

INNOVA Early Years Center

Introduction





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Introduction

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Casey Bucheler

Principal/Head of
Early Years

Introduction

Welcome to the Innova Early Years Centre.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Innova Early Years Centre (IEYC). At Innova Early Years Center we know and understand how unique and precious your child is, and our teaching and learning spaces reflect this.

We believe that in order for children to grow and learn, they need to **feel safe, respected, loved** and have a **real sense of belonging**.

Children truly are born with a sense of wonder. Our teachers foster each child's unique character, curiosity, love of learning and respect each child's individual learning journey.

We value relationships and believe that parents, students and the IEYC need to be partners in learning. Current research about learning states that a child learns best within a community and that is why we all need to work together to maximize the learning for your child.

We look forward to working with you to support your child's learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey Bucheler".

Principal/Head of Early Years





Innova Early Years Center

The Innova Early Years Center (IEYC) is a stand-alone Early Years campus of the Innova Academy.

The Innova Early Years Center opens in September, 2017 and is located in the Zhaolin Center in Yizhuang. It will provide education to children aged between 2-5 years old.

Our Programme

At the Innova Early Years Center we are committed to developing and providing education of the highest quality to prepare students for their future. Our teaching reflects the value we place on inter-cultural skills and is inspired by leading education philosophies, such as Reggio Emilia and Montessori.

The teaching at IEYC has a strong focus on using an inquiry approach, fostering creativity and innovation, based upon a solid foundation of character education.

Learning is child-centred and designed to foster a love of learning, develop confidence and independence.

The teaching and learning experiences are designed to provide a solid foundation for the child's future schooling and academic success.

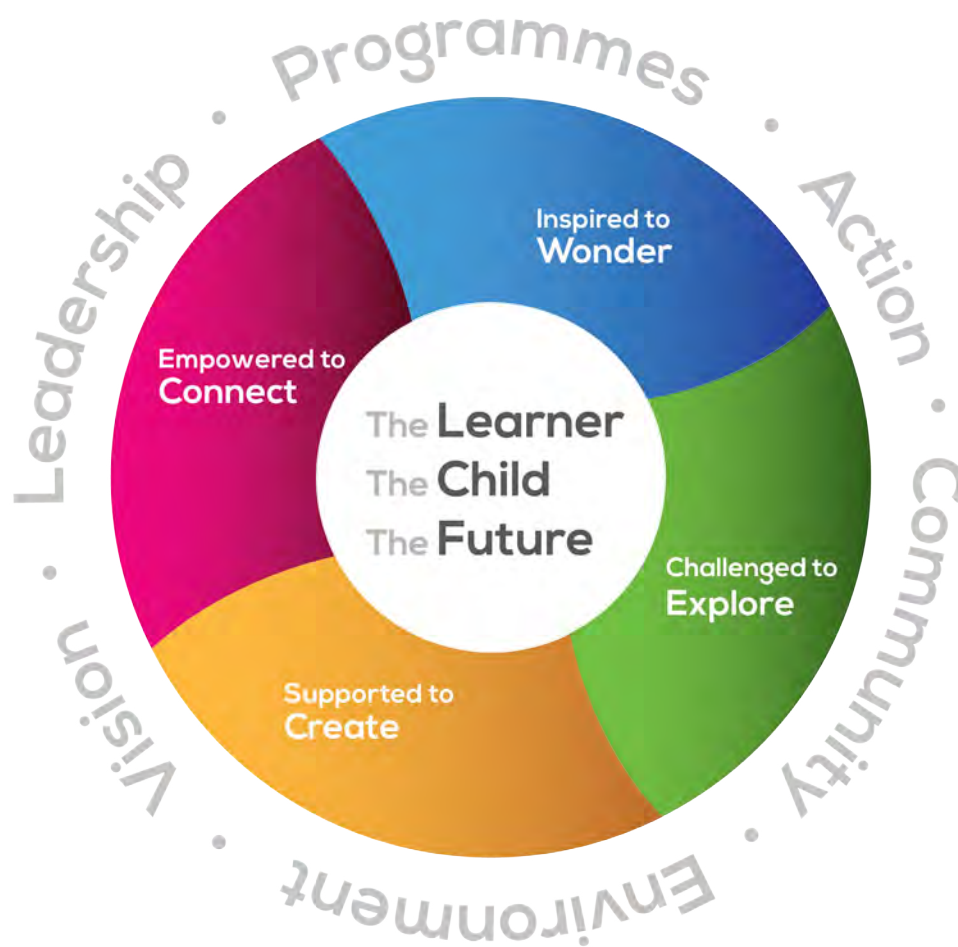
INNOVA GUIDING STATEMENTS

As an Early Years Center, what core considerations guide our work with your child? What is our mission (what we say that we do)? What is our vision (what is our goal for your child's education?) and what values guide what we think, say and do when we are working with you and your child?

An INNOVA education focuses on the learner and you can see in the diagram below, the student is at the centre of everything we do.

The INNOVA mission states that we "develop responsible learners ready for the future". To do this, we plan to inspire students to **WONDER**, challenge students to **EXPLORE**, support students to **CREATE** and empower students to **CONNECT**.

These guiding statements are summarized by the graphic below.



The logo is a visual representation of our Guiding Statements. The following list has 6 pillars that reflect the ideal INNOVA student when they finish their education.

- Vision • Leadership • Programmes
- Action • Community • Environment

Through the educational programmes offered, the INNOVA student will be able to demonstrate vision and leadership, care for their community and the environment and be empowered to take action.

In addition, in an increasingly global society, we believe in the importance of children becoming proficient in more than one language and therefore our instructional programmes provide an emphasis on Chinese and English languages.

EARLY YEARS TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

What guides the teaching in the INNOVA Early Years Center? What is the philosophical foundation that guides all teaching and learning at IEYC?

The INNOVA Early Years Center is inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy. This is regarded world-wide as the leader in Early Years Education. We believe in the best for our students and hence why we have chosen this philosophy to inspire our teaching and learning at INNOVA.

A Reggio inspired educational programme shares the image of a successful child as one who is curious, confident, competent and well prepared for the future. It also recognizes the importance of the environment to provide learning opportunities for children to investigate, analyse, question, test ideas and take action. Emphasis is placed on the development of collaborative skills, social skills, independence and developing a sense of belonging. Children are encouraged to use language and mediums to investigate, to explore and to reflect on their experiences and provide opportunities for all to learn and explore together.

EARLY YEARS TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRACTICE









Play based learning

“Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.”

O’Fred Donaldson

Play based learning is a teaching approach that is recognized world-wide by leading researchers in the Early Years Education field to be the most effective way of teaching children in the Early Years.

It is a teaching technique (or approach) where it looks like children are ‘just playing’. However, there is a lot of planning and preparation in making sure that learning is happening while children are playing. To the observer and for the student, it may look like or feel like that it is just fun and games but deep learning is happening concurrently. Within the ‘play’, the teacher has planned and prepared the learning experience towards specific curriculum (learning) objectives. (Refer to the Curriculum section for the learning objectives we will be using in our teaching).

Play based learning is a necessary element of your child’s learning and development at INNOVA, and will ensure that your child is socially, emotionally, physically and academically ready for further education beyond the Early Years.



The Learning Environment and the 'third teacher'

Renowned Reggio educator, Loris Malaguzzi highlights the importance of the environment as the third teacher. He describes this as:

"There are three teachers of children: adults, other children and their physical environment."

Therefore, at IEYC we use the learning environment (both inside and out of the classroom) to help students understand the connections between knowledge, skills and understandings and therefore build deeper learning.

INNOVA understands the significance of the environment as the 'third teacher' and its potential to inspire children to investigate. Careful thought and attention is given to the materials, textures, colours, natural light, order and beauty of our spaces. We therefore create an inviting and engaging learning spaces for our students.

The learning spaces encourage working together (collaboration), communication and exploration, and both children and adults take responsibility for the care and cleanliness of the learning spaces.

Our classrooms open onto 'Piazas'; special spaces which provide busy places for sharing and creating, and displays designed to provoke questions. They are also special spaces filled with books, with quiet places to read alone or with a friend, and for parents to discuss their learning with their children.

Our 'Kitchen Studio and Maker Space' is designed as a flexible space for children to learn through cooking and design thinking as well as explore science, technology and artistic expression.

Across the road from the INNOVA Early Years Center is Boda Park, which provides a rich environment for children to develop an understanding and appreciation of the natural world.

Our playground also includes a garden for children to experiment with planting and growing.





Language Learning

In an increasingly global society, we believe in the importance of children becoming proficient in more than one language and therefore our instructional programmes provide an emphasis on Chinese and English languages.


The early years is a time of rapid language acquisition. Children must establish a strong foundation in their mother tongue language to ensure they have developed core skills in communication, vocabulary development, syntax and language structure.

Children who spend two or more years at the INNOVA Academy Early Years Centre can develop the foundation skills that prepare them for proficiency in English.

The **co-teaching model** of a foreign teacher teaching with a bi-lingual Chinese teacher means children have access to both Chinese and English at all times and teachers will challenge and scaffold language learning in both languages based on the needs and readiness of each child.

As partners in your child's learning, we encourage families to celebrate their mother tongue and cultural histories. Parents are invited to share stories, cultural artifacts and family histories to enrich the learning experiences of our Early Years students.

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Our Curriculum

“Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water.”

Loris Malaguzzi

The written document that specifies learning objectives in Key Learning Areas for the Early Years, is our curriculum. Teaching approaches (or teaching pedagogy) is the way in which the teachers will deliver the curriculum to ensure your child is learning.

The curriculum was designed by Origins Education and informed by Reggio Emilia, International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (<http://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/>) and the Chinese National Curriculum Standards (Learning and Development Guidance for 3-6 year olds).

The Curriculum is documented into 5 Key Learning Areas:



NB: While the curriculum is documented into 5 Key Learning Areas, the teachers will integrate learning objectives from the different learning areas at the same time when they are teaching children. This is called a ‘trans-disciplinary’ (IB PYP) or ‘inter-disciplinary’ (IB MYP) teaching approach.

The Early Years curriculum will seamlessly transition into the educational programme of the Elementary School of INNOVA Academy which will implement the IB PYP.

Teachers will use the curriculum to develop ‘Units of Inquiry (UoI)’ and they will use these UoI to support students’ learning each day.

When the teachers are planning and writing their Units of Inquiry, they consider each child as an individual, that they are unique and that they all learn in different ways and at different rates. They will plan and develop learning experiences with children of different age groups, so that they can learn from each other, and develop leadership and social skills.





Key Learning Areas

Literacy

(in both Chinese and English)

Literacy includes reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting skills. There is a strong focus on developing all of the skills within literacy in both Chinese and English.

Numeracy

Numeracy is our 'Mathematics' curriculum which includes various components of Maths: number, pattern and function, data handling, measurement, and shape and space. The curriculum learning objectives are informed by the IBPYP Mathematics framework.

Science and Social Studies

Science is about the natural world around us and the relationship between the biological, chemical and physical aspects of that natural world. Social Studies is about our individual place and responsibility in the world, how we relate to history, contribute to society for the present and the future. It also explores human and physical geography.

Innovation


(includes Art, Drama, Music, Technology)

Technology is used by teachers as a teaching tool and children learn how to use technology to support their learning in a balanced way. The Performing Arts, which includes Art, Drama and Music is weaved within the teaching approaches. The Arts are crucial to supporting children in many different ways and across different subjects and cultures. The Arts allows creativity to flourish and innovation occur in learning, and IEYC children develop skills in the Arts to respond, experience and create in meaningful ways.

Well-being

(includes character and values education, social skills, relationship building, physical and emotional health and safety)

Well-being is an 'umbrella' term that describes the holistic approach we will use at IEYC. Your child's health and safety is about more than just his or her physical wellbeing; it also refers to their social and emotional well-being, and we want each child to be happy, healthy in mind and body, secure, and successful while rooted in universal moral values. We will encourage and model healthy lifestyles and physical activity.







Assessment

What is Assessment?

Assessment is not just a percentage or a letter – it is so much more.

Assessment is the way in which we, as educators, know what knowledge, skills and understandings your child has acquired, and is learning. We have ongoing assessment of student learning and this happens every day as we observe your child at school. While observing your child, our teachers are gaining useful information about the student's learning and can use the observations to make adjustments in 'real-time' to ensure that your child achieves the learning objectives in the Key Learning Areas.

Assessment in the Early Years at INNOVA can look very different to what you as parents experienced in your own schooling. We will take photos, write notes, collect samples, hold student-led conferences, compile portfolios and work samples and use checklists at times. There will be a number of different ways in which we will assess your child's learning journey.

Key to our Assessment practices is the partnership for learning with you, as parents, and communication. We realise that there could be occasions when you do not understand our Assessment of your child, and this is where our partnership with you comes in. Please communicate with us and ask us for clarification – we are working with you for your child's learning.

Purpose and goal of Assessment

The primary purpose of assessment is to provide feedback and improve student understanding and learning. It is also for teachers to understand and determine where a student is in his/her learning journey and what to plan for next.

Learning is viewed as a continuous journey, where teachers identify students' needs and use assessment data to plan the next stage of their learning.

Early Years Centre Assessment Objectives

Overall, and in conjunction with the curriculum learning objectives, by the end of their Early Years Program students will have:

- developed the cognitive, emotional, social and physical foundations they need to continue successful school lives,
- developed their use and understanding of both Chinese and English languages (pronunciation, comprehension, expression)
- acquired the knowledge, skills, conceptual understanding and attitudes to be confident and caring learners.






Reporting

Reporting is when the Innova Early Years Centre communicates with the parents/guardians about their child's learning progress and achievement. Assessment is the process whereby the teacher is evaluating the student's learning journey, and reporting is when we communicate the milestones in learning to the parents/guardians.

Reporting can take a variety of forms, for example: online messages, pictures capturing your child's learning, videos of your child explaining his or her learning and through student-led conferences, learning stories, portfolios, work samples, anecdotal notes, checklists and reports.

As partners in learning, we expect that parents will acknowledge receipt of the communication and communicate back to the school and the teachers, as well as with their child. We expect parents to ask questions or seek clarification if they do not understand the reports, attend the student-led conferences and parent information workshops and respond in a timely manner to our communications. In turn, we will keep you informed in a timely manner about your child's progress, and work with you for the best interests of your child.

Making mistakes, and learning from these mistakes is a critical component of our teaching and learning at INNOVA. Making a mistake and learning from it is an essential life skill and builds resilience – skills for a successful future. Making the same mistake continuously will be an opportunity for a conversation so that we can work together to support the child and their learning.







INNOVA Community Connections

Innova Academy believes in the value of community. Together we educate a child. Together we share knowledge and skills. Together we make connections to support each other and learn and grow as a community.

The Innova Early Years Centre will develop various programmes to nurture community connections. Examples of the types of programmes could be: Mummy or Daddy and Me, Grandparent Days, Family Movies, Parent Education, Baby Swim, Cooking with Mummy or Daddy, Mini Maker and Me, Story Theatre, Young Innovators, Yoga and Me.

This sense of community will extend our connections to the broader community and develop community spirit.



Innova Early Years Center Team



Casey Bucheler

Head of Early Years

Casey has been working in Early Years Education for over 30 years as teacher, mentor, Early Years Senior Lecturer, Principal and Coordinator. She began her career in New Zealand but her passion in Early Years International education led her overseas, eventually allowing her to pass on her knowledge as an IB Workshop Leader and Visiting School Team Member.

Casey is passionate about young children's education and about working with parents as partners in their child's learning journey, fostering a sense of wonder along the way. In her practice, Casey works to engage, energize and empower learning through guided inquiry which involves exploring, playing, designing and constructing.



Lara Ronalds

PYP Coordinator

Lara Ronalds has been working as a teacher and curriculum coordinator across elementary school subject areas for 22 years. She is passionate about pursuing an ever-improving understanding of what it is that inspires children to learn, driving her to further refine the ways she and her colleagues recognize potential within each individual student. She understands and values the learning a child can make through their own curiosities and sees it as the educator's role to help children make connections between what it is that they are curious about and what it is they need to learn.

Lara is an IB Workshop Leader, IB school Visiting Team Member, and completed her Masters of Education in 2015. This is her 6th year of working in Beijing and brings with her a unique set of perspectives, having lived in Hong Kong, California and her home country Australia.

Conference Presentations

- EARCOS 2013
- Beijing Learning Summit 2012, 2015
- Learning 2.0 – 2012, 2015, 2016



Qiong Qiong Wu 吴琼琼

Elementary Teacher

Qiong Qiong Wu is an experienced elementary school educator who started her teaching career as a special needs teacher after graduating from university in 2006. From 2007-2016, she worked at a well-known Beijing International school as a librarian, ESL Assistant Teacher, and finally as a Chinese Language Teacher for 7 years across both the PYP and MYP. She believes deeply in the value of inquiry-based learning and hands-on class experience, and hence structures her class time to maximize these beneficial aspects of a complete educational experience. Qiong Qiong finds both teaching and learning fun and engaging, and believes children should be able to enjoy learning in a friendly and interactive learning environment.



Fish Yang 杨沛瑜

Elementary Teacher

Fish Yang was born and raised in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, and received a degree in Early Years Education from South China Normal University. As a young teacher, Fish applied her enthusiasm for Early Childhood Education as a playgroup instructor and running her own Early Learning Centre. Fish worked as an Early Years and Chinese teacher in Zhuhai International School (ZIS).

Fish is passionate about storytelling and since 2010 has been a volunteer at the NGO Dreamkid Land, promoting reading in the home. This work has encouraged Fish to give storytelling workshops in both local and international settings. Fish also highly values play-based learning and believes that, since children are born inquirers, play provides the most natural and meaningful process through which children construct knowledge and practice skills.



Nikos Kritsantonis

Elementary Teacher

Nikos Kritsantonis has been working in international education the past 10 years.

His experience has been enriched, both professionally and culturally, by working in diverse school environments in Europe and Asia as a Homeroom teacher, Theater manager and Drama Coordinator.

Nikos sees himself as a facilitator of students' knowledge. He is passionate about implementing technology and design thinking to his practice, and his educational philosophy aligns with the inquiry-driven educational movement.

He believes that the teachers' role is to create learning environments where kids will find the space to unfold their unique talents.

Innova Academy Leadership team



John McBryde

莫铭翰

Education Director

Mr. John McBryde is an educator with over 25 years of experience as Director/Head of School in five international schools in Asia, including 9 years as Director of the Western Academy of Beijing during its growth and development phase during 1998-2007. John is co-founder of ACAMIS and served on both the ACAMIS and EARCOS Boards. He has extensive experience in IB Programs and school accreditation, has served as an education consultant for the Chinese Ministry of Education, developing NCCT accreditation for international schools and is deeply engaged in Learning Technologies, Community Service and the Arts.

Awards

- 'Foreign Experts Award' – Chaoyang District, Beijing 2015
- Award for 'Significant Contributions to Accreditation' – Council of International Schools 2009
- International Education Consultant to the Chinese Ministry of Education – including Four Parties Accreditation Agreement with CIS, WASC and NEASC 2002 - 2009

Professional Service

- Accreditation Committee Member/Chair – CIS ongoing
- Accreditation Commission Member – NCCT (China) ongoing
- Visiting Team Chair and Report Reader – Council of International Schools 2006-2010

Memberships & Organizations

- East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS) Board Member 2005-2007
- Association of China and Mongolia International Schools (ACAMIS) Board Member and Founder 1999-2007
- Beijing International Schools Network – Chair and Founder
- ISAC (International Schools Athletics Conference-Beijing/Tianjin) – Advisory Board Member 2001-2008
- Sports Beijing (Community Sports) – Advisory Board Member 2000-2007
- JAAC (Jakarta Area International Schools Association) – Founding Member 2009
- Global Issues Summit (East Asia) and GINDO Conferences – Founding Member 2003
- Jane Goodall Institute (China) – Founding Member 1999
- JUMP! Leadership Foundation – Founding Board Member 2001



Karen O'Connell

Head of School / Elementary Principal

Karen O'Connell is from Australia and has worked in national and international schools for the last 37 years as a teacher, consultant, researcher, Principal and Superintendent. She has had 29 years of educational leadership experience, with her international experience beginning at the Western Academy of Beijing in 1999, where she was the Elementary Principal/ Deputy Directory. Karen then moved to Indonesia as Deputy Head of School at Sinarmas World Academy in Jakarta. In 2013 she joined the United World College South East Asia, East campus as Primary School Principal.

For the last fifteen years, she has also been actively involved in school accreditation, as a member and leader of CIS, NEASC and IB accreditation teams on school visits. She has also led a number of leadership conferences for NGO's in Cambodia over the past few years. Karen is passionate about student learning and well-being and feels that she has a strong affiliation with mission-driven and value-driven schools.



Grace Yang 杨千帆

Curriculum Coordinator

Ms. Grace Yang has Masters degrees from the University of Toronto (Canada) in Education Administration and Northeast Normal University (China) in American Young Adult Literature. She is a licensed High Education teacher in China, and has taught in public schools, private schools and the college level in China and in education institutes in Canada from 2004-2010. From 2011-2015, Ms. Yang served as the Assistant Director of the Yuecheng Education Research Institute and was responsible for the teacher development program, IB curriculum development, and government related education projects. In 2016 Ms. Yang was invited to participate in the revision of the NCCT Accreditation Standards (version 2.0) and to join an NCCT School Accreditation visit.

Awards

- 'Outstanding Young Teacher Award' – Beijing University of Technology, Beijing 2005

Conference Presentations - Keynote Speaker (Recent)

- NCCT China Conference – Guangzhou. December 2015

Professional Service

- Accreditation Commission Member – NCCT (China) ongoing

Join Innova

We welcome your inquiries in person, by phone, email or WeChat and we would be glad to give you a guided tour of our facilities or answer your questions at one of our frequent community events.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Innova community.

Contact us

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ey.innovaedu.cn



Origins Education

Innova Early Years Center has been developed and is managed by Origins Education. Origins is a highly experienced team of educators and specialists based in Beijing, China. The Origins team has many years of experience in international in China and around the world and in Chinese bilingual schools and are recognized as leaders in the field gaining recognition for operating outstanding schools. Individually, they have been recognized for excellence and contributions by the Chinese Ministry of education and various international associations.

Origins Education shares a passion for education and has a deep appreciation for the importance of high quality schools and the life-changing impact that they have on students and communities. Origins is committed to providing model schools and education services as part of China's education reform movement and to provide parents with the choice of truly outstanding schools.

Our vision is reflected in both our English and Chinese names: to develop leading school communities where we are all encouraged and inspired to engage with both our heritages and our futures in rich and meaningful ways. In each Origins school community, students, parents and staff, are: Inspired to Wonder, Challenged to Explore, Supported to Create and Empowered to Connect.

For more information, visit our website at www.originsedu.cn and contact us at info@originsedu.cn.



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