



Parent Handbook

January/September 2012

Welcome to Maritime Montessori School!

Please keep this handbook for a guide during the school year.

“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.”

- Maria Montessori

Mission Statement/ Philosophy

Guided by the Montessori philosophy, our mission is to provide a caring school community that nurtures every child's natural curiosity for learning and supports full development of academic, social, artistic, physical and life skills.

Maritime Montessori School aims to cultivate a life-long love of learning in our children and inspire them to realize their full potential while positively contributing to the world around them.

At Maritime Montessori School children are encouraged to learn at their own pace and have the freedom to explore in a safe and structured environment. They participate in a prepared environment that encourages understanding, respect and thoughtfulness; they learn how to take turns, to share and to accept others while making their own discoveries and celebrating their own individual achievements.

The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method is an international philosophy of education based on the theory and practice of Dr. Maria Montessori. Dr. Montessori gave the world a scientific method, practical and tested, for bringing forth the best in young children. Maritime Montessori is suited to parents looking for a preschool that will stimulate, challenge and nurture their children while providing an excellent foundation for the next stages in school life.

The Preschool/Kindergarten Curriculum

The preschool years are an exciting time for both the child and their parents. These early years of development are critical in every child's life. The Maritime Montessori environment provides the child with a stimulating, rich, caring place to allow him/her to develop to their fullest potential.

Traditionally, children first entering Montessori education are introduced to 'Practical Life' activities. Children learn self-help and environmental care skills such as buttoning, tying shoes, watering plants, washing windows, and sweeping.

Sensorial activities are next, helping children develop, organize, and refine sensory perception.

The third aspect of the program involves conceptual or academic materials. The practical and sensorial skills learned in the first two areas lay the ground work for future; writing, reading, and mathematics skills.

The Montessori classroom offers many unique, educational, self-teaching materials which are used by the children. They accommodate many levels of ability. The goal is to cultivate the child's own desire to learn. The materials aid this growth by capturing the child's attention and inspire a process of concentration. Children then use the materials to develop fine motor skills, co-ordination, and good work habits.

There are five distinct areas in our Montessori Casa classroom:

Practical Life

Practical Life Exercises aid in the growth and development of the child's intellect and concentration. They also help the child develop an orderly way of thinking. Practical Life focuses on; care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement. Practical Life materials and activities support:

- Fine Motor Development
- Refinement of Concentration
- Development of Hand Control
- Develop and encourage a child's natural sense of order
- Preparation for writing

Sensorial

The Sensorial Area develops the child's senses (sight, taste, smell, hearing and touch). It develops the ability to discriminate. This gives the child the ability to order, classify and describe their sensory impressions. Sensorial materials support:

- Visual Sense– The child learns to perceive differences in size, form, and color.
 - Montessori materials: the Pink Tower, Brown Prisms, Red Rods, Knobbed and Knobless Cylinders, Geometric Solids and the Geometric Cabinet.
- Chromatic Sense– The child learns to perceive differences between primary and secondary colors, as well as the various gradations of each.
 - Montessori materials: Color tablets
- Stereognostic Sense- The child learns through his hands to perceive size and shape of objects.
 - Montessori activities performed with eyes closed.
- Tactile Sense– The child learns to perceive her world through touch.

- Montessori materials: Sandpaper tablets, Fabric swatches.
- Thermic Sense– The child learns to differentiate temperature by touch.
 - Montessori materials: Thermic tablets
- Baric Sense– The child learns to differentiate the weight of objects.
 - Montessori materials & activities: Baric tablets, moving child-sized furniture around the room
- Auditory Sense– The child learns to differentiate the sounds of her world.
 - Activities: The Silence Game.
- Olfactory Sense– The child learns to differentiate the smells of her world.
 - Montessori materials: Scent bottles
- Gustatory Sense– The child learns to differentiate the tastes of her world.
 - Activities: Food Preparation, food tasting.

Language Arts

The Language Arts Area offers opportunities to explore and expand the child's spoken and written language. Through daily conversation, books read aloud, and through new vocabulary acquired, the Montessori student is learning language, and thus, learning to read.

In the Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten environment, emphasis is placed on the process of acquiring language. Knowledge is acquired by mental and physical activities rather than on passive learning. Writing is taught before reading through the direct and indirect aims of the Montessori Practical Life and Sensorial works. In the Montessori 3-6 Language curriculum, writing itself is seen as a direct preparation for reading.

Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters, movable alphabet, and various presentations allowing children to link sounds and letter symbols effortlessly and to express their thoughts through writing. The Language curriculum is phonics-based with an emphasis on the child's whole-language experience. Children also enjoy French language instruction. Language Arts materials assist students in:

- Rhyming
- Phonics (letter/sound correspondence)
- Blends/phonograms
- Sight words
- Mechanical writing activities
- Reading
- Creative writing and composition
- Grammar/punctuation

Mathematics

The Math Area has materials that allow the child to move from the concrete to the abstract. This work gives children a solid understanding of basic mathematical principles, prepares them for later abstract reasoning, and helps to develop problem-solving capabilities.

The materials in the Mathematics area support development of the following concepts:

- Numeration
- Decimal system (place value)
- Mathematical operations
- Linear counting
- Squaring and Cubing
- Fractions
- Time

Cultural

Children learn about people and cultures in other countries with respect and admiration. The materials peak the children's interests and give them the freedom to explore and experience, as well as gain an understanding of the world around them. Music, art, and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

Cultural materials and activities develop the following concepts:

- Geography
- Physical science
- Zoology
- Botany
- History
- Arts and music

General Program & Schedule

Maritime Montessori offers the following program options.

Casa Program Options:

Monday to Friday morning program 8:45am to 11:45am

Monday/Wednesday/Friday morning program 8:45am to 11:45am

Tuesday/Thursday morning program 8:45am to 11:45am

Monday to Friday afternoon program 12:15pm to 3:15pm

Monday /Wednesday/Friday afternoon program 12:15pm to 3:15pm

Tuesday/Thursday afternoon program 12:15pm to 3:15pm

Monday to Friday full-day program 12:15pm to 3:15pm

**Children as young as 2.5 years may apply for admission if they are completely toilet trained

**Should you require additional after or before-school care please email our Directress with your specific child care requirements. Please send your requests to directress@maritimemontessori.ca.

TUITION

1. Tuition may be paid monthly, by post-dated cheque. Tuition for September 2012 is \$550 per month for our Monday to Friday Half-Day Casa Program and \$995 for our Monday to Friday Full-Day Casa Program. Post dated cheques are due on or before the child's first day in the program.

Limited space exists each year in our M/W/F and T/Thu, half-day morning and afternoon program.

The monthly tuition for M/W/F Half-Day Casa Program is \$330 (Morning or afternoon).

Tuition for the T/Thu Half-Day Casa Program is \$220. (Morning or afternoon).

2. Commencing September 2012, for new students, there is a non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00. Parents with more than one child attending Maritime Montessori will only pay one registration fee.

3. Parents whose children are *consistently not* picked up promptly may be charged \$5.00 for each ten minutes the child remains overtime. This will be paid to the employee detained at the time of pick up.
4. Thirty days advance written notice is to be given if you decide to remove your child from the school. Refunds cannot be made after April 1.
5. The school will be closed as indicated on the school calendar.
6. Refunds or make - ups for days absent due to illnesses, holidays, or vacations cannot be made since school expenses continue while a child is absent.
7. Returned checks are subject to a \$20.00 fee.

The Session

Our sessions are organized so that the children can choose from and work at a range of activities and in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion.

Circle Time

Every child is welcomed and asked for any news. Within the circle we discuss a topic, for example the solar system, dinosaurs, birds, art history.

Choosing Time

Every child is then able to go into the environment and select an activity to work on, for example number rods, puzzles, painting, sand play.

Break Time

The children are encouraged to either listen to a story, have free play or enjoy a small snack. Consistent with the Montessori Method, children are free to access the snack table throughout the session at their discretion. Snacks will consist of a variety of fresh fruit, water, packaged crackers and packaged cheese.

Focus Time

Within the Montessori day there is a focus to each session. All children are encouraged to take part.

Outdoor Time

Within the Montessori day there is also a focus on exploring the outdoors and nature. Weather permitting; all children are encouraged to take part. Please ensure your child has weather appropriate outerwear each day.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. All children who come to the school must be independently toilet trained.
2. Wednesdays is our show and tell day. We encourage children to bring materials that are *related to our curriculum for that period*. Please discourage children from bringing toys or objects that easily break. Toys are allowed, but not commercial figures such as Batman, Barbie, etc.
3. Snacks are provided by the school and also by the parents on a voluntary basis. When the children bring snack they may serve it. This is a good exercise for grace and courtesy. Please remember that we are a PEANUT FREE SCHOOL.
4. We celebrate important holidays. We make these celebrations low key so as not to over stimulate the children.
5. The Montessori environment thrives on independence and order. Should there be a child who is not socially ready to be in this environment, the child may be asked to withdraw and reapply at a later date.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

1. A child who is ill should be kept at home. If the child has been ill due to a contagious disease (chicken pox, lice, conjunctivitis, and others) a note from their physician must be presented to the teacher indicating that it is all right for the child to be back in school.
2. If the child displays symptoms (e.g. diarrhea, fever, etc.) indicating a contagious condition during school hours, the parents will be called to pick up the child immediately.
3. Parents are required to advise the staff of any physical, emotional, or environmental condition that may affect the child's health and progress in school.
4. In the event that the children are exposed to a child with a contagious condition, a notification will be sent out to parents.
5. In case of a minor accident first aid will be immediately administered to the child and the Parent(s) or Emergency contact will be notified. For major accidents requiring emergency or immediate medical care, the staff reserves the right to call 911 and have an ambulance bring the child to the IWK Children's Hospital for proper care.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

We do not release confidential information, including addresses and telephone numbers or our students. We encourage you to use the parent box to leave notes, invitations, telephone numbers, etc.

ATTENDANCE

1. Emergency information is kept in the school's file at all times. Children will only be released to those persons authorized on file and parents. Should an emergency contact need to pick-up your child, Teachers will require picture ID. *Should there be any changes please notify the staff in writing.* Children will not be released to anyone not written on the file.

STORM DAYS

Maritime Montessori does not intend to close for winter storms and will be open during these days, provided electricity and other utilities are functioning. In the event of a closure, we will communicate with parents by providing closure notice to C100 Radio, posting a closure notice on the Maritime Montessori homepage website, and announcing the closure on the school's voicemail system. If the school is open and you decide to keep your child at home, please call and/or leave a message.

2. HOLIDAYS

Maritime Montessori School will be closed on the following Holidays:

Christmas/ New Years Holiday Break (December 15th until January 4th inclusive)
March Break (March 5th to 16th inclusive)
Easter Break (April 6th and April 9th)
Victoria Day (May 21st)
Last Day of School (June 15th)

FIRE DRILLS

We conduct fire drills monthly to teach the children how to respond in case of an emergency.

In case of a fire: 1) the signal to leave the building is the sound of the fire alarm beeping for several minutes. 2) Children line up and follow the teacher through the nearest exit door. 3) Directress checks all the rooms follows the class outside taking all emergency cards and checks the role sheet for proper accounting of every student.

Class may not enter the building until safety has been established by proper authorities. A teacher will remain with the children at all times.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parent observations can be scheduled throughout the year. The classroom is open for observation at any time should a parent wish to observe. Please contact us if you wish to arrange a time.

Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year, one in each semester. Parents may bring up their concerns and the staff will inform the parents of the level of accomplishment of every child. When necessary, conferences can be held at other times.

Parents are encouraged to contact us if they have questions or concerns at any time.

Special holiday events will be scheduled throughout the year.

“Education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment.”

- Maria Montessori