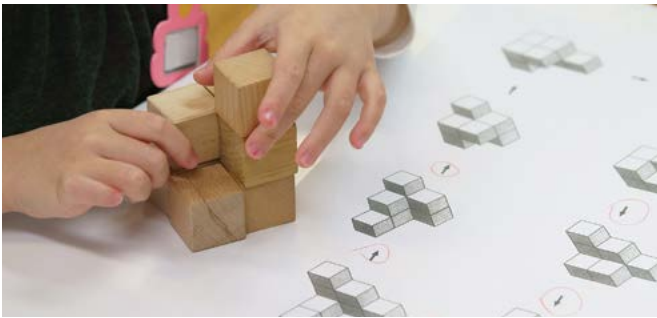




EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR PRESCHOOLERS

A highly regarded enrichment programme from Tokyo, Japan has reached our shores, and it is tailored for children from the preschool age group.

words lim sharn photo kuno method



It is inevitable that our little ones grow up. As parents we constantly face the dilemma of wanting to hold on to our children's littleness for as long as possible, whilst yearning for them to be independent and thinking young people. The leap from kindergarten to primary school is, indeed, one of the biggest jumps in terms of the impact a learning environment has on a still-maturing mind.

The Kuno Method was developed by its founder, Mr Yasuyoshi Kuno, in response to the challenges faced by children making the transition from preschool to primary school. Mr Kuno believes that a child's learning habits are shaped from the moment they are born, and varies greatly as a result of their home environment. This, in turn, leads to disparities in their propensity to learn or grasp knowledge when it is presented to them through textbooks, and structured lessons while seated at a desk in most primary school classrooms.

Early Childhood Education from Home

Teaching young children how to think is a main cornerstone of the Kuno Method approach. "Before learning 'Reading, Writing and Maths'", Mr Kuno asserts, "Listening and

Speaking Abilities' must first be nurtured." He strongly regards the power of independent thought in a child as the most important quality to possess in order to excel in an environment of structured learning.

Through experiential learning — such as by trial and error, or by observing daily life, a child is encouraged to approach play as an opportunity for learning. Adults can learn too: by framing daily encounters as a means for your child to learn through play. For instance, when you cook, showing them how to measure the volume of each ingredient used will build the foundation for an understanding of numbers and proportions.

Creating a Foundation for Learning

Developing a love for learning from an early age helps a child build a habit around the forming of meaning, and helps him independently situate whatever he learns within a larger mental picture. This will help your child organise his thoughts in a coherent manner when he makes the leap from preschool to primary school, where learning takes on a more structured approach in the form of subjects.

Parents can help a child understand that learning within each subject does not occur independently of each other. A child who is accustomed to devising her own ways of thinking will be better prepared to connect her language skills as a way to understand a question when it comes to, say, mathematics. The Kuno Method considers the 'ability to think for oneself' — or, the 'non-cognitive ability' as the key ingredient to a child's success in early childhood.

Furthermore, Mr Kuno implores parents not to take the fun out of learning, thereby dulling the journey for young children. Seeing each discovery as a learning adventure, and acknowledging each effort will help children see learning in a positive light. 🌟