



## ● About Us

Habitat Learning Community will open its doors in July 2017. Our objective is to offer families who are looking for a different education for their children, a place where not just the kids learn, but the whole family benefits from a wholesome learning experience.

In spaces that have been carefully conceived and designed for the children and adults that comprise Hábitat Learning Community, we create experiences —through the interaction between children and adults, materials and spaces— that allow us to learn from one another and develop new knowledge together.

Hábitat Learning Community offers all of its members an opportunity to coexist with and learn from nature through our close partnership with Rancho La Luna, a leading organization in the practice of permaculture. Children will learn to use natural resources ethically and responsibly, caring for and valuing the natural environment and the economic and social resources that ensure a sustainable future for us all.

Our English immersion program offers the children an opportunity to develop their language abilities, strengthening their mother tongue while they learn a second language. We use a pedagogy based on the most recent studies, which show the importance of acquiring a foreign language from a young age.

At Hábitat Learning Community, we ensure that the learning process is a natural one, safeguarding the richness of childhood to preserve its potential, while providing the right conditions so that every child can contribute his or her individuality toward the building of a collective culture that values childrens' capacity to love, remain in the present, and be joyful.



**An experience of this kind requires educators who value constant professional and personal growth. For this reason, we have selected a group of highly qualified, bilingual educators who are passionate about their work, respectful of the interests and curiosity of children, and careful and skillful listeners.**



## ● Our Staff

We, the educators and administrators of Hábitat Learning Community, believe that children require spaces and experiences that will help them maximize their potential, and to this end, they must be surrounded by adults that are careful and skillful listeners. Adults who are able to understand the interests and curiosity of the children and to observe and accompany children in the development of their cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Our teachers are fully bilingual and are trained to teach English as a second language. For some, English is their native language, while others were educated in bilingual schools or studied and lived

in an English-speaking country for long periods of time.

In order to offer the best quality education, we have combined our skills and abilities to provide the children with learning experiences in an environment of trust, warmth, respect, and safety, allowing us to create a democratic, caring, and compassionate community.

## ● Philosophy

Our philosophy is based on the Reggio Emilia educational approach, and as such, the children that form part of our learning community are the main protagonists in the educational experience that we offer. Our image of the child as a competent citizen, full of potential, inspires our work as educators. In order for children to develop their skills and competencies, they need adults that are capable of listening to them and observing them carefully, and that are knowledgeable of the socio-constructivist theories of development.

We believe in the importance of pedagogical documentation as a learning tool for children and adults, and it is the essential component that gives visibility to our work with the children. This kind of documentation allows the cognitive processes of children and adults to be understood and tracked and recorded over time.

This process also enables us to conduct reflective analysis, not only of our metacognitive processes, but also of both our individual and collective actions. It allows us to see how we communicate verbally and non-verbally —including affective and emotional communication—, the decisions that we make, and the effects of those decisions.

We believe that the collaborative and organized participation of parents in our educational community is essential to achieving the shared goal of providing children with a different kind of educational experience that encourages creativity, views mistakes as opportunities for learning, and allows children to understand the scientific method through research projects, thereby developing their capacity for analytical thought.





We value the collaboration of parents, as they too can contribute their experience in the fields in which they work by sharing their knowledge in the research projects and by spending time with their children playing, reading stories, showing interest in their children's interests, and enjoying the process of learning together.

The following principles guide us in upholding this philosophy:

### ■ **Respect**

We respect the opinions, ideas, and attitudes of other people, even if they are not the same as our own. We believe diversity to be an asset that allows for the growth of each member of the community, acknowledging that each person is unique and contributes their own individuality to the development of the community as a whole.

### ■ **Empathy**

We work to understand the worldview of others by affectively participating in a reality different from our own

### ■ **Compassionate Communication**

We promote a healthy and enriching exchange of ideas and opinions among all members of the learning community by listening with tolerance and openness. Adults practice compassionate and assertive (as opposed to aggressive or passive) communication, understanding disagreements and negotiation to be a process of growth that occurs in a respectful environment. Children also learn to use this kind of communication when it is modeled by adults

## ■ Solidarity

Solidarity, in its purest meaning, is a central focus of our philosophy, implying strong social cohesion for the good of the community and of each person.

## ■ Democracy

We encourage the active and ethical participation of each member of the learning community because it is important for the creation of a culture in which everyone's point of view is valued, and everyone feels that they are heard, appreciated, and respected. Each adult in our learning community assumes the responsibility of establishing relationships that allow him/her to grow as a person and to contribute to a community that values the potential of each child, viewing them as active citizens and holders of rights, rights which we all must ensure are respected.

## ■ Aesthetics

Aesthetics is an element that is present not only in the spaces where our educational experiences take place, but also in each of the decisions made by the people involved in the learning community. Beauty is found in the everyday thoughts and actions of the members of the learning community.

## ■ Joy

Inspired by Loris Malaguzzi's utterance "nothing without joy", our learning community finds pleasure in the everyday activities of our work as educators, in the interactions between individuals, and in the existence of our community and our shared learning.

## ■ Play

We consider play to be the most important activity of childhood, as it is through play that children give meaning to the world in which they are immersed. By playing, children learn naturally with the curiosity and joy that they already possess. It is through play that children teach us to understand how they learn.

## ■ Environmental Responsibility

One of our main priorities is to raise awareness among members of the learning community of the impact our actions and decisions have on other species, nature as a whole, and future generations. In light of the pressing problems of climate change and the deterioration of natural resources, we act to reduce our ecological impact through the practice of permaculture.

## ■ Organization and Cleanliness

These are essential elements of the educational/play and administrative processes of our learning community. The cleanliness and organization of the spaces, materials, projects, and planning are essential to creating proper conditions for effective learning.





## ● Curriculum

The Preschool Education Program of the Mexican Public Education Secretariat stipulates that the purpose of preschool education is to guide children in developing skills that will allow them to begin grade school with the abilities and knowledge that they have acquired through their experiences in the family environment. Our learning community has come to the understanding that the best way to achieve this purpose is through the development of research projects based on the children's own interests; in other words, by means of an emerging curriculum which provides the students with learning experiences that stem from their curiosity and interest in the world around them.

All learning activities and research projects are conducted in English at Hábitat Learning Com-

munity. Our English immersion environment offers children the opportunity to learn a second language from teachers who are native speakers, have been educated in bilingual schools and/or have spent long periods of time in English-speaking countries.

Based on the Reggio Emilia educational approach, our classrooms offer the spaces the children need to conduct research and develop skills with the guidance of adults, who themselves are researchers whose focus of study is their own educational approach. Given that the skills that children must develop are not only cognitive, but also social and emotional,

## Our campus includes spaces such as:

■ The plaza (piazza), which is a place for children and adults to interact, play, and explore.

■ The atelier, which is a space where hands and thoughts are joined to give shape to the children's ideas through multiple languages. Here the children are guided by a teacher with training in the arts who provides them with various materials to nurture their creativity, and tools to explore and express themselves through other languages —besides the oral and the written— that allow them to evince their creativity.

We use pedagogical documentation to give visibility to the learning experiences in our educational community. Pedagogical documentation is also an educational training tool used daily by our educators to learn about how children learn (the metacognitive process) and about the effectiveness of the learning experiences offered. Using the documentation panels, we record the learning achieved by the children and adults each day.





## ● Pedagogy

Our pedagogy is based on the work of Loris Malaguzzi, an Italian pedagogue who developed the educational philosophy for preschools and early education centers in the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy. This philosophy serves as the inspiration and basis for the educational experience that we offer in our learning community. This example is one of a pedagogue who managed to combine the very best of various approaches to create a pedagogy that places the child at the center of the educational experience, viewing the child as a citizen and holder of rights. As such, the child is effectively heard, thereby valuing his/her potential, which is developed through collaborative learning experiences.



## ● Why Hábitat?

We have designed spaces, an environment, and a pedagogy that provide the necessary conditions for children and adults to learn and develop their potential while creating a culture in which we can all coexist, collaborate, and participate actively and democratically in an environment of respect and joy, thereby allowing learning to flourish in a natural way.

## ● Why an English immersion environment?

It is scientifically proven that the acquisition of a second language at an early age not only aids in the development of language, but also has cognitive and social benefits that can help children during all learning process throughout their lives. We have decided that the language of instruction will be English, so that the children become familiar with this language, are educated as bilingual individuals from the time they begin at our learning community. They will also develop a cultural awareness that will help them to accept and respect differences (not only linguistic) of the people with whom they interact.



# ● Why is it important for children to learn through play?

We know that the primary activity of childhood is play, and we acknowledge the importance of play as the main tool with which children learn. Play is the means whereby the child develops motor skills, creativity, and abstract thought. It is through play that children learn to develop strategies for social interaction and to express their way of seeing and understanding the world.



## ■ MISSION

To become a community that recognizes the potential inherent in childhood and, in a warm environment with strong ties to nature, encourages the joy brought forth by learning through the democratic interaction between its members. Regarded as competent citizens and guided by their curiosity, children develop their creativity and discover the world through collaborative projects.

## ■ VISION

To contribute to a society that respects children and advances alongside them.



# Hábitat<sup>®</sup>

Learning Community



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