

A Multicultural Creative Place for Children

A CREATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE
Play & Learn



Play and Learning

[From Copple, C. and S. Bredekamp. 2005. Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction to Teachers of Children 3 to 6. Washington, DC: NAEYC. 17-18.]

Young children learn through the following:

Active, hands-on involvement. Young children learn best when they are actively involved. As they play, explore, experiment, and interact with people and objects, children are always trying to make sense of those experiences. Though abstract ideas are not totally beyond them, children under age 7 are most comfortable in the concrete world they see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. Although hands-on learning opportunities suit preschoolers to a tee, equally important is for activities to be "mind-on," that is, to engage children's thinking processes and encourage them to investigate, question, and ponder problems. **Meaningful experiences.** Children learn best when they can relate new knowledge to what they have already encountered, to what is already important to them. Then they can weave new threads into the fabric of their previous knowledge and experiences. For example, books about babies or new siblings are likely to be of interest to preschoolers, many of whom have younger sisters, brothers, or cousins. And children can visualize and learn about wolves by thinking about the dogs they've been around. **Constructing their understanding of the world.** Young children are mentally active learners who are always "constructing" their knowledge or understanding of the world. That is, they are continually working to figure things out on their own terms. Although this is true of adult learners as well, young children have so much to try to make sense of in the world around them...



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About the director:

Agapi Liapaki is a Kindergarten Teacher. She finished her BA from the University of Crete and her Master's Degree in Arts in Music Education from the Institute of Education at the University of London. She has finished 2 of the 3 levels from the Orff-Schulwerk music education program and the Director's Certificate for Early Childhood Programs in CA, USA. She has worked with children up to 12 years old in various educational settings such as Montessori, Academic, Reggio Emilia and Greek-American schools. She was the Director of the Preschool Program at Bright Horizons (Bristol-Myer Squibb campus, NJ) and a Training Associate for the Head Start Centers of Learning (University of Memphis, TN). Moving back to Greece she worked at the "Mikro Ergastiri", Child Development Center. In 2010 she was awarded by the World Organization of Early Childhood Education (OMEPE) in Sustainable Education in Early Childhood Education and her project about social inclusion was also awarded by the E-twinning (Community for schools in Europe). She works at Play & Learn where she continues to learn, take risks and make her dreams come true!

1 What is Play & Learn?

It's an **English Workshop** for children 2 to 9 years old. We believe that children learn best in a program that provides developmentally appropriate practices through hands on activities and structured play in an age-appropriate group.

2 Our philosophy

We believe that **"Every Moment in a Child's Life is a Teachable Moment"**. Our motive force is that children learn when they're actively involved.

At Play & Learn the teacher observes, analyzes and enriches the children's play as well as their language development through **free and structured activities**.

3 Meaningful experiences

The English Workshop's goal is to help children learn by doing. We use various teaching methods, such as the **Total Physical Response (TPR)**. The children enhance their language development through dramatic stories, songs or movement. Our everyday curriculum is based upon the children's individualised needs and includes greeting songs, colors, animals, numbers, our body, our family, cooking, clothing, etc. We often review the curriculum or we enrich it by celebrating Holidays around the World such as Halloween, the Chinese New Year, and Valentine's Day.

6 Small group classes (morning and afternoon)

There are morning and afternoon children's classes.

The children/teacher ratio is:

- 6:1 for 2 to 4 year old children (**Little Bunnies**),
- 7:1 for the Pre-K and Kindergarten children (**Busy Bees**) and
- 9:1 for 6-9 year old children (**Shining Stars**).

Each class is divided according to their:

- Age
- Language development

5 Our learning space

Our learning space is developmentally appropriate for the young learners. Each room is designed with children in mind rather than children being an afterthought. The **handmade educational exhibits** and hands on activities enhance the children's language development and boost their imagination for creative play. Through daily activities, the teacher provides learners with opportunities to develop developmentally appropriate language skills: **listening, speaking, reading and writing**.

4 Teacher as partner

Play & Learn **experienced teaching staff** is consisted of well trained educators in the area of early childhood. The teaching team meets **monthly** to assess **each child's individual growth** and plan the curriculum accordingly to the needs of the group. At Play & Learn we believe that the parent is the child's first teacher and an active partner. The teacher works closely with the parents to enrich the child's imaginative play in the classroom and at home, by providing **creative ideas on games and interactive songs**.