits of such programmes before implementing them. We have to adhere to MCYS / MOE guidelines on the provision of optional programmes and you have a choice to decide on your children's participation. The normal child care programme shall continue for children who are not participating in the optional programmes.

ASSESSMENT & STUDENT- LED CONFERENCES (SLC)

To keep track of children's development and progress, iMAN implements the following methods of assessment and evaluation:

- Observational Checklist
- Portfolio Assessment
- E-Portfolio
- Child Profiler
- Oral & Written KinderAssessment

Parents will be kept updated of their children's development and achievements through Progress Reports and during Student-Led Conferences (SLC) at the end of Term 2 & 4.

PARENT- ASSISTED LEARNING (PAL)

A conducive home environment where children receive a sufficient level of guidance and supervision in their learning is a pre-requisite for school success. By guiding the child to complete his / her PAL materials, parents are helping their child to build an important connection between home and school. PAL activities complement the classroom lessons and provides opportunities for learning extension and further exploration. At home, your help to complete the PAL activities is invaluable because you know your child best. '15 mins. daily' of contact time for PAL is preferable to 'a single hour once a week' to develop a habitual study routine. In doing so, you may ensure that learning difficulties do not accumulate.

CALENDAR OF EVENT

	TERM 1	WK 1-10 Semester 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EduVisit • Parents' Career Talk • Chinese New Year Celebration • Career Talk By Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Clinic • Club Genius • Iqra Clinic • Fire Drill • Maulidur Rasul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinder Research • Dental Talk • Curriculum Audit • Curriculum & Teachers Training

March Holiday Programme: KinderChef & Curriculum Training

TERM 2	WK 1-10	Semester 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Clinic • Club Genius • Iqra Clinic • KinderPrenuership • Fire Drill • Re-registration Exe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KinderAssess • Battle of the Best • Class Photo Taking • KinderResearch Project • EduVisit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excursion • SLC (Semester 1) • Mother's Day • Curriculum Audit • Curriculum & Teachers Training

June Holiday Programmes: E-Badah Camp, KinderFun, Reading Camp, Team Building

TERM 3	WK 1-10	Semester 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Clinic • Mosque Visit • Racial Harmony • KinderSports • EduVisit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary 1 immersion • National Day • Teachers' Day • Curriculum Audit • Fire Drill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whizz Club • Children's Day • Hari Raya • Curriculum & Teachers Training

TERM 4	WK 1-10	Semester 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EduVisit • KinderAssess • Earth Day • KinderOrient • KinderStep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Clinic • Kidz Fiesta • Earth Hour • Open House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLC (Semester 2) • Excursion • Curriculum & Teachers Training

December Holiday Programmes: E-Badah Camp, KinderFun, Reading Camp

My Child's First Day in School ~ How to Handle The First Day Jitters

By
DR. A . SYED
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The first day of school can be both an exciting and stressful occasion for children and parents alike. 'Exciting' because it is a milestone, 'stressful' because it means separation. In most families, it causes butterflies and even more tears. Some kids deal with the first day of school with mild jitters. However, some do not feel the same way and see school as something to be fearful about. Even mothers admit that they are just as nervous and excited when its time to bring their children to school for the first time.

Causes of School Phobia & School Refusal

The causes of school phobia and school refusal include:

Fear of the unknown, unfamiliar people and surrounding. Some young children cling to or hide behind their caregivers or even cry when they meet a stranger. This is known as stranger anxiety. Young children, because of their inability to distinguish between reality and imagination, may develop fear. A three year old child may run screaming from a barking dog but a seven year old child is more likely to appraise the degree of danger before deciding whether or not to run. Research has shown that children may not be really afraid of school but rather, they are afraid of being separated from their parents. This is termed as separation anxiety.

Experts say that children below the age of four are usually unable to retain a mental picture or understand the concept of time. When your child could not see you, he or she might assume you are gone forever. Even a slightly older child may experience fear in his parents' absence. A child may respond by putting his or her arms tightly around his / her mother's neck and may refuse to let go on the first day of school. This is a clear sign of fear of separation.

Parents need to give assurance that they would return soon. When children feel secure and trust that the parents would come back, then their fears would slowly disappear.

Take Children's Fear Seriously

We should not dismiss or belittle the children's fear or resort to teasing them or be angry with them in an effort to change the fearful attitude. We need to acknowledge children's fear by being understanding, patient and reassuring. This provides them with psychological support, comfort and security.

The Big Day – How Parents can help to get Kids sure-footed! Tips to Help Children Adjust

Parents should plan to take a few trips with their children to show them the way to school. Walk the route with them. If possible, on the way to school, point out neighborhood landmarks to breed familiarity. If the kids are taking the bus, show them the pick up and drop off points. Do this several times.

Talk to the teachers and let your children see you do this. Childcare expert says - Your child needs to know that, you, his most basic and trustworthy person, know the school well, know the teachers and approve of them. Do not hand the child immediately to the teacher who is a stranger to the child. Help the child to feel at ease gradually.

Try not to make too much fuss when you send your children off to school. Just say, 'Good bye, I am going, I will be back later.' Do remember not to prolong the good bye. If the child whines or clings, staying will only make it harder.

More importantly, do not whine about how much you will miss your child when he goes off to school. That will just make him / her want to stay at home with you more.

When you are picking them up, try and not say 'Oh I missed you so much'. Instead try saying 'Oh! Did you have fun today?' Be positively excited, and this will excite his colourful imagination as well. After school, discuss what he has done in school and tell him how proud you are of him for being so grown up.

Place a card with personal details such as the child's name, address and phone number inside their pockets so parents can be contacted in the event of the child getting lost.

Allow the child to take to school something special which he is attached with. This provides familiar comfort. Let your child bring a security object to school, like a stuffed toy or even your photo, being his parents.

Start early to help your child adjust to your occasional absences. Gradually increase the number and length of visits with relatives, friends and other caregivers to improve your child's comfort level with those outside your immediate family. Later, arrange play visits in your home or in other people's homes to help your child improve social and play skills. This will help him to befriend his school mates easily when he starts school without feeling awkward and shy.

If possible, arrange a playdate with another child from the Centre, preferably one-on-one, so that your child will see a familiar face when he walks in. If you are experiencing fear and anxiety, try not to communicate this uneasiness to your child. Attitudes can be contagious and children possess mental antenna that picks up these negative tell-tale signs fast.

Show the child groups of kids around his age who are going off to school especially if they seem to be having fun and laughing. Tell your child in advance that he or she soon will be going to school. Be positive and reassure your child that school is a safe, good and fun place. Give him an idea on what he might be doing at school such as drawing, colouring and story telling. It is important that he is mentally prepared for school and knows what to expect. This minimizes the child's fear of the unknown. Be enthusiastic about the upcoming change. If you are positive and confident, your child will be, too.

Let your child become involved with school preparations such as laying out clothes. Also begin an earlier bedtime several weeks before. Never use school as a threat or a means to change your child's behaviour. Child psychologists have indicated that the word 'send' has a meaning of finality to a young child. For instance, we 'send a letter to a friend' and we never see that letter again. Perhaps, when discussing school, it will be better to use terms such as 'you are spending some time at school' and we are taking you to school' rather than sending him to school

Read age-appropriate books about going to school to help your child know what to expect. Crying and clinging are healthy coping mechanism in very young children, so as parents, do try not to overreact.

Do not sneak out when you leave, it will make your child feel abandoned and unloved. Say goodbye and make a proper exit.

Off To School

School is just one of many new situations your child will have to face in life. But because small children don't come equipped with adult-size coping skills, it is up to you to help your child see change as a challenge. Starting school is one of the earliest and most challenging goodbyes between a child and his parents. But successfully mastering this new challenge can increase a child's feeling of self-confidence and security as well as strengthen a child's emotional health. Preparation – yours and your child's – can smooth the transition from home to school.

===THE END===

Even as we invest in early childhood education, let's raise the bar for early learning programmes that are falling short. Now, today, some children are enrolled in excellent programs. Some children are enrolled in mediocre programs. And some are wasting away their most formative years in bad programs. Parents beware !

President Obama on the importance of having a child enrolled in quality early learning programmes.

INFO @ A GLANCE

<h1>Our centres</h1>		<p>Tampines (Kindergarten)</p> <p>Blk 136 Tampines St 11 #01-156 S (521136) Tel : 6788 4911 Fax : 6788 3424</p>	<p>Tenagaville (Kindergarten)</p> <p>Blk 651 Jalan Tenaga #01-04 S (410651) Tel : 63421332 Fax : 63421022</p>
<p>Pasir Ris (Childcare)</p> <p>Blk 148 Pasir Ris St 13 #01-34 S (510148) Tel : 6584 1742 Fax: 6584 1743</p>	<p>Simei (Childcare)</p> <p>Blk 154 Simei St 1 #01-75 S (520154) Tel : 6784 5082 Fax : 6784 4814</p>	<p>Kids Kingdom (Childcare)</p> <p>Blk 154 Hougang St11 #01-196 S (530154) Tel : 6382 3895 Fax : 6284 5212</p>	<p>Woodgrove (Kindergarten)</p> <p>No. 5 Woodgrove Avenue S (738405) Tel : 6369 4436 Fax : 6369 4437</p>
<p>Bukit Batok (Kindergarten)</p> <p>Blk 277 Bukit Batok East Ave 3 #02-373 S (650277) Tel : 6561 5466 Fax : 6561 5436</p>	<p>Choa Chu Kang (Kindergarten)</p> <p>Blk 530 Choa Chu Kang St 51 #01-323 S (680530) Tel : 6468 9402 Fax : 6468 9406</p>	<p>Yishun (Kindergarten)</p> <p>Blk 934 Yishun Central 1 #01-579 S (760934) Tel : 6756 0041 Fax : 6756 0042</p>	<p>Jurong (Kindergarten)</p> <p>Blk 399 Yung Sheng Road #01-19 Taman Jurong Shopping Ctr S (610399) Tel: 6264 4163 Fax: 6264 4263</p>

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