

Mother Teresa

Pre-Kindergarten Montessori

Parent Handbook



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"The education of a very small child does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life."
Maria Montessori

Brief History, Montessori Philosophy & The Montessori Method

Maria Montessori: The Woman Behind the Name

Maria Montessori was an Italian medical doctor born in 1870. She studied disabled children that had been institutionalized to develop her highly successful, concrete and sensory based teaching approach. Later she founded the "Children's House" (Casa de Bambini) and devised specialized materials, teaching methods, and later a philosophy that is now internationally known.

The Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori Method is founded on the principal of respect: respect for self, for others, and for the environment. The classroom is designed to create an environment that is calm, ordered, and realistic for the child. The materials and furniture are all sized for the children's learning and exploration. The Montessori instructor facilitates and guides activities, and models respectful behavior. Also, the Montessori instructor is unobtrusive and respects student's choices. Children are active participants in their learning, and are encouraged to follow what interests them. Each child sets his/her learning pace, and the rich curriculum allows creativity to flourish. The classroom community encourages self-direction through non-competitive activities; this boosts the child's self-esteem, independence, and awareness. When children have mastered a skill they are encouraged to take it to the next level!

Exercises of Grace and Courtesies

We say, "hello", we shake hands, we say, "I'm sorry,"
we say, "please" and "thank you", we clean up after
ourselves, we practice our table manners

Religion

We will learn of God's love and how we have been created unique and in his image, to be disciples of Jesus through "The Fruits of the Spirit": kindness, peace, patience, self-control, love, gentleness, joy, goodness and faithfulness. We start and end each day with a prayer as well as say grace before snack. Where possible, we will attend school based liturgies.

Learning "The Montessori Way"

Children have many opportunities for free choice during their day, but they must follow the order and structure of the classroom. When they first enter the class, they are introduced to the routines of the day. They are shown how to work at a table or how to get a work matt set up. They are shown how to take material from a shelf, and then return them to the same place. They learn not to touch another person's activity and they are shown how to observe another child at work and not interrupt them. These things are done for the comfort and safety of all their peers. Children learn that they may move throughout the room, but they must first clean up and put away their activity. They may work alone or in small groups. Children may choose any activity they want, but may be encouraged to explore other activities in order to gain a wider understanding of their environment and the world around them.

Core Centres of Montessori

- Practical Life Activities
- Science & Culture
- Language Arts
- Sensory-based Activities
- Math
- Art and Creation
- Sensorial Activities

Discipline

Montessori principal teaches and models respect for self, for others, and the environment

- ✓ If needed we will direct/redirect children in a positive, clear and relaxed manner
"Sally, please use walking feet, so you don't fall down."
- ✓ Children will always be encouraged to make good choices, but if needed a child could be asked to sit and "Take a Break". They will be asked to re-join the group when they are ready.

Requirements

- ✓ Must be three years of age in the month they start school
- ✓ Children must be completely toilet trained
 - We are happy to assist with snaps and belts, but children must not come to school in Pull Ups

Classroom Rules

- 1) We use friendly hands.
- 2) We use walking feet.
- 3) We only call people by their names.

Montessori offers
"freedom within structure."

Days/Times

- ✓ There are 3 morning options: 8:45am - 11:35am
 - Monday - Friday
 - Monday/Wednesday and some alternating Friday's
 - Tuesday/Thursday and some alternating Friday's
- ✓ There are 3 afternoon options: 12:15pm - 3:05pm
 - Monday - Thursday with some Fridays (4 year olds only)
 - Monday/Wednesday and some Friday's
 - Tuesday/Thursday and some Friday's
- ✓ Please try your best to be on schedule for drop off/pick up; it helps build routine, and expectations

Fees/Payment

- ✓ \$325 / Month for Monday - Thursday am or pm classes with some Fridays
- ✓ \$200 / Month for M/W or T/Th am or pm classes with some Friday's
- ✓ Payment is required on the first day of each month. You may choose to pay with post-dated cheques or if the entire tuition is paid in full for the ten month program there is a 2% discount. Please arrange payment with the secretaries. All cheques are made payable to Mother Teresa School.

Class Supply List

- ✓ 1 pair of indoor running shoes (**Velcro please:** so students are able to put them on independently)
- ✓ Backpack and Lunch Kit along with a labeled water bottle
- ✓ Full change of clothes in labelled Ziploc bag

Illness

- ✓ If your child is ill and will be absent, please e-mailing me directly
- ✓ If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be called to come and pick them up
 - If you are not able to be contacted, your Emergency Contact will be called.
- ✓ Please keep your child at home until they are rested and completely healthy

Separation Anxiety

- ✓ It is not unusual for a child (or parent) to experience anxiety the first few days of school
- ✓ Some children will adjust quickly, and others will take a little time. Here are a few helpful hints to start the year off positively:
 - Allow plenty of time to get ready for school, so that your child will feel calm upon arrival
 - Arrive on time
 - Keep your good-byes brief and reassure your child of your return and that they are safe
 - Be prompt at pick-up time
 - Have faith in your child but also in the Instructors

Library / Gym

- ✓ We will visit the Library where we can take out a book for the week
- ✓ We will visit the gymnasium (or go outside) every day for a varied and active gym program

Botany

- ✓ We have classroom plants, which the children will learn to care for and watch grow
- ✓ We have a classroom pet, which the children will learn to care for

"Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment."

Parent Days

- ✓ While the door is always open for parents to visit, we do ask that the opportunity be given to both the children and the Instructors to gain a relationship of trust with each other.
- ✓ Once children have a chance to get into a solid routine, to increase independence and self-esteem, parents will be scheduled for their "Parent Day". This is a specific day for you to join the class to see all the fun things your child has been doing and learning about
 - We ask that you have a sitter for younger siblings so your child is your true focus

Snacks

- ✓ Students will need a healthy snack each day of class - we encourage you to choose 2-3 nutritious items along with a drink to help develop a health body and mind
 - Fresh fruit & vegetables, yogurt, crackers and cheese, wholesome muffins, dried fruit, rice cakes, and sandwiches are all examples of healthy school snacks
 - Please do not send kool-aid, wagon wheels, potato chips, fruit roll-ups, chocolate bars, candy or other high sugar items - they will be sent home.
 - **WE ARE A PEANUT / TREE NUT FREE SCHOOL BECAUSE OF SEVERE ALLERGIES**, so please check labels on granola bars and snack items

Additional Supports

- ✓ Each child entering pre-kindergarten will have an early childhood screening conducted through the Grande Prairie Catholic School Division. This will either be scheduled prior to school beginning or soon after school has started.
- ✓ This assessment is a glimpse into your child's development in the areas of: Awareness of Self and Environment, Cognitive Skills, Language and Communication and Physical Development.
- ✓ Parents will receive a copy of the results and if any difficulties are indicated in an area, further assessment may be requested in order to provide your child with the best possible start to the future.
- ✓ Some additional supports may include:
 - Speech and Language
 - Occupational Therapy (Fine Motor)
 - Physical Therapy (Gross Motor)

Communication

- ✓ I truly believe that for your child's first experience in a school setting, needs to be fun and exciting!
- ✓ Open communication between home and school is a vital part in making this a successful year.
- ✓ I ask all parents and caregivers (where applicable) to sign up for our classroom "Remind". This is a quick and easy way for important reminders or updates to be received in a timely way.

If at any time you would like more information, have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me. I check my e-mails regularly and will do my best to assist in any way possible.

- You can also call the school (780) 814-9732 or set up a meeting anytime after class

I look forward to getting to know you and your children and I am excited to have a fantastic year!

God Bless,



Information was used from the following sources to make this handbook:

North American Montessori Center Classroom Guide

<http://www.mandalachildrenshouse.com/Montessori.htm>

http://www.milestonemontessori.ca/parent_handbook/parent_handbook.html

http://www.sunnybrookmont.com/parent/parent_handbook.html

http://www.keystonemontessori.com/doc/Keystone_Handbook_09-10.doc?rn=6965710