

PATHWAY MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to create an environment for children in which they are encouraged to explore, create, learn, socialize and celebrate their unique talents.

SCHOOL PURPOSE

We strive to inspire a love of learning.

THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

The Montessori Method of education is based on the observations and discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori. She was the first woman physician in Italy, graduating from the Royal University of Rome in 1896. From her many years of observation of children she began to design activities that would help the individual development of each child. Given a carefully prepared learning environment, children work toward perfecting their concentration, inner control, and will. A Montessori program is an individualized program designed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential. The Montessori materials are designed to help develop concentration, coordination and independence, as well as give good experience with academic concepts. The classroom environment allows the child to develop his or her social sense and awareness of others in a natural and unrushed way. Montessori education is education for life.

"I have studied the child, I have taken what the child has given me and experienced it and that is what is called the Montessori Method."

Dr. Maria Montessori
(1870- 1952)

REGISTRATION

New Students: A non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 is required with the application form.

Returning Students: A non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 is required with the application form.

There will be no refund or reductions for scheduled closures, family holidays, or temporary absences. Parents are responsible for tuition each month regardless of the amount of time the child attends school. Please make cheques payable to **Montessori Pathway Inc.**

All enrollments are for the entire month. Cancellation must be given with one month's written notice.

If the school initiates the withdrawal of a child the family is relieved of any further financial obligation.

COLLECTION POLICY

There is a \$30.00 charge for NSF checks. Parents are expected to remedy payment. If no payment agreements are made parents will be asked to not bring their child for the first day for which tuition has not been paid. When payment is made the child may return to class. The school understands that families may experience financial difficulties and are committed to working with any families to make arrangements for payment.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Pathway Montessori's Langley location is at 7279 202 St. Langley. Park in front of the house and follow the sidewalk down the left hand side of the house through the gate and come down the stairs. Please close the gate after leaving.

We ask parents to exercise caution around the railings and stairwell when bringing and picking up their children from school.

The Fort Langley location is at the St. Andrew's United Church at 9025 Glover Road. Enter down the back stairs. Please remember to keep the gate shut after arriving or leaving.

We open our doors 5 minutes early for drop offs and pickups.

PICK UP

Be prompt for picking up your child. Not only do the children not enjoy sitting and waiting, but it affects clean-up & preparation time after class. If something happens that you know you will be late, please call the school. A **five dollar late charge** will be applied on the second late pick up. Everyone's time is important to them including your child's and those looking after them. Being on time shows respect for them. In certain instances (inclement weather, traffic accidents etc) consideration will be given.

Please notify the school **in writing** of any changes regarding those people who are allowed to pick your child up from school. In an emergency, you may telephone the school with instructions to release your child to another individual.

FIRST FAREWELLS

We want to assure a happy and successful school experience for your child. Sometimes children or parents may suffer separation anxiety on the first day of school. The Directress is well experienced in managing this, and has found that a short and positive good-bye is easiest for the child. The prolonged good-bye often makes the separation more difficult. Depending on the situation it is sometimes advantageous for the parent to come in with the child. Feel free to call the school for reassurance that your child has settled in and is adjusting well.

SOUND OF THE WEEK

As we have a strong focus on phonetics in our Montessori language program, we have an activity that will bring phonetics into the home as well as into the school. Each week, we focus on a different phonetic sound. We would like children to bring an object that begins with the sound for that week. We focus on the short letter sounds. In order for the children to get the most out

of this activity we ask that objects from the home/outside environment take precedence over toys especially the type of toys that would distract from the lesson. The object will be put in our sound basket at the beginning of each class and will be discussed at the end of each class.

TOYS AND SHARING

Children enjoy sharing items during the class gathering. We encourage children to bring objects of educational value such as plants, flowers, shells, nature and science objects and books. Students should not bring toys to school. Toys are better kept at home as they may become lost or damaged and they distract the children from their Montessori work. Occasionally children's treasures do come to visit us. They can be relinquished at the door or stored in a cupboard for the duration of the class. Kindly check pockets for unfamiliar objects when your child returns home; these may be part of school equipment and are often very costly to replace or render the material unusable to other students.

SNACKS

The children are to bring their own snack each day. Please bring a small container labeled with your child's name for them to bring their snack in. Good nutrition is important to everyone, especially for developing and growing children. Please send a snack that emphasizes good nutrition. Please do not send high sugared items or juice. Do not send anything with nuts as there are children with allergies. Drinking water is encouraged and there are paper cups and water set up for the children to pour themselves.

DRESS

Your child may be dressed in everyday play clothes. Aprons will be provided for some activities. As the children sometimes go outside during class time (weather and program permitting) please have them wear appropriate seasonal outerwear every day. Clothing should also be easy for them to manage independently.

Please send a pair of shoes to keep at school to be used as indoor shoes. Please send shoes that are appropriate for going outside for fire drills or emergencies.

Please label all your child's belongings with his/her name.

OUTDOOR TIME

Time outdoors is an important part of the child's day. It provides the fresh air needed to ensure good health and aids in the development of social and gross motor skills. Please send your child dressed appropriately for the weather.

FIELD TRIPS

Class field trips will be planned during the year. Parents will be informed of the destination, date, time and cost. The school does not provide transportation for these trips and a parent or guardian is required to attend with their child.

CHILD/FAMILY PRIVACY

Pathway Montessori values the privacy of each family that is enrolled in our program and will endeavor to keep personal and private information secure.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

The school telephone number is 604-644-7547.

Effective communication between parents, directress and child are essential. Pathway Montessori invites you to communicate with the directress whenever you feel your child's best interests would be served. In turn they will inform you of their observations and concerns.

Please make an appointment so their full attention can be devoted to your concerns.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

The environment of the Montessori classroom has been carefully designed to meet the developmental needs of children. A delicate balance occurs between the child, teacher and the environment as they work together to support growth and learning. The presence of visitors or volunteers can be distracting and sometimes confusing for the children. It can interfere with the atmosphere of independence and concentration in the classroom. We ask all visitors to respect the children and the classroom. In the case of parents and volunteers, please allow the teacher to direct you to appropriate activities within the classroom where you can become involved such as making materials, assisting children with a craft or sharing a special skill or cultural information during circle time.

OBSERVATIONS

One of the best and most delightful ways of learning about the Montessori approach to education is to observe a class in session. Once the children have settled in and the classroom rules and routines have been established there will be opportunities available for parents to come in for observations.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are welcome to share their talents and knowledge. Please speak to the Teacher if you would be willing to share skills or information with the children. The curriculum is open ended and your participation is welcome. Montessori teachers are always seeking to improve and create materials. If you're willing to help let us know!

BIRTHDAYS

Pathway Montessori holds a special ceremony for birthdays and parents are welcome to share in the celebration. The child brings a photograph from each year of his or her life. The birthday child will be invited to walk around a candle (representing the sun) while holding a globe of Earth, as we share the pictures, and talk about the child's development for each year. We end the

walk with the traditional birthday song and each child in the class shakes the birthday child's hand and wishes them a Happy Birthday. We always follow the lead of the child and adjust the activities to reflect their comfort level. Even if a child is reluctant about the walking, they are usually pleased to share their pictures and birthday snack. If you wish to send a snack, fruit kabobs have always been a favorite of the children.

CELEBRATIONS

We teach with great respect for the child and his or her family and background. We welcome families to share their heritage through cultural information, music, food or a story. Many of the holidays are approached from a cultural perspective. This helps to build a sense of community by celebrating our similarities as well as our differences. If we want to achieve peace, we must begin by teaching children how to accept each person for who they are.

SPECIAL DAYS

We acknowledge special days, such as Valentine's Day at school with activities and crafts. We ask that birthday invitations be mailed or given out discreetly at school in order to avoid confusion and possible hurt feelings.

ILLNESS

It is most important that children who are sick are not sent to school. This is for your child's good as well as for the welfare of the other children in the class. Sick children do not benefit from being in school, and can cause other children to become ill. If your child becomes ill at school, we will request that you, or your designated emergency contact, take your child from school. Please remember that when illness is accompanied by fever, your child may not return to school until their temperature has been normal for 24 hours (without medication)

MEDICATION

If a child has a medical condition that requires the administration of medicine at school parents will require filling out and signing a Medication Release Form. Medication will be stored in a high unlocked kitchen cupboard that is easily accessible to caregiver but is inaccessible to children except in the case where self-medication has been deemed appropriate. Medication must be in the original container and the directions for use on the container must be followed unless alternate written instructions came from a physician. Administration of medicine, including the time and amount, needs to be documented appropriately in the child's care plan.

EMERGENCIES

Every effort is made to ensure your child's safety. The Directress has CPR and First Aid training. Minor accidents will receive prompt attention. Accident reports are given if the accident caused injury to your child. In case of a serious injury, parents will be called. If necessary, the parents may need to pick up the child. In an emergency, paramedics will be called first, then the parents or emergency contacts.

FIRE AND EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and earthquake drills are held once a month as a safety precaution. A record will be maintained identifying the date of the fire drill, exit used, time taken to evacuate and children present. Children will be reassured and learn about fire safety and earthquake preparedness in a positive and non-threatening way. The school has appropriate fire safety stories to read prior to having the fire drill. Children are required to wear shoes at all times to be prepared in the event of a fire or earthquake. A cell phone will be kept in the class at all times.

Langley location emergency procedures:

In the case of a real fire, children walk to 7289 202 St. Attendance is called, and then parents are called.

In a drill, children are lead to the yard, and attendance is called. Once all names have been called, the children are lead back to school.

In the case of major emergency that requires evacuation the meeting place is at R.C. Garnett Elementary school located at 7096 201 St. Langley.

Fort Langley location emergency procedures:

In the case of a real fire, children will be guided to the public library at 9167 Glover Rd. Fort Langley. Attendance will be called, and then the parents will be called.

In a drill, teacher will lead children out the west door up the stairs to the playground where they will be lined up along the fence. Attendance will be called. Once all names have been called, the children are lead back to school.

In the case of major emergency that requires evacuation the meeting place is at the Fort Langley Public Library located at 9167 Glover Rd. Fort Langley.

In the case of a major emergency the out of area contact is Pathway Montessori Preschool in Calgary at phone # 403-313-2214 or 403-253-1533.

LOST AND FOUND

With so many children it is sometimes difficult to keep track of clothing and other belongings. Having clothes, shoes and snack containers labeled helps reduce “lost” items. Items that are not claimed at the end of the year may be kept for children who may need it on any given day or donated to a good cause.

EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

Pathway Montessori maintains documentation on each child in accordance with the Montessori curriculum. Evaluation of progress is based on the individual growth of each child. Children are not compared to each other and not encouraged by external rewards. Younger children’s work is mostly hands on and older children maintain a file of their work.

Report cards will be written for all children and will be distributed in June.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is in a Montessori classroom?

A Montessori class is a child-sized world. Materials and curriculum center on practical life, sensorial, language, math, geography, history, science, art and music. Materials or exercises are designed to stimulate independent exploration. This prepared environment entices the child to proceed at his own pace from simple activities to complex ones.

What is the role of the Montessori teacher?

The Directress works with individual children, introduces materials, and gives guidance where needed. One of the primary tasks is careful observation of each child in order to determine his/her needs and to gain the knowledge needed in preparing the environment to aid his/her growth.

How is a Montessori Preschool different from other Preschools?

In most preschools the children are taught educational concepts in a group by a teacher. In a Montessori preschool the children learn concepts spontaneously as they work independently with the many materials in the environment.

What is the Montessori method of education?

The Montessori Method is basically a unique approach to learning. Rather than "teaching" the child concepts, an environment is designed to stimulate the child's interest and facilitate his understanding and learning capacities spontaneously - with little or no adult intervention.

Is the child free to do what they choose in the classroom?

Children are free to move about the classroom at will, to talk to other children, to work with equipment or ask the teacher to introduce new materials to them. They are not free to disturb others at work or to abuse the equipment so important to their development.

Why the mixed age group?

The combination of different ages allows the children the opportunity to learn from each other and permits the older children to reinforce their knowledge by sharing their skills with the younger children. We believe that the third year at the Primary level (Kindergarten) is of unique importance and we encourage five-year old children to remain with their Primary level class.

What are sensitive periods?

This is Montessori's name for age periods when the child shows unusual capabilities in acquiring particular skills. Dr. Montessori found that the child is able to absorb different subjects more readily at different ages or periods of growth.

What about socialization and group work?

Socialization is very much a part of the Montessori Method. In the classroom you will notice children interacting, choosing to work on projects together, and older children helping younger ones. Each day there is a group gathering time.

How well do Montessori children adjust to public schools?

Montessori educated children are generally very flexible and adjust quite easily to public schools. They are often better students and spend their time in more productive ways because they are self-directed and have a positive attitude toward learning.

With all this freedom, isn't there confusion?

The concept of freedom within the classroom is a freedom within limits. A child is allowed to work freely as long as the ground rules are followed. Because children have the freedom to follow their own interests, they are generally happy and busily involved with their work.