




CAMBRIDGE

# **Nurturing Young Minds:**

## **A holistic approach and seamless transition to and from Kindergarten**

Jemma Joakim and Dr. Justin Coy

June 2025



**Ready  
for the  
world**

The image features a graphic on the left side of a dark teal background. The graphic consists of a shield-shaped element with a light teal border and a white interior. Inside the shield, the text "Ready for the world" is written in a dark teal, serif font, arranged in three lines. To the left of the shield, there are several overlapping, curved shapes in various shades of teal, creating a layered, abstract effect.

# Agenda

Time	Item	Speaker(s)
5 min	Introductions and Core Principles	Justin Coy
5 min	Cambridge Early Years Materials	Justin Coy
10 min	Activity – See the Curriculum for Yourself	Jemma Joakim
15 min	Feedback from teachers	Guest Speakers
15 min	Transition	Jemma Joakim
10 min	Questions	Jemma Joakim and Justin Coy

“Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water.”

Reggio Emilia

Loris Malaguzzi

# Introductions

# Introductions

- **Jemma Joakim** – Head of Early Years and Primary Curriculum
- **Dr. Justin Coy, PhD, BCBA** – Regional Product Strategy Manager, Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup>
- **Holly Mathews** – Principal on Assignment, Lee County School District, FL
- **Brittney Griffin** – Head of Education & Curriculum, Montessori Reggio Academy of Sugar Land, TX



# Core Principles

# Cambridge Pathway

Cambridge  
Pathway 

A clear path for educational success from age 3 to 19

## Cambridge Early Years

### Age 3+

- A play-based programme, with:
- a holistic curriculum
  - engaging resources
  - support to measure progress

6 curriculum areas including  
Personal, social and  
emotional development

## Cambridge Primary

### Age 5+

- Clear, adaptable curriculum
- Flexible assessment options
- Support and resources
- Insight to understand potential

10+ subjects including English,  
Mathematics, Science, Computing,  
Art & Design and Wellbeing

## Cambridge Lower Secondary

### Age 11+

- Clear, adaptable curriculum
- Flexible assessment options
- Support and resources
- Insight to predict performance

10+ subjects including English,  
Mathematics, Science, Computing,  
Art & Design and Wellbeing

## Cambridge Upper Secondary

### Age 14+

- Broad, adaptable curriculum
- Fair, valid, reliable assessment
- Support and resources
- Insight to optimise achievement

Cambridge IGCSE™: 70+ subjects  
Cambridge O Level: 40+ subjects  
Cambridge ICE

## Cambridge Advanced

### Age 16+

- In-depth, adaptable curriculum
- Fair, valid, reliable assessment
- Support and resources
- Insight to predict performance

Cambridge International  
AS & A Level: 50+ subjects  
Cambridge AICE, Cambridge IPQ

**Cambridge Professional Development** for teachers and school leaders

Ready for  
the world





# Cambridge Early Years

- Research and evidence base for Cambridge Early Years
- Curriculum
- Measuring progress
- Teacher & Learner resources
- Teaching support
- Professional Development



# Our curriculum

Is **holistic** and **balanced**, focusing on the **whole child**

Is **child-centered** and **play-based**

Develops **knowledge**, **understanding** and **skills** to prepare children for the next stage in their education

Helps learners meet **international milestones** for early development

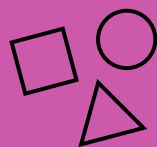
**Connects learners** with the world around them



# Six curriculum areas



Communication,  
Language, and  
Literacy



Mathematics



Physical  
Development



Creative  
Expression



Personal,  
Social, and  
Emotional  
Development



Understanding  
the World

Speaking  
Listening  
Composing  
Phonemes  
Spelling  
Handwriting

Counting  
Regrouping  
Money  
Data; Sorting  
Shape & Space  
Measuring

Gross-Motor  
Movement  
Safety

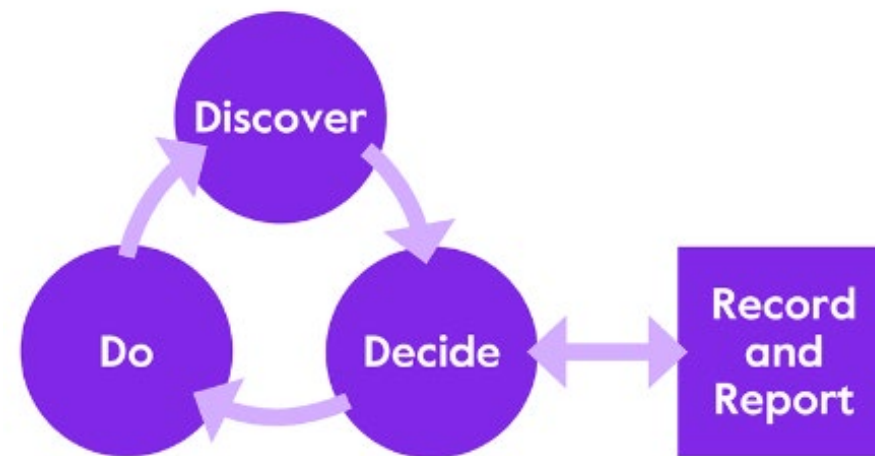
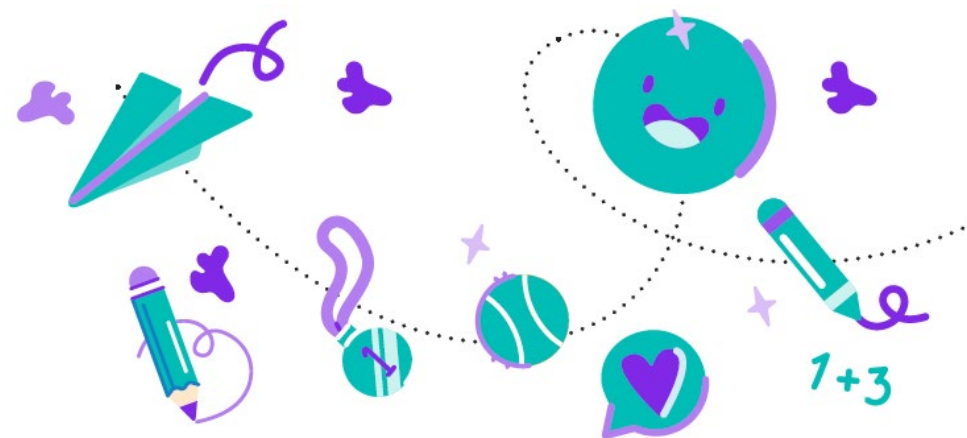
Art & Design  
Music  
Dance  
Drama

Self-Regulation  
Relationships  
Self-Confidence  
Emotions  
Health, Self-Care  
Responsibility

Living Things  
Materials  
How Things Work  
Sound  
Earth & Space  
Digital Technology

# Our assessment approach

- **Continuous, formative** assessment gives a holistic picture into children's learning and developmental progress
- **Observing** how children behave in the learning environment
- **Gathering evidence** during learning – Discover, Decide, Do



**We provide guidance and support to help you measure your learners' progress**

# Teaching Materials, Supports, and Guidance



# Teaching support and guidance

- Implementing the curriculum
- Helping your learners transition to primary education
- Active and play-based learning approaches
- Short, medium, & long-term planning
- Creating a safe, inclusive learning environment
- Supporting EAL/ESL learners and students with disabilities



# Teaching resources

- **Suggested activities, advice, and guidance**
- **Downloadable resources** like activity sheets, song lyrics, stories, and more
- **‘Listen and observe’ assessment guidance** to monitor learners’ development
- **Language guidance** to support EAL/ESL learners
- **‘Home-link’ activities** to share with parents for further learning outside the classroom

# Cambridge Early Years

## Digital Teaching Resource 1





# Learner's Books: Communication & Language

Our story-led **Communication and Language Learner's Books** feature international **fiction and non-fiction texts**, as well as engaging activities that build important **reading and writing skills**.

**Where is the spider?**  
**Draw and say.**  
Look at the example.  
Draw a spider *in, on or under* the objects in the pictures.

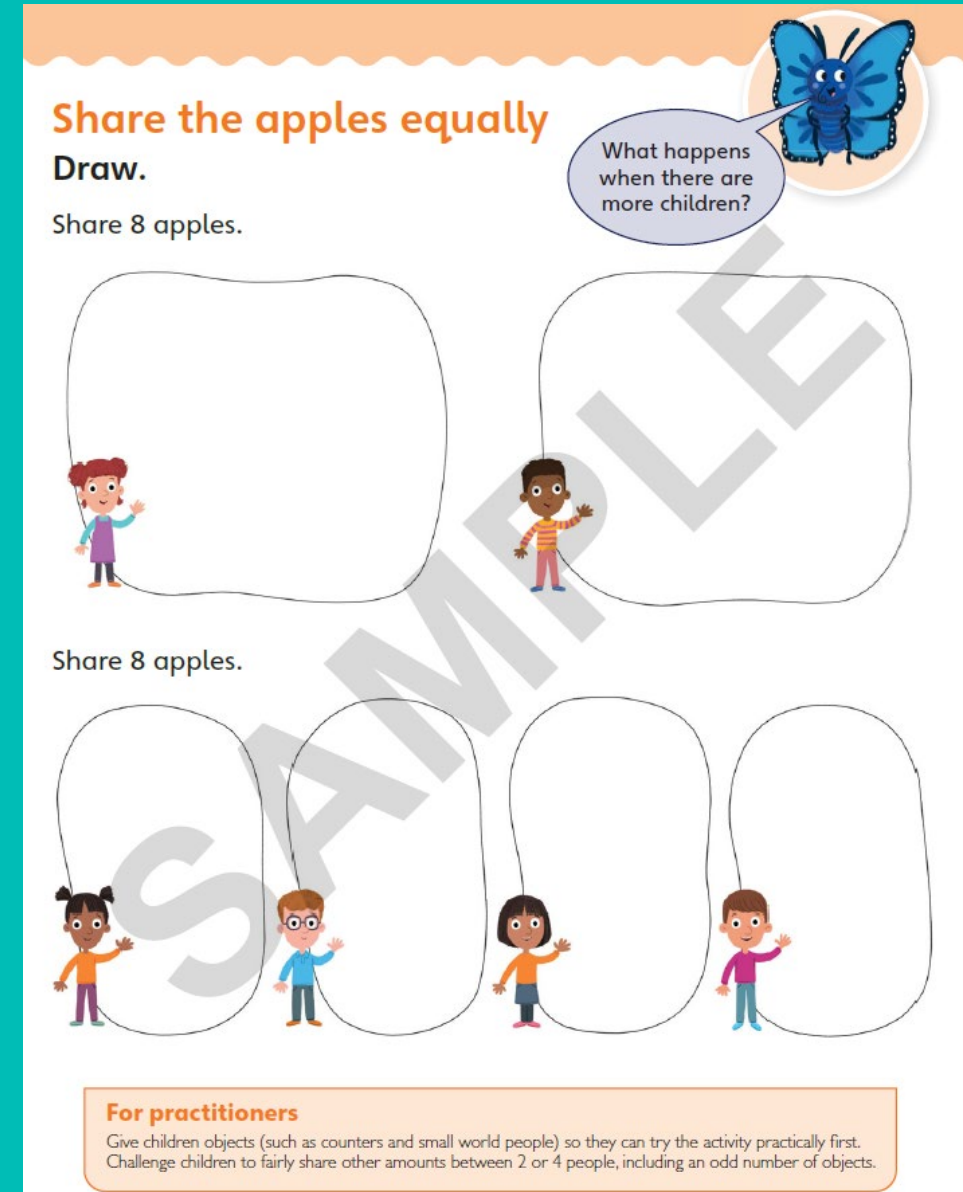


**For practitioners**  
Children draw their spiders *in, on or under* the objects and describe the location to their partner.



# Learner's Books: Mathematics

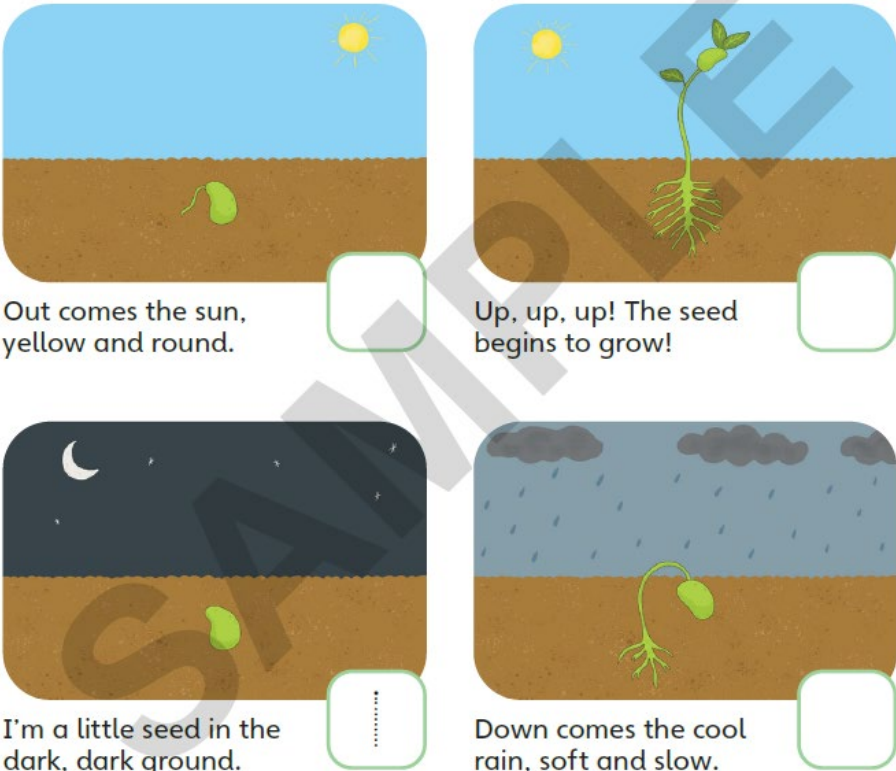
Our **Mathematics Learner's Books** help learners develop their mathematical abilities through **play-based activities** including **counting, coloring, and measuring**.



# Learner's Books: Let's Explore

Our **Let's Explore Learner's Books** help children **understand themselves and the world** through activities such as matching, drawing, sticker activities, and more.

**A little seed**  
Read and write.  
Put the pictures in order.



Out comes the sun,  
yellow and round.

Up, up, up! The seed  
begins to grow!

I'm a little seed in the  
dark, dark ground.

Down comes the cool  
rain, soft and slow.

**For practitioners**  
Explain that the pictures aren't in the correct order. Point to the picture with the traceable number 1 and read the words, encouraging children to repeat after you. Say *Look at the seed in the other pictures. Which picture and words come next? How has the seed changed?* Children write numbers 1–4 to show the correct order of the 4 pictures.

# Continuous Provision Areas → Learning Centers

- **Defined areas** allowing students to **freely explore** and **make connections**
- Encourages **independence** (“fully stocked” areas which rely on **known routines** for child led or guided-play)
- Activities support work towards learning statements
- Allow for **rich conversations**/engagement between teacher and student(s)
- Teacher guidance provided for each Block

## ESL Communication and Language

### Week 2: My community

In ESL Communication and Language this week, we will revisit the story *The Umbrella Tree* with a view to consolidating the language and concepts introduced in Week 1, and talking about all of the wonderful things around them in their community. Children will also use simple sentences to talk about their peers' likes and dislikes.

#### Continuous provision and guided play

- **Library/reading area:** Enhance the Library/reading area with a rich array of books to further support the language of community, friendship and the world around us in the story, which will provide opportunities for talking about the world around us using key language. Model retelling parts of short simple stories and texts as they explore the books, using visuals and/or prompts.
- **Art area:** Enhance the Art area with crayons, paints and pencils so children can draw pictures about their lives, using key vocabulary to chat about what they draw. You could even suggest children draw pictures together with their classmates to promote collaboration and allow them to use simple talk as they discuss what they are drawing together.
- **Construction and small world play area:** Enhance the Construction and small world play area with toys representing different hobbies and activities. As they play, encourage them to talk about their hobbies and likes and dislikes, using simple sentences and language structure, such as *I like/don't like + verb + ing*.



# Activity – See the Curriculum for Yourself



# Let's get planning!

What makes me happy?



## Activity 3: What makes me happy?

### Learning statements

- **ICLC.02** Listen to others when conversations and discussions interest them.
  - To support the child, accompany routine talk with gestures and actions, and initiate simple conversations regularly as they play.
  - By the end of EYI, the child may only respond using gestures, actions and a small range of simple words, for example, waving in response to *Goodbye* at the end of the day, or responding to the question *Are you cold?* (accompanied by shivering), by saying *Yes*.
- **ICLC.18** Use a range of appropriate vocabulary to describe objects and people that are of particular importance to them, to describe their experiences and to express ideas.
  - To support the child, model using simple words to describe pictures to support their descriptions of people and objects. Also model using simple language of position to describe people and objects (e.g., *on*, *in*).
  - By the end of EYI, the child may only describe people and objects using gestures and single words (e.g., *red*, *tall*, *soft*).

# Insights from US Teachers and Leaders



[Link to video](#)

**Cambridge Schools Conference, June 2025**  
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive



# Leader Panel

- **Holly Mathews** – Lee County School District, Florida
- **Brittney Griffin** – Head of Education & Curriculum, Montessori Reggio Academy of Sugar Land, Texas



# Transition

‘There’s no sand and the work’s hard!’

# Transition tensions

Depending on the setting, there can be a 'mis-match' between the practice in EY versus Stage 1 and 2 and fundamental differences in style and content.

- An active curriculum versus a more passive listening curriculum
- An integrated curriculum versus a more subject based curriculum
- Play based Literacy and Numeracy activities versus more formal, desk-based work
- Larger number of adults versus smaller numbers of adults
- Child initiated activities versus adult directed activities

The 'bottom up' model is more likely to be successful than a 'top down' approach.



“The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.”

**Maria Montessori**

Philosopher and educator

# Four key aspects to consider:

All children are different, and their brains develop in different ways.

- Space
- Time
- People
- Information

Teaching in Stage 1 should be child centered, learning focused – see it, hear it, do it, say it!



# Three key questions to consider:

1. Is our practice developmentally appropriate?
2. Is our pedagogy suited to the children we teach, or does content and coverage come first?
3. Does the layout and organisation of our classrooms support both what we want children to learn and the kinds of learners we want them to be?

The principles of Continuous Provision remain the same:

- Start with the child and their interests
- Create clearly defined spaces with well-organized resources



# Question time!

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Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive



Get in touch!

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# Your feedback

Please let us know your  
views on this session

Scan the QR code and share your  
feedback with us





# Thank you!

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