



SUMMERSUN MONTESSORI SCHOOL
PARENT HANDBOOK

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SUMMERSUN MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to be a quick resource for parents whose children are attending Summersun Montessori School. Refer to the sections below to help you find what you need.

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SUMMERSUN MONTESSORI MISSION STATEMENT

Summersun Montessori is a non-profit school committed to developing a quality early-childhood educational environment that promotes creative thinking and learning.

THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Summersun Montessori follows the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori. To learn more about this method of teaching and how it will apply to your child, see the sections below.

The Purpose of Montessori Education

Dr. Montessori believed no human being is educated by another person – that each person must educate themselves or it will never be done. Truly educated individuals continue learning long after the hours and years they spend in the classroom because they are motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love of knowledge. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-school course of studies, but rather to cultivate each child's own natural desire to learn.

In a Montessori classroom, this objective is approached in the following two ways:

- 1) By allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced.
- 2) By helping each child perfect all of their natural tools for learning so that their ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations.

The Montessori materials have this dual long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.

Montessori child care is designed to maximize the development of young children through scientifically prepared environments which build sensory/motor skills, social skills, high self-esteem, abiding habits of concentration, and inner security through carefully planned activities. Montessori theory has been used for more than a century and is now practiced in almost four thousand public and private schools in the United States and throughout the world.

Philosophy

The philosophical foundation of the Montessori approach is based on the premise that education should be an aide to life. In order to develop their physical, intellectual and spiritual powers to the fullest, children must have freedom — freedom to be achieved through order and self discipline.

Respect for a child's personality and trust in the inner potential of a child are prerequisites to the foundation of an adequate educational alliance. Montessori education offers 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 learning.

Children's Goals

The specific goals for the children who attend our school include the following:

1. To develop a positive attitude toward school and learning
2. To develop a sense of high self-esteem
3. To build habits of concentration for lifelong study skills
4. To develop and foster an abiding curiosity
5. To develop habits of 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
9. To acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning
10. To help develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Facility Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday

Class Hours:
Pre-Primary classes 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Primary classes 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

(NOTE: A yearly calendar with all school closure dates will be distributed at the beginning of each Fall program.)

Daily Schedules

Pre-Primary Schedule:

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Children may have breakfast, and then will be invited into individual or group play time with toys, reading stories or listening to musical tapes.

8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.: The children will work with Montessori materials employing the themes of practical life, sensorial and language and will also do some math number work. They will have snacks, enjoy social interaction with other children, and experience active and quiet activities.

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Children will play outside, then clean up and prepare for lunch. Sack lunches will be brought from home. Children will clean up their eating areas and wash themselves, then prepare for nap time.

12:30 p.m.: Nap time.

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.: Children will have snacks and be encouraged to participate in crafts, art projects, play toys, and outdoor activities (weather permitting).

Primary Schedule:

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Children may have breakfast, and then will be invited into individual or group play time with toys, reading stories or listening to musical tapes.

8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.: The children will work individually with Montessori materials, participate in small group activities of music, art, oral reading, storytelling, vocabulary enrichment lessons, mathematical activities, and group lessons in geography, botany, zoology and history.

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Children prepare for and eat lunch. Sack lunches will be brought from home and eaten in a group setting. Outside play before and after lunch will be encouraged each day as weather permits.

12:30 p.m.: Group story time (or nap time for children who take them). Children will then gather to prepare for the afternoon Montessori session. Frequently children will work together in small or large groups on extensions of their work with the Montessori materials.

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.: Children will have snacks and be encouraged to participate in crafts, art projects, play toys, and outdoor activities (weather permitting).

School Closures

Along with a yearly calendar of all scheduled school closure dates, occasional closure may be required due to emergencies or weather. We will follow snow closures according to Mount Vernon public schools. Early morning radio or TV announcements will be broadcast.

Messages and Phone Calls

Our school office number is **(360) 428-3510**. Due to the differing schedules and frequent periods of time spent outdoors, the phone is sometimes unheard. If your call is answered by voicemail, please leave a message and we will call back.

Enrollment Procedure

- 1) After parents' initial inquiry to the school, information will be given on the facilities program.
- 2) Parents will then be invited to schedule a time to observe the classroom and prepared environment.
- 3) Registration, immunization records, financial agreements, school calendar, and fee schedules will be given at time of appointment.
- 4) Upon completion of the registration process and acceptance by the Director, a date will be set for the child to start.

Daily Arrival and Departure

- 1) Parents are required to sign *their complete signature* on the sign-in form when they deliver and pick up their children.
- 2) The sign-in/ sign-out record is kept on the counter as you walk in the front door.
- 3) Children will only be released to adults authorized on the registration form, unless the center has written permission to release children to another adult by the parent or guardian who enrolled the child. Staff may ask for verification of identity before releasing a child.
- 4) Children will not be released to any person who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The center will notify the police of a suspected driver under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Field Trips

We try to plan field trips a few times each year. Since we have no school-owned transportation, we rely on parents to help drive and chaperone.

Parents wishing to drive on field trips must be fully insured and must have background checks completed if they will be spending unsupervised time with any children other than their own. Participation in field trips is always optional.

We will enforce the state regulations on child car safety seats during all outings involving vehicles. If your child is required to use a car seat, please be sure you bring one to school on the day of the field trip.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special event for each child. Our birthday celebration at school will include a special song sung by the other children. The child having the birthday may bring a few photos to share that will represent their development. The celebration can also include a snack that the class will share together. Please do not bring snacks that require a lot of clean up, i.e. cupcakes. Simple treats that do not create a mess are better, and excessive sugar, additives and coloring are discouraged.

Clothing

Slippers (or socks) as well as rubber boots are needed at school. Slippers must have rubber bottoms. Aquasox (watershoes) work very well as slippers. Please do not buy the character slippers or boots as they are a distraction to the class of children, particularly when the group comes together for a circle time.

Children need to keep an extra set of clothes in their baskets at all times for any emergencies. All clothing and personal items are to be labeled with the child's name. This helps us to return items to the child's basket, when necessary.

Sharing

Children may bring some personal belongings to be kept in their baskets and brought out during specific times of the day. Bringing "action-type" figures and toy weapons of any kind will not be allowed. Children are encouraged to bring items that can be of interest to the class and a catalyst for self-expression and discussion. Some ideas would be items of nature (i.e. a rock, a shell, a bird nest, etc.), a special book, music, picture, postcard, or maybe some artistic expression.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the Policy of this child care center that no person shall be subjected to discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, marital status, disabled or Vietnam Era Veteran status, or the presence of any physical, mental, or sensory handicap.

This policy is consistent with Titles VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Age Discrimination in employment Act of 1967; the 1974 Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act; the Governor's Executive Order 85-09; and the Washington State Laws Against Discrimination, RCW 49.60.

This Policy applies to every aspect of the agency's programs, practices, policies, and activities, including client services and employment practices.

Statement of Religious Practice

Summersun Montessori will not conduct any religious activity program.

Consistent with state and federal laws, the school shall respect and facilitate the rights of the child in care. Summersun Montessori will observe the tenets of a child's faith. A child will not be punished or discouraged for exercising these rights.

Health Policy

Please refer to the **Summersun Montessori Health Policy** document for detailed information about the following topics:

- When to keep a sick child home from school (see POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR EXCLUDING ILL CHILDREN)
- The MEDICATION POLICY including what forms to fill out for medications
- CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT reporting requirements
- Care for CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
- Required IMMUNIZATIONS
- What HEALTH RECORDS the school is required to keep
- Detailed cleanliness and safety requirements
- and much more...

Emergency Procedures

Please refer to the **Summersun Montessori Disaster Plan** document to learn what the school will do in a crisis or emergency situation, what the off-site emergency school location is, how to contact the school in the event of an emergency, and more.

Discipline Statement

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at our Montessori School. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work which they are capable of doing and are free to work with it for as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline which might be present in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's more mature behavior.

Below is the sequence of events followed when a particular child is in need of disciplinary action:

- 1) Define exact unacceptable behavior with the child and why it is unacceptable. Expand this to explain briefly, but clearly, what would be acceptable and what would be expected next time the same situation may arise.
- 2) If the behavior reoccurs, repeat number one above, but give the child a warning of "Time Out" if the actions are not stopped.
- 3) Follow through with a time-out period.
- 4) If unacceptable behavior becomes a constant recurring issue, interfering with the workings of the whole classroom environment, have the parents come in for a conference to discuss the problems, working together for a satisfactory solution.
- 5) If none of the above stages brings about satisfactory change in the child's behavior, the child will be asked to leave the school.

* The center will not use any form of corporal punishment which includes biting, jerking, shaking, spanking, slapping, hitting, kicking, or any other means of inflicting physical pain.

* Corporal punishment of any form will not be permitted on the premises of the day care by anyone, including parents.

ACTIVITY PROGRAM DETAILS

Summersun Montessori School's programs are designed to meet the needs of:

Pre-Primary students:	ages 2 and 3 years
Primary students:	ages 3 to 6 years

The program provides pre-school and kindergarten children with a learning environment and varied experiences which will help them develop socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development.

- 1) The program is designed to meet the developmental needs of the various age groups served: preschool and kindergarten.
- 2) The program promotes:
 - (a) Large-muscle development by providing experiences in climbing, pushing, swinging, jumping, digging, etc.

- (b) Small-muscle development by experiences such as coloring, working puzzles, stringing beads and cutting.
 - (c) Intellectual development by experiences in sensory awareness and discrimination, language, problem solving, discovery, creativity, etc.
 - (d) Social-emotional development by experiences in self-help, sharing, making friends, trusting others, respecting rights and property of others, making decisions, self-control, and self-confidence.
- 3) The program provides for a balance between:
 - (a) Free play and structured activities;
 - (b) Active and quiet activities;
 - (c) Individual play and group experiences;
 - 4) The program considers the cultural and other particular needs of individual children or groups, such as different styles of learning.
 - 5) The program avoids categorizing people.
 - 6) The program promotes individual, supportive contact between:
 - (a) Staff, child and parent, and
 - (b) Child and child
 - 7) There is a reasonable regularity to the schedule each day, with allowance made for a variety of special events.
 - 8) The schedule of activities is posted for staff and parents to see.
 - 9) The equipment is adequate and appropriate to the number and ages of children served.
 - 10) There is a sufficient quantity and variety of equipment to carry out the required program. There are art supplies, blocks and accessories, books, dramatic play props, manipulative toys, musical instruments, science materials, water play supplies, and large-muscle equipment.

Pre-Primary Curriculum

The first few years of a child's life are crucial to his or her personality and intellectual development. Children of this age need not only love, emotional nurturance and a healthy physical environment, but also an environment which promotes their very real need to learn. Summersun Montessori will provide an environment to encourage, assist, and protect the normal development of each child: a prepared

environment that will foster respect, support, and respond to their basic needs of independence, exploration, and the building of trust and self-esteem. The structure of the curriculum is based on five developmental areas:

- 1) Sensory and Perception
- 2) Physical and Motor
- 3) Self-Help Skills
- 4) Language
- 5) Social and Emotional

Primary Curriculum

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. He or she must do it by him or herself or it will never be done. In the Montessori classroom the child is allowed to experience the excitement of learning by his or her own choice. Children's lessons will be given with materials of:

- **Practical Life Exercises** - Exercises that teach basic skills in care of self and care of the environment, and which, at the same time, help develop the child's fine motor skills and sense of discrimination.
- **Sensorial Exercises** - Offers children a chance to increase their awareness of sounds, sights, colors, shapes, tastes, smells, and textures of their world.
- **Mathematics** - As children interact with the concrete and manipulative they discover the meaning of quantity and gain an overview of the number system.
- **Language**- Activities will include language awareness, vocabulary development and an introduction to writing and reading.
- **Physical Geography** - Materials are used to introduce geographical information.
- **Cultural Awareness** - Children gain awareness of the world around them by exploring other countries, their customs, foods, music, climate, language, and animals. This helps to raise their consciousness about other people, to gain an understanding and tolerance and, in turn, compassion for all the people in the world.
- **Arts and Crafts**
- **Music and Creative Movement**
- **Science and Nature** - In science the children's natural curiosity is stimulated through discovery projects and experiments. The plant and animal kingdoms are studied to foster a love and appreciation for all living things.

MORE ABOUT MONTESSORI

Recommended Reading

The following books and articles are available in our parents' lending library. Parents are encouraged to select from them in order to further your own understanding of the Montessori philosophy and method of education.

- Montessori A Modern Approach, Paul Polk Lilard. An introduction to the Montessori movement in education.
- Child In The Family, Maria Montessori. Explanation of the rationale behind the Montessori methods.
- The Discovery of The Child, Maria Montessori. A description of the nature of the child and the application of the Montessori method to child development.
- The Absorbent Mind, Maria Montessori. A discussion of the child from birth to six, focusing on the enormous powers of the child to absorb all that is in the environment.
- Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work, E .M. Standing. A biography of Montessori.
- *Montessori Talks to Parents* - A series of magazines published by North American Montessori Teachers Association discussing several topics relevant to parents, e.g., the home environment, the child in nature.

Twelve Points of Montessori

- 1) It is based on years of patient observation of child nature by the greatest educational genius since Froebel.
- 2) It has proved itself to be of universal application. Within a single generation it has been tried with complete success with children of almost every civilized nation. Race, color, climate, social rank, type of civilization; all these make no difference to its successful application.
- 3) It has revealed the small child as a lover of work, intellectual work, spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy.
- 4) It is based on the child's imperious need to learn by doing. At each stage in the child's growth, corresponding occupations are provided by means of which he develops his facilities.
- 5) While it offers the child a maximum of spontaneity, it nevertheless enables him to reach the same, or even a higher level of scholastic attainment as under the old system.
- 6) Though it does away with the necessity of coercion by means of rewards and punishments, it achieves a higher discipline than formerly. It is an active discipline which originates within the child and is not imposed from without.
- 7) It is based on a profound respect for the child's personality and removes from him the preponderating influence of the adult, thus leaving him room to grow in biological independence. Hence the child is allowed a large measure of liberty (not license) which forms the basis for real discipline.
- 8) It enables the teacher to deal with each child individually in each subject, and thus guide him according to his individual requirements.

- 9) Each child works at his own pace. Hence the quick child is not held back by the slow, nor is the latter, in trying to keep up with the former, obliged to flounder along hopelessly out of his depth. Each stone in the mental edifice is “well and truly laid” before the next is added.
- 10) It does away with the competitive spirit and its train of baneful results. More than this, at every turn it presents endless opportunities among the children for mutual help-which is joyfully given and gratefully received.
- 11) Since the child works from his own free choice, without competition and coercion, he is freed from the danger of overstrain, feeling of inferiority, and other experiences which are apt to be the unconscious cause of profound mental disturbances later in life.
- 12) Finally, the Montessori Method develops the whole personality of the child, not merely his intellectual facilities, but also his powers of deliberation, initiative and independent choice, with their emotional complements. By living as a free member of a real society, the child is trained in those fundamental social qualities which form the basis of good citizenship.

Phonetic Sounds

In the Montessori context the alphabet is taught with letters made of sandpaper for the child to feel as well as see and repeat. Each letter of the alphabet is taught, not by name (although this is later used), but by its phonetic sound. The following words isolate the beginning consonant sound from the rest of the word, yet pronouncing it exactly as you would if you were to complete the word. For example, “b” is a soft, explosive sound made mostly from the lips, not “ba” as in “ba, ba, black sheep.” People who were not taught to read by a phonetic method may find practice and perseverance surprisingly necessary before they are familiar enough with the sound to repeat it off-hand in answer to a child’s question:

at	goat	man	tin
bat	hat	nut	us
cat	ink	hot	van
dog	jug	pin	was
egg	kettle	queen	box
fan	leg	rat	yellow
		silence	zoo