

MONTESSORI CENTRE
OF BARRINGTON, INC.

PARENT HANDBOOK

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What is Montessori?

Montessori is a philosophy of education with the fundamental tenet that a child learns best within a social environment that supports each individual's unique development.

Dr. Maria Montessori, creator of "The Montessori Method of Education", based this new education on her scientific observations of young children's behavior. As the first woman physician to graduate from the University of Rome, Dr. Montessori became involved with education while treating children labeled as retarded.

In 1907 she was invited to open a childcare center for desperately poor families in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome. She called it a "Children's House", and based the program on her observations that young children learn best in a homelike setting, filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provide experiences contributing to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners.

Dr. Montessori designed materials and techniques for self-contained hands-on areas of the classroom. Practical life, sensorial, math, language and geography materials are all within easy reach and invite exploration. A child may work alone or ask another child to share in a project, read a book, or have a snack. Within the environment a sense of community develops, based on respect for learning and for one another.

Mission Statement

Montessori Centre of Barrington, Inc. is an early childhood program that fosters independence, self-esteem and a lifetime love of learning. Our goal is to provide a healthy, safe, nurturing environment in which your child can learn and grow.

Philosophy

Montessori Centre of Barrington, Inc. follows the Montessori method of teaching and learning. The Montessori method provides a structure in which children in a group setting can develop their own individuality through independent play and learn activities.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help each child reach full potential in all areas of life. Our activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation. Montessori Centre of Barrington, Inc. will provide

a carefully planned, stimulating environment, in which children can play and learn. Our specific goals and objectives are as follows:

1. To develop a positive attitude toward School and learning.
2. To develop high self-esteem.
3. To build concentration for lifelong study skills.
4. To develop and foster an abiding curiosity.
5. To develop initiative and persistence.
6. To foster inner discipline and a sense of order.
7. To develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate and judge.
8. To develop socially acceptable behavior.

The Prepared Environment

In order for self-directed learning to take place, the whole learning environment – room, materials, and social climate – must be supportive of the learner. The teacher provides necessary resources, including opportunities for children to function in a safe and positive atmosphere. The teacher thus gains the children's trust, which enables them to try new things and build self-confidence.

The Montessori Materials

Dr. Montessori's observations of the kinds of things which children enjoy and go back to repeatedly led her to design a number of multi-sensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials which facilitate the learning of skills and abstract ideas.

Admission Procedures

Admission to the program is based upon child suitability, child/parent interest and commitment to the Montessori principles. Pre-testing is not required. Students are accepted regardless of race, creed, color, religion, sex, or national or ethnic origin. Preschool enrollment ages are three to five. Kindergarteners must turn five years old by September 1.

Parents who are interested in enrolling their children first must set up an appointment to tour the School and meet with the Director. This initial visit is usually without the child to enable the parents and Director to focus on the program. A typical admission sequence is as follows.

1. Parents visit, observe and meet with the Director.
2. Child and parents visit classroom, and meet with teacher and Director.
3. If accepted, and upon receipt of completed application form, materials fee, deposit and registration fee, parents will be sent a letter of acceptance, along with other forms to be completed.

Tuition

Enrollment of your child is considered a commitment for the entire school year. As such, any tuition monies paid can not be refunded, and any outstanding tuition balance is still owed. However, parents may cancel the enrollment if they inform the program in writing within 30 days after the date of their signed Application for Admission without penalty, except for forfeit of the registration fee. If enrollment is cancelled after said 30 days, the obligation to pay the full annual tuition is binding. Tuition is due regardless of absence due to illness, vacations, holidays or school closings. An additional charge of \$25 per month will be added for all payments 10 days past the due date.

A sibling discount of 10% (off the lesser tuition) is available for the enrollment of a second child from the same family.

Financing Options

The Fall semester's tuition is due by the preceding June 15. The Spring semester's tuition is due by January 1 of the following year. The deposit is a part of the total tuition, and is applied toward the second semester's tuition.

A monthly payment plan is also available, which is typically 10 installments. The monthly plan is computed by subtracting the deposit from the total tuition and then dividing the remainder by the number of payments. A small finance charge will be included in each monthly payment.

Child Arrival

The MCB has two arrival times:

- Early Bird: 8:00 – 8:10
- General Arrival: 8:30 – 8:45

To help your child begin the Day calmly and successfully, we kindly ask that all children arrive on time.

If your child belongs to Early Bird and arrives after 8:10 a.m., they will need to wait until general admission at 8:30 a.m. to enter the classroom. This allows us to maintain a smooth and focused start to our morning routine.

If your child has not arrived by 8:45 a.m., please be sure to notify us through ProCare.

We truly understand that occasional delays can happen. However, frequent late arrivals can affect your child's transition into the classroom and may disrupt the flow of planned activities for the group. Arriving on time helps your child feel secure, prepared, and ready to engage in the Day's learning experience fully.

In case of a doctor appointment, the maximum arrival time is 11:30 a.m.

Arriving on time helps maintain their daily routine and minimizes disruptions during transitions throughout the Day.

The MCB program aims to support children in their early exploration experiences. Children are required to arrive awake and fully engaged in planned activities. According to Rhode Island childcare center regulations, upon arrival, young children undergo daily check-ins supervised by staff to monitor for signs of illness, injury, or developmental concerns. These checks may include temperature assessments, behavioral observations, and prompt communication of any issues to parents or designated caregivers.

Families are encouraged to inform the School via ProCare or by calling the office if a child arrives late, has had a challenging night, or encountered other situations. This communication ensures that our teachers can effectively accommodate the child's needs during their time in our care.

Child Dismissal

The MCB has four dismissal times:

- Morning Program: Toddlers, 12:15; Preschool, 12:30.
- Full Program: 2:45 – 3:00.
- Extended Program: 4:15 – 4:30.
- Late Train: 4:45 – 5:00.

Late Pick-up

An "overtime" charge of \$10 will be added for any child not picked up at their regular dismissal time up to 5 minutes late, and \$10 for every 5 minutes after that. Payment is direct to the teachers.

The late fee payment does not exempt Parents from adhering to the School's schedule, and it is essential for Parents to recognize that the School staff operates on a fixed schedule that the entire school community must respect.

If the Parents incur more than two late fees in a given academic year, the School reserves the right to intervene and address the situation.

The accumulation of three or more late fees will require the Parents to schedule a meeting with the School Director.

Termination of Program

The School reserves the right to evaluate any child's continued participation in the program who may have special needs that the program cannot best meet, or that may be detrimental to the health or progress of other children. The School may, under these circumstances, request withdrawal of the child from the program. The School will recommend suitable alternatives to better meet the child's needs. Two weeks' notice will be given should the school request withdrawal of the child.





Family Engagement

Parents are encouraged to get involved in their child's program. Each year, the Centre holds Parent Night to welcome new families, Fall Festivals, Holidays around the world, and a special Family Festival. In addition, the Centre's open-door policy welcomes parent observers, suggestions, and constructive criticism. Parents are encouraged to come in and share their travel or work experiences with the class.

Preschool/Kindergarten Montessori Program

Practical Life

At the beginning, practical life forms the core of the child's work. This area aids the child's development in:

-  Care of the person
-  Care of the environment
-  Control of movement
-  Social relations

This area is the foundation for subsequent academic learning because it provides:

1. A sense of order; a task's beginning, middle and end.
2. A sense of independence – "I can do it by myself."
3. A sense of coordination – the child brings his/her muscles under his/her own control.
4. Most important of all, an ability to concentrate, because learning can only occur when concentration is present.

Tasks are broken down into simple steps so that the children learn to button, tie, zip, buckle, pour, wash tables and chairs, polish silver, brass and wood, wash and hang clothes, sweep the floor, and prepare and serve food for themselves and others, all with grace and courtesy.

As soon as the child has the basis for integrity given by the exercises of practical life, she/he moves on to the sensorial.

Sensorial Area: Between birth and six years, the child has a special sensitivity to sensorial impressions. Therefore, Dr. Montessori designed sensorial materials to help the child develop his/her senses and powers of observation. This development of children's physical senses enhances their readiness for greater intellectual work.

The child works with Montessori sensorial materials designed to develop and train his/her sense of:

Taste: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, etc.

Hearing: pitch, tone, loud and soft, etc.

Sight: many series of blocks for long and short, broad and narrow, small and large, and puzzles with geometric shapes.

Touch: smooth and rough, hot and cold, heavy and light, etc.

Smell: spices, herbs, flowers, etc.

There are also activities for the development of the sense of balance, and concepts such as shortest to longest, smallest to biggest, smooth to rough, and color tints.

Through the use of these materials, children begin to sharpen their awareness and increase their perception of the world around them.

Math: Concepts in Montessori math are always first presented in concrete, manipulative terms, and only later when the child has understood the meaning and use of symbols by using Montessori materials are more abstract forms introduced. The materials are designed to help the child understand basic mathematical concepts, beginning with the numbers 0 through 9 (sandpaper numbers), associating quantity and numerals (spindle boxes) and extending to the concepts of the decimal system and place value, (ten-, teen- and hundred-board). As the child progresses, materials such as the bead stair are used for working with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Children in a Montessori class never sit down to memorize addition and subtraction facts; they don't simply memorize multiplication tables. Rather, they learn these facts by actually performing the operations with physical materials.

Language Area: Although language is one of the four basic learning areas in a Montessori class, it spans every other area. Language consists of verbal skills, visual perception, and small muscle coordination. Therefore, language education begins with listening games, training the hand with the metal insets and puzzles, and familiarizing the child with the symbols of the alphabet using the sandpaper letters. The period for writing generally occurs between ages 3-1/2 and 4-1/2, and development in this area leads directly into the period for reading between 4 and 5.

A complete reading system is available to the children. Through the use of these materials, children gain an understanding that separate sounds can be blended together to make words. Even the learning of reading incorporates movement, from the tracing of the sandpaper letters to manipulating the letters of the movable alphabet to form words.

Geography/Cultural Subjects: The children are introduced to the three basic elements: land, air and water. At first, the children use large wooden continent puzzle maps simply as puzzles. Gradually, they learn the names of the continents, and then move on to country maps, studying climate, people and products. Culture units then cover food, dress and music from different countries, while typical geography units include world flags, land formations, the globe, beginning mapping (exploration of the neighborhood) and even the solar system. Hands-on projects reinforce geographic concepts, such as actually making island and peninsula land formations out of clay.

Science and Nature: Children learn science and nature through simple experiments with familiar materials, such as sink/float and magnetic/non-magnetic as well as hands-on experiences of gardening, seeds and flowers. The children will also classify living/non-living, plant/animal and vertebrate/invertebrate. Classroom science units cover such topics as minerals, the life cycle of a butterfly, bones and skeletons, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds. In addition, the calendar, seasons and telling time will be covered. Throughout the school year science will carry over from the class to the outdoor environment.

Music: Musical games, chants, nursery rhymes, finger plays and songs are used to help the children develop their sense of pitch and rhythm, and improve their coordination, focus, and enjoyment of group activities. Children deepen their understanding of basic musical concepts such as singing in tune, beat, tempo, dynamics and melodic awareness. Some of the skills being introduced in age appropriate ways include matching a pitch with one's own voice, easiest singing intervals, high-low pitch awareness, moving to a steady beat, and musical structure.

Art: Children are encouraged to use their imagination through experimentation. From the beginning, work with the Montessori sensorial materials helps refine the sense of color, balance and design, preparing the child to see harmony in his/her surroundings and using this in artistic expression.

The art environment is planned, set up and maintained by the teacher, as are the activities, so that the children can function independently to use their materials and tools, work in their space, and most importantly create their own unique pieces of art.

Drama: Appreciation of drama will be introduced by puppetry and various children's plays, performed throughout the school year. While not all children are willing to perform in plays with an audience, most, if not all, feel comfortable creating their own puppet shows during class time.

Spanish: Children will be introduced to Spanish through a variety of engaging activities such as music, dance, and games. They will develop multiple skills, including:

- Identifying colors and numbers

- Learning short phrases
- Recognizing the months of the year and days of the week
- Naming common objects and animals
- Understanding basic greetings and polite expressions

These fun and interactive methods will help children build a strong foundation in Spanish.

Children's Yoga: Available on-site at additional cost.

Private Piano Lessons: Available on-site at additional cost.

Disciplinary Classroom Management Policy

Children's Rights: Staff is responsible for ensuring that enrolled children:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards
- Have use of all equipment and space on an equal basis: equipment will be in functioning condition
- Have their ideas and feelings respected
- Have opportunities to express their anger, frustration, disappointment, joy etc. in an appropriate manner
- Have activities that allow participants to express their creative ability, as they explore and discover while developing to their fullest potential
- Have an environment that offers a variety of choices: physical gross motor quiet, indoor, outdoor active and passive areas, creative, dramatic play and exploration.
- Have staff members that care about them, enjoy being with them and help them grow
- Are treated with caring, respect, honesty and responsibility

Children need to be responsible for:

- Learning to take consequences for their own actions
- Displaying character development traits: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility
- Respecting the rules that are established for them
- Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm anyone
- Not willfully damaging any equipment or property in the building or anyone else's property
- Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program
- Remaining with staff member at all times and notifying staff if they need to go to another area
- Dressing appropriately for indoor and outdoor play
- Returning materials and equipment to the place they found them and before they start a new activity or go home
- Participating in and carrying out an activity that they committed themselves to

Policies and Procedures: Rules for positive behavior are included in the section entitled "Children's responsibilities" and are shared with parents prior to enrollment; Basic rules include respect for each other, the property of others, the facility, the child's safety and the security of the group.

Behavior management is accomplished through a positive approach that respects the child as an individual. Discipline procedures are handled individually, usually with a mild consequence that is associated with the particular infraction. "Time Out" is not used at our center.

Progressive methods of Approved Discipline:

1. Teachers offer to younger child different options (for example, comfort, hugs, read a book, move to another area, sing songs, breathe deeply, count to 10 ...) Children will choose the alternative that adjust to their emotional needs by themselves then when they feel better, they can express their ideas assertively. With older children, at the beginning of the year they implement the classroom rules for coexistence and the possible consequences for not following them.
2. Allow transition time and warnings before consequences occur.
3. Give verbal warning/reminder
4. Redirection
5. Talk through the program with the child. The child is encouraged to suggest alternative solutions and assist in implementing them
6. Remove child from activity and offer them to do something different and they can come back after 1-2 minutes, allow the child to return to the activity.
7. If behavior continues to be an issue, establish a behavior chart with the child
8. Discuss problematic situations with the child's parent(s) and incorporate his/her suggestions into the child's behavior management plan
9. For unsafe behavioral incidents, write an incident report and have it signed by the parent(s)
10. Severe behavioral issues are taken to the Director/Coordinator contacts the parent(s) and sets up a conference. A solution is usually made together as to the outcome and/or disciplinary procedure to take place. The final step is for the Director, parent(s) and the older children to meet to clarify behavioral expectations for the future and a behavioral expectation contract may be drawn up.
11. In all cases suspension and/or expulsion of a child from the School Age Child Care program is the final decision of the Child Care director. Although a last resort suspension or expulsion may be necessary to ensure the safety of your child and of others in the group.

Restricted Methods of Behavior Management

- No spanking or other corporal punishment
- No cruel, unusual or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment
- No denial of meals or snacks, drinks, rest or bathroom facilities as punishment
- No force feeding
- No punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet or other excessive practices of toileting
- No punishment related to eating or not eating food

Any staff member who violates any of the above restricted methods will be immediately suspected until further investigation is completed by the center and Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Health and Safety

Authorized Pick Up Policy: A pick-up Authorization Form must be completed by the parent prior to the child's enrollment at Montessori Centre of Barrington.

- If a child is to be picked up by someone other than the authorized person, the Center must be notified in writing via email or Pro Care.
- Parents or designated persons picking up children MUST come into the building and sign the child out. For your child's safety we will not allow your child to leave the site without an authorized person.
- A valid photo ID will need to be presented before the child can be released. Our preference of course is for you to tell us in person that someone else will be picking up your child; however, we know that emergencies do arise. If in an emergency it is necessary for you to call in to notify the staff that someone else will be picking up your child you must identify that you are in fact who you say you are.
- All persons authorized must be 18 years of age or older.
- At least once a year you will receive a form for updating any information, however, it is safer for all concerned if you remember to notify the center of any changes immediately.

Immunization and Medical Records: Each child's health and safety is of extreme importance. Upon enrollment, each parent must provide:

1. Proof of immunization
2. Physician's signed health form
3. Tuberculin test results
4. Complete medical history, including any allergies, medications required, and other special medical conditions.

The forms to comply with the above State requirements are included in your child's application packet.

If the child has not been immunized, a Health Department exemption form must be completed and filed. If an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease should occur at the Centre, exempt students will be excluded from School for a period of time as determined by the Health Department.

Medication: Medication will be dispensed provided that:

1. It is in prescription form, properly dated and labeled, and accompanied by a written dispensation authorization by a physician.
2. Parent/legal guardian written authorization is received which includes the dosage, instructions for dispensing, and parent/legal guardian signature and date.

Medical Emergencies: In the event of a medical emergency or accident, the parent (or individual indicated on the emergency treatment authorization form) will be immediately contacted. If immediate emergency treatment is required, the child will be taken to the nearest medical center or hospital, unless the parent has instructed otherwise in writing.

In life and death situations where time is vital in saving the child's life, immediate medical attention will be sought at the nearest medical center or hospital. Under no circumstances will the School, director or teachers put the life of a child in jeopardy.

If the parent cannot be reached in the event of a medical emergency, and it is deemed by the EMTs that an ambulance and/or hospitalization is required, the local EMTs will transport the child to the hospital.

It is imperative that parents keep their emergency contact information up to date.

When To Keep Your Child Home: In order to protect your child and the other children enrolled, as well as our staff, children will not be admitted in the morning, or allowed to stay in School if it is felt that they are too sick or contagious to others. Please DO NOT send your child to School on the days when any of the following symptoms are present.

1. Fever (temperature over 100.4 F)
2. Diarrhea in the last 24 hours
3. Vomiting in the last 24 hours
4. Undiagnosed rashes, impetigo or head lice
5. Severe cold or flu symptoms (sniffles, red eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain and fever)
6. Discharge of discolored or profuse amounts of mucous from the nose.

When Your Child Can Return: Children who have been ill may return to School if they show none of the above symptoms and:

1. if an antibiotic has been prescribed, they have been on that medication for at least 24 hours.
2. if exposed to a communicable disease, the incubation period has passed and we receive a physician's note that the child is no longer contagious.
3. if out for five or more consecutive days due to illness, we receive a physician's note that the child may return to School.

LUNCH

We ask that children in all sessions bring their own lunches to School. Prepare foods so that your child can be self-sufficient in feeding him/herself. For example, cut fruits and vegetables and send oranges and tangerines peeled unless your child can already do this for him/herself. Please label your child's lunchbox.

Suggested Lunch Items:

- Slices of hearty bread (rye, pumpernickel, whole wheat, oat, etc.)
- Slices of vegetables, raw, cooked, pickled, all kinds (carrot sticks, baby carrots, celery sticks, cucumber slices, string beans, baby corn, cherry tomatoes, peas, beets)
- Slices of fruit, all kinds (avocado, apple, pear, banana, orange, tangerine, peach, plum, grapes, grapefruit, blueberries, strawberries)
- Crackers

- Slices of cheese
- Deli meats (ham, turkey, etc.)
- Pitted olives
- Pickles
- Dried fruit (dates, apricots, mangoes, papaya, figs, raisins)
- Bagels or bagel chips
- Rice
- Boiled eggs
- Pasta
- Please pack a well-balanced, nutritious meal, excluding candy and other highly sugared or salted foods with excessive amounts of additives and preservatives.
- We are a nut-free school.

Items to be kept at School

- Each child must keep a complete set of clothing (pants and shirt or dress, and socks and underwear) at School. Each item must be labeled with the child's name and placed in a large ziplock bag.
- Each child should also have a pair of properly fitting, simple slippers for indoor use at School.
- All items should be brought to School in a labeled backpack on the Delivery Day scheduled in the school calendar.
- For Toddlers (Full and Extended Day): Each child must keep a large crib-sized sheet and blanket at School for naps. Small sleeping bags are not allowed due to space constraints. The sheet and blanket will be sent home every Friday for laundering.

Dress

We will go outside every Day, excepting rain or when the wind chill is 30 degrees F or lower. The children love to play in the snow, so boots, snow pants and a hat should always be at School.

Play clothes that are comfortable and appropriate are encouraged. As it is our aim to foster the children's independence, we strongly suggest trousers with elastic waists (no belts please!) and shoes with velcro tabs.

For the purpose of safety, jewelry is prohibited. Necklaces, earrings and rings can become choking hazards. Bracelets and watches have small parts that can break off and leave sharp edges, and may become choking hazards as well.

Items to be kept at Home

Our program emphasizes cognitive and social skills. Toys from home distract in many ways from the carefully prepared environment and purpose of our program. It is assumed your child has many opportunities to play with their toys when at home. Therefore, we ask that, aside from a favorite stuffed animal/toy that is critical for naptime, all toys remain at home and not in the classroom. Also, **please do not try to negotiate parting with a toy once it arrives at School, as this is most difficult.** Not only is it not successful, it also starts your child off in a disagreeable emotional state. Please address any toy problems before arriving at School.

Other items that should remain at home include

1. Glass bottles. Instead send sippy cups or a thermos and drinking cup (sippy cups, without leaks, are preferred).
2. Umbrellas
3. Jewelry (rings, bracelets, necklaces, watches)
4. Superhero attire, including slippers

Sharing Days at School

Children love to bring in items such as educational books or something from a recent family vacation, or educational gifts from grandparents. All these are welcome – no toys, weapons or superhero books please!

Birthdays

Children enjoy celebrating birthdays at School. Parents may check with the teacher beforehand to set up a Montessori birthday celebration, where the children learn the planetary rotation of the earth and the sun, and the months of the year from the time they were born up to their present age. The teacher will have a picture packet and snack suggestions for the special Day. Please do not pass out invitations at School. We have found that not all children are invited, and this can be upsetting to the children left out.

Holidays

Holidays are celebrated in the classroom according to the discretion of the teacher.

Newsletters

At the end of each week, parents will receive via email a newsletter, detailing the weekly's activities. This enables parents to follow up on school activities at home.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in the fall and spring; please see the school calendar for exact dates. If you feel the need for an additional conference, feel free to contact the Centre and set up an appointment.

Montessori Centre of Barrington Toddlers

Our toddler program may be your child's first group or school experience. We want to help him or her adjust happily, while having a fun learning experience.

Following this, MCB Toddlers will be more flexible than the ages 3-6 classes. Toddlers will offer 3, 4 or 5 day per week programs, morning, full or Extended day. Your child will be able to flow right into the ages 3-6 Montessori class, and be guaranteed a space when she or he is ready to move. Most likely, in January, summer or fall staff and parents will come together to make that decision. In the 3-6 classes, all children need to be potty-trained.

Lunch and Snack

Extended, Full and Morning program children will have lunch and snack with their friends each Day. This is a very social time for your toddler – we will also assist with learning manners at mealtimes. All Toddler program children will enjoy snack together.

Parents are required to provide lunch and a snack for their children. Please note that we are a nut-free facility due to allergies. Ensure lunches and snacks are healthy and nutritious.

Include fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurt, cheese, mini sandwiches, raisins, or other items low in salt, sugar, and fat.

Avoid sending cookies, chips, and candy. These items will be returned if included in lunchboxes. Montessori Toddlers will have purified water available daily.

Diapers and Naps

Montessori Centre Toddler teachers will help in the toilet training process, using a child-sized toilet.

- Each child will need diapers, wipes and diaper rash compound, as well as underwear or pull-ups if in the training process. Two changes of clothes should remain at School.

- Naps will be available for those children who attend full Day. Napping children need to have a clean crib sheet and blanket. Animal friends are welcome. Bottles and pacifiers will not be used during activity or play time, as children will want to use each other's. If your child needs one of these items at nap time, please talk to one of the teachers so we can accommodate your child.

Potty Training

At our Montessori school, toileting is viewed as an important step in a child's development of independence, self-awareness, and confidence. In alignment with the philosophy of Maria Montessori, we respect each child's natural developmental timeline and emphasize readiness rather than pressure.

Our Approach:

- We do not use portable or training toilets in the classroom.
- Children use regular child-sized toilets in the bathroom environment, promoting dignity, normalization, and independence.
- Potty training begins when the child demonstrates clear signs of readiness at Home.
- School and Home must work in partnership. Consistency is essential for success.

Signs of Readiness: Before beginning potty training at School, your child should:

- Stay dry for longer periods (at least 1.5–2 hours).
- Show awareness of being wet or soiled.
- Communicate the need to use the toilet (verbally or non-verbally).
- Show interest in using the toilet or imitating others.
- Be able to pull pants up and down with minimal assistance.
- Follow the simple two-step directions.
- Transition comfortably to the bathroom environment.

Readiness is emotional, physical, and cognitive — not based on age alone.

Requirements Before Starting at School:

- Potty training must be initiated and well established at Home first.
- Children should wear underwear (not pull-ups) during the school day once training begins.
- Families must provide extra clothing (including socks and shoes).
- The child should be comfortable sitting on a regular toilet (with child-sized seat support if needed).
- Frequent accidents may indicate the child is not yet ready; in this case, we may recommend pausing and trying again later.

What We Avoid:

- No pressure, bribes, or punishment.
- No shaming language.
- No portable potty chairs in classrooms.
- No forced sitting schedules without signs of readiness.

Our Role at School. Teachers will:

- Gently remind children to listen to their bodies.
- Support independence in dressing and handwashing.
- Maintain a calm and respectful environment.
- Communicate openly with families about progress.

Every child develops at their own pace. Our goal is to protect their confidence and sense of dignity throughout the process. When School and Home collaborate with patience and consistency, potty training becomes a positive and successful experience.

Playtime

Montessori toddlers will go out on the playground each Day, or for a walk in our super buggy that holds six children at a time, weather permitting. If the wind chill is 30 degrees F or higher, and not raining, the children can go outside. Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing for the season. While we won't go out in the rain, we will go out in the snow; the children love it.

Toys and Animals at School

The Toddler Program will have plenty of games, books, puppets and animals. The children will also learn how to share at School. Children feel very possessive of their own items; it is better to leave toys and other things at home, except for a nap animal.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in the fall and spring; please see the school calendar for exact dates. If you feel the need for an additional conference, call the Centre and set up an appointment. Toddlers will also receive weekly reports.

Please see the Toddler monthly studies and activities handout for more program information.

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