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THE MONTESSORI CURRICULUM

Philosophy

The basic idea in the Montessori philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. In order to develop physical, intellectual and spiritual potential to the fullest, the child must have freedom – a freedom to be achieved through order and self discipline. The world of the child, says Montessori educators, is full of sights and sounds which at first appear chaotic. From this chaos children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail their senses, and slowly but surely gain mastery of themselves and their environment.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed what she called the *Prepared Environment*, which already possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own speed according to their own capabilities and in a non-competitive atmosphere. The years between three and six are the years in which children learn the rules of human behavior most easily. These years can be constructively devoted to "civilizing" children, freeing them through the acquisition of good manners and habits to take their places in their culture. Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activity and offers the child stimulation. It is the *child* who learns and who is motivated through work itself, not solely by the teacher's personality, to persist in a given task. If Montessori children are free to learn, it is because they have acquired an "inner discipline" from their exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Maria Montessori's philosophy. Social adjustment, though a necessary condition for learning in a classroom, is not the purpose of early education. Patterns of concentration, perseverance and thoroughness, established in early childhood, produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, to judge. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social development go hand in hand.

Goals and Objectives

The main objective of our School is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will help children develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. All concepts will be presented in a safe, secure, loving and respectful environment. The specific goals for the children who attend the School are:

- To develop a positive attitude toward School and learning
- To develop a sense of healthy self esteem
- To build the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning
- To develop and foster an abiding curiosity
- To develop habits of initiative and persistence
- To develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate and judge
- To develop socially acceptable behavior
- To develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations
- To develop a child's love of learning through a process which is FUN and ENJOYABLE to the child

Admission

Children 2 ½ to 12 years of age may be considered for admission in either our preschool or elementary programs. In order to be accepted, the child must have an acceptable concentration span and be able to follow directions. A personal interview is required of prospective students so that proper placement may be determined. All students are subject to a four week adjustment period. If after this adjustment period, the child has not settled in, a conference will be scheduled to determine if our program is meeting the needs of your child. Parents are also required to tour the facility and meet with the Director prior to admission. When available, the Pre-Montessori program accepts children at age two. This program is a training program designed to help prepare the children for the Montessori environment and is not designed to be day care. Children need not be toilet trained, but must show a social maturity to adapt to the group interactions and activities. As the children master language, toilet skills, and respect and knowledge of the work, they will transition into a Montessori room.

Enrollment

The enrollment process includes submitting admission forms with the enrollment fees. The enrollment package must be completed before the child's first day.

Immunizations

Prior to admission, it is required that the parents submit a physician's report which covers the child's general health, physical and emotional maturity, special needs, and immunizations. A child may be exempt from immunization requirements when (a) his physician recommends against immunization on medical grounds, or (b) his parents sign a medical release based on religious or personal beliefs. A child may not begin School unless immunization or exemption requirements have been met.

Enrollment Plans

The School is open every weekday of the year except national holidays, or as otherwise specified. We offer two enrollment plans. Please refer to the current fee schedule and calendar.

Plan A: Year Round (includes summer school)

The enrollment period begins the first week in September and continues for one full year. Tuition is charged monthly, September through August.

Plan B: The enrollment period begins the first week in September and continues through the end of June. Tuition is charged monthly, September through June. The school policy is that the child is enrolled these ten months in order to keep our school staffed appropriately. If you take your child out before the end of June, there is not a guaranteed placement for your child the following September. Our summer program runs from July through August. Parents who wish to pull their child out prior to our summer months are still required to pay regular tuition to hold their child's place in class. We regret that failing to pay regular tuition during the extra time off will necessitate re-enrolling your child and placing them on our waiting list, as we cannot hold his or her current position. There is a holding fee for parents who decide not to send their child during the summer months of July and August. This holding fee is applied to September's tuition and is non-refundable.

Attendance

The School offers both full-day and half-day programs. The full day begins at 9:00 and ends at 3:00. The half day begins at 9:00 and ends at 12:30. We offer five, four and three day a week sessions. Children 4 ½ years of age or older are encouraged to attend School five full days a week. No substitutions of programs are permitted due to teacher/child ratios. If a child is absent for more than two days in a row, the office must be notified of the reason for the absence as well as the probable return date. **Tardiness is very disruptive to the teachers and classes in session**, therefore, we ask your cooperation in being punctual when dropping off your child.

Payment Policy

The yearly tuition for Plans A and B is divided into equal monthly tuition payments. The payment is the same regardless of the number of days a child attends. If a child is enrolled mid-year, the tuition is prorated. Every six months the child is enrolled, the family earns one week of vacation time in which tuition will not be charged while the child is not at school. A two-week prior notice for vacation time is required. School holidays and vacations are exempt from this earned vacation time. Vacation days must be taken consecutively, the school will not credit by the day. *Aside from this vacation credit, there are no reductions in tuition due to illness, additional vacation or any other reason.*

Sometimes we are asked why we charge the same monthly fee during the months when we take holidays. Please note that paying monthly is actually in your better interest than paying by the week. Paying monthly is the equivalent of paying 48 weeks a year. If you paid weekly, you would be charged for 50 weeks a year by subtracting the week at Christmas and Spring Break. Tuition payments are due on the **20th of the previous month**. The first payment is due on August 20th, or at the time of enrollment. If it is not received by the 1st, it is past due and a 5% late fee will be charged. No checks will be accepted after the 1st. Payment must be made with money order or cash. If it is not received by the 5th day of the month, the child is considered no longer enrolled and his place could be filled with someone on the waiting list. There will be a \$15.00 fee for all returned checks.

There is a sibling discount of 10% off the tuition amount for the second child enrolled, and a 5% discount for the third child enrolled. There will be a 6% discount for full payment of tuition a year in advance. Frequently, the School will stay open for child care only on national holidays. There is a daily fee for these occasions. Commonly, we are asked why we charge for these extra days. As a private School, we value our staff and students to have time off to spend with their families. We follow the public school district calendar to make this time off convenient with older siblings. While the regular School is closed for the holiday, we offer child care for those parents who cannot take the time off. This service is meant to be a convenience for those parents.

Tuition Deposit

All parents are required to pay a \$100 deposit at the time of enrollment to be credited toward the last month tuition. The deposit is non-refundable in case of withdrawal without 30 days written notice.

Fees

There will be an annual registration fee due for the coming year. This fee will be collected in the spring and will be non-refundable. Kindergarten students will be charged a materials fee payable at the time of registration for the coming year.

Extended Child Care

Extended child care programs are available for children year round. The program is offered from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. This program offers the children a chance to socialize and engage in informal play and rest periods if needed. Many of our extra curricular programs are offered during these hours. Occasional child care is available for an hourly fee, but should be scheduled in advance to ensure proper teacher/child ratios. Payment for occasional child care is due immediately unless other arrangements have been made with the office.

The School closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. All children must be picked up by that time. If there is an unforeseen emergency which prevents the parent from arriving by 6:00, the child will be attended to and **a fee of \$1.00 per minute per child will be charged.** This fee is payable at the time the child is picked up and must be paid directly to the person who assumed responsibility for the child.

Scheduled Hours

Children who are dropped off earlier or picked up later than their scheduled hours will be charged \$6.00 an hour billed in one hour increments. Children should be dropped off no earlier than 9:00 a.m. unless enrolled in the morning child care program, and picked up by 12:30, 3:00 or 6:00 p.m.

Early Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw your child from the School, you are required to give 30 days *written* notice or further tuition charges will accrue and your tuition deposit will not be refunded.

Summer Program

Our summer program runs through July and August and is optional. Summer is a time of relaxed learning and lots of old fashioned fun. Themes are created to engage the child's interest. This eight week session will keep your child in the habit and routine of school, but will provide a slight break from the regular curriculum.

Elective Subjects

Each year various elective subjects are offered. Please refer to the current list and fee schedule. A child may attend these classes only after enrolling with the authorization of his/her parent. If the parent wishes to enroll the child, the application form and appropriate fees are to be submitted to the office.

Sunscreen

For the safety of the children, the School uses a non-toxic, hypo-allergenic, water proof children's sunscreen on all the children. This program is to avoid mixing several types of sunscreen the children might bring to school. The School charges a small monthly fee May-September to cover the costs of the sunscreen and asks that all parents sign an annual

permission slip for the sunscreen. All children will be charged and applied with sunscreen unless parents sign a waiver. The School will not accept sunscreen from home.

Preparing for School

Children attending School for the first time are bound to be apprehensive the first couple of weeks. This is normal. There are things you can do to prepare your child for School, a few suggestions are:

- Take your child to visit the School prior to his/her first day
- Talk often about School and what a positive experience it will be
- Do not let your child see any apprehension you might be feeling about leaving your child for the first time. This will only reinforce and validate his/her feelings of distress
- At home, emphasize the positive aspects of the day
- Have your child help label and organize clothing and bedding for the first day

Arrival and Departure

A brief loving good-bye is the beginning step towards independence. Prolonging it only enhances frustration to both parent and child. A positive parental attitude is key to your child's successful adjustment.

Dress Code

All children must come to School with a clean, neat appearance and be dressed appropriately for the day's activities. Comfortable clothes which allow children to run, jump and engage in various activities are encouraged. A daily bath, clean hair, clipped fingernails and brushed teeth are expected. Clothes should be able to be taken off and replaced independently by the child. Overalls for example, are difficult to maneuver for a child who has just recently been toilet trained. Additionally, art projects may result in clothes becoming soiled. Please do not send your child to School in his or her best clothes, costumes, or logo clothes. Children tend to become "Batman" or a "Princess," and often have a difficult time separating reality from the fantasy their clothes represent. If a child's clothes are causing disruptions in the classroom, the teacher will simply have the child change his or her clothes.

Change of Clothing

Each child must bring a complete change of clothing that is clearly labeled, in a plastic zip lock bag. If the child uses them, they will be sent home and must be replaced on the following school day. It is the parent's responsibility to replace them as the child grows into a new size.

Discipline

The staff does not use corporal punishment or other intimidating means of discipline. Our approach to discipline is that of communication with mutual respect. Problem behavior is redirected into positive action. Occasionally a child may need time to collect his or her thoughts and feelings. The teacher may invite the child to choose participating in an activity or taking a break with an open invitation to return when the child feels ready. If there is a persistent problem and it becomes necessary to involve the parent, it is done with a spirit of

cooperation. If further professional help is required, it is done with all parties equally contributing their efforts to help the child. If such a program is entered into, the child's enrollment automatically becomes probationary, contingent upon the meeting of predetermined goals within a specific time period. This approach of school-parent-professional communication applies to academic and emotional concerns as well as to discipline situations.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The School has zero tolerance for violence, weapons and threats. This includes gun or other weapon play. We feel all children have a right to attend school in a safe environment. Children who break this policy will be sent home. Repeat offenses are grounds for expulsion.

Dismissal from School

A child may be dismissed by the School without prior notice if, in the opinion of the School, it is in the best interest of the child or the School to do so. If a child is dismissed from School, prepaid tuition will be refunded from the date of dismissal including tuition deposit.

Field Trips

During the course of the year we will be taking field trips to enrich learning experiences. Generally, only small groups of children go on field trips at one time and all trips will be well chaperoned by parents and teachers. All field trips will be announced in advance and all children must have signed permission slips on file before participating. Car seats for all children are highly encouraged, and are a must for smaller children. Parent drivers are asked to provide proof of insurance.

Birthdays

Children may celebrate their birthday at School as long as the teacher is notified in advance. We ask that the low sugar policy is followed for birthdays. We will not accept cupcakes or cakes. "Sugar-free" foods are not a healthy alternative. Nutra-Sweet and Splenda are controversial substitutes and, therefore, not acceptable. Please see the office for special ideas you can make together with your child. Birthdays at School are not intended to be the child's primary celebration. Please do not bring balloons or other favors on the day. Birthday invitations for children's birthday parties will not be passed out at School unless all children in the class are included. This policy is intended to keep any child from feeling left out. You may use the School Directory to acquire names and addresses of the children you wish to invite.

Nutrition

The School observes a "low-sugar" (sugar listed as fifth ingredient or lower) policy in the interest of the children's health and behavior. Please make sure that enough food is included in your child's lunch to provide a healthy balance of the food groups. The children bring their own lunches to School. Standard size lunch pails should be used unless there is an all-day field trip, in which case the children should bring their lunches in a labeled, disposable lunch bag including a canned fruit drink. We suggest that the children participate in the preparation of their lunches as an extension of their cooking and nutrition lessons at School. Any uneaten food will be sent home, to help parents determine amounts appropriate for their children.

Our school has a **no peanut policy**, due the growing number of severe peanut allergies. Please help us keep everyone safe by not sending any peanut products in your child's lunch or snack.

Lunch Ideas

1. Sandwiches
 - a. Nut butter with jam
 - b. Meat
 - c. Pita with hummus
 - d. Cheese
 - e. Bagel with cream cheese
 - f. Rolled tortillas with spreads
 - g. Quesadilla
2. Fruits/Vegetables
 - a. Carrots, cucumbers, celery
 - b. Dried fruit
 - c. Fresh fruit
3. Dairy
 - a. Yogurt
 - b. Cheese
 - c. Ranch dip or cream cheese with vegetables
4. Snack Foods
 - a. Almonds
 - b. Granola bars
 - c. Graham crackers
 - d. Pretzels
 - e. Bagel chips
 - f. Fig Newtons
 - g. Muffins
 - h. Crackers
5. Drinks
 - a. Milk
 - b. Water
 - c. 100% Fruit or vegetable juice

Foods which require refrigeration or heating may be brought in a large mouth thermos found in most supermarkets or drugstores. The School does not have the capability of heating individual lunches. If an unacceptable item (i.e. high sugar) is mistakenly included in your child's lunch, it will not be thrown away, but put in a labeled lunch bag to be taken home.

Snacks

As part of the children's Practical Life Activities the School will have a monthly snack host/hostess sign up calendar. This will allow the children to experience the full process of creating a meal: shopping, preparing and serving. Each month parents will sign up to bring the snack on a specific day. Teachers will provide suggestions that meet our School's nutrition guidelines. Your child will help prepare and serve the snack that day.

Children experience great joy and pride in the process, but it is not mandatory to participate. A snack will always be served whether we have a host or hostess.

Special Events

Holidays are celebrated in each classroom according to the discretion of the teachers. A few of our favorite holidays will be celebrated School wide. We appreciate parent help and support for these events.

Toys

Games and toys are not allowed at School. Toys can become lost or broken and this can be very distressing to a child. Personal items that have educational merit may be brought to share with the class. Parents are asked to monitor carefully what the child brings to School.

Release Authorization

Children will not be released to any person other than a parent, legal guardian or someone duly authorized in writing by one of the above. At the time of enrollment, parents are asked to list those people authorized to pick up their children. If it becomes necessary to have someone not so listed pick up a child, **a written release must be provided by the parent**. This person must be able to identify themselves with a picture ID. It is against the law for the School to prohibit a parent from picking up their child unless the School is provided with documentation stating otherwise. Please contact the office in these circumstances.

Illnesses and Medication

An ill child will not be allowed to enter the classroom. If a child becomes ill at School, the parent will be contacted to arrange for the child's care. The child may be kept isolated as needed until the parent arrives. This child must be picked up by the parent or authorized person within 30 minutes of notification. Children who are taking medication must have a written authorization from their doctor detailing the exact dosages to be given. *This applies to non-prescription drugs as well.* The medication must be presented to the School in the original container and it must state the child's name and dosage required. The prescription must be current. The parent must give the School written authorization to dispense any medication to the child. There is great danger in sending any type of medication to School in a child's lunch pail. Any medication sent to School without following the proper procedures will be returned home.

Children may not attend School if:

- They have had a fever in the last 24 hours.
- They have had diarrhea or have been vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- They have a persistent cough and/or nasal drainage that is anything other than clear.
- They have an infectious or communicable disease without a doctor's release.

Emergency Care

In the case of illness, accident or injury to a child, the parent will be notified and instructions for the course of action will be obtained from the School or designated hospital. In an emergency 911 will be called.

Disaster Preparedness

The School holds monthly fire and emergency drills. Children will be supervised at the School until their parents arrive or for a maximum of 48 hours following a major disaster. After this time the children will be taken to the nearest central disaster site where additional assistance and counseling will be available. Parents will be informed of minor scrapes and bruises at the end of the day, in the form of an "Ouch Report."

Observation of Classrooms

Parents are encouraged to visit the School and observe the classrooms at any time. Observation windows are available for each classroom.

Classroom Participation

Parents who have a talent, career, or hobby that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the Director or teacher to set up a time to share this information with the children. Parents are also encouraged to share anything they may have to aid in our different curriculum studies. Parent volunteers are welcome and encouraged to participate in the program. Please notify the Director if you have an interest in helping out.

Parent Education

It is the School's intention to provide parent support and education throughout the year. There will be meetings to familiarize you with the different curriculum areas of the classroom as well as meetings designed to address various parenting issues. The School has a resource library covering a wide range of topics. Should you like information on a particular issue, please let us know and we will attempt to provide resources for you. There are a number of books on the subject of Montessori education that can be purchased or checked out through the School. Parents are encouraged to read at least one such book each year to enhance their understanding of the Montessori method. The School will be happy to check out any books of interest to you.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled twice annually in the fall and again in the spring. During these conferences, written evaluations will be issued. Special meetings may be scheduled at times that are mutually convenient for the parent and teacher. Please refrain from discussing detailed subjects with your child's teacher when he/she is being dropped off. This is a time when the teacher must be free to greet all children entering the class. Feel free to call the School after 3:00 p.m. to talk to your child's teacher if you would like to discuss your child. The teacher can schedule a phone conference or a meeting at that time.

Newsletters

The School publishes a monthly newsletter distributed at the first of the month. Classrooms will also provide monthly newsletter specific to each classrooms monthly activities, changes and lesson plans. Because pertinent and important information is included in these newsletters, it is the parent's responsibility to make sure to read them. Parents can find the newsletters in their child's classroom at the first of each month. Please be sure to pick one up. Additionally, school newsletters can be emailed to you, classroom newsletters will still be available only in your child's classroom, let the office know if you would like to receive the school newsletter electronically.

Nondiscrimination

The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation or disabilities.