



Agora Preschool

**Personalised learning for
every child, every day**

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Introduction to the Agora Method

The Agora Method reflects our commitment to a personalised education that nurtures both mind and heart, preparing children for lifelong learning and growth. We blend the best elements of established educational philosophies like Reggio Emilia, Waldorf Steiner, and Montessori with a modern, flexible approach that meets the needs of today's children.

While these methods have laid important foundations, their focus on child-led learning can lead to inconsistent outcomes and gaps in essential skills. To address this, we balance foundational skill development with a whole-child approach. Using best practices like the Singapore Maths method, we ensure a strong academic base.

Every child is unique, so we tailor our teaching to individual learning styles and create personalised learning plans. We closely observe each child's progress and actively engage with parents to reinforce learning.

Central to the Agora Method is the importance of play, which is integrated into our curriculum as a vital part of the learning process. Through play, children explore, experiment, and make sense of the world, fostering a natural and engaging learning experience.

Theoretical Foundations

The Three Pillars

The Agora Method rests on three foundational pillars: Cognition, Character, and Wellbeing. We believe that fostering these three interconnected aspects is essential for a child's holistic development and future success. Cognition encompasses intellectual growth and the acquisition of crucial skills like language, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Character development focuses on cultivating positive moral, ethical, and social qualities. Wellbeing prioritises the child's physical, emotional, mental, and social health, creating a safe and supportive environment for learning and growth.

An Integrated Approach

Our approach breaks down traditional subject-based silos, connecting learning areas to create meaningful, real-world connections for young children. We seamlessly blend indoor and outdoor environments, using a variety of activities and approaches to foster a deep and well-rounded understanding across different subjects. This integration mirrors how young children naturally explore and learn about the world, promoting engagement, motivation, and a holistic educational experience.



Learning Through Play

Play is not merely a recreational activity but an essential tool for learning and development. Through play, children naturally explore, experiment, and make sense of the world around them. At Agora, we champion the power of play by integrating it into all aspects of our curriculum. This fosters a joyful and engaging environment where children acquire knowledge, develop critical skills, and cultivate a lifelong love of learning.

Learning Styles

We recognize that every child has unique learning preferences. While research suggests that catering solely to specific learning styles may not be the most effective approach, we acknowledge and utilise these preferences to build trust and confidence in our students. This allows us to encourage them to explore new strategies and expand their skill set, promoting adaptability and a growth mindset.

Age-Appropriate Staging

We tailor our teaching methods and activities to align with each child's developmental stage, ensuring they are appropriately challenged and supported. By considering cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and language development, we create a learning environment that promotes optimal growth and prevents frustration or disengagement. We remain flexible and responsive to individual differences, recognizing that every child develops at their own pace.

Assessment for Learning

We employ a continuous process of observation, documentation, interpretation, and response to gather feedback on student progress. This approach, known as Assessment for Learning (AFL), enables us to personalise learning experiences, identify areas for improvement, and provide targeted support. By actively involving children in their learning journey, we boost their confidence and encourage them to take ownership of their development.



Project-Based and Thematic Learning

Our curriculum utilises project-based and thematic learning, allowing children to deeply explore specific topics throughout each term. By engaging with a central theme across different subjects and activities, children make meaningful connections and gain a deeper understanding of concepts. This approach fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge in various contexts.

Curiosity and Critical Thinking

We create an environment where curiosity and critical thinking thrive. Through diverse activities, exploration, and problem-solving opportunities, we encourage children to ask questions, seek answers, and develop a lifelong love of learning. We emphasise the learning process over the outcome, helping children see mistakes as valuable growth opportunities and fostering resilience.

Practical Implementation

The Teacher as Guide

At Agora, teachers are not just instructors but facilitators and mentors who guide children on their unique learning journeys. They foster strong relationships, understand individual needs, and create a safe and supportive environment for exploration and growth. Teachers personalise instruction, provide constructive feedback, and collaborate with parents, empowering each child to reach their full potential.



An Integrated Approach in the Classroom

Our integrated approach seamlessly blends indoor and outdoor learning, weaving together multiple subjects to create meaningful, real-world connections. Activities might begin with concrete exploration outdoors, transition to pictorial representation, and culminate in abstract problem-solving, fostering a holistic understanding of concepts across different disciplines.

Assessment for Learning

We use a continuous cycle of observation, documentation, interpretation, and response to personalise learning and support individual growth. Teachers gather data through observation and tools like HoloTracker, then create and update Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to guide each child's progress. Regular communication with parents ensures collaborative support and a positive feedback loop that reinforces learning and motivates the child.

Teaching Literacy and Numeracy

We integrate modern, research-based approaches into our curriculum, such as the Singapore Math method and Letterland phonics, to provide children with a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy. We alternate these lessons, incorporating inquiry-based learning and multi-sensory experiences to ensure deep understanding and engagement.



Learning Environment

Our dynamic and adaptive learning spaces are designed to spark curiosity and encourage exploration. Designated learning corners foster specific skills, while flexible furniture arrangements support various learning modes. We showcase children's work and integrate interactive elements to create a vibrant and inspiring environment.

Use of Technology

We leverage technology to enhance communication and personalise learning. Our Parent app provides real-time updates and facilitates seamless communication between parents and teachers. HoloTracker allows for detailed observations and data collection, informing each child's ILP and ensuring a responsive educational experience.



Parental and Community Involvement

We actively involve parents and the community in the learning process. Through regular communication, family days, excursions, and collaborative projects, we build strong partnerships and extend learning beyond the classroom. We also engage with the local community to share our unique methodology and inspire others.

The Three Pillars in Practice



Cognition

At Agora, we foster cognitive development through a multi-faceted approach. For example, during a lesson on the solar system, children engage in a hands-on activity building a model of the planets, fostering their understanding of spatial relationships and relative sizes. Later, they might use drawings or diagrams to represent their understanding, strengthening their ability to connect concrete experiences with abstract representations. Additionally, group discussions encourage children to express their ideas, ask questions, and challenge each other's thinking, promoting communication, critical thinking, and collaboration skills.

Character Development

Character education is woven into the fabric of our daily activities. During free play, teachers observe and guide children in resolving conflicts peacefully, fostering empathy and conflict resolution skills. Through structured activities like group projects, children learn the importance of cooperation, responsibility, and respecting diverse perspectives. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) further reinforce character development by setting goals related to social and emotional skills, such as taking turns or showing kindness to others.

Wellbeing

We prioritise children's wellbeing by creating a safe and supportive environment that encourages emotional expression and self-regulation. For example, during circle time, children might share their feelings and learn strategies for managing big emotions like anger or frustration. Our daily outdoor play sessions promote physical health and gross motor development, while mindfulness exercises and healthy snacks contribute to overall well-being. By nurturing a sense of belonging and providing opportunities for self-expression, we empower children to develop resilience, self-esteem, and a positive sense of self.

Conclusion

The Agora Method reflects our commitment to providing a balanced, thoughtful education that empowers children to explore, discover, and flourish.

The method nurtures every aspect of a child's growth — intellectual, social-emotional, and physical. We use dynamic learning methods and make effective use of our spaces, innovative tools and strong parent engagement to create an engaging, personalised experience for children, and ensure that they thrive and are well-prepared for the future.

Frequently Asked Questions

Pedagogy

TLDR; Too Long Didn't Read... what's the Agora Method?

The Agora Method is a personalised educational approach that integrates the best elements of established philosophies with modern, flexible strategies. It focuses on nurturing the whole child by balancing foundational skills development with a strong emphasis on play, individualised learning plans, and a nurturing environment that fosters cognitive, character, and wellbeing growth.

How does the Agora Method differ from other educational approaches?

The Agora Method goes beyond traditional subject-based learning by integrating various disciplines and fostering connections between concepts. It emphasises structured exploration, play-based learning, and individualised support to create a more engaging and effective learning experience.

What is Age-Appropriate Staging, and how is it implemented at Agora?

Age-appropriate staging involves tailoring educational materials and activities to the specific developmental levels and capabilities of children at different ages. At

Agora, we meticulously craft our curriculum to align with these stages, ensuring that children are neither overwhelmed nor under-challenged.

How does Agora incorporate play into its curriculum?

Play is considered a cornerstone of the Agora Method. We believe that play is not merely a pastime but an essential tool for children to explore, experiment, and make sense of the world around them. Play is seamlessly integrated into our curriculum, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and social interaction.

What are Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), and how do they work?

ILPs are personalised learning roadmaps that outline each child's unique learning objectives, strategies, and support systems. They are created based on close observations of the child and are regularly updated to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to the child's evolving needs. ILPs foster collaboration between teachers and parents, enabling them to work together to support the child's development.

How does Agora support children's emotional and social development?

We prioritise emotional and social intelligence by teaching children to recognize and understand their feelings, communicate effectively, and interact positively with peers. We also focus on developing self-regulation and self-awareness, empowering children to navigate social situations and manage their emotions with confidence.

How does Agora incorporate technology into the learning experience?

We utilise technology to enhance communication and personalise learning. Our Parent app provides real-time updates and facilitates communication between parents and teachers. We also use HoloTracker to observe and document children's interactions, providing valuable insights for tailoring their individual learning plans.

How does Agora involve parents in their child's education?

We believe in a collaborative partnership with parents. We encourage open communication, provide regular updates on progress, and involve parents in their child's learning journey through activities and projects. This partnership ensures consistent support for the child's development both at school and at home.

What is the future of the Agora Method?

The Agora Method is a dynamic and evolving approach to early childhood education. We are committed to continuous improvement, incorporating research-based practices and innovative tools to ensure that our children receive the best possible education. We envision a future where the Agora Method becomes a leading model for personalised, holistic, and play-based learning, empowering children to reach their full potential and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Do you have a bilingual programme?

We do not offer a bilingual programme at present. Our Chinese-speaking members of staff speak in Mandarin when engaging with the children in the play and activity spaces, which exposes and familiarises them to the language.

How do you train your teachers?

We keep all staff up to date on best care and educational practices, including curriculum development and child safety management through a combination of the Agora Training Plan and third-party programmes.

How do you help children with their social and emotional development?

Our programme is founded with holistic development as a focus. Learning how to build and maintain connections with others is one of the more important aspects of growing into a successful young adult. We help children navigate the process as well as create the space for them to develop social and emotional capabilities, that we then seek to observe and reinforce.

Learning Environment

What is the teacher-to-child ratio in your classrooms?

We prioritise individualised attention and small group interactions to ensure each child receives the support they need to thrive. Our teacher-to-child ratios are carefully maintained to foster optimal learning and engagement. We maintain a ratio of 1:6, and 1:8 respectively in grades PG and N1, allowing for close supervision and personalised interactions. For grades N2 through K2, the ratio increases from 1:10 to 1:12, and 1:15, ensuring a balance between individual attention and opportunities for collaborative learning.

How do you ensure the safety and security of children in your facilities?

The safety and security of our children are of paramount importance at Agora. Our centre is designed with child safety in mind, featuring secure access points, age-appropriate equipment, and well-maintained facilities. We have strict protocols for drop-off and pick-up, ensuring that children are only released to authorised individuals. Additionally, our staff members are trained in first aid and emergency procedures to respond promptly and effectively to any situation.

What kind of outdoor spaces do you have available for children to explore and play?

We believe in the importance of outdoor play and exploration for children's holistic development. Our centre features a wonderful outdoor terrace facing the sea, featuring a playground, sand- and water play features, and shaded areas, where children can engage in active play, connect with nature, and develop gross motor skills. We also utilise our outdoor spaces for learning activities, allowing children to experience the world around them and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

Practical matters

Are your teachers first aid trained?

We have Child First Aiders on site at all times as required by regulations.

Do you provide food and snacks?

Yes, we provide a morning snack after our Core Music and Movement time. It offers a natural break time for the children and gives them energy for the next round of activities. We seek to ensure that all snacks are healthy. Please remember to provide us with information regarding allergies during registration.

How do you clean, and how often do you clean equipment and resources?

All of our equipment is cleaned after usage in accordance with ECDA standards. At the end of each session, it is cleaned and wiped down with disinfectant. We put any resources that have been in children's mouths during the session aside, so that they won't be played with until they have been sanitised.

How do you verify who is allowed to pick up my child?

Authorised persons must be listed in the registration form and introduced to the Head of Early Years and teachers, in person if possible, otherwise by sharing photographs.

What happens if I am running late?

Your child will remain safe under the supervision of Early Years staff. Agora Colearning opens every weekday until 8pm.

Other questions

Can you accommodate children with special needs?

Yes, we can accommodate certain mild or moderate disabilities. Claire Michael, the Head of Early Years, is an ECDA-certified Inclusion Officer (ICO), and our

programme is flexible to individual needs. To ensure that we are able to offer suitable support, we recommend a trial period to evaluate and discuss options.

For pricing and programme options?

Please find out more at:

<https://www.agora-colearning.space/preschool-playschool/pricing>

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