

The Curiosity Approach – An Introduction

What is happening at Curro Chartwell?

We are excited to announce two exciting changes! Firstly, our name will be changing to Curro Chartwell. Secondly, we are in the process of creating the perfect environment to accommodate a brand-new, radically different philosophy of learning! As of January 2022, we will be adopting the exciting and internationally successful Curiosity Approach.

Why the new approach?

Following the success of implementing the Curiosity Approach at Curro Rosen Castle in Cape Town, our school will now become an accredited Curiosity Approach school. At Curro, we believe this methodology encompasses the latest international trends in early childhood development and has been proven to be more successful than traditional teaching methods currently being followed in most ECD centres. This will also distinguish Curro Chartwell from any other nursery school in the area – we will be offering what no other school does.

What is the Curiosity Approach?

The Curiosity Approach is a modern-day approach to early childhood development and encompasses aspects of Reggio Emilia, The Steiner Education Approach, Te Whāriki and the Montessori Method of Childhood Education.

Tell me more ...

- This is a wonderful new philosophy using age-old techniques which reintroduces the wonder of play-based learning to childhood.
- This approach embraces 'loose-parts play', the Reggio Emilia philosophy, as well as aspects of the Montessori Method of Childhood Education.
- Children are exposed to loose-parts play in a variety of environments where they can explore, experiment, create, get dirty and play to their hearts' content while being challenged to imagine, communicate and problem-solve.
- These environments have natural soothing colours and children play with 'real' objects in the absence of bright colours, cartoon characters and plastic toys so typical of mainstream ECD centres.
- The Curiosity Approach is child-driven, where the teacher responds to the child's needs and not one where the teacher dictates the learning content and pace.
- This is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but a philosophy where children's individual preferences prescribe learning.
- The skills our children need to learn does not change, but how they acquire these skills will change dramatically.

What will change?

Changing the teaching philosophy from a traditional 'academic', but play-based curriculum, to the Curiosity Approach necessitates certain changes in our classrooms.

- The space our children play in will incorporate a variety of magical environments to provide them with a wealth of learning opportunities.
- For our children to explore their new environment safely, the outdoors will become an extension of the indoors
- Because our children will play mostly with everyday, 'real' items from our living spaces and outdoors, the overall look and feel will be inspired by nature and incorporate wooden furnishings. We will be losing the tables and chairs in our classrooms, as little bodies are not meant to be sitting still while doing desktop 'work'.

How does the Curiosity Approach work in practice?

- Curro Chartwell will be getting rid of almost all tables and chairs in classrooms, replacing them with different furniture and areas of interest in line with the new approach.
- When entering the classroom, our children will be drawn to various learning stations which the teacher will have carefully prepared to intrigue and arouse their curiosity.
- Children will have absolute carte blanche to explore things that take their interest.
- Individual classes may delve deeper and longer into certain topics that take the child's/children's interest.

What are the advantages of the Curiosity Approach?

- An element of magic and wonder is reintroduced into the school environment.
- The natural self-confidence of the child is rediscovered and enhanced as they learn to trust themselves and experiment with choices and decisions throughout their day.
- The approach encourages collaboration, creativity and imagination, perseverance, initiative, problem-solving, responsibility, socialisation and communication, amongst other skills.

How will my child's progress be monitored?

With the Curiosity Approach the teacher develops a closer, more nurturing relationship with a child and monitors him/her continuously, which is another advantage of this teaching method.

But, what about the curriculum?

Curro Chartwell will keep its excellent curriculum, it's only our approach that will change. We will continue to monitor all the developmental milestones.

Will the number of teachers increase?

No, but the new style will free teachers up to interact on a one-on-one basis frequently with each child in her class every day. She will be better able to respond to each child's emotional and educational needs due to the more nurturing relationship that the Curiosity Approach encourages.

Will teachers need extra training?

All Curro Chartwell's teachers fully support the Curiosity Approach and will be undergoing intensive training during the next 12 months to adopt all the techniques required to offer this beautiful philosophy to our children.

Will this new way of teaching allow my child to seamlessly integrate in mainstream schools?

Yes, this approach better prepares children for any curriculum and teaching style after nursery school – as the curriculum doesn't change, just the method of delivery. It also aligns with Curro's project-based education and 21st-century learning style.

Curro is passionate about children's education and development and is therefore creating a space where your child can be heard, valued and respected even more. Simply put, we're aiming at developing an environment where your child can absolutely thrive.

Where can I find more information about the Curiosity Approach?

www.thecuriosityapproach.com