

# **A Child-Centered Preschool Curriculum that Fosters Happy Learning**

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Early Childhood Education and Care Act (ECECA)—a law that was enacted with the purpose to enhance the quality of early childhood education—took effect in 2012. To materialize the spirit of ECECA, i.e. to facilitate comprehensive development of the body and mind of preschoolers, Preschool Education Quality Curriculum Outline (PEQCO) has been promulgated. The promulgation of this national curriculum outline meets our policymakers' expectation of high quality preschool education and care. The outline also helps protect preschoolers' rights of receiving appropriate education and care.

## **Why does PEQCO exist?**

"Why does PEQCO exist in the first place, especially when kindergarten can teach students as well without it?" This is the question lingering in the minds of many parents and preschool educators. Before the integration of kindergartens and nursery schools, kindergartens and nursery schools performed different educational functions due to different stipulation of statutory standards. After the integration, early childhood education institutions all follow the same standards. In addition, preschoolers' learning methods should also be updated to address the progressive needs of our society. PEQCO was designed with an aim to assure and enhance the quality of early childhood education. Furthermore, the learning outcomes in early childhood can pave the way for lifelong learning, thereby expanding the access of high quality education.

## **What is PEQCO?**

The tenet of PEQCO is to examine the various learning activities done by preschoolers in kindergartens from the "curriculum" concept, that is, during the time period—starting from the moment preschoolers step into the kindergarten to the moment they graduate, preschool educators have to plan and implement curriculum on an on-going basis. For example, morning reading time can cultivate their competencies of languages, dining time can train their self-care abilities, while game playing time in the learning zone is the best time for them to explore and learn autonomously. From the perspective of PEQCO, learning is an on-going process during school time.

## **What are preschooler-centered curriculum activities?**

In traditional education, it is a common scene that children sit side by side in the classroom, listening to the teacher quietly. For instance, in plant course, teachers offer students some pictures and posts about plants, put some potted plants in the classroom, and teach students about the various kinds of plants and their unique features. However, in preschooler-centered curriculum activity, teachers arrange various activities and games for students to learn through their own touches. That is to say, in the same plant course, teachers will lead children to the campus or community to observe, touch, smell, and even taste the plants in their living environment. Such practical and hand-on experiences could truly help them to understand what a plant is.

Due to the ever-changing society, knowledge that has been acquired today might not serve the changing needs of society in the future; hence, the learning focus of preschoolers shall switch to the cultivation of their competencies through the acquisition of knowledge, rather than the knowledge itself. The implementation of PEQCO provides the best opportunity for children to cultivate their learning ability through autonomous exploration, thereby laying a solid foundation for their learning.