

The *essential* Parent Guide

To early years education in Singapore



The power of a strong start:
A parent's guide to early education
and lifelong learning





Why the first years shape a lifetime

Early childhood is not just the beginning of learning, it is the blueprint for lifelong growth. Neuroscience tells us that 95% of brain development occurs by age six. What happens during these years shapes everything from literacy and emotional wellbeing to how a child will navigate challenges as an adult.

At the Australian International School in Singapore (AIS), we don't just offer an Early Years program, we offer a foundation for life. Our approach is guided by global research, a deep respect for childhood, and decades of experience nurturing capable, compassionate learners.

This guide is here to help you:



Understand why the Early Years matter



Know what to look for in a quality Early Years program



Discover how AIS helps children thrive in these formative years

Why the early years matter more than you think

95% of brain development happens before the age of 6.

This period is when your child is most receptive to learning, forming emotional bonds, and building foundational cognitive skills.

Research shows that children who attend high-quality Early Years programs are more likely to:

- **Develop strong language and literacy skills**
- **Show confidence and emotional resilience**
- **Build lasting habits of curiosity, cooperation, and problem-solving**
- **Thrive academically and socially throughout life**

This is why investing in the early years isn't just wise, it's essential.



The experiences children have in the earliest years of life are deeply embedded in the architecture of the brain.



Harvard center on the developing child



95%

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What makes a great Early Years program?

Not all preschools are created equal. Here are key features of a strong Early Education program:

A play-based approach

Children learn best through meaningful, hands-on play. Look for environments that encourage exploration, creativity, and collaboration.



Skilled and caring teachers

Teachers that are trained with early childhood education degrees and create warm, responsive relationships with every child.



Language-rich environment

Exposure to storytelling, conversations, songs, and emergent literacy builds literacy and communication skills.



Focus on emotional wellbeing

Programs that help children develop empathy, confidence, and the ability to manage emotions.



Engaging, purpose-built spaces

Classrooms that are safe, inspiring, and tailored to young learners' developmental needs.



Why play-based learning matters

In the early years, learning is not about memorising information, it's about building understanding that lasts.

Play-based learning is one of the most effective ways young children learn. When play is intentionally designed and guided by skilled teachers, it leads to deeper, more meaningful learning.

Through play, children:



Actively learn with hands-on activities, moving, talking, and exploring



Connect learning to real experiences and emotions



Develop essential skills such as focus, self-regulation, and problem-solving



Build confidence, creativity, and curiosity



**Play is not less learning,
it is how young brains learn best.**



Why parents choose AIS

We believe the environment shapes the child. At AIS, our Early Years program is built around that conviction: every space has been designed for exactly how young children explore, move, and learn. The result is a purpose-built physical space where play blends with purposeful learning, giving your child a genuine developmental head start.

As one of Singapore's most established international schools, AIS is proud to deliver this within a program modelled on the world's best practice.

Research-led learning

Our approach integrates three globally recognised, research-informed philosophies. Reggio Emilia guides responsive teaching, the EYLF grounds learning in child development and wellbeing, and the IB PYP structures inquiry and conceptual understanding over time. The physical environment is central to all three: when the space is right, children don't need constant pressure to progress.

Expert teachers

Experienced, internationally qualified teachers lead our classrooms, supported by specialist teachers in Library, Music, Mandarin, and Physical Education across the week. A dedicated Head of Learning Enrichment ensures the right balance of support and challenge for every learner. Together, they make the most of a space designed for how children actually learn.

Inspiring environments

Every element of the AIS Early Years space has been designed around how young children think, feel, and grow. Rooms are filled with natural light, structured for movement, and built to invite exploration. The 1,500m² UV-covered playground, Learn to Swim program, and screen-free STEM learning areas each serve a specific developmental purpose, giving children the physical space they need to build curiosity, confidence, and key early skills.

The *right* space, at the *right* stage.

Whole-child wellbeing

What sets AIS apart is our commitment to each child's sense of security, independence, and belonging. Teachers are trained in the Stuart Shanker approach to self-regulation, creating a calm, supportive environment where children feel known, included, and emotionally safe. A space that feels right is one where children are free to discover and grow.

Partnership & trust

With over 30 years of experience, AIS Singapore partners with families from the Early Years to graduation. Personal weekly communication, a whole-school approach, and community-focused events ensure continuity, smooth transitions, and trusted support at every stage.

Voices from the community



The teachers work hand in hand with parents and listen to every concern.

If you want a child-led environment where your child's voice matters, this is the place. Children are truly respected and valued at AIS preschool in Singapore.



Faris, Fadhilah and Fayra

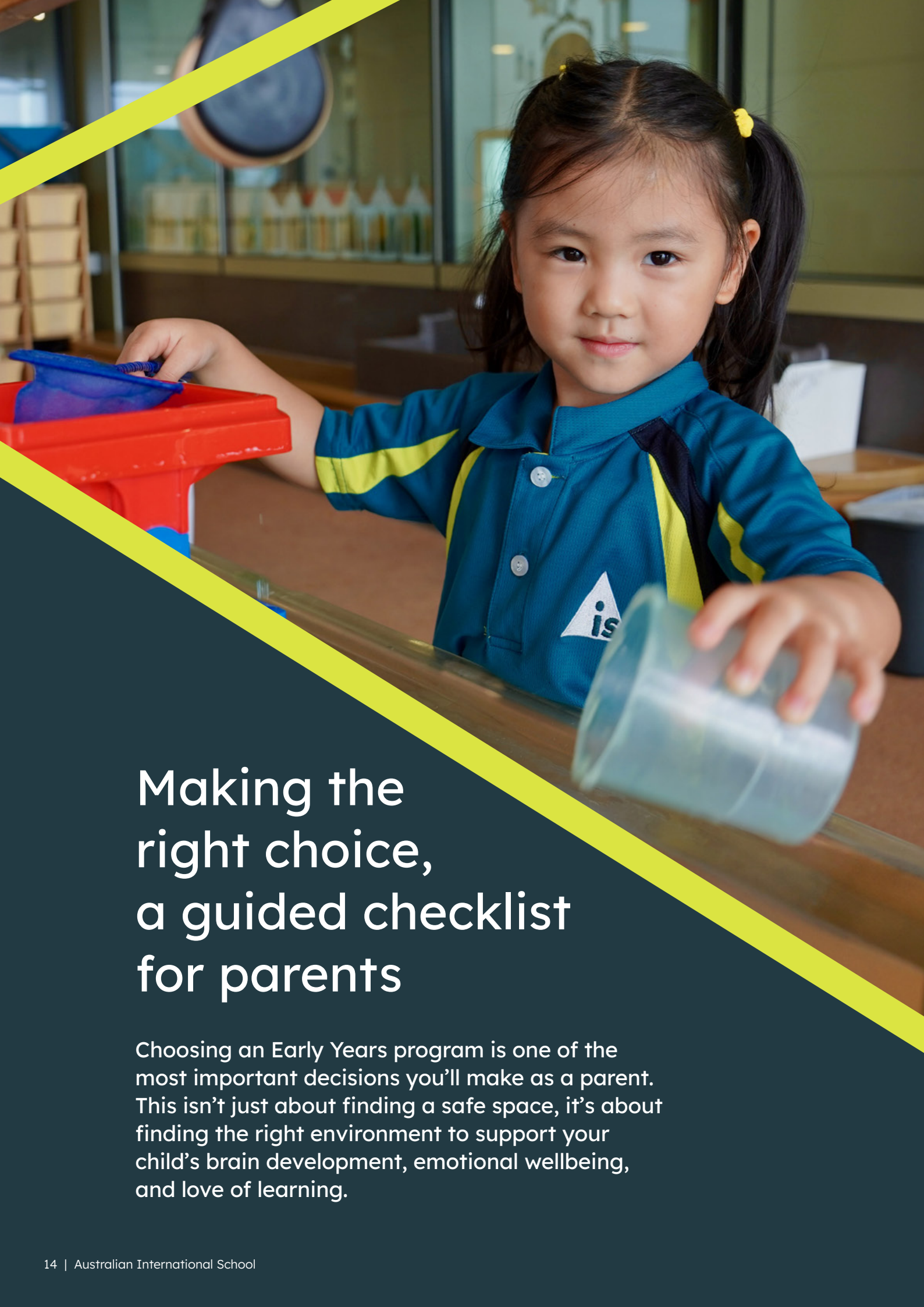




The O'Sullivan Family



“
The Early Learning Village has many excellent facilities, which my son loves. The water play area, sand-pit, scooters, and playgrounds are suitable for his age group. He has also made many friends and loves attending school daily.
”



Making the right choice, a guided checklist for parents

Choosing an Early Years program is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a parent. This isn't just about finding a safe space, it's about finding the right environment to support your child's brain development, emotional wellbeing, and love of learning.

Use this checklist as a guide when visiting schools or evaluating programs:

1

Is the environment warm, safe, and engaging?

Children should feel secure, curious, and inspired. Look for natural light, age-appropriate materials, and spaces that invite movement, creativity, and discovery.

2

Are the teachers responsive and respectful?

Watch how teachers interact. Are they at the child's level? Do they listen actively, speak with warmth, and follow the child's interests to deepen learning?

3

Is play at the heart of learning?

High-quality programs use play and inquiry to drive exploration, imagination, and problem-solving, not just follow rigid instruction.

4

How are communication and emotional skills developed?

Look for language-rich environments with storytelling, conversations, and support for emotional growth, helping children express feelings, manage social situations, and build empathy.

5

Are families seen as partners, and is every child supported individually?

Great programs maintain open communication with parents and adapt to each child's needs, academically, socially, and emotionally.



Discover the Early Years program at AIS

At AIS we believe the earliest years should be a celebration of discovery, not a race. By combining play, purpose, and research-based practices, we help each child grow into a confident, curious, and compassionate learner.

Book a visit or join our upcoming Open House to see our program in action.

Discover how AIS builds
a strong start for life





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