

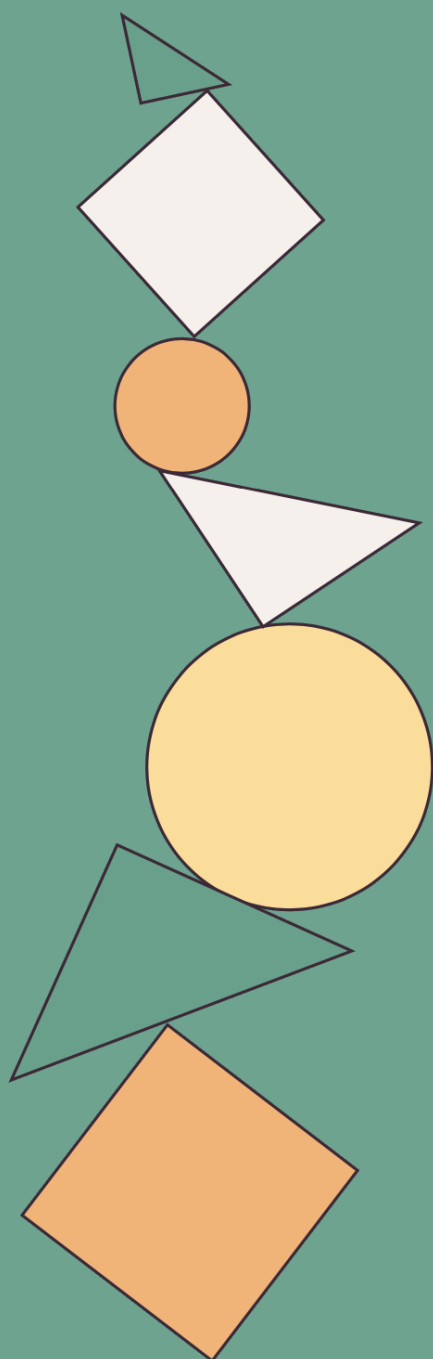
EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

2026 / 2027
year XVIII

Summary for prospective families

ESPAI AIGUA

Escola i
laboratori
pedagògic



Origins

The project was born in mid-2009 out of the educational and child-rearing concerns of a group of families and professionals working with children. For its first six years the project lived in premises in Barcelona's Clot neighbourhood and, in September 2015, it moved to the building of the former Tres Fonts state school in the Guinardó. September 2026 marks the start of the 18th year; we welcome children from ages 2/3 (P3, the first year of the early years stage) to 11/12 (Year 6 of primary).

Espai Aigua is an officially recognised early years and primary school. Recognition, obtained after the building was adapted, gives official status to the children's schooling at the project without giving up our way of doing things.

We are a non-profit, self-managed association: the Associació Espai de Criança AIGUA. Our only source of income is the fees paid by member families, and the project is built on the collective commitment and active participation of all of them.

This alternative school draws on the educational theories and practices known as "active" and "free" (R. Wild, M. Montessori, C. Freinet, J. Dewey, A. S. Neill, L. Malaguzzi, J. Piaget, Ferrer i Guàrdia, among others). The adult's role is to accompany the child with constant respect for their pace of development, their attitudes and their motivations, in a deliberately non-directive way: we understand that children already have an innate capacity to direct and regulate themselves in many aspects of their development.

Spontaneous activity, free movement, choosing between proposals, play, and freely chosen interaction with people and materials are what give rise to a child's real development, and learning then becomes functional, creative, deep and meaningful. The job of the accompanying adults is to make sure the environment is the right one to respect these processes: a calm, relaxed, loving space, rich in activities, suitable materials and play.

Our main goal is for children to be happy at school; to grow up respected, loved, understood and accepted; to unfold wherever and however they wish, and to feel at ease with themselves.

Who we are

Teaching team



Cristina García Carbonell

Head of pedagogy.
Teacher specialising in
special educational
needs.



Sara Maurel Virtus

Early years teacher.



Alicia Camargo Donaire

Degree in Fine Arts.



Jose Rodríguez Gutiérrez

Degree in Translation
and Interpreting
(English). Master's in
teaching.



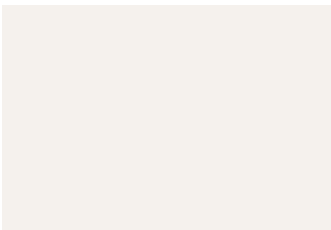
Laura Arnal Villanueva

Primary teacher, music
specialist.



Virginia Saura Caroli

Special educational
needs teacher.



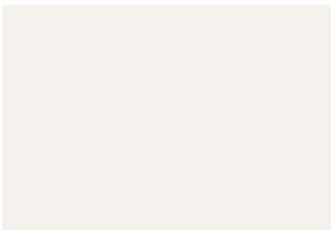
Adriana Gil Yela

Primary teacher,
specialising in attention
to diversity. Degree in
Social Education.



Lourdes Ruiz

Administrative
secretary.



Icela Cisneros

Maintenance.



School

Another way of looking at childhood

There is broad agreement that the education system needs to be renewed and rethought: it no longer answers today's social needs, let alone tomorrow's. Ours is a project immersed in this process of research, reflection and putting into practice new educational proposals that are continually being created and transformed. We are committed to an educational paradigm centred on processes, on the construction of one's own learning and on the indispensable emotional accompaniment, leaving behind knowledge fragmented into disconnected subjects and closed timetables.

That requires another way of looking at childhood, at its development and its authentic needs (R. Wild): more sensitive, more respectful, more open, more intuitive and imaginative. And a rethinking of our roles as educators with respect to children and their learning.

Sensitive pedagogy

If there is one trait we want to surround every intervention, observation and proposal, it is sensitivity: listening with our whole body to the messages children and their families send us, including those not put into words. We are adults who care for and accompany, who see not difficulties but opportunities, not mistakes but attempts, who do not judge but listen.

Sensitivity is also sensory. We relate to the world through all our senses, and the more senses are involved in discovery, the richer the connections. That is why every proposal involves a great deal of handling and creating: learning by doing (J. Dewey). And why we build knowledge from each child's own experiences and interests, so that motivation and emotion, essential to learning, are always present. Mistakes are not only not penalised: they are an indispensable part of the process.

Undisciplined projects

We approach the curriculum through, among other things, STEAM interdisciplinarity (science, technology, engineering, arts and design, mathematics), erasing the artificial lines that divide knowledge into areas. We use tools linked to experimentation, the maker and tinkering movements, gamification and a pedagogical basis rooted in constructivism, competence-based learning, a systemic outlook and emotional accompaniment. All of it shaped by the gender perspective, by awareness of sustainability and the climate emergency, and by the paradigm of neurodivergence, with a new proposal: "non-exclusion".

Art is always present, understood as a way of looking, of educating sensitivity and of approaching knowledge through emotion. Most projects, once completed, are dismantled: the value lies in the process, not the result.

School as a place of life and of living together

School is not a place to prepare for later life: it is present life, where problems are solved and solutions sought for what is happening here and now. Social life at school is based on communication between people and on resolving the conflicts that arise from living together. Conflict is not avoided: it is an opportunity for growth, and the meetings are where disagreements are aired and agreements and rules are made.

How we learn

We speak of a freedom that always takes into account the other person, the group and the community. We need rules of coexistence and safety, and we adults are responsible for keeping them present. Violence is not allowed under any circumstances: nobody may be hit or insulted. Clear limits give security, containment and shelter to move freely. And the order of the space (as Maria Montessori explained) is not merely aesthetic: it is the order children need in order to be autonomous.

Families are present: they can take part in proposals, tell stories, contribute ideas, suggest changes, always respecting the project's pedagogical line. A commitment to the educational project and its principles is essential, so that children are accompanied coherently.

Coeducation

Coeducation is the basic principle that guarantees the participation and development of everyone without distinction. We work to detect and remove stereotyped and sexist comments, attitudes and contents from daily life, and to create spaces in which new masculinities, femininities or other gender expressions can develop, so that everyone feels comfortable and safe. Spaces in which care is at the centre of relationships.

Coeducating means overcoming the power relations that subordinate one sex to the other, and incorporating on equal terms the realities, history and culture of all people in order to act with equity.

Early years

People do not learn through instruction but through autonomous living together. We want a space where children can be themselves and relate with respect, trust and mutual acceptance. It is the child who shows the way, choosing what they need at each moment, always with the guidance and accompaniment of their reference adult, who trusts their inner drive towards growth and respects their pace without anticipating. This warm, close attitude creates an emotional climate in which the child feels safe, relaxed and accepted, with natural limits that let them develop all their capacities.

Espai Aigua gives families the possibility of accompanying their children for as long as needed during the settling-in period. Every process is different, it is not linear (it moves in a spiral) and it lays the foundations of the relationship between family and school.

Primary

In "Four Little Corners of Nothing", Jérôme Ruillier tells of a square that could not get into the circles' house through its round door. Instead of cutting off its corners, they cut four corners into the door. That is how we understand the curriculum: to respect each child's own shape we widen and loosen the academic path, rather than rounding everyone off to fit through the same door. Success has many shapes.

How we learn

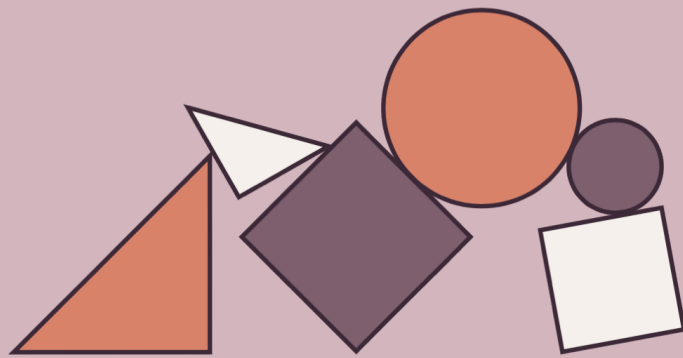
Contents become flexible and we focus on the processes, skills and resources for learning them: competences that let children access any knowledge and solve the challenges they meet. We work through projects born of the children's own interests, designed with their reference adult, who accompanies planning, carrying out and self-assessment. We give priority to art as a transversal learning tool.

Truly respecting each child's pace means loosening expectations about when each one is supposed to reach a given piece of learning. As R. Wild said, in order to learn a child must be relaxed: feel safe, accepted, unafraid of mistakes. At this stage language is functional and playful; first approaches to writing come at very different moments, and we respect that they should be born of the child's real interest.

Tools, proposals and tasks

There are three kinds of activity at school. **Tasks** are compulsory: sweeping, mopping, tidying, watering the plants... we all look after the school together and take on real responsibilities. **Proposals and projects** arise from genuine interests, of the children and of the educators; children are free to choose what to do with their morning and, as they grow, they commit more to their choices. **Tools** are a daily small-group work space (arithmetic, written, body and musical language, measuring, spelling, grammar...) that helps develop attention, concentration and planning.

Every morning begins with the **meeting**: in the early years, welcome rituals and the day's proposals; in primary, the moment to make decisions, present proposals and organise how to carry them out. **Groups** are organised by cycles, without rigidity, with frequent inter-cycle proposals. The ratio is one reference adult for every 10-12 children: 8-10 in the early years and up to 12-13 in primary.



Pedagogical
laboratory

Pedagogical Lab

In 2021-22 Espai Aigua launched the Pedagogical Laboratory: a 180-square-metre space at Carrer Agregació, 6, designed for undisciplined projects that make it possible, through creation and experimentation, to study the world from an interconnected, unfragmented point of view.

In the morning, between 9.30 am and 2 pm, the school's primary groups use it weekly as one more space for carrying out projects in an even more individualised way and with more specialised materials: a specialised library, a DIY and construction workshop, an audiovisual workshop, a painting and modelling workshop, a technology and science workshop.

In the afternoons and on some Saturdays, it hosts training for educators centred on learning by doing and on the Create method of pedagogical design: a space to reconnect with curiosity, motivation and the joy of discovery, shared with other professionals in an open, collaborative way.



A morning at school

Children move freely between the areas, workshops and proposals that develop over the morning and, as a rule, the activities proposed are not compulsory. The timetable may change slightly over the year.

EARLY YEARS

9 am	Doors open. Welcome to children and families
9.30 am	The entrance/exit door closes
10.15 am	Morning meetings (3- and 4-year-olds group and 5-year-olds group)
10.45 am	Snack. Workshops, proposals and free movement between the different areas
12.20 pm	Tidying up the areas
12.30 pm	Second snack
1.50 pm	Workshops, proposals and free movement between the different areas
2 pm	Tasks for the 5-year-olds group
2.30 pm	Story or reading time
3 pm	Home time
3-4 pm	Extended-hours service (optional) / extracurricular activities run by the AFA (families' association)

PRIMARY

9 am	Doors open, or gathering in the park next door. Welcome to children and families
9.30 am	Morning meeting; the door closes
9.45 am	Tools
11.30 am	Workshops and/or activity and project proposals in the different areas
1-2 pm	Second snack
2.15 pm	Space maintenance tasks
2.30 pm	Reading time
3 pm	Home time
3-4 pm	Extended-hours service (optional) or activities run by the AFA (families' association)

On Fridays the early years groups spend half the morning in the park. The primary groups make weekly outings to the library, the neighbourhood parks, Collserola, the beach or other green spaces in the city, as well as outings to museums or for specific activities. Sports take place once a week at the CEM Guinardó sports centre.

Calendar for 2026-27

We follow the official school calendar. The school year begins on **Tuesday 8 September 2026** and ends on **Monday 21 June 2027**. In July we run a summer camp (casal): the July fee includes the three weeks of camp, from 22 June to 9 July. An extended-hours service is offered from 8 to 9 am and from 3 to 4 pm, depending on demand each year, and the AFA organises extracurricular activities.

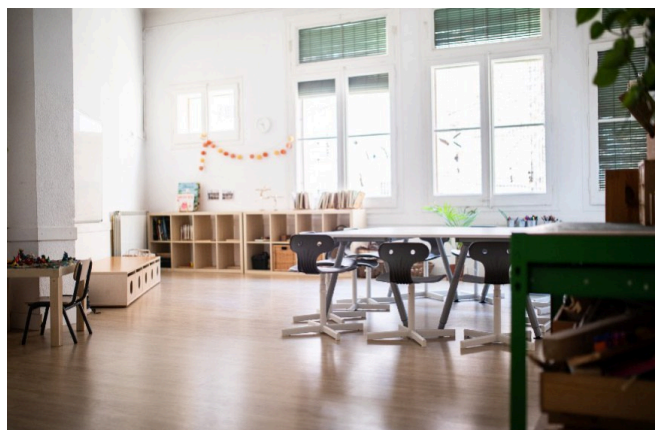
Spaces and location



The school is in the building of the former Tres Fonts school, at **Rambla Volart, 88** (08041 Barcelona), in the Guinardó neighbourhood, with a second entrance at Carrer Feliu, 14-16, for early years and lower primary. The Pedagogical Laboratory is at **Carrer Agregació, 6**.

The school has three outdoor playgrounds, a library, a symbolic play and construction workshop, two movement and music rooms, DIY and visual-arts workshops, project workshops and a games room.

- School
- Pedagogical Laboratory



Fees

The Associació Espai de Criança AIGUA is a non-profit association; its only source of income is its members' fees.

Monthly fee

€504 × 12 payments

Paid all year round, July and August included. The July fee includes the three weeks of summer camp.

Siblings

€352 per month

30% discount on the second and subsequent fees while siblings attend the school at the same time.

Enrolment fee (new families)

€200 before 1 March

€300 from 1 March. Paid once, on joining the project, and also for each sibling who starts.

Deposit (from the second year)

€504 per child (€352 siblings)

Equal to one month's fee per child; it covers the August fee. Returned when leaving the project, with three months' notice.

The payment commitment is for a whole school year. Fees are paid within the first five days of the month. Some outings (coach trips, residential trips) are paid separately; any family with difficulty paying for them can contact the secretary's office.

Maintenance tasks

To keep the school well cared for without raising fees, each family contributes **2.5 hours a month** (10 hours per four-month period) of maintenance tasks: painting, repairs, cleaning, gardening, organising materials... Hours not worked are paid for at **€10 per hour**. Tasks are published on the school's management platform, where each family signs up and sees its validated hours.

Joint guarantee

The works that made the school's official recognition possible were financed with a loan from the ethical finance cooperative Coop57, jointly guaranteed by all member families for as long as they belong to the project. It is a private, non-notarised commitment that ties up no money and does not affect the ability to obtain other loans; we explain all the details when you join the project.

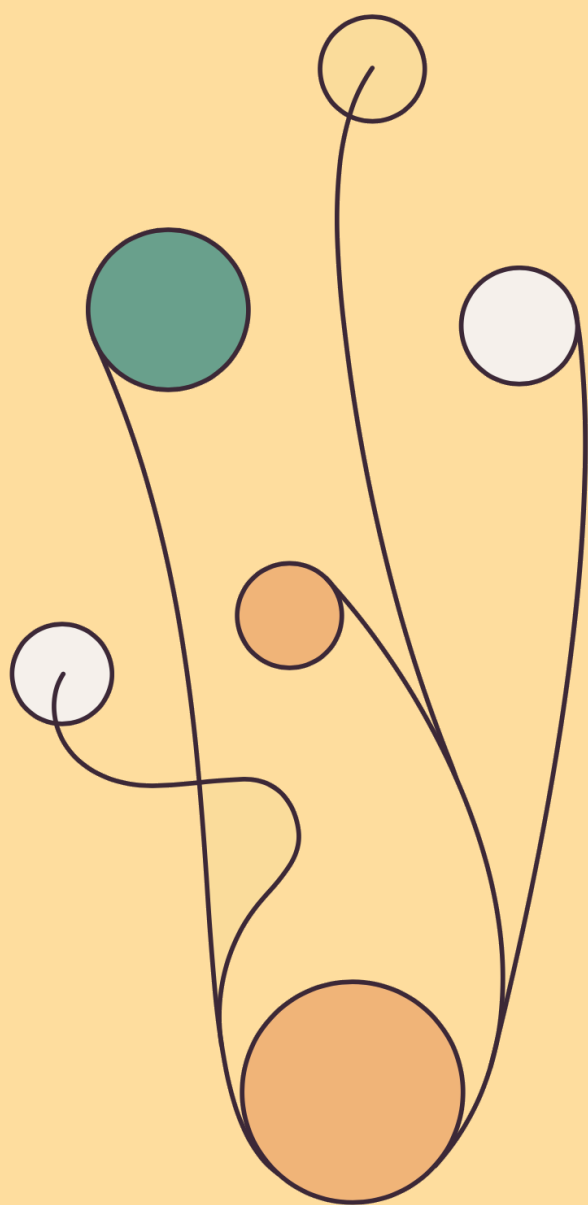
How to join

1. **Get in touch.** Write to the secretary's office (lourdes@espaiaigua.org) or call **931 378 059**. We will explain the project and the availability of places for your child's year.
2. **Reserve a place.** Once the project confirms a place, it is reserved by paying the enrolment fee by bank transfer (with the child's name as the payment description) and sending an email with the child's and family's details, the bank account for the monthly fee and the signed SEPA mandate.
3. **Start.** In early September we hold an initial meeting with all the families joining. Settling in happens at each child's pace, with the family present for as long as needed.

Association account: ES50 0081 5557 0700 0171 1972 (Banc Sabadell).

Where to find us

- **Website:** espai-aigua.org
- **Instagram:** [instagram.com/espaiagua](https://www.instagram.com/espaiagua)
- **School:** Rambla Volart, 88, 08041 Barcelona · 931 378 059
- **Pedagogical Laboratory:** Carrer Agregació, 6, Barcelona



ESPAI AIGUA

Escola i
laboratori
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