

KINDERGARTEN



EtonHouse students enjoy music time.

EtonHouse Tai Tam

Established in Singapore in 1995, the EtonHouse Group has almost 100 schools across Asia, including China, India and Japan. Inspired by innovative educational practices in Reggio Emilia, Italy, it encourages young children to construct an understanding of their world while developing social, cognitive, emotional, physical and creative skills.

Led by principal Allison Banbury, EtonHouse Tai Tam has enjoyed a successful first year, and is establishing itself as a strong choice for international families. According to the EtonHouse philosophy, the environment is the third teacher and the school's campus maximises its proximity to nature, with large bay windows offering magnificent views of Tai Tam harbour and the surrounding countryside. The connection with nature continues through the choice of natural and

“ At EtonHouse the environment is the third teacher ”


sustainable materials for furniture, fittings and toys. Children are encouraged to use their own imagination during play time, rather than play with toys that offer little chance for exploration and creative thinking.

EtonHouse follows an enquiry-based method. Rather than teaching an established curriculum, teachers observe and listen to each child's interests, then plan lessons that allow children to explore their own thinking and solve problems. Teachers are there to facilitate learning rather than just impart knowledge, which requires sophisticated



EtonHouse Tai Tam.

interaction with the children and asking pertinent, thought-provoking questions. Children then have opportunities to find the information for themselves.

Each child at EtonHouse has his or her progress recorded in a portfolio regularly updated by the teachers and available for parents to view and make comments. This better involves parents in their child's learning and reinforces the school's open-door policy. Each class has native English and Mandarin-speaking teachers, providing children with an immersive bilingual learning experience. The curriculum gives the teachers a chance to observe individual children, which allows them to make sure the next steps are put in place for their development. 

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PRINCIPAL'S TIPS

Seven tips for choosing a kindergarten

Selecting a kindergarten that is a good fit for your child can be exciting as well as overwhelming. As a parent, you want to be confident that you decide on the right program for your little one, but how do you make the best choice? Ms Sandra Hite, Principal of ESF International Kindergarten, Tung Chung is here to help.



Pupils outside International Kindergarten, Tung Chung.

- 1 Always inquire about practical matters first. When visiting kindergartens, evaluate practical issues specific to your family's needs. These include proximity to your home or work, transportation, cost, and staff/child ratio.
- 2 The powerful interactions between talented teachers and children have the most profound effect on learning. The best kindergartens will employ teachers with early childhood degrees, experience working with young children and proven expertise. It's important that the family is welcomed into the program, encouraged to stop in, receives frequent communications about their child's learning and development as well as information on the school's curriculum and events.
- 3 The best kindergartens embrace new practices and design inquiry based programs where children can be curious and explore. We now know that creativity, problem solving, collaborating, and communicating well are important for our learners to succeed.
- 4 The most important factor to consider when making the decision about a child's first school is one's own instinct as a parent. Choose the school where you believe your child will be happy, safe, secure and thrive as a learner.
- 5 Children play in a variety of ways. It allows children to develop independence, which prepares them for future schooling. We also know that focusing on relationships is critically important for children to form a healthy identity, sense of belonging, and to value family and culture. A nurturing environment that recognizes the uniqueness of each child and offers developmentally appropriate learning opportunities will be a place where each child can reach his or her potential.
- 6 Parents should pay attention to the developmental stages that their children are progressing through. Putting pressure on children to move through them too quickly does not make them smarter or more capable in the long run. It can also have a detrimental effect on self-esteem. Enjoy your children; play with them, read to them, give them your time and attention. This will have the greatest impact on their learning.
- 7 Research the schools you are interested in on the web and using the Expat Parent Schools Guide. And finally, visit them with your children and don't be afraid to ask questions.

Ms Sandra Hite, Principal of ESF International Kindergarten, Tung Chung

