



How an International Education can help your child find their Multicultural Identity



Nagoya International School
Inquire Inspire Impact



Intercultural learning is embedded in everything international schools do, and is one of the main reasons parents choose a multicultural education that international schools offer

"If you want your child to function, survive, thrive, enjoy, and contribute to the solutions in what is becoming an increasingly international society, you need to start them off early with an intercultural perspective, an intercultural lens."

Matthew Parr Head of School, Nagoya International School

When it comes to deliberating between a local Japanese school and an international campus like NIS, especially if your children are multicultural, it's important to take into consideration what is best for them. Which campus environment will provide the atmosphere for them to grow and thrive?

"We started noticing a lot of 'othering' happening in the Japanese school because our daughter looks different than many of the other kids," said Nathan H., a lecturer at a university in Nagoya and an NIS parent, regarding why they made the switch to NIS.

Throughout this eBook, you'll discover:

- **The benefits of a multicultural identity**
- **How an international education helps your children find, nurture, and embrace their multicultural identity**
- **Parent perspectives from the Nagoya community**
- **How NIS is committed to ensuring a strong multicultural identity in your children**





Why Multiculturalism is Important and How it Benefits Your Children

"Since attending NIS, there have been days where she comes home and says, 'Mommy, am I Japanese?' And we answer excitedly in the affirmative. Then another day she comes home and says, 'I'm American, right?' and we say, 'Yes, you're also American.' She's Austrian as well, so she has three. She realizes she has these different identities and that's okay. She's starting to think about these different identities and embracing them openly and I feel like she would probably try to hide those other identities if she was at a Japanese school rather than embrace them."

Nathan H., NIS Parent

When your children find and welcome their multicultural identity, they finally get to be themselves and live freely.

A multiculturalism environment also helps your children in key areas of their lives including:

- Giving them an enhanced educational experience
- Having the ability to better navigate adulthood with a global perspective
- Having increased intercultural and multicultural knowledge, understanding, and empathy

Enhanced Educational Experience

Studies show students work better in a diverse environment. A school campus rich in diversity will encourage your children to push themselves further and concentrate more effectively.

Given the many perspectives and lived experiences, diverse campuses allow children to learn from one another, enhancing the educational experience. This experience empowers students to think creatively and critically.

Better able to Navigate Adulthood

Through a multicultural education, your children will excitedly pursue lifelong learning, with their cultural identity helping them better navigate adulthood.

According to [The Century Foundation](#), 96% of major employers say it is "important" for employees to be "comfortable working with colleagues, customers, and/or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds".

A multicultural education also helps your children [build trust](#) and remove barriers because there's a mutual

under-standing in the classroom. With a greater level of trust and a willingness to see other's perspectives, your children will be more efficient and effective in their future workplace.

Increased Intercultural and Multicultural Knowledge, Understanding, and Empathy

Through a multicultural learning environment, your children will have a clearer lens through which to see the world. "The world becomes much more open for you, much more complex for you. You find it difficult to box, stereotype, and divide people. Multiculturalism becomes a way to unite people and see people as a whole," said Tulika Bathija, Secondary English/ EAL teacher at NIS.

As a multicultural individual, learning the beauty of their cultural perspective, learning to embrace this part of themselves, it'll be easier for children to be surrounded by others on the same journey. In addition to finding, nurturing, and embracing a child's multicultural identity, children in an international learning environment also have increased intercultural and multicultural knowledge, understanding, and empathy.

According to Dr. Sudhiranjan Dey, Chief Executive Officer at Global Management Xperts Ltd, in his report titled ["Importance of Multicultural Education"](#), through an international learning environment that provides opportunity for discovering different norms, rules, and perspectives, children learn these differences are not something bad or negative, but rather something to be embraced.

"Through learning about other cultures, barriers are demystified, permitting for more open relationships and dialogue," writes Dr. Dey.

How our International Education Helps Your Children Find, Nurture, and Embrace Their Multicultural Identity

Now that the benefits of a multicultural education have been explored, let's dive into the specifics regarding how NIS provides the learning environment to help your children find, nurture, and embrace their cultural identities.

At NIS, we help students develop their multicultural identity through:

- A diverse campus
- Strong language and cultural learning
- English as an Additional Language
- The use of code-switching in the classroom
- Home language clubs
- International curriculum

A Diverse Campus

The families who make up our diverse community represent a wide-range of cultures and nationalities. We are united in our desire to embrace the skills, behaviors, and values that will enable our students to navigate and contribute to their world.

NIS graduates join over 50 years of alumni who can be found pursuing their dreams and making a difference in the lives of others in diverse places and inspiring ways all over the world.

The image below represents our unique community.



2020-21 School Year

Strong Language and Cultural Learning

Language and cultural learning at NIS helps students nurture their cultural identity, maintain their second language - or home language(s) - while also exposing them to new languages. By appreciating multiple cultural

identities, we're helping students embrace the idea of fluidity and multiplicity between their identities and languages.

NIS deeply respects the Japanese culture and the surrounding community. As the language of our home country or adopted home country, as well as the aim for a truly multilingual education that the IB program strives for, the Japanese program at NIS is taught as a subject at all levels and offered from ELC Kindergarten to Grade 12.

"It is fascinating to see people gain the ability to speak multiple languages. Especially for Japanese speakers, the NIS language program will offer a chance to develop their English while still being able to speak their own native language," said Serena, a Grade 12 student at NIS.

- [Click here](#) for a look at the NIS language program.

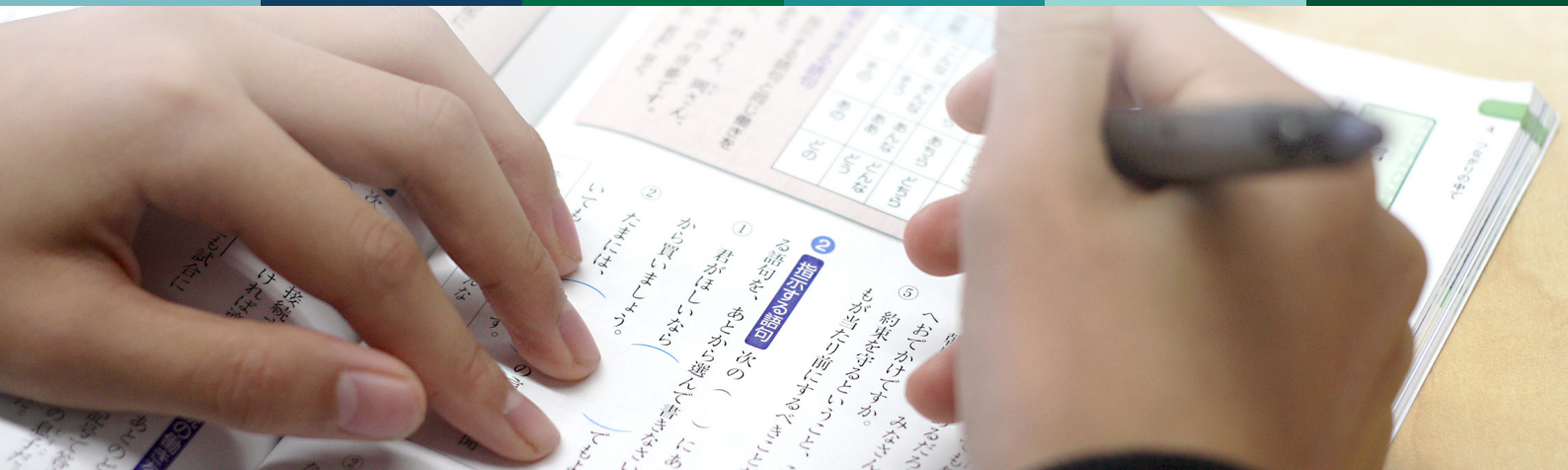
"When I first came to NIS, I was fluent in Italian but my English and Japanese were shaky. I started in English language acquisition and Japanese language acquisition where I gained the skills and confidence to communicate with others. It was hard at first, but seeing other students like me, I felt the motivation to work hard and improve my English and Japanese no matter what. With the support of teachers, I was able to significantly improve my language skills. To think that I started all the way at English acquisition and that I am now taking an IB class in English literature makes me feel extremely proud of myself. I believe the language program at NIS contributed greatly to my improvement, and I am sure it has helped many other students too."

Serena, NIS Student

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

For students coming to NIS with English as an additional language, it's important to have a program in place to help them in their acquisition of English. The English as an Additional Language (EAL) program helps give students the ability to add their multicultural perspectives in the classroom to further enhance the learning experience for them and their classmates.

The aim of the EAL program is to improve students' capabilities in academic English in order to facilitate their access to the wider curriculum at NIS, while also supporting teaching staff in differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of the students with whom they work. Teachers are also actively involved in supporting new students for whom English is a new language as they transition into the NIS community.



Code Mixing and Translanguaging in the Classroom

Using code mixing and [translanguaging](#) in the classroom celebrates language and cultures. Wherever possible, we try to incorporate these techniques into our classroom activities and our curriculum as a whole.

For example, NIS encourages students to research different topics in different languages to give multiple perspectives, leading to richer classroom discussions.

"We're recognizing that there's not just one way to look at a situation, different cultures are going to think about it differently and that's all valued," said Reid Pierce, the EAL

Teacher and Personal Project Coordinator in our Secondary School.

Code mixing helps students take pride in their multicultural identity. For example, Bathija, encourages students to code mix in their blogs. In these posts, students can write a term in their home language using the English alphabet and put the English meaning in brackets.

"By using the two languages side-by-side, this is a

celebration of both parts of your identity and your academic language that you're acquiring at school as well as the language that you speak at home," said Bathija.

- [Click here](#) to read more about *Code Mixing* and *Translanguaging*

Home Language Clubs

Language learning takes place both in and outside the doors of NIS.

Our *Home Language Club* (HLC) is student-led and gives participants a chance to honor, appreciate, and nurture their mother tongue. Not only does this club enhance language learning, it also helps students celebrate their cultural identities.

Secondary students organize weekly activities with Elementary students to support and develop their mother tongues.

These meetings are beneficial to all attendees as they have the opportunity to celebrate who they are, and the language skills learned will contribute positively to the richness of the NIS community.

Activities include educational games through:

- Literacy development
- Reading
- Discussing stories about their countries and cultures

Each activity necessitates participants using their mother tongue.

"[Through the programs and extracurricular activities], we are all constantly exposed to multiple cultures and we all identify in different ways. This has really helped me accept my multicultural identity, as I now don't feel as much pressure to fit into a specific category," said Serena.

International Curriculum

NIS students are able to embrace the International Baccalaureate (IB), a non-profit educational foundation, motivated by [its mission](#) of nurturing "inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect."

There are three programs within the IB geared towards different age groups:

- The [Primary Years Programme](#) (PYP)
- The [Middle Years Programme](#) (MYP)
- The [Diploma Programme](#) (DP)

The program as a whole focuses on helping students develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn, and work in a rapidly globalizing world. The curriculum and pedagogy of IB programs focus on international perspectives of learning and teaching, while insisting that students fully explore their home culture and language.

"In the IB curriculum, learning is very conceptual and it has a lot of student agency; it has a lot of real-world connections, and ties in service and interdisciplinary learning," said Marika Farrell, the Associate Principal for our Secondary school and the IB MYP Coordinator.

We invite you to learn more about what the IB program looks like at NIS by [clicking here](#).



How an International Education Benefits Your Children

The decision on whether to send your children to a Japanese school or international school, or whether to provide your children with a national curriculum or global education, is complex and ultimately is something only you and your family can decide.

While making this decision, it's important to take the above sections into consideration, but it's also essential to understand that if your children have multiple cultural identities - for example Japanese and American - they are citizens to neither of these locations and at the same time, they're citizens of both.

Your children will grow up with questions such as:

- Am I American?
- Am I Japanese?
- Am I Korean?
- Am I Mexican?
- Am I all, or neither?
- Where DO I belong?



When making the decision regarding their education, it's important to surround your children with other students asking the same questions, with teachers who are trained to nurture those questions, and with a whole environment designed to support the exploration.

Ultimately, it comes down to this question, perfectly articulated by Parr.

"Which learning environment is going to lead to your kid being the happiest, most confident, and having the most self-belief in themselves and their identity?"

At NIS, we are proud of our supportive, inclusive, diverse community, where everyone is encouraged to discover who they are and how they fit into the world. Through many different avenues, we help our students find, nurture, and embrace their multicultural identity.