ESSENTIAL INFO PACK

AN INFO PACK FROM ACTON ACADEMY SAN DIEGO EAST

ONLY YOU KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY, BUT WE ARE HERE TO HELP



WELCOME TO ACTON ACADEMY SAN DIEGO EAST

Do you remember how it felt to be 6 years old? The world was full of possibilities and you were full of curiosity. Alive and a natural learner. Perhaps even convinced you were a superhero.

What if you were right?

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What if children are far more capable than we've ever imagined?

Education, student-teacher ratios, common core, standardized tests, control, regurgitation, and oversight. 19th-century solutions for the 21st century.

Perhaps this makes sense to some until we ask: What if children are more capable than we've ever imagined?

Google shares information, Uber shares cars, Airbnb shares rooms.

What if children could share learning with each other, in a tightly bound community with extremely high standards of excellence? Becoming convinced that they could know that they would find a deep burning need in the world, that matches the deep burning need in their heart?

Welcome to Acton Academy San Diego East. A learner-driven community founded on the belief that every person who enters our doors is a hero on a hero's journey, who deserves to find a calling that will change the world.

If you want to join a revolution, you've come to the right place.



WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS... WHERE TO START?

As an experienced educator and parent of three children, I recognize that evaluating educational options can be overwhelming. The more we see your children for who they are, the better we will be able to correctly assess their individual educational needs and therefore, determine the best path for them.

COVID-19 has been a unique opportunity to connect with our amazing kids, while also receiving a rare glimpse into some of the gaps in public school education. Instead of a focus on rote memorization, standardized test, and zoom calls what if we looked at them and school through a new lens... what if your children's school saw them as the next Albert Einstein, Steve Jobs, or Marie Curie? What if you looked at your child today and saw the genius within and enjoyed their presence, wondering what they would create or say next?

As parents, we can see our children as a person with unique creative potential – a spirit of genius – worthy of driving their own independent learning that supersedes tests, grades, and homework. We don't just want our children to be fine, we want them to thrive and for them to see their own genius. We believe school should embrace these ideals and that's why we started Acton Academy San Diego East.

HOW TO REACH US

mandy@actonacademysd.org

Acton Academy San Diego East https://actonsandiegoeast.org/





WHAT MAKES ACTON DIFFERENT?

Here are just a few things that make Acton Academy different from other schools

HOMEWORK IS OPTIONAL

We call homework at Acton "Lifework". Our students are assigned the work of living life with purpose and meaning. There is much to discover in the freedom of having time and space to explore, play with friends, write a book, memorize a song, play games, be alone, compete in sports, or dabble in a variety of activities.

When the question of homework arises from prospective parents, their main concern is that without required homework, children won't learn time management. At Acton, we cheerfully disagree as this is one of the many things built directly into our studios (classroom).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT (Learning to Be)

As a parent or as an educator, if we do the hard work for our children, we rob them of their own learning, especially in the realm of "learning to be" where we become fully human, living rich lives filled with love and joy. At Acton, we embrace the hard, which sometimes is difficult to watch as a parent but is so important for our children as they strive to become their true selves.

"GUIDES" INSTEAD OF "TEACHERS"

Guides at Acton Academy play the role of more of a coach than a teacher. They offer real-world challenges, encouragement, and choices as they hand over leadership to the studio. Unlike a teacher who disseminates information, a guide steps back and lets the learners make decisions, exercise agency, and make and keep covenants between each other.

HERO'S JOURNEY

At Acton, we call our learners "heroes." This is an important vernacular because these young learners aren't vessels waiting to be filled, they are active participants in their learning. Our curricula and studios are designed with this journey in mind. This narrative helps empower each child to take control of their own learning, tap into their unique passions, talents, and interests to find their individualized strengths.



STUDIOS

MONTESSORI "SPARK" STUDIO

We provide an environment that fosters academic, physical, and emotional independence through developmentally appropriate work inspired by Maria Montessori. The "Spark" studio is designed to spark curiosity through hands-on experiences and play-based challenges, and ultimately to equip young learners for the next steps of their journey by embracing the Hero's Journey philosophy. Half-day and all-day options available.

ELEMENTARY "ADVENTURE" STUDIO

Our Elementary Studio is designed to create flexible spaces for work, learning, and play. It is a tight-knit community of mixed-age learners who support each other and collaborate daily. This environment fosters a culture of respect and character development.

MIDDLE SCHOOL "JOURNEY" STUDIO

Throughout student's experiences in the Journey Studio, they are supported in navigating the world around them, making new and long-lasting friendships, obtaining new skills, and growing as unique young men and women of character. Our learning environment is nurturing, and we provide a variety of academic offerings, technology, entrepreneurship, physical education, art, and leadership opportunities.

HIGH SCHOOL "LAUNCHPAD" STUDIO

Our high school is designed to help young people find their talents and achieve their life purpose. Launchpad students get ready for real-world success by gaining valuable skills, mastering them through apprenticeships, launching businesses, and completing projects. Your teen's Launchpad High School accomplishments will be showcased in a way that will impress university admission offers or convince prospective employers of the value of hiring them.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION

What is the Socratic Method & why does Acton use it?

Definition:

• The Socratic method as defined by Wikipedia, "is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presuppositions...it is a method of hypothesis elimination, in that better hypotheses are found by steadily identifying and eliminating those that lead to contradictions. The Socratic method searches for general, commonly held truths that shape beliefs and scrutinizes them to determine their consistency with other beliefs. The basic form is a series of questions formulated as tests of logic and fact intended to help a person or group discover their beliefs about a topic."

At Acton:

- During a Socratic discussion at Acton Academy, a guide or young learner sets up scenarios and asks questions to stimulate critical thinking and independent learning. Acton uses the Socratic method rather than lectures because learners improve their critical thinking and speaking abilities through discussions and actively making arguments to support their beliefs. This engagement allows students to gain a better understanding of a topic as compared to passively taking notes during a lecture.
- Outside of discussions, guides employ the Socratic method with students throughout the day in order to build and reinforce independent learners who are able to answer their own questions.
 Guides are trained to answer questions with questions in order to help students discover their own answers. This method is important to the process at Acton Academy because as Charlotte Mason says, "What a child digs for becomes his own possession".

LEARNING AND GROWING

How do we ensure students are learning and growing?

We measure learning and growing in a few ways:

- 1. At Acton Academy, we set S.M.A.R.T. Goals Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely goals for the session, week, and/or day (depending on the learner's level). Students track their progress in relation to these goals on our online tracking program called Journey Tracker and the learning community provides support and affirmation.
- 2. Students work to mastery. Working to mastery means a students doesn't move on if they get anything less than 100%. In a traditional school setting, after the exam the student moves on regardless of their score. For example, if the student scored an 80% (and that's not a terrible grade) it means they missed 20% of the material. This gap only widens as the material gets harder. At Acton, students work until a skill is mastered.
- 3. We utilize robust real-time data for each of our e-learning tools. At any given time students, parents, and guides can determine what a given student is engaging with and how they are faring. Technology enables us to monitor how each student is progressing and can ensure mastery of the given subject has been achieved before moving on.
- 4. We utilize individual portfolios where each student showcases their best work.
- 5. We host interactive exhibitions for friends and families of our students where students display and demonstrate their work while interacting with the guests. The exhibitions demonstrate what the students did and learned during their 4 6 week quest.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much homework will there be?

 Homework is optional. We believe that kids need time to play, relax, and spend time with family and friends.

Will children be grouped into grades?

 We believe that children learn best when working with children younger and older than themselves rather than split up into groups based solely on age. In addition to individualized curriculum, all ages of students work together in groups primarily within their Studio.

Is Acton Academy a religious school?

 No. While we expose children to the importance of mindful spirituality and stress the historical importance of religion to the development of civilization, we do not promote any one religion. We strongly believe in religious, political, and economic freedom.

Does Acton Academy San Diego East serve children with special needs?

- Severe Learning Disabilities: We are not trained or staffed to serve children with serious learning disabilities or behavioral challenges. However, each child and situation is unique and we will treat it as such. If you believe that Acton Academy San Diego East is a great fit for your family and that your child can thrive in this environment then please don't hesitate to reach out. We are committed to treating each child and family as unique individuals and will assess the situation in the same way.
- Dyslexia: We have specialized training in helping learners diagnosed with Dyslexia.

Frequently Asked Questions

• What's a Hero's Journey?

 We believe that each of us has a special calling in life, and a series of trials and tests that must be faced with integrity and purpose, in order to live a satisfying and fulfilled life. Our mission is to prepare your child for his or her special journey.

What do you mean by "every child is a genius"?

• We believe each of our students will find a passion — something they love and have a gift to do. They will use this gift to serve others and fulfill a need they are passionate about in the world. This may be by becoming a shoeshiner who tells stories and makes people's day just by doing his job with love and vigor; it may be by becoming a coach who sees the light in a child's eyes and guides her to pursue a dream; it may be by becoming a father or mother who leads a family on a Hero's Journey; it may be becoming an entrepreneur or business leader guided by compassion and integrity; or it may be by becoming an artist or writer who brings beauty to people's lives.

• What are Quests?

- Quests are real-world challenges that make learning fun. Lasting anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks, Quests put learners in the shoes of someone who has to solve an important problem. Students must use 21st-century skills in areas such as chemistry, physics, robotics, math, public speaking, art, marketing, and more, to complete a series of challenges that culminate in an open public exhibition for friends and family.
- One example is the Bridge Building Quest, in which students are challenged to construct bridges that are structurally sound and also fit within the budget allocated for the project by their city. As bridge engineers, students explore concepts in physics like tension and compression, friction, and elasticity. But physics isn't the only consideration; as project managers, the students must also figure out how to build a strong bridge within a limited budget.

• What is an "independent learner"?

 Someone who can research questions, follow instructions, solve problems admit that they don't know something and figure out a solution when they hit a roadblock without asking an adult for help — participate in discussions, and strive for mastery.

Common Questions

Please
reach out
with any
questions

Grades/Ages

We are currently enrolling ages EAK through 8th grade in our Montessori and Elementary studios (ages 4yrs 8mo-15 yrs)

Tuition

- An enrollment fee of \$500 is due each year.
- Annual tuition for EAK- 8th grade is \$10,750 (\$896 a month)
- Shorter day option for EAK-1st (ends at 1:15):
 - Annual tuition for the shorter day is \$9,000 (\$750 a month)

Financial Aid

- We offer financial aide.
 Please contact Mandy for more information.
- Acton Academy: San
 Diego East is a 501(c)3
 non-profit.



Location

We are located in the La Mesa area of San Diego, CA.

SAMPLE DAILY Schedule



The daily schedule varies from dayto-day a little but this represents a good overview of the daily schedule for the Elementary Studio.

8:00	Drop-off / Free Time
8:30	Daily Launch (Socratic Discussion)
8:45	Core Skills Goal setting, math, Writers' Workshop, reading, civilization discussion, "Brain Breaks" throughout
11:30	Lunch / Free Time
12:30	Quest Launch (Socratic Discussion)
12.50	Quest taurier (sociatic discussion)
12:45	Quest Quest Hands-on work, team-based challenges, sciences, coding, entrepreneurship, art & music, history, report on goals
F was and	Quest Hands-on work, team-based challenges, sciences, coding,
12:45	Quest Hands-on work, team-based challenges, sciences, coding, entrepreneurship, art & music, history, report on goals



PONENTS OF OUR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Here are some components of our weekly schedule that may be of interest

LAUNCHES (morning & afternoon)

Morning launch is a Socratic discussion about any variety of topics: character, resolving conflict, annual theme, etc.

Afternoon launches are also a Socratic discussion, but will typically surround a topic related to the Quest.

CORE SKILLS

This is the time when students work on their core skills: math, reading, spelling, etc. This time will be spent on computer programs like Kahn Academy and Lexia, or reading and writing independently. Younger learners will work in workbooks or using manipulatives either independently or with the Guide as appropriate.

At Acton Academy, we set S.M.A.R.T. Goals – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely goals for the session, week, and/or day (depending on the learner's level). Setting individual goals helps to brew passion and excitement.

COMMUNICATORS WORKSHOP

At Acton Academy, we believe in the importance of communication. We believe that while writing a 5-part essay may be important, it's also important to be able to write a convincing email that will get you a job, or create a flyer that will sell a product. While most time in communicators workshop is spent on written communication, it also includes verbal and visual elements such as pictures and videos.

NATURE/P.E./MOVEMENT

We believe that time outside, movement, mindfulness, etc. are not only valuable but necessary and we incorporate it into everything we do.

QUEST TIME

Quests were described in the FAQ section, but they are designed to be real-world, hands-on projects. This is a dedicated time when students are working individually or in groups (depending on the quest) to complete daily challenges and/or Quest-related projects.

EXAMPLE ANNUAL calendar



Some dates may change, but this will give you an overall idea of the year.

3-24	Summer Break	AUGUST '20			FEBRUARY .	21	13	Children's Business F
20	Launch Party	S M T W		S M	WHAT IN A SHIP SHAPE IN		15	Presidents' Day
25	First Day of School		1	1	2 3 4	5 6	15-19	Session Break
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		30 31						
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19	Adventure Exhibition		Th F 5	S M	T W Th		20	Parent Pastries
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1 18	New Year's Day M.L. King Day	JANUARY			JULY '21		4	Adventure Exhibition Independence Day
21	Parent Pastries	S M T W		S M	T W Th		5	July 4 Holiday
	Parent Meeting		1 2		1	2 3	9	Last Day of School
		3 4 5 6	7 8 9	4 5	6 7 8	9 10	12-30	Summer Break
		10 11 12 13 17 18 19 20	14 15 16	18 19				
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Additional Resources

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Courage to Grow

<u>Click here</u> to get your FREE copy of Courage to Grow (The origin story of Acton Academy)

COURAGE

TO



How Acton Academy Turns Learning Upside Down

LAURA A. SANDEFER

VIDEOS



Disruptive Education

An award winning independent documentary about Acton Academy.



Virtual Tour of Acton Academy

An explanation of Acton's core beliefs and how the school operates.

finally, FOCUS ON FAMILY

In the book "Home Grown Kids" by Raymond & Dorothy Moore it says, "The school, not the home is the substitute, and its highest function is to compliment the family." That is exactly what we believe. At Acton Academy San Diego East our goal is to support and compliment you as an entire family and help make you stronger.

Family life and culture are like a tree's roots and the stronger the roots, the taller and wider the tree can grow. In today's culture, most things are pulling against family life, but at Acton, we aim to support you in living the best life for your family.

A part of supporting the family is encouraging all members on their own hero's journey. We invite family members to work on being the best version of themselves. Whom do you want to be in the world, are you living your hero's journey? It's never too late to make a difference.

If there is anything I can do to help or support you and your family, please email me at mandy@actonacademysd.org.

Warmest Regards, Mandy Callister





We would love to meet with you to discuss our school, our mission, and possibilities for your family to join our community.

MANDY CALLISTER, HEAD OF SCHOOL

mandy@actonacademysd.org 619-709-5656

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https://actonsandiegoeast.org/



