

MONTESSORI SCHOOL - PRIMARY HANDBOOK

**Accredited by
Association Montessori Internationale**

Registered
Non-Public Elementary School
State of Illinois

“The real essence of the Montessori method is to help the natural process of human development, to create integrated personalities. . . that is. .

PEOPLE-

- who have a sense of responsibility,
- who know their limitations,
- who have a sense of duty toward themselves and society and
- who, having a clear vision, can make a positive contribution to solving social problems.”

Mr. Mario Montessori

THE EDWARDSVILLE MONTESSORI SOCIETY, INC.

The Edwardsville Montessori Society, (E.M.S.), a non-profit organization, was formed in 1970 for the purpose of learning about the Montessori approach to child development. Its members now include educators and parents from around the United States as well as from our local community.

Parents of children enrolled at OUR Montessori School are automatically members of the E.M.S.

The Society is the umbrella organization for two schools, which are governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Among the activities of the Society are lectures, workshops, a newsletter and a lending library specializing in books on Montessori and the varied phases of child development. You will receive notices throughout the year on the activities to be presented.

The Board of Directors is a self-perpetuating board, and must include a trained/certified Montessori Director/Directress. This member has always been the Head Directress/Director.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kim Kirn, President

Francesca Cooper, Vice-President

Susan Brennan, Treasurer

Kara LeChien, Secretary

Mary Beth McGivern, Head Directress

MONTESSORI SCHOOL STORY OF PROGRESS

- 1971 Our school opened first Primary class in Edwardsville.
- 1973 A second Primary class was started.
- 1975 The Elementary Program was started with a class for 6 year olds only. Each year a grade was added until the elementary program consisted of first through sixth grades.
- 1979 To help meet the needs of working Montessori parents, the Montessori Before and After School Program was made available to students enrolled in our school.
- 1980 A satellite school was opened in the Belleville area providing one Primary class.
- 1982 Our school relocated from Eden Church Education Building in Edwardsville to the old Stallings School building on State Route 162 in Granite City.
- 1990 The name “Edwardsville” was dropped from our school name, becoming “Montessori School”.
- 1995 The St. Clair (Belleville) Campus added a second Primary class.
- 2001 Our school celebrated 30 years of excellence and progress in Montessori education.

THE ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNAZIONALE

The accrediting organization for our school is the Association Montessori Internationale (A.M.I.), headquartered in Amsterdam, Holland.

The A.M.I. was established in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori and directed by her son, Mr. Mario Montessori, until his death in 1982. The A.M.I. is the recognized international authority on Montessori education and directs its studies in affiliated teacher-training institutions on five continents. Yearly, international study conferences sponsored by A.M.I. have fostered exchange of insights which have grown out of the successful application of Montessori to widely differing lands and cultures.

OBJECTIVE

The basic objective of the Montessori school is to help the child acquire the self confidence and inner motivation he needs in order to fulfill his highest potential. Emphasis is placed on:

- Freedom for the child within the limits of the “prepared environment”
- Ordered learning exercises which are self-correcting and motivate the child to active and concentrated participation
- Self-directed activities which stress an individual, rather than a group approach to learning
- Cultural awareness through exposure to the world of nature, the fine arts and literature
- Social growth through learning to share and cooperate with others...that respect for each other’s rights and individuality which promotes harmony and a spirit of community

ORGANIZATION

The school is organized into four separate programs: the **Primary, Extended Day, Elementary, and Day Care.**

The **Primary Program** is designed for children ages 2 ½ through 6. Due to the sequential nature of the activities, the Primary Program is designed to cover a three to four year period.

The **Extended Day Program** is an all day program designed for children ages 5 and 6 enabling the older primary child to broaden experiences and to internalize and strengthen desired skills.

The **Elementary Program** consists of ungraded classes of first through sixth grades. Children over the age of 6 (or at the discretion of the Directress) progress at their own pace under the guidance of A.M.I. trained Elementary Directresses. The program offers an integrated approach to the various subject areas. Independence, initiative, and responsible behavior are encouraged. The Elementary Program is open only those children who have participated in an accredited Montessori program at the Primary level.

The **Before and After School Program (Day Care) is available to all children enrolled at the Montessori School.** The Day Care hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. See the Before and After School Program section for further details.

The Montessori-St. Clair is our satellite school. This school has two primary classrooms and is located at 2360 Country Road, Belleville, IL 62221. Phone Number: (618) 235-4289. Margie Anderson is the Head Directress for this school.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

You will receive a calendar at the beginning of each school year. Please transfer this information to your own calendar.

FIRST DAYS

The first day is a great change in the young child's life. His adjustment to this new environment depends in large part upon the attitudes of the parents and their cooperation with the Directresses.

New children are introduced to the Montessori environment in small groups. This procedure is called "Phasing in" and allows each child to have the individual attention he needs in the early days. You will receive a letter or phone call giving you the specific date and time when your child enters. Please do not ask the staff to make changes or exceptions. The date assigned has been chosen according to the child's age, sex, siblings in the class, and many other factors. Should extreme hardship occur, please contact us and we will try to arrange a change.

Avoid excessive discussion about the school. Your child should feel it will be a normal and natural part of his growth and an extension of his home life. If you are calm and positive in your approach, your child will sense this and feel that going to school is a good thing. Just a few days before, teach your child the names of the Directresses.

Upon arrival the first day, bring your child to his/her classroom door. A Directress will be there to greet your child and accompany him/her into the classroom. Say a friendly good-bye, then leave; do not linger. Please do not return for any reason or accompany your child into the classroom. What happens after you leave is the Directress' responsibility and you need to have confidence in their ability if your child's adjustment is to be the easiest for him/her.

ARRIVALS

Children will be greeted each morning between 8:20 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. at the classroom door. As the Directresses are busy preparing for a new day prior to this time, the school will not be responsible for children before 8:20 a.m. It is the responsibility of the parent to bring the child into the building or to see that the child is safely inside and has been greeted by one of the staff before leaving.

Should a child arrive before that time, he or she will be placed in Day Care and the parents will be charged for the Day Care service.

Always try to be on time...a tardy start means something missed. The child who comes to school late disrupts the class and may suffer self-imposed embarrassment. One who consistently brings a child late shows a lack of respect for the school's program and the child's feelings.

DISMISSALS

The Primary children will be ready for dismissal at noon and the Extended Day and the Elementary children at 3:30 p.m. It is most important for your child's security that when he is ready to be dismissed, he sees you in the hall waiting for him. Should there be a reason that you will be delayed, please tell your child that morning or call the business administrator so that we may help your child feel comfortable. Your consistent late arrival to pick up your child shows lack of cooperation with the staff and an insensitivity to your child's feelings of security. Your child is your responsibility after his regular dismissal time. Our staff has many duties after school hours and cannot properly attend children left on the premises.

Under no circumstances will the child be released to anyone but the parents, unless the school has permission in writing on the Transportation Form and on file. This is for your child's protection.

Parents may pick up their children at his/her classroom door. The Directress will dismiss the child directly to the parent. Try not to arrive more than 5 minutes before your child's scheduled dismissal time and please refrain from loud conversation. When you greet your child, show him/her through your greeting that you love him and are more interested in him rather than in "products" of school-time activities. When your child does bring a paper or project home, give him/her true interest and reflect your pleasure in his/her work. Refrain from remarks that evaluate or criticize.

Children not picked up promptly at noon or 3:30 p.m., according to their dismissal time, will be put into Day Care and levied Day Care charges.

TRANSPORTATION

The school does not have facilities for arranging transportation. For those interested in car pooling, parents will be given names of other parents living in their general residential area, upon request. If carpools are formed please supply the school with a list of the participating families, as well as a schedule of drivers for our file. Notify us in advance of any changes in this schedule.

If you use a transportation service other than a carpool, it is required that the service deliver and pick up your child at the specified times. The service is required to receive your child directly from the Directress/Director. Should the service be unreliable, the school will ask the parent to make other arrangements.

HEALTH FORMS

The Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois School Code requires that a Medical Form be completed by your child's physician and be on file at our school **before** the child can be allowed to enter. All immunizations must be current.

ILLNESS

Consistent attendance is most important for your child's orderly growth; however, we ask parents to have their child remain at home if he is in the early stages of a cold, has a temperature above normal, has a rash, has an upset stomach, or discharges from the eyes, ears or nose (except in cases of diagnosed allergy). Please do not allow your child to return before he/she is well.

Should these symptoms develop while the child is in class, the school will notify the parent and ask that their child be picked up as soon as possible.

When your child has been exposed to or contracts a contagious disease, even during a school holiday, please report the disease to the school immediately. The school will alert all parents. No names are ever mentioned.

MEDICATION

If it is necessary that your child take medication during class hours, **written authorization and instructions giving the time, dosage, and other pertinent information are required on one of our school's medication forms before any**

medication can be administered. This form may be obtained from your child's Directress, Day Care room, or the business administrator.

Medication should be in the original container with your child's name clearly printed on it. Please include a measuring device.

If your child wears glasses, braces, hearing aids, etc., please make sure your child is provided proper containers and instructions about their care and use.

EMERGENCIES

In case of an accident or sudden illness, an attempt will be made to notify parents, or the parties listed on the Emergency Care Form, in order to learn their wishes in regard to the emergency care of the child. If neither parent nor designated party can be reached, the child will be given emergency attention and treatment as specified on the Emergency Care Form. It would be advisable that the child's pediatrician be listed on the Emergency Care Form.

CLOTHING

The choice of dress is left to the discretion of the parents. In general, the clothing should be suited to the weather, washable, and designed so that the child is not hampered in his attempt to learn to dress himself or go to the bathroom independently. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name. The children should wear comfortable shoes; leather is preferred as the children derive great satisfaction from polishing their own shoes. Shoes such as cowboy boots, clogs, open-toed sandals, high heels, platform heels or dress-up shoes with slick soles are not suitable in the classroom.

During inclement weather, the children should be provided with appropriate attire such as raincoats, boots, snowsuits, gloves, and hats. Please make sure that all of these are large enough so that the child can remove them and put them on with ease. **Do not send children in boots without an extra pair of shoes to wear indoors.** Extended Day children should wear "athletic" shoes on the scheduled day for their formal physical education class. Appropriate clothing for running and tumbling should also be worn on that day. Dresses are not recommended on "P.E. Day".

Note: Extended Day children go outside daily unless it is raining or extremely cold.

Every article of clothing should be identified and loops provided for hanging outdoor garments. Primary children should have a complete change of clothing, LABELED and in a plastic bag, left at the school for emergencies or accidents. Please include a washcloth in the bag.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

Elementary and Extended Day students should bring a lunch box with a simple lunch including 100% fruit juice, milk, or water and napkins. At lunch time, emphasis is placed on proper nutrition, the effects of food on the human body, the cultural and historical aspects of different foods, eating rituals, grace and courtesy.

Parent cooperation is needed to make the Nutrition Program a meaningful and enriching experience. **We ask that no candy, cookies, junk food, etc. be sent in the lunch boxes. Read labels carefully!** Please note that Extended Day and Day Care children do not have access to a microwave or refrigerator.

SNACK PROGRAM

A small healthy snack is available every day.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The MONTESSORI SCHOOL offers a Before and After School Program to meet the needs of our busy parents. The Day Care service is provided for those children attending our school. In order that the Day Care Program be a Montessori experience for the children, our Montessori philosophy will govern the Day Care program.

Activities - It is important to understand that, as Montessorians, we are attempting to AID LIFE. The child in Day Care is experiencing life under somewhat different social conditions than the child who goes home after school. We want to create a family and home-life setting rather than an institutional one. As a neighborhood/home experience is an essential one to develop, always utilize Montessori principals and guidelines.

A permanent day care room is furnished with brightly colored shelves, rugs, pillows and furniture. The outdoor playground, music and all-purpose rooms are also utilized.

For Extended Day and Elementary children, activities emphasizing physical exercises, games, (checkers, chess, etc.), art, and music are predominate.

Snacks - A generous nutritious snack and beverage will be supplied by Day Care for children participating in the program. Children's appetites vary considerably; therefore, if parents feel additional food is necessary for a child's particular needs, we encourage them to include supplementary snacks in the child's lunch box. Fruit juice or milk is provided with the snack each day.

Naps - A supervised rest period will be a daily routine for the children in our early afternoon Day Care sessions. Each child will have his/her own mat. If your child has a favorite "snuggle," a stuffed toy or blanket, he/she may bring it to Day Care for nap time.

Hours - **The Day Care hours are 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The doors will not open until 6:30 a.m. and you will be expected to pick up your child no later than 6:00 p.m.**

Fees - A schedule of current Day Care fees can be obtained from the business administrator or Day Care personnel.

GENERAL RULES

No toys or money are to be brought by the child to the school; books or records may be brought, provided the Directresses have been informed and given consent. The school has ample materials and constructive activities provided for the children. We try to create a different environment for the child rather than duplicating what he has at home. It is only in this way that we feel we can most enrich his life and stimulate his mind to new vistas.

All items lost by the children and parents will be kept in the "lost and found" basket in the Day Care room closet.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

One of the joys of a child's life is to celebrate his birthday in a special way. If your child's birthday falls on a school day, we will celebrate it that day; if the birthday is on a weekend, during a holiday or in the summer, you and your child may choose an appropriate date for the celebration. "Half-birthday" celebrations for summer birthdays are a frequently chosen option. (For example, a July 22 birthday would be celebrated January 22.).

Our special observance will consist of a ceremony symbolizing the child's life. The birthday child carries a globe of the earth around a lighted birthday candle representing the sun. The number of revolutions coincides with the number of years since the child's birth. At each revolution, the Directress reads the child's life story provided by the parents telling something significant that has occurred during each year. Additional information that parents might provide would be why the child's name was chosen, ethnic origins of the last name, special family customs, etc. (See example at the end of this section.)

A birthday celebration is prepared for the child and his friends and a special snack is provided by the child's parents. **NO CAKE OR CUPCAKES, PLEASE.** A simple finger food, brownie, cookie, muffin, etc., is acceptable.

Each child's birthday is celebrated the same way so that no favoritism is shown. Should you wish to mark the occasion in a special way for the child, the following suggestions are most favored:

- a) a monetary donation may be given to the child's classroom.
- b) a book may be donated to our library in the child's name. In this manner, the child's birthday is a "sharing" day, for the child not only receives but shares the joy with others for years to come. Ask one of the staff to show you where these books are stored.
- c) a much needed item for the classroom suggested by the Directress/Director may be given in the child's name.
- d) a magazine subscription may be given in the child's name (Science-land, Zoo Books, World, Faces, Your Back Yard, Ranger Rick, Cricket).

EXAMPLE OF A CHILD'S LIFE STORY

("Child" is to be replaced by your child's name.)

Age 0-1: "Child" was born on **Month, Day, Year** and **Time** in the morning/evening. He/She was a beautiful baby and the nurses at the hospital chose him/her to use to teach the new mothers how to bathe a baby. "Child" was a happy baby who brought joy to his/her family. He/She was also a good eater and grew fast.

Age 1: When "Child" was one year old, he/she started to walk and a whole new world opened to him/her. He/She explored the farm where we still live and spent many hours playing in the sandbox and swimming in the pond.

Age 2: When "Child" was two years old, he/she started school at the Montessori School and made many new and interesting friends. He/She started learning more about the world away from home.

Age 3: When "Child" was three years old his/her world was...etc.

BIRTHDAY PARTY POLICIES

One of the joys of the child's life is to celebrate his/her birthday. However, a birthday celebration can also be a potential negative to SELF-ESTEEM. When details of a "party", **especially with regards to whom is to be invited**, become a topic of conversation at school, we have witnessed many hurt feelings.

We acknowledge parents' prerogative to have separate parties and to issue as many or as few invitations as they wish; however, we are keenly aware of our responsibility to protect a child's feelings from unnecessary hurt, however unintentional.

WE DO ASK YOUR COOPERATION IN HELPING US WITH THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:

1. Do not distribute invitations at school; please use the mail or the telephone.
2. Mail invitations far enough in advance so any arrangements for transportation, etc. may be confirmed between parents away from school.

3. Discuss with your child the need to refrain from excessive talk about the party at school.

HOLIDAYS

Halloween, Thanksgiving, winter holidays, Valentine's Day, spring holidays, etc. will be celebrated with songs, decorative napkins, small favors and special snacks. Should the parents wish to remember the staff during a holiday or show their appreciation in any way, it is suggested they contribute something to the school that can be enjoyed and shared by many in the classroom for now and times to come. Valentines are not exchanged in our Primary or Extended Day programs.

PARENT CONFERENCES

One of the fundamental principles of the Montessori approach is that each child advances and grows at his own rate. For that reason, we do not issue graded reports or evaluate the child by testing at the preschool level. Twice during the school year, appointments will be set up for individual parent-teacher conferences. The school calendar lists the dates for these conferences. The mid-year conference is an oral report. During the final conference held at the end of the school year, you will be given a written report. This will be a summary of your child's progress throughout the year.

We would, therefore, appreciate your cooperation in not asking for progress reports at the arrival or dismissal time. If you wish to have an additional conference, please contact your child's Directress by phone or leave a message with the business administrator.

OBSERVATION OF CLASSES

Parents who wish to observe a Montessori class in session will be invited to do so during January through April. Each family is welcome to visit and may bring an interested friend or relative.

Appointments must be made for these visits in advance through the business administrator. Observation procedures and rules will be discussed before the visitors are taken into the classroom.

The school will provide opportunities for the children to introduce their parents to their "world". These will be announced as dates and details are decided.

Professional observations will be permitted by making an appointment with the business administrator.

COMMUNICATION WITH DIRECTRESSES

It is always beneficial and necessary for open and continual communication between parents and Directresses. Try not to be overly anxious in the early days though. Allow the child to become acquainted with his new environment and the Directresses.

Should an incident occur at home that would affect the child's mood, such as loss of sleep for several nights, the birth of a sibling, or unusual stress or tension, please inform us as this provides added insight into the child's behavior in the class and allows us to help him cope with these problems. Any unobserved, disturbing incident occurring at the school should also be reported. For either of the above, please call us to schedule an appointment for a conference; we will arrange for a meeting as soon as possible or confer with you by telephone.

ORIENTATION MEETINGS

All new parents are required to attend a special orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year. This is to acquaint you with the school's procedures and the objectives and techniques used in the Montessori approach.

PARENT EDUCATION

The Directresses at the Montessori School will occasionally offer evening programs concerning aspects of child development. We encourage your attendance. Program days will be announced throughout the year.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Active involvement and participation is the most direct way for parents to share in their child's growth and development. At the same time they enrich and educate themselves. This involvement may take many forms.

From time to time, parents will be called upon to volunteer transportation and to serve as chaperones for field trips, material making, fund raising, furniture repair and painting, and social functions for classroom holiday parties and refreshments for parent lectures.

Finally, the success of the school and its ability to continue to provide for an enriched environment depends on parents contributing their special talents and time. For years to come, we must continue to make many of our cultural materials, to publish information, and to raise funds. If each contributes his part, much will be accomplished.

FUND RAISING

Our school has opted for fund raising events to keep tuition costs as low as possible, and yet, provide for the extras (such as computers, piano, playground equipment, carpeting, air conditioners, playground fencing, black top, etc.). **It is imperative that ALL parents participate so that our school may maintain its provisions of high quality.** You will be provided specific information as fund raising events are formulated.

PARKING LOT RULES

Keeping the safety of the children in mind, please follow these guidelines:

- Park only in the parking lot. It is dangerous and illegal to park on the side of the highway in front of the school or school parking lot.
- Do not park on blacktop in front of the building.
- Do not park in delivery or fire lane area located on the blacktop on the east side of the building.
- Obey the Entrance and Exit signs.

DISCIPLINE

If a student chooses to not follow classroom rules, the Directress will discuss the situation with the child. If the child continues the behavior, the Directress will ask the student to sit in a chair until the child is ready to listen and follow classroom rules. Depending on how soon the child calms down, this should be for approximately 3 to 5 minutes. If a student chooses to disregard classroom rules on a regular basis (3 to 4 times a week), parents will be notified either verbally or by a written note.

If a student exhibits behavior (such as hitting, biting, etc.) which requires the student to be removed from the classroom, you will be notified by verbal or written communication of this behavior.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In case a disagreement occurs, follow this procedure:

- I. Discuss the problem with the Directress of the child's classroom.
- II. If still unsatisfied, parents should meet with the Head Directress.
- III. If this is inadequate, a Parent-Directress-Head Directress discussion is arranged, resulting in a written report to the Edwardsville Montessori Society, Inc. Board of Directors.
- IV. If the above measures fail, concerned parents can contact the President of the Board and ask that the problem be submitted at the next meeting of the Board with Directress, parents, and Head Directress being present.

Parents are responsible for observing and learning about the school's operations and Montessori philosophy. This usually prevents any misunderstandings.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Should it become apparent that a child is not benefiting from this form of education, the school reserves the right to terminate the contract of enrollment. A child will be dismissed only after all possible remedial measures have been tried and have proven unsuccessful. Parents shall be given advance notice and reason for dismissal.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Montessori School founding Directress: Mrs. Charlene S. Trochta, A.M.I.

Mrs. Patricia Thompson; Saskatoon, Canada.

Patricia O'Connor; Designhouse; Starkville, Mississippi.

Mrs. Lynne Beetner; Edwardsville, Illinois.

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