

**CANBERRA
MONTESSORI**
SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

Canberra Montessori School
Educating children from 18 months to 12 years
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WELCOME

Welcome to the Canberra Montessori School. We know that this is an exciting time for you as a family and you will have many questions to ask as you become involved in the school and as your child progresses in their education. This handbook is a valuable resource for you as parents and carers and will answer many of the questions you have about our philosophy, policies, procedures, the staff, the School Board and useful general information about the school.

Parents are urged to keep learning about the Montessori approach and philosophy and to use the many resources at the school to do that. This includes our parent library and parent education evenings.

We know that you will find great satisfaction as you and your child join, learn from and contribute to our school community.

Anthony Vandermolen
Principal

Canberra Montessori School's Mission Statement

**“To provide a learning environment based on
Montessori education that enables every child
to reach their full potential”**

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1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

1.1 Introduction

This handbook is directed towards families who have enrolled their children in the Canberra Montessori School. It provides information about the Canberra Montessori Society, the Canberra Montessori School and has been provided to assist with the smooth running of the school. Please keep this handbook in a safe place at home, so that you can refer to it when necessary and attach updated information and amendments as required.

1.2 History of the Canberra Montessori Society Inc

The Canberra Montessori Society Inc (CMS) was formed at a public meeting in August 1980 by a group of parents interested in providing Montessori education in Canberra. The Society was formally incorporated in May 1981. Soon after its formation the Society submitted a proposal to the ACT Schools' Authority for the establishment of a government Montessori programme catering for children aged from 3-6 years.

For some years, the Canberra Montessori Society acted successfully as an informal umbrella group for Montessori activities in Canberra. However, in 1987 it was recognised that the workload resulting from such a structure was too great and the Society was restructured to focus on the Canberra Montessori School, including those activities necessary to support the development of quality Montessori programmes within the School.

In 1981, CMS established its own school, the Canberra Montessori School, to meet the immediate demands for Montessori education ... in 2003 the School built its own premises at Holder.

The Canberra Montessori School has been established for over 30 years, having begun its life in the government education system. In 1981, two preschools were opened in rented premises with 34 children and a waiting list of over 100. In 1996, led by a trained Montessori Director, the Parent/Toddler environment was established, in which parents attended with their child (aged 18 months to 3 years of age) and learnt about the Montessori philosophy first hand. These sessions proved to be so popular that there are now six Parent Toddler sessions running per week. By 2014 the school had an enrolment of over 210 children aged 3 to 12 years and a parent/toddler programme for 60 children aged 18 months to 3 years. The waiting list continues to grow.

The school was fortunate enough to be granted a block of land by the ACT Government in 2003 at Holder, in Weston Creek. At a cost of \$1.2 million financed by the Australian Government, a loan from the bank and accumulated school fundraising and building fund donations, the first stage of our purpose built school was constructed. A further three building programmes have taken place since then.

The Canberra Montessori School currently operates the Parent/Toddler programme, five Cycle 1 classrooms for children 3 to 6 years, two Cycle 2 classrooms for children 6 to 9 years and one Cycle 3 classroom for children 9 to 12 years.

1.3 Functions of the Canberra Montessori Society Inc

The main function of the Canberra Montessori Society is to operate Montessori classrooms for children aged 18 months to 12 years. In addition to the responsibilities associated with the administration of the Canberra Montessori School, it is also responsible for the following activities:

- ❑ the dissemination of information relating to Montessori educational philosophy through meetings, information and open days
- ❑ the maintenance of a library of books on Montessori educational philosophy and child development for parents and staff
- ❑ promotion and furthering of Montessori education not only in the ACT but throughout Australia through contribution to national networks
- ❑ support in the establishment and operation of Montessori training courses and provision of opportunities for practice teaching for Montessori trainees
- ❑ promotion of courses, seminars, meetings etc. to further understanding and development of parenting skills
- ❑ liaison with appropriate educational authorities to further the rights of the child in society
- ❑ co-operation with training colleges in the provision of information on Montessori educational theory and practice teaching for students of early childhood and the primary years of schooling.

CMS has membership of:

- ❑ Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
- ❑ Montessori Australia Foundation (MAF)
- ❑ North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA)
- ❑ Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools (APFACTS)
- ❑ Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA)
- ❑ Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AIS)
- ❑ Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW)
- ❑ Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA).

1.4 Aims of the Canberra Montessori School

The Canberra Montessori School follows the educational philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Its aim is to assist in the total development of the child's - social, emotional, intellectual, physical, cultural and spiritual needs - so that the child will be better prepared for life and able to adjust to the changing conditions of their environment. The Montessori approach to education is child centred and is based on mutual respect and co-operation. Montessori education offers children the opportunity to realise their potential and seeks to promote:

- ❑ self-confidence and self esteem
- ❑ a sense of achievement and self worth
- ❑ a sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- ❑ independence and tolerance
- ❑ a sense of security
- ❑ co-operation with others and a sense of community
- ❑ respect for the rights and needs of others
- ❑ concentration and persistence in completing a task
- ❑ initiative and self motivation

- ❑ good work habits
- ❑ finding joy in work and a love of learning
- ❑ creative intelligence and imagination
- ❑ ability to discriminate and judge.

In order to achieve these goals the School provides an ordered and secure environment where the child feels free to explore and discover. The Montessori environment is specially prepared to meet the needs of the child at each particular level of development. CMS has a set of values, which it holds fundamental to the operations of the school. The Values Paper helps to maintain a vision and acts as a guideline for a range of activities within the community including leadership and administration.

2. PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

2.1 Introduction

The Montessori curriculum is an integrated one where all aspects of a child's learning (e.g. music, writing, reading, mathematics, science, art, craft, culture, and physical activity) are presented as part of an interrelated whole. Many of the activities performed by the children at an earlier age are an indirect preparation for a later skill and the environment allows the discovery of new and exciting things about material often worked with throughout their developing years.

Everything in the environment has a place. Activities are complete and attractive. Activities emphasise the process, not the end product.

Great care is taken in the preparation of an environment tailored specifically to meet the child's needs. Furniture and equipment are child-sized. Everything in the environment has a place. Activities are complete and attractive. Activities emphasise the process, not the end product. Although the Montessori program has definite structure, it is flexible and open to individual interpretation. Each Montessori classroom is unique, in reflection of the physical environment, the Class Director's personality and the dynamics of a changing class group.

The Montessori classroom is a rich environment and provides a wealth of experiences through which children have the opportunity to acquire a range of social, emotional, physical and academic skills. Children will take advantage of these opportunities in different ways depending on their own interest, maturity, personality, home background and pace of development. During their 9 years in the

During their 9 years in the programme children have the opportunity to develop self-confidence, independence, responsibility, tolerance, concentration and a joy of learning.

programme children have the opportunity to develop self-confidence, independence, responsibility, tolerance, concentration and a joy of learning. These, together with various academic skills, which they will also acquire, provide a firm foundation for their future learning.

2.2 Characteristics of Montessori Education

Far more than a method of education, the Montessori philosophy of education is an attitude and approach to the child and to life. Its success for the child will to a certain extent depend on the degree of consistency and co-operation between the home and class. Parallel with the child's development and learning is also a process of growth for parents as a greater understanding of their role in their child's education develops.

Both at home and at school a child is treated with the same respect that adults would accord to another adult. Self-confidence is encouraged through showing appreciation and acknowledgement of attempts and achievements but without judging. Through the order and routine of both home and school environments the child will acquire a sense of security.

At school, children work spontaneously in a prepared environment. Within limits, they are free to choose their own work, and work at their own pace, to move around and communicate with others in the classroom. The limits imposed are in relation to the collective interest and this means that children learn to have respect for the rights and safety of others and for the environment. This is the Montessori approach to self-discipline. They learn to use care with materials, to help other children and to become a co-operative member of the group. This enables each child to enjoy the freedom that is offered, while displaying a developing discipline. The classroom is a society in itself, fostering equal opportunity for all where the child can develop socially.

Classes have a vertical age structure, spanning three years. Younger children have the opportunity to learn by observation and absorption of the work of older children, while the older children also have opportunities to teach the younger ones, thereby acquiring a greater depth of understanding as well as greater confidence and competence.

The limits imposed are in relation to the collective interest and this means that children learn to have respect for the rights and safety of others and for the environment.

Children work with concrete materials, which isolate important concepts and skills. Many of these materials are self-correcting. Activities are self-directed so that children have a sense of control over their own learning and are able to follow their own interests.

The Montessori approach is child centred and allows an unfolding of each child in an atmosphere of co-operation rather than competition, according to his or her own true nature. The role of a Montessori Director is in constructively guiding children in their learning rather than teaching them.

2.3 The Montessori Cycles

Parent Toddler Programme (1½ - 3 years)

The Parent Toddler Programme currently operates six mornings per week. A parent/carer attends with their child for 2 hours, once a week, in an environment especially set up to facilitate the child's growing need for independence. The Parent Toddler Programme differs from playgroup because the emphasis is on catering for

the child's urge towards independence and faith in the child's capabilities. The room contains only child-sized furniture and activities that match the children's physical proportions and their stage of development. The age range of the children is from the time the child walks independently and can carry a tray (usually by 18 months) to the time the child is three years of age.

The range of activities offered is:

- ❑ language enrichment exercises
- ❑ exercises to refine eye-hand co-ordination and visual discrimination
- ❑ practical life exercises
- ❑ art activities
- ❑ group music activity.

All work is set out in such a way that children can use the materials with the minimum of adult assistance and parents are made aware of the importance in allowing their children to complete and repeat tasks without interruption or interference. In this way children build up their concentration span.

Cycle 1 (3-6 years)

Characteristics of the 3-6 year old child

Children learn through imitating and then by doing, but they are more concerned with the process of doing rather than the end result.

The 3-6 year old child is at the sensitive period of the absorbent mind. It is this absorbent mind which allows the child to learn easily using all the senses. They have a strong sense of order and feel secure and confident in an environment based on routine. They love to work with concrete materials and perform real-life activities. Children learn through imitating and then by doing, but they are more concerned with the process of doing rather than

the end result. These children have no sense of time and will continually repeat a task until the process is mastered. 3-6 year old children are happiest working independently and at their own pace.

Curriculum

Children of approximately three years enter an environment, which they explore and make their own. Activities include:

■ **Practical Life**

These exercises allow the child to continue to develop self-control and co-ordinated movement with tasks seen around the home. They are particularly important for the very young child as they help to satisfy the need for meaningful activity.

The activities are done not only for their own sake but also to develop inner discipline, organisation, independence and the orderliness of the classroom.

These activities help to develop abilities directed towards:

- ❑ caring for the self e.g. polishing shoes, doing up buttons and zips
- ❑ care of the environment e.g. washing up, arranging flowers
- ❑ care of each other e.g. preparing and serving a snack
- ❑ control of movements e.g. pouring without spilling.

Practical life exercises are fundamental to the whole programme. They lay foundations for the 3 year old for their later activities in other areas. The activities are done not only for their own sake but also to develop inner discipline, organisation, concentration, independence and orderliness of the classroom.

The child wants to be given more than just the facts and needs to know the reasons as to why and how things are the way they are ... during these years the child is discovering the world and their place within it.

- **Sensorial**

The activities in this area are designed to bring order to the wide range of sense impressions - sight, taste, touch, smell and sound - that the child has already received. These impressions provide a key to the environment, in bringing children to an awareness of differing qualities. In this way an external order is presented to the child, from which inner order can be built.

- **Language**

Language development is an integral part of all activities in the classroom and involves all areas of the environment. Spoken language forms the basis for the child's written work and later understanding of what has been written i.e. reading.

- **Mathematics**

The programme lays the foundation in maths concepts with concrete materials. The maths apparatus can take the child from an initial understanding of the meaning of the numbers 1 to 10, to a comprehension of the decimal system and all the way to the four processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The materials are designed to take children from a physical concept of numbers, through to the beginnings of an abstract level of understanding of mathematics.

- **Culture**

This area is as wide and varied as possible. Activities give the child early experiences in arts, craft, music and movement, basic science, geography, history, fauna and flora.

Nature and its fascination for the young child are brought into the classroom from outside.

- **Outdoor activities**

An important part of a child's development is their activity in the outdoor environment. The indoor and outdoor environments are closely related. Children extend their social skills through co-operative interaction. Concepts explored with classroom materials are applied to the wider outdoor environment. Nature and its fascination for the young child are brought into the classroom from outside. A range of exciting outdoor play equipment fosters physical activity.

In addition, the programme is broadened by taking children on excursions. These may include, for example, trips to the park, a farm, fire station, art gallery, theatre or puppet show. Also visitors with special skills and interests to share may be invited into the classroom e.g. musician, police officer, foreign language speaker or artist.

Cycles 2 and 3 (6-9 years and 9-12 years)

Characteristics of the primary age child

Around 6 years of age children have reached the time in their lives when intellectual and emotional growth is linked. The child is on an endless quest for knowledge and has unlimited energy to research and explore this knowledge. They have a keen memory with the ability and desire to learn. They have also reached the developmental stage called the "reasoning mind". The child wants to be given more than just facts and needs to know the reasons as to why and how things are the way they are. The child is also developing a moral sense of what is right and wrong, fair and unfair. Socially, children crave the world outside their home and family. Their peers are very important at this stage of development, children will seek acceptance by them. During these primary years the child is discovering the world and their place within it.

Curriculum

The Montessori 6-9 and 9-12 years classrooms are carefully prepared environments, designed to meet the intellectual, imaginative and emotional needs of each stage of the child's development.

These environments cater for the child evolving from the concrete to the abstract. The environment also has the added advantage of familiar materials from the 3-6 years programme (e.g. maths, maps and grammar games) but is designed to develop the child's imagination leading to the development of abstract thinking.

We reverse the teaching method used in most schools by giving students a picture of the whole, or a frame of reference, before introducing individual subjects. For example, our students learn about the creation of the universe before going on to study topics such as the solar system, the physical features of the earth, weather patterns, the countries of the world and their inhabitants, their customs, flags and so on.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) recognises the Montessori National Curriculum (MNC) as an alternative national curriculum framework, allowing all subjects taught in conventional schools to be covered at CMS. The Montessori philosophy and curriculum also encourage and foster learning extension into the areas of interest and capability expressed by the individual child. Subjects include:

- **Mathematics**

The magic of mathematics for this age group opens up with the story of why humans needed mathematics and how we learned to calculate. This then leads on to the reinforcement of skills gained in 3-6 year old class - in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Fractions and decimal fractions, laws of arithmetic, squaring, square root, multiples and factors, divisibility, cubing, cube root, velocity, simple interest and problem solving are all basic to the mathematics programme.

Geometry is the branch of mathematics with which Montessori children are already familiar from their sensorial work in Cycle 1. In Cycle 2 and 3 children engage in a detailed study of plane and solid figures, equivalence, the Theorem of Pythagoras, area and volume.

- **Language**

Language is studied in a wide variety of contexts such as stories, novels, poetry, drama, letters and articles. It is continuously developed through all the areas of the curriculum increasing the child's own personal expression in words.

The history of language and how writing is developed is introduced as a precursor to the study of the components of language. Students consolidate their skills in reading and writing and progress to spelling, punctuation, handwriting, paragraphs and note taking. They look at the lives of authors, time lines of literature in general and then nationally.

The aim is to have children develop, through understanding, a sense of love, responsibility and respect for nature and their environment.

■ **Social Studies and Science**

Human relations, geography, history and biology are areas of study which are interrelated and linked within the Montessori primary curriculum. Although outlined separately below they are studied in an integrated way within the classroom. Covered also in the course of this work are things like anthropology, astronomy, zoology, chemistry, physics, geology, economics, government, philosophy, political behaviour and sociology.

■ **Human Relations**

This is the organising centre or unifying theme for all the cultural subjects. It deals with the fundamental needs of human beings recognising that in all places on the earth and at all times in history, they are the same. In history the needs of people are used as a guide for the child's research into how people over time have met their basic needs. In geography the influence of physical geography on meeting these needs is studied along with the influence of climate, seasons, natural resources etc.

■ **Geography**

Having been introduced to the origin of the earth, students go on to study how the earth is constituted - to examine its elements. This includes:

- physical geography - an understanding of the physical compositions of the earth and their formation
- scientific understanding of natural phenomena - to help students understand the dynamic geographic forces at work on the earth through the use of experiments and impressionistic charts
- mapping and graphing - to give children knowledge of how to properly read maps and graphs and how to create their own
- political geography - to give knowledge and understanding of the reasons behind political boundaries and the different varieties which exist (e.g. countries, states, provinces and capitals)
- economic geography - allows for the study of human interdependencies and how these are affected by political and physical boundaries.

■ **History**

This study follows development of solar system, life on earth, development of humans, early civilisations and recorded history. The child first needs to understand the passage of time and its

expression in linear form (calendars, growth charts etc). Then follows the divisions of time (year, month, week, and hour). It is then possible to start to detail the history of the earth and the story of creation; the evolution of the earth and of life; then of mankind and those that came before us; then the study of our own nation and state.

- **Biology**

This is the study of the physical structure of life and its development over time. It covers botany and zoology; both presented on similar lines. First is given an overall view of the development of life on earth, then increasing detail of classification systems which have evolved giving the child not only a means to understand each organism in relation to the whole, but an understanding of the evolutionary changes which have taken place over millions of years.

The aim is to have children develop, through understanding, a sense of love, responsibility and respect for nature and their environment.

- **Music**

The music programme includes music history and literature, recorder, instruments of the orchestra, percussion, vocals, work with the Montessori bells, rhythm and beat etc.

- **Creative Art**

Art is studied through a variety of processes such as hand development, beginning tools, advanced tools, painting techniques, design and aesthetic awareness. The aim is to enable children to communicate ideas visually. Included also is a study of the historical development of artistic expression.

- **Personal Development, Health & Physical Education**

The aim is for our children to acquire both fine and gross motor skills in a non-competitive co-operative environment. Activities are designed to develop locomotor and non-locomotor skills, hand-eye and foot-eye skills. Children also participate in swimming lessons and gymnastics classes.

- **Languages other than English (LOTE)**

A specialist Korean language teacher is employed to offer children an introduction to Korean language and culture. In addition, the programme is broadened by field excursions.

Before and After School Care Programme ("Gumnut")

These programmes have been developed in recognition of the fact that many families work or study outside of the core school hours of operation. CMS co-ordinates before school care from 7.30am and an after school care programme from 3pm – 6pm for children from the age of 3 years. At before school care, children are provided with a healthy breakfast (gluten free options are available).

These programmes, while different from the Montessori classroom programmes, remain consistent with Montessori principles and philosophy. The programmes are fully licensed and offer a relaxing, but stimulating environment, which aims to foster a secure, family atmosphere. Eligible families may claim the Childcare Benefit or Rebate.

Holiday Programme

CMS coordinates a Holiday Programme catering to the needs of working parents as an extension of our Before and After School Care Programme. The Holiday Programme is available to children aged 3 to 12. It offers a variety of activities to keep your children engaged and happy during their break and we publish the details, including activities and fees, prior to each holiday period. As the Holiday Programme is part of our registered childcare programme, eligible families may claim the Childcare Benefit or Rebate

3. ORGANISATION

3.1 School Hours and Contact Details

School starts at 8.45 am. No supervision of children is provided prior to 8.30am or after 3.10pm. Children who are not picked up by 3.10 pm are taken to the After School Care Programme and families are invoiced accordingly.

The School Office is open during school terms from Monday to Friday: 8.30 am - 3.30 pm.

For general school information, please contact our administrative staff via reception@cms.act.edu.au or by phone to 02 6287 1962. For questions of a financial nature, speak with the Business Manager.

3.2 Licensing and Registration

The school's Cycle 1 and Before and After School Care Programmes are licensed by the Children's Education & Care Assurance (CECA) within the ACT government Community Services Directorate. CMS has been issued with a Provider Approval and Service Approvals to operate education and care services under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. The licensing process ensures that the programmes are operated in a way that provides for the safety of the children being cared for and educated, and that their developmental needs are met. Ongoing assessment and inspections are undertaken by Children's Education & Care Assurance.

The school is also regulated under the ACT Education ACT 2004 for years K-6. The compliance and registration process involves an annual compliance audit and a panel of educationalists and representatives from the ACT Department of Education & Training's Non-Government Education Section assessing the school's curriculum, staff, policies, management, procedures and premises every four years. Contact details of the DHCS and NGSO are as follows:

Office of Children, Youth & Family Support

The Director
Children's Education & Care Assurance
ACT Education Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra 2601
Tel: 6207 1120
www.act.gov.au

Non-Govt. Education Section

The Manager, Non-Govt. Education
Dept. of Education and Training
PO Box 1584
Tuggeranong 2901
Tel: 6207 5111
www.act.gov.au

3.3 Staffing

Teaching Staff

Our aim is to ensure that Montessori Directors in the school hold a Montessori Diploma. In addition to their Montessori Diploma, they must also have the appropriate tertiary education qualifications.

Generally, Montessori training courses are of one year's duration, involving an intensive program of lectures, seminars, preparation of materials and curriculum documents, observation and practice teaching of Montessori education theory and practice. Central to the training of a Montessori Director is the preparation of oneself, the revisiting of traditional teaching methods and approaches to the child and the freeing from preconceived ideas about children's learning.

A key aspect of the courses involves training in the observation of the child and the development of faith in children to reveal themselves through their work. For most Montessori Directors, their coming to Montessori education involves considerable commitment and sacrifice both during training and their later work.

Assistants are employed in the Cycle 1 classrooms and in Cycle 2 and 3 as required. The number of assistants in the Cycle 1 classes is regulated by the Children's Services regulatory authority and is based on a ratio for the School (not per class) of 1:11.

Administration Staff

The School employs a Principal, who is responsible for the day to day management of CMS as well as a Business Manager, Director – School Administration, and other administrative staff.

3.4 School Structure

The Montessori programme is of approximately 9 years' duration broken up into 3 cycles. It is expected that children will complete the entire program. Children enter at the age of 3 and for approximately the first 2 years they attend a half-day session of 3 hrs from 8.45am to 12.00pm for 5 mornings per week. This provides a regular and established routine at an optimal time of day for learning. From the term a child turns 5 years of age they are expected to stay for the extended day from 8.45am – 3pm, Monday to Friday.

The School also provides an option for 3 and 4 year old children to join the extended day sessions ("Early Extended Day") and remain until 3.00pm Monday-Friday. The extended day sessions give the child continued opportunity to refine and consolidate their skills and build upon them, developing greater confidence, competence and concentration. Increasingly difficult tasks may be tackled as the children move towards the abstraction of the primary years. The older children become models for the younger ones, acquiring a sense of responsibility and increased confidence through their position as leaders in the class and their ability to teach others what they have learned. There is an additional fee charged for Early Extended Day as government funding does not commence until children reach 5 years of age. The Early Extended Day fee is eligible for the childcare rebate.

The Montessori programme is of approximately 9 years' duration broken up into 3 cycles.

Parent Toddler Programme: One session per family, per week.

AGE	SESSIONS	TIME
18 months - 3 years	Monday to Saturday	9.30 am to 11.30 am

Cycle 1 (3-6 years):

AGE	SESSION	TIME
3 - 4 year olds	Monday to Friday	8.45 am to 12.00 pm
3 - 6 year olds (extended day)	Monday to Friday	8.45 am to 3.00 pm

Cycle 2 (6-9 years) and Cycle 3 (9-12 years):

AGE	SESSION	TIME
6-12 year olds	Monday to Friday	8.30 am to 3.00 pm

Before School Programme (Gumnut) is available from 7.30 am.

After School Programme (Gumnut) is available between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

This service attracts the Childcare Rebate for all users. Please refer to the After School Care Programme brochure or contact the Office for more information and fee structure per session.

Transitions

Towards the end of each 3 year cycle, children have developed the adaptability, confidence and maturity to progress. At this point they enter the next cycle. Children are transitioned from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 or Cycle 2 to Cycle 3 in February each year. Readiness for this move is determined through consultation between Directors and Director-Administration. Entry into the Cycle 2 programme of a child who has not completed Cycle 1 will depend on various factors. Please see the School's Progression and Transition Policy for more detail.

Late Entry to Montessori

Entry into the Montessori programme after the age of 3 may occur in special circumstances with the concurrence of the Director-Administration if there is a vacancy, but the child's sensitivity to certain aspects of the programme may have passed and settling in may prove more difficult. The hours of attendance of a new child to the class will usually be reduced in the first days (or weeks) in the class to facilitate a smooth transition to the Montessori environment.

Decisions on the timing of entry of children into the class are made by the Director-Administration in liaison with the classroom Director, on the basis of their placement on the waiting list, an assessment of the needs of each individual child and the classroom as a whole.

3.5 Parent Education

It is hoped that a child's experience at school will be a continuation and extension of the parents' nurturing and that the Director will build on the strengths that parents have fostered. To achieve this, good communication between parents and Classroom Director is essential. Parents attracted to a Montessori programme for their children will generally aspire to the attitudes and approaches to the child which are consistent with those in the class. These include:

- ❑ treating a child with the same respect as an adult
- ❑ having a consistent approach to the child
- ❑ providing encouragement and refraining from correction unless absolutely necessary
- ❑ providing an ordered and secure environment and routine
- ❑ allowing children to work at their own pace and without interference
- ❑ allowing children the choice of whether to work alone or with others
- ❑ allowing children to be actively involved in decision making
- ❑ allowing children to have responsibility within their capabilities.

The challenge of parent education is to develop a better understanding of how to achieve these goals in parenting during our busy day to day lives.

Parents who have chosen a Montessori education for their child are encouraged to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Montessori philosophy through reading and attendance at workshops, general meetings, information days and educational nights.

Regular classroom observations both before and after your child commences in the programme enable you to follow your child's development as well as acquire a greater understanding of how Montessori works.

Parent meetings are held regularly and provide the opportunity for families to gain more information about the classroom programme and related aspects. Regular classroom observations both before and after your child commences in the programme enable you to follow your child's development as well as acquire a greater understanding of features of the Montessori program and the classroom dynamics within the school.

Further reading/websites about Montessori

- ❑ David Kahn (NAMTA) *"A Parent's Introduction to Montessori Pre-school"*
- ❑ Terry Malloy *"Montessori and Your Child - A Primer for Parents"*
- ❑ Maria Montessori *"The Absorbent Mind"*
- ❑ Canberra Montessori Society *"Peace - A Montessori Approach"*
- ❑ Paula Polk Lillard *"Montessori, A Modern Approach"* and *"Montessori Today"*
- ❑ Tim Seldin *"How to Raise an Amazing Child"*
- ❑ North American Montessori Teacher's Association publication *"A Parent's Guide to Montessori Elementary"*
- ❑ michaelolaf.net
- ❑ marenschmidt.com
- ❑ www.montessori-namta.org
- ❑ <https://montessori.org.au/about-montessori>

- ❑ <http://www.mwei.edu.au/montessori-teacher-resources/what-is-montessori/>
- ❑ <http://cms.act.edu.au/why-montessori/philosophy/>

3.6 Parent Information

Parents are encouraged to observe a class as a means of gaining a greater appreciation of the Montessori approach to education and the functioning of a Montessori classroom. An observation time can be arranged through the office.

Parents of children attending the school are welcome to discuss with their child's Class Director any aspect of their child's development. Formal interviews with parents are held twice a year and written reports are provided for children from their final year of Cycle 1 to the end of Cycle 3.

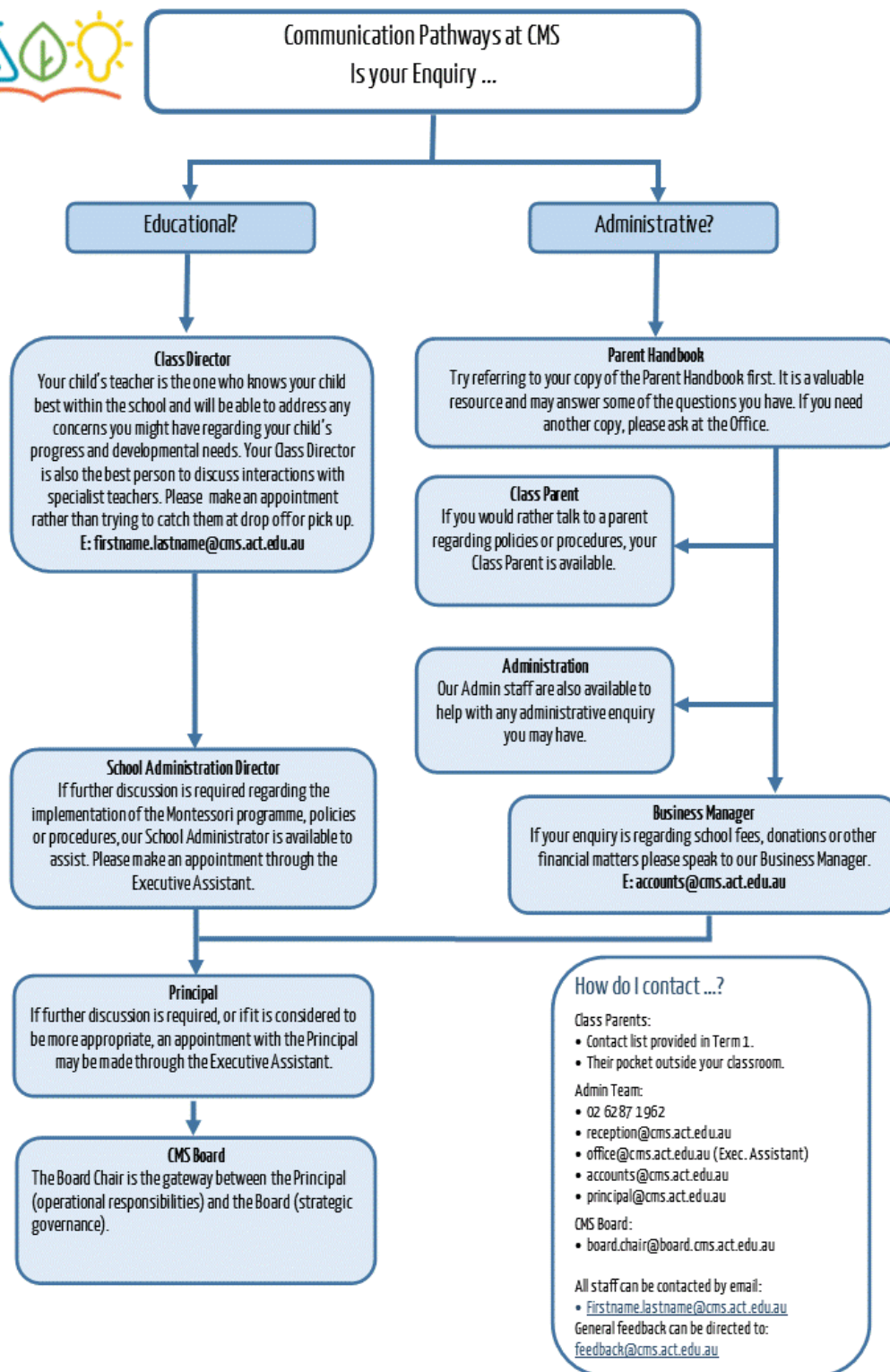
Good communication between parents and the Classroom Director is regarded as vital to the well-being of the class and children.

Should matters of concern arise at any time, parents or the Classroom Director may request an interview. Smaller day-to-day matters can be raised with the Classroom Director at any time, and your child's Classroom Director should be the first contact for any concerns. Good communication between parents and the Classroom Director contributes greatly to the well-being of the class and children. It is the parent's responsibility to raise matters, which may be worrying them. These might, if appropriate, also be discussed with the Class Parent, or the Director of Administration (see Communication Path following).

3.7 Communication Path for Parents

Our school, similar to that of any organisation, believes open communication and feedback in both directions is healthy. We hope the below diagram demonstrates the best communication path for you, as parents/ guardians/ carers, to follow.

The Principal and Class Directors are available to meet with you to discuss any query or concern you may have. However, we ask that you appreciate that the education and safety of the children always come first and meeting times need to be scheduled accordingly. We also encourage you to make an appointment to observe your child in the classroom at least **twice a year** and sign up for the follow-up meeting with the Class Director to discuss progress.



ComPath 01

3.8 Parent Engagement

Parent involvement is essential in the collaborative effort to educate children. It enables costs to be kept down, but it also means that parents are more closely involved with their child's school environment and thus more aware of the needs and features of the school, and their child's education. Parents help set the foundations for their children's learning, and research demonstrates that a child's attitude towards school is influenced by the attitude of their parents. The following considerations can help you and your child within our school community.

Parent engagement is essential in a community based school.

Parents and grandparents are welcomed into the classroom on special days and other scheduled events such as Grandfriends' Day, Open Door Sessions and Child/Parent Sessions. Please check our School Calendar and keep up to date with our newsletter for these dates. In addition, you can also organise for an observation via the Front Office, help with cleaning the class at designated times, or help with various other rosters such as washing classroom linen. If you have a particular skill such as in the area of music, drama, foreign language or culture, please talk to your child's Director about opportunities to contribute these skills in the classroom.

At other times, it is considered important that the child's workspace is valued as the child's domain and that parents say good bye at the door of the classroom. We trust and assist all the children to be independent enough to stay and work in a friendly, safe environment. This trust is transmitted through the parents' strong reassurance and a quick farewell. These messages in words and body language give the child the confidence to know that they will be fine and that you (or another trusted adult) will be there to pick them up at home time.

Other ways that parents can assist are with the outdoor environment, as well as being part of the School Board. In addition, parents are required to assist with fundraising activities (further discussed in Section 3(f)). Either parent may become involved in any of these tasks.

3.9 Fundraising and Social Events

The Society relies on fundraising to meet both on-going and developmental needs of the school and also to build our community spirit. Over the years, fundraising has been used to finance the purchase of indoor and outdoor equipment for the classes, building and equipment maintenance, classroom extensions and library acquisitions. While the extent of a family's involvement in fundraising may vary over time, parents are expected to contribute to fundraising activities on an ongoing basis.

The Society relies on fundraising to add to both on-going and developmental needs of the School... parents are also expected to contribute to the School's building fund by making voluntary, tax deductible contributions each term.

As interests and abilities of members vary, the annual fundraising programme includes a range of activities and reflects a number of aims - that activities may involve either parent, are enjoyable and provide a reasonable return for the time involved. Fundraising events have included the annual fair, auction, cake stalls, sausage sizzles, raffles, wine drives, dinners, children's theatre, cinema, trivia nights etc.

3.10 Community Engagement programme

At our school, we encourage Parents to get involved in the community. Over the course of the year there are many opportunities for families to volunteer for the betterment of the school and the society, and many parents have selflessly donated their time towards our school since its inception. As you walk through our beautiful Casuarina Grove, remember that every one of those trees was planted by parents of our school. This is true of all elements of CMS. Without the help of our Parent Volunteers, our school would not be the vibrant, active community that we all enjoy today.

Please refer to our Community Engagement Booklet to see the multitude of ways that parents can become involved at the Canberra Montessori School.

4. ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Board of the Canberra Montessori Society Inc

The school is governed by a Board whose role is to focus on strategic issues of organisational purpose and direction, and achievement of corporate goals. The Board delegates responsibility for the day to day management of the school to the Principal. Membership of the Board is made up of parents and members of the wider community who have an interest in Montessori education and school governance. The Board is elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Society and parents and interested persons are encouraged to nominate.

4.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for all aspects of school management including facilities, staffing, financial affairs and the co-ordination of educational leadership within the school.

4.3 Fees

The Canberra Montessori School receives Government funding (Australian Government and ACT) for primary school aged children. Fees are set at the level necessary to cover the operational expenses and development needs of the school and are supplemented by fundraising.

Fees are invoiced in advance each term and are payable within 14 days.

1. Fees are invoiced in advance each term and are payable within 14 days of invoice.
2. If for any reason another arrangement is required, this must be arranged with, and confirmed in writing by, the Business Manager.
3. Parents who wish for any reason to withdraw a child from the school for any reason must give **A FULL TERM'S NOTICE IN WRITING TO THE BUSINESS MANAGER. IF SUCH NOTICE IS NOT GIVEN, A TERM'S FEES WILL BECOME PAYABLE IN LIEU.**
4. Parents who wish to withdraw a child for an extended period, for travel or any other reason will be charged the tuition fee, payable before departure.

Parents who wish to withdraw their child from the School for any reason must provide a full term's notice in writing, or pay a term's fees in lieu of notice.

The School reserves the right to review fees at any time. Generally this occurs annually in the final term of the year.

Parents who wish to withdraw a child for any extended period for travel or any other reason will be charged the full tuition fee, payable before departure.

4.4 Capital Entry Fee

A once per family Capital Entry Fee, at a rate determined from time to time by the Board, is payable before commencement in the School. This contributes to the maintenance and development of the School's capital resources.

4.5 Enrolment Deposit

An enrolment deposit equivalent to one term's fees is payable for each child before commencement in the School. This deposit is credited against the final invoice for that child, ie Term 4 of Year 6. The remainder amount must be paid before departure.

Please note, families are still required to provide a full term's notice in writing when withdrawing a child from the School.

The sibling discount does not apply to the Enrolment Deposit.

4.6 Building Fund

The Canberra Montessori School has established a building fund to assist in meeting the expenses incurred in the construction, extension, alteration or maintenance of buildings used for the Canberra Montessori School and all parents are strongly encouraged to contribute each term.

The fund is registered with the Taxation Office and donations are tax deductible. Cheques should be made payable to the "Canberra Montessori School Building Fund".

The major purposes for which building fund donations have been used to date are the extension of the Red Gum Classroom and more recently the new school buildings.

5. ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL

5.1 Enrolment Procedure

CMS has waiting lists for the Parent Toddler Programme and Cycle 1 classes. Children may be placed on the waiting list at any age, the sooner the better. A waiting list application (enrolment) fee applies. This is a non-refundable fee to cover administrative costs. Families must be financial members of the Society for the duration of their time on the waiting list. Registration on the waiting list does not, however, automatically guarantee enrolment into the school.

Our enrolment procedure is designed to ensure that all families have a sound understanding of the Montessori Philosophy and our School before committing to our 9 year programme.

While we give preference to siblings of current students, they are not automatically added to the waitlist or automatically offered a place, so please don't forget to register them in advance!

5.2 Conditions for Acceptance

On the formal acceptance of the offer of a position, the following conditions must be agreed to:

1. That the Capital Entry Fee and Enrolment Deposit are paid.
2. That parents will abide by the policies of the Canberra Montessori Society/School.
3. That membership of the Canberra Montessori Society will be maintained for the duration of the child's time in the Canberra Montessori School

4. That parents assist and support fundraising, community hours and other activities as required
5. That the child will complete the entire programme for which they have enrolled unless exceptional circumstances intervene
6. That should a child be withdrawn for any reason, one full term's written notice, or a term's fee in lieu is payable.

5.3 Transfers

The School is always keen to include interstate and overseas transfers from other Montessori schools. However, offers of enrolment will depend on the availability of places and the needs of individual classes at the time.

There is no automatic right of transfer between classes of the Canberra Montessori School. Once a child has entered a class he or she will not be transferred to another class within the school unless there are exceptional circumstances and taking into account the recommendations of the Class Directors of both classes and the Principal.

5.6 Preliminary Procedures

Parent Toddler Programme (1½ - 3 years)

Following acceptance of a place the Director will welcome you on your first morning.

Cycle 1 (3-6 years)

If you are already enrolled in the Parent Toddler Programme and following acceptance of a place in Cycle 1, the Classroom Director will arrange a meeting with the parents or visit you and your child in the Parent Toddler Programme. Further meetings will then be organised with the child prior to starting in the class, to familiarise the child with the environment. This is usually incorporated into their PTP morning. Parents are encouraged to discuss ways of familiarising their child with the coming experience of the Cycle 1 environment. Children must be toilet trained prior to commencing in the school.

*Children must be toilet trained
prior to commencing in the School.*

Familiarisation visits are made available for all prospective older students and parents.

Cycles 2 and 3 (6-9 and 9-12 years)

Towards the end of each 3 year cycle, children have developed the adaptability, confidence and maturity to move on. At this point they enter the next cycle. Children are transitioned from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 or Cycle 2 to Cycle 3 in February each year. Readiness for this move is determined through consultation between Directors and Director-Administration.

Once classroom placements for Cycle 2 and 3 have been notified, parents are encouraged to observe in their child's next classroom. Classroom Directors will collaborate to encourage your child to start to visit their new classroom, and a more formal orientation day is organised during the last week of term 4, which allows the children to gain an understanding of the routines of the new classroom.

Entry into the Cycle 2 programme of a child who has not completed Cycle 1 will depend on various factors.

Daily Classroom Essentials

INFORMATION ON DAILY CLASSROOM ESSENTIALS

Absences and Illness

If your child is absent you need to inform the School in writing before 9 am to reception@cms.act.edu.au, informing of the reason for absence. Please remember to cancel your afterschool care booking at the same time.

Arrival and Departure

Please be punctual and arrive in time for class to start at 8.45am. It is disruptive to the class and your child if they are later than 8.45am.

*School starts at 8.45am ...
please assist your child to arrive
on time, as coming in late can be
disruptive to the classroom.*

Children may be dropped at school from 8.30am and are dismissed from class at 12pm and 3pm. All Cycle 1 children may only be released into the care of their parent/carer (unless attending After School Care) and must be signed in and out of the School. Any child not picked up by 3.10 pm will be taken to the After School Care Programme and parents will be invoiced accordingly.

*If arriving late, please bring your child
past the Office first to pick up a late
slip and add them to the electronic roll.*

If arriving late, *you must first take your child via the Office* so that we can electronically enter them onto the roll. If your child has an appointment and will be arriving late to School, please notify the School in writing of their partial absence.

If you or a carer needs to collect your child early, please come past the Office *before* collecting your child to receive an early departure slip, which you can give to the Classroom Director, who will release your child. This applies to Cycle 1, 2 and 3 children. A carer or other parent collecting a child *of any age* early must be authorised to do so by the child's parents (see below).

*We require all notices of
absence in writing to
reception@cms.act.edu.au.*

“Authority to Collect” information

Your completed enrolment form will have details of who you authorise to collect your child from the school premises. If you need to change or add to these names please let the School know in writing to reception@cms.act.edu.au. If your child is going home with a friend you will need to fill out the daily sign in sheet (Cycle 1) or the child will not be allowed to go until the Class Director has checked by contacting you.

The first time a carer comes to pick up your child they must come past the Office, where we will photocopy their photographic ID to be filed with your authorisation. Please advise all carers that they may be asked to show photographic ID at any time when collecting your child, if the staff member does not recognise them.

Birthdays

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday at school during the year. Please see the Class Director for details of how your child's class celebrates birthdays.

CMS Bulletin

The Bulletin is our newsletter which is sent out by email in weeks 2 and 9 each term. It is our main means of communicating with parents on matters relating to the school, so please be sure to read it and to let the office know your current email address via reception@cms.act.edu.au.

Car Park

For the safety of all concerned please observe the one way arrows in the car park. **The horizontal spaces nearest the school are intended only for drop off and pick up of children in Cycles 2 and 3**, who do not need to be signed in and out of class by their parents. They are not for parking.

Please observe the one way arrows in the car park and do not park in the drop off zone.

Class Parent

The Class Parent is chosen by the Classroom Director each year and is crucial in assisting the Director to facilitate the smooth and harmonious operation of the classroom and in assisting the development and welfare of the school as a community. The Director and Class Parent work together to facilitate communication between parents and the Director.

Clothing and Belongings

Children should dress comfortably according to the weather. Check the weather with your child each day before deciding what clothes are appropriate. Students will feel uncomfortable if they are too hot or too cold.

They must wear a broad brimmed sunhat as **it is compulsory for all children to wear a hat whilst outside.**

All children must wear a broadbrimmed hat whilst outside ... please provide closed-toe, flat shoes or sandals (no crocs or thongs) and avoid high boots.

Thongs and bare feet are not allowed, please provide closed-toe, flat shoes or sandals that are easy to run and play in for physical activity, and avoid high boots.

The children need to be able to manage themselves at the toilet so they should wear pull up trousers or shorts with no fastenings.

Children should feel free to take part in any activity offered without feeling inhibited by a worry about getting clothes dirty. A change of clothing should be kept in their school bags.

Students are encouraged to:

- Wear clothes which are clean and in good condition. This shows self-respect and respect for their community at school.
- Wear clothes that are simple. They should be easy to take on and off.
- Leave jewellery, novelty belts, chains etc at home as they have no use and are difficult at school. These things are fun to wear at, say the school discos, but they are not suitable for the classroom.
- Remember the Cycle 2 and 3 children do gym, PE and swimming during the year and they will need appropriate clothes and footwear for these activities.

Clubs

The school offers our students a variety of clubs during terms 2-4, usually for the primary aged children, either after school or at lunch time. These are run by our staff on a voluntary basis though occasionally parents will volunteer a club option for the school.

Forms for these clubs are sent out only to the families of children in the appropriate age groups.

There are also club options run by external providers and these are detailed in our weekly What's On. The providers should be contacted directly for information and enrolment.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of a full emergency evacuation we will go to **St Jude's Primary School**, Mulley Street, Holder. Practice drills are held regularly.

Facebook

Joining us on Facebook is a great way to keep in touch with our community and receive calendar updates. You will find us under Canberra Montessori School

(<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Canberra-Montessori-School/168765263173843>)

Like us on Facebook!

[Canberra-Montessori-School](#)

Flowers

Please encourage your child to bring flowers into the classroom any day – our classrooms need them at all times. They are a very important aspect of the beauty, care and love of the environment in a Montessori classroom.

Health & Safety

In the school community infections are easily transmitted and should your child contract an infectious disease or develop any allergies or illness, such as food or insect allergies, diabetes, asthma etc. you will need to inform the Class Director and the office via reception@cms.act.edu.au as soon as possible. A copy of the Canberra Montessori School Health Policy is available from the office. Please note that exclusion periods apply for various illnesses or symptoms, including 48 hours for vomiting or diarrhoea.

A school **health nurse** visits the school to assess children's vision, hearing and general health and well-being at particular ages (from a child's Kindergarten year).

Please note, exclusion periods apply for certain illnesses or symptoms, including 48 hours for vomiting or diarrhoea.

Head lice are a problem in most schools. We ask that parents check regularly. Children must be kept home until effective treatment is carried out.

Parents are discouraged from sending **peanuts** to school. This includes peanut butter and other food containing peanuts (including muesli bars).

Lunch

Healthy food and drink should be sent for lunch. Chocolate, sweets, chips, lollies, artificially flavoured or coloured foods or similar items high in sugar content are not appropriate.

Healthy food and drink should be sent for lunch – chocolate, sweets, chips, lollies etc are not appropriate.

Medication

Medication should be handed in to the Class Director in a sealed bag with instructions. Medication should not be given to the child to self-administer.

News

Children are welcome to bring in items of interest (not toys) into the class for our nature table, eg: postcards, leaves, artefacts from other countries etc.

Observations

You are encouraged to observe your child regularly in the classroom once they have settled in. Just contact reception to book a time at reception@cms.act.edu.au. Observations are available during weeks 2-9 of each term (excepting term 4 which is weeks 2-8) starting at 9.30am for half an hour.

During observations, we ask that you remain seated in the chair assigned to you, so that you don't disturb the normal workings of the room and so that you will receive a truer idea of its operation. If a child greets you, of course you should return the greeting, however, please refrain from initiating conversations with children (please remain as inconspicuous as possible).

Open Sessions

These are usually held twice a year. This is a time when you can come into the classroom for a couple of hours to sit with your child and find out more about the work they are doing.

Policies

A copy of school policies is available for viewing in the School Office.

Safe Arrival Procedure

If your child is not at school and we have not been informed of their absence, you will receive a text from the office to ensure that they are safely in your care. Please respond by email to reception@cms.act.edu.au. If you arrive late please bring your child past the office first to sign an 'Admission Slip' which should be taken to the classroom and given to the Class Director.

On the first day the Class Director will meet you at the door. Say goodbye cheerfully and lovingly... your child takes cues from you, so show you are confident and this will help them to have an enjoyable and happy time

Settling in on the First Day

The first few weeks at your first school can be an anxious time for parents and children. Remember when you leave your child you are starting them on the road to emotional self-sufficiency and giving them an environment specially prepared to meet their developmental needs.

- On the first day the Class Director will meet you at the door. Say goodbye cheerfully and lovingly, but do not cling, however hard you may find it to leave your child. Do not carry your child, but have them by your side holding your hand.
- Your child takes cues from you, so show you are confident and they will have an enjoyable and happy time.
- Give yourself plenty of time in the morning. Being rushed can result in your child feeling unsettled and unsure.

- Children need order at this age, so it is good to establish the routine of going to school every day as soon as you can.
- It is also essential that you arrive by 9 am for the smooth running of the class and your child's morning.

Sign in Sheets (Cycle 1 only)

There is a legal obligation for all Cycle 1 children to be signed in and out, by a person over the age of 18 years of age. Children attending the After School Programme need to be signed out from there.

Snack

Please note, parents are discouraged from sending **peanuts** to school. This includes peanut butter and other food containing peanuts (including muesli bars). Children share snack (fruit and vegetables) in the Cycle 1 classes and bring their own in Cycles 2 and 3. See your Class Director about what to provide for your child.

Parents are discouraged from sending peanuts to school. This includes all food containing peanuts (including muesli bars)

Stationery

All stationery is supplied for children in Cycle 1 classes. Cycle 2 and 3 classes need to supply their own stationery in a pencil case. A small cubby is provided for storage of personal items. Please see your Class Director for specific requirements.

Toys and Jewellery

Please do not allow your child to bring any toys or wear jewellery to school.

Written Information

A daily check of your 'pocket' is advisable for children in Cycle 1 and 2. Cycle 3 children will be handed all notices, so please prompt them each day to deliver them to you. Please read the notice boards for any information about the class or activities of the school, as well as The Bulletin, which contains items of interest, information about excursions, visits to the school and special events. We suggest you check the [calendar](#) on our website early in the year and note down important dates in your own calendar. You can also keep in touch with events via Facebook and classroom blogs. A parent contact list is distributed to every family at the start of the term.

Visitors

From time to time we will have visitors of interest in the classroom. You may have a skill or interest to share or know of someone who does, so please let us know.

Volunteers

Volunteers are always welcome to assist in certain areas of the school. Anyone working with children will need to complete a Police Check (see office for details).

Appendices

Appendix A:

Settling in and orientation (Cycle 1)

A slow start for your child is an opportunity for them to establish a rapport with his or her Class Director. This is crucial so that each child develops a sense of trust in the adults with whom s/he will be working, assisting the child in feeling safe and secure in the new environment. Transitioning in this way provides time to lay the foundation for the child by allowing the Class Director an opportunity to observe and become familiar with each child. In order to facilitate a smooth transition, the 1 hour on the first morning will be increased to the full 3 hour cycle over a period of approximately 1 week at the discretion of the Class Director as this period of time may vary with each child.

Cycle 1 children will attend for 1 hour on their first day ... transitioning gradually allows your child to develop a sense of trust in the adults with whom s/he will be working, and time to become familiar with the environment and how it operates without becoming overwhelmed

The brief time during transition allows your child to become familiar with the environment and how it operates, without concern of becoming overwhelmed or frustrated with long time periods s/he may not yet be accustomed to. Typically, separation anxiety is minimal due to the gradual lengthening of time experienced in the environment. This is comforting and reassuring to the child.

During transition the new children are introduced to and become comfortable with the environment and develop a sense of ownership and pride as they define the class as their personal space. A community of caring and sharing unfolds with eager excitement to welcome new friends in to join the community.

Determining a child's readiness:

Readiness indicators are:

- ☐ Child can communicate his/her needs
- ☐ Toileting success – we accept that accidents will sometimes happen!
- ☐ Sufficient coordination of movement.

Transition takes place for all new children, gradually lengthening the amount of time that the child spends each day. The Class Director focuses on making the children comfortable in the environment and with the other children.

Home Visit

Home visits are sometimes scheduled depending on the needs of the family and the individual child, which allows the child to spend time with the Class Director in the child's more familiar environment and so makes the child more comfortable.

This visit can also help your child separate on their first day as they already know their Class Director.

- ☐ Home visits are about 20 minutes long.
- ☐ Activities might include reading a book of the child's choosing, playing a game of catch or working on a puzzle together.

Preparation for Parents

We know you are just as excited/anxious/nervous/thrilled about your child's first day of school as the child is (sometimes more so!). It is often seen that if parents are nervous or worried, their children are nervous or worried, so it is important to prepare yourself in order to have a calm first day for the child. There are different approaches to preparing yourself (without children) for the first day of school. These can include any/several of the following:

- ❑ Gathering school and class Information, which may include:
 - Information and instructions for the school year
 - This Parent Handbook
 - What to expect and what to say to the child. For example, "You will meet [Wendy] and the other children. I will see you in 1 hour."
 - Where you can meet other parents (at a nearby coffee shop, or in the School's Parent Room).
- ❑ Be positive when talking with your child about school and reinforce that the Class Director and assistants are there to help them.
- ❑ Talk with your child about how wonderful it will be to make new friends and learn new things.
- ❑ Go shopping with your child to buy a school bag they can manage independently.
- ❑ Leave your child with a friend or family member prior to starting school so that they understand that when you leave them, you will come back.

It is important to prepare yourself in order to have a calm first day for your child

Your child's first day

- ❑ Give yourself plenty of time in the morning. Being rushed can result in both you and your child feeling unsettled and unsure.
- ❑ Your child's clothing should be comfortable, practical and allow for freedom of movement. Encourage your child to dress themselves.
- ❑ Your child will hang their bag on their peg outside the class. (The bag should contain 2 spare sets of clothes and a sun hat).
- ❑ The Class Director will meet your child at the door and greet them.
- ❑ Make your goodbyes at the door and be happy and calm, don't cling however hard it is to let go!
- ❑ Come back at the specified time (usually 1 hour) and wait outside the door of the classroom.
- ❑ Remember that when you leave your child on their first day you are starting them on the road to emotional self-sufficiency, and providing an environment prepared to meet their developmental needs.
- ❑ Children need order, so it is essential to establish the routine of going to school at the same time every day as quickly as you can.
- ❑ Don't compare your child's reactions with those of other children. Children handle separation in a variety of ways. Separation anxiety is common even in well-adjusted secure children.

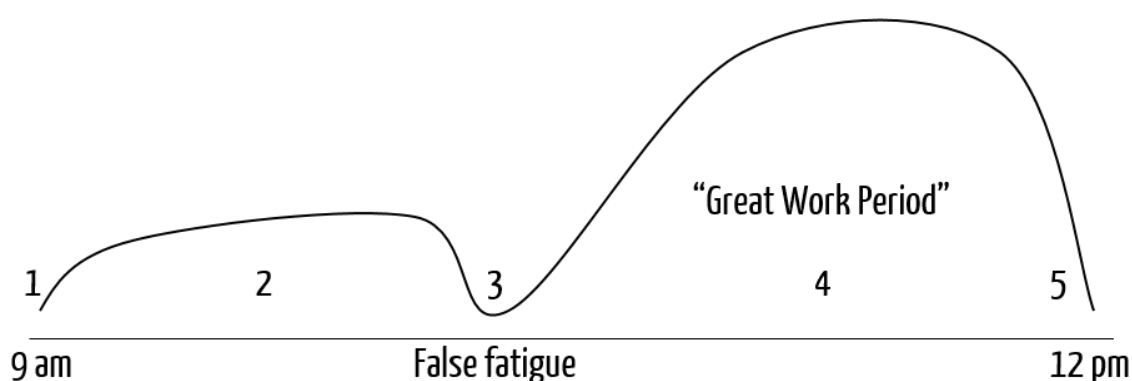
Give yourself plenty of time in the morning, being rushed can result in both you and your child feeling unsettled and unsure.

Appendix B:

The Work Cycle

One of the interesting aspects of Montessori education is that Maria Montessori set up an environment for children in which they revealed characteristics which did not appear under other circumstances. One of these characteristics is the ability to work for long periods of time in concentrated activity. For this to occur it is necessary that there be a minimum of three hours of unbroken time. The following illustration of a work cycle shows a simple curve of ordered work during a class session that lasts three hours.

Montessori set up an environment for children where they revealed the ability to work for long periods of time in concentrated activity.



The straight line which represents the three hours is a base of no activity. The line above illustrates the length and depth of involvement in constructive activity. The numbered comments below correspond to the numbers in the illustration.

1. Many children will enter the class and choose something relatively simple and stay with it a short time.
2. Their next activity is generally more difficult and they stay with it longer.
3. This is followed by 'false fatigue', a time when many children have put their work away and have not as yet selected another activity.
4. If the Director allows the children to take the time they need to experience the restlessness of the false fatigue they will soon settle into their most difficult work choice of the cycle and stay with it the longest period of time. During this time their concentration is the deepest and they make the greatest strides in the development of skills and in the acquisition of knowledge. Montessori called this the "Great Work Period".
5. As the cycle nears its completion, the children put away their work and they appear to be refreshed and relaxed as they talk to one another.

When the time available is less than three hours, the work cycle does not complete itself... this obviously means a heavy responsibility falls on the parents' shoulders because the children need to arrive at school by 8.45am in order to achieve their full potential in the classroom.

When the time available is less than three hours, the "Great Work Period" does not occur and the work cycle does not complete

itself. To protect themselves from having this work period interrupted, the children either do not choose any work after the false fatigue or they choose something that involves only superficial involvement. Directors are normally faced with a time frame that is just three hours long but this obviously means a heavy responsibility falls on the parents' shoulders because the children need to arrive at school by 8.45 am in order for their children to achieve their full potential in the classroom.

Appendix C:

The Extended Day Programme (Cycle 1)

The final year of Cycle 1 is of high importance in each child's Montessori educational experience. It is the culmination of and provides the child with the opportunity to consolidate and reinforce the academic and social skills they have learnt over the past 2 years. They are in the final stage of the "absorbent mind", which encompasses the period from birth to approximately six years, and are ready to move forward.

The final year of Cycle 1 is of high importance in each child's Montessori educational experience ... it is the culmination of and provides the child with the opportunity to consolidate and reinforce the academic and social skills they have learnt over the past 2 years.

By the time children enter their third year of school they are familiar with the Cycle 1 classroom environment. They have worked with many varied pieces of concrete materials and have gradually acquired skills, knowledge and a sense of achievement.

Language area: work with phonograms (ee, ie, ay, sh, etc); puzzle words (they, once, the, etc.); function of the words (adjectives, articles, verbs & adverbs, etc); writing stories; longer, chapter books, can be read by the Director and with discussion afterwards.

Maths area: work with the golden beads (units, tens, hundreds and thousands) leading to memorization work in the four operations (addition, subtraction, division & multiplication); linear counting up to 1000; skip counting (preparation for times tables) and fractions.

Cultural area: geography, biology, botany, history, cooking, science experiments, art and craft work. Excursions may also be included pursuing the interests of the children.

Development of Social Skills: children are encouraged to participate in discussions and develop social graces (eating in company, listening to others, etc.)

The older children provide social role models for the younger children and can give lessons to them. This contribution to the classroom community also reinforces and consolidates the older children's' academic and social skills.

In Term 4 of a child's final year in Cycle 1, Directors will look for opportunities for the child to link in with Cycle 2 classes, facilitating their transition to Cycle 2.

APPENDIX D:

Preparing the Way to Write and Read

The preparation for writing and reading begins long before formal schooling starts and parents are the first and best teachers that a child has.

At home from a young age children need a language rich environment. This develops from the role model of parents' speech, the joy of being read to, a knowledge and interest in the world around them, development of the senses (especially auditory and articulation abilities), the control of the body and at all times an enthusiastic and interested approach from parents.

An awareness of the sounds of which languages are constructed builds on this foundation and later comes the ability to attach symbols to these sounds. The skill of using those symbols to express your own thoughts follows, culminating in the ability to write and read, giving a lifetimes pleasure.

Writing and reading are not in themselves a sufficient ambition.
What is of supreme importance is bringing about in a child a desire to write and read.

To achieve this love of learning, activities such as reading aloud to your child are critical. Pictures are an important means of engaging your child's attention and the language in books is much more descriptive and more rhythmical than spoken language.

*Writing and reading are not in themselves a sufficient ambition.
What is of supreme importance is bringing about in a child a desire to write and read.*

Your child's ability to use spoken language is the foundation on which all other forms of language will rest. Use your language creatively and well giving different words to describe events, objects, feelings, tastes, in short everything. Involve your child in lots of conversation from the earliest days and use questions to develop their logical thinking. Play games that support language development, eg: naming objects, parts of objects, inventing rhymes, Simon Says, memory games, descriptive games, etc.

As your child develops an awareness of different sounds and their composition within words, there are a number of games that can be played at home with all members of the family. These games should be played often and in a way that is enjoyable for all involved. "I Spy Games" can be played using the sounds that letters make and not the name of the letter (see following page). Start with a single object held in the hand, to develop the children's understanding of the game, this can gradually be developed to several objects, objects on a shelf, in a part of the room, in the wider environment, etc.

Later other games can be played, such as trying to identify the last sound of individual words, thinking of a selection of words that begin with a particular sound, thinking of words that rhyme or that have the same sound within them, etc. All of this work can be done extending the children's awareness of their languages without the complicated issue of how to hold a pencil correctly. These activities can be developed and extended for many years as your child develops.

The Sounds

a as in am	j as in jam	t as in mat
b as in tub	k as in look	u as in up
c as in tick	l as in full	v as in move
d as in lid	m as in am	w as in win
e as in egg	n as in in	x as in box
f as in if	o as in on	y as in yet
g as in mug	p as in up	z as in quiz
h as in hut	r as in run	
i as in ink	s as in toss	

Double sounds

qu as in quilt	ai as in aim	ee as in see
ie as in pie	oa as in oat	oo as in book
ue as in blue	ou as in out	oy as in toy
er as in her	ar as in car	or as in or
th as in moth	sh as in push	ch as in much

Examples for playing “I Spy Games”

First sounds

cat	‘c’	bat	‘b’	acorn	‘ai’
owl	‘ou’	Australia	‘o’	phone	‘f’
chop	‘ch’	think	‘th’	centre	‘s’
knock	‘n’				

Last sounds

mat	‘t’	dance	‘s’	bench	‘ch’
tap	‘p’	cake	‘c’	lamb	‘b’
window	‘oa’	cage	‘j’	party	‘ee’
books	‘x’				

All sounds

dog	d-o-g	pamper	p-a-m-p-er
house	h-ou-s	shoe	sh-ue
fetch	f-e-ch	bottle	b-o-t-l
tough	t-u-f	since	s-i-n-s
bath	b-ar-th	quiet	qu-ie-e-t

Since these activities are only done at a verbal level they are not spelling activities and so incorrect information is not being given to the child. The refinements of spelling are given at a later date when the children have a solid understanding of how words are formed at an oral level.

Appendix E:

Home Environment

Discipline in the home

“Supposing we study the phenomenon of error in itself: it becomes apparent that everyone makes mistakes. This is one of life’s great realities, and to admit to it is already to have taken a great step forward. If we are to tread the narrow path of truth and keep our hold upon reality, we have to agree that all of us can err; otherwise we should all be perfect. So it is well to cultivate a friendly feeling towards error, to treat it as a companion inseparable from our lives, as something having a purpose, which it truly has.” (the Absorbent Mind 1973. P24)

The Montessori approach is based on a profound respect for the child. It eliminates the necessity for coercion by means of reward and punishment, by achieving instead an active discipline, which originates from within the child rather than being imposed from without. It allows the child the liberty, not licence, to pursue the development of will and construction of self.

The Montessori approach ... achieves an active discipline, which originates from within the child rather than being imposed from without. It allows the child the liberty, not licence to pursue the development of will and construction of self

Remember your child should feel like a valued, useful member of the family, rather than the sole focus. Also that it is you, the adults in the environment, who set the limits necessary for your child’s safety and well being, as well as their development. These limits must be applied consistently.

Remember your child should feel like a valued, useful member of the family, rather than the sole focus.

Generally speaking there are three levels of obedience. A very young child (0-3 years) is controlled by impulses driven by a sensitive period and will obey only if the request complies with the child’s needs or vital urges. When a requested behaviour upsets the child’s inner drive, deviant behaviour manifests in the form of a tantrum. The second level occurs when the child can now obey because they are able to absorb

another person’s wishes and express them in their own behaviour. This is all that many adults demand and expect of children. However, Montessori speaks of a third and higher level of obedience that children can obtain. This arises when the child’s own conscience determines their behaviour. The internalisation of this results in the child making their own decisions, using reason to convince others and becoming a contributing member of society.

Misbehaviour is the result of a child’s mistaken assumptions as to how to get attention. If they can’t gain favourable attention, then they will settle for the negative.

Misbehaviour is often the result of a child’s mistaken assumptions as to how to get attention. If they can’t gain favourable attention, then they will settle for the negative.

The adult has the responsibility of setting an example for the child as well as giving the limits for the child to operate within. “Do as I say and not as I do” will simply not work! Live the values you wish to impart. If you want your child to be kind, gentle, thoughtful, polite and patient, then you must exhibit these characteristics yourself.

Do place value on the child as she is right now.

Do show you have confidence in your child's abilities by letting them make mistakes, where safety permits. Always doing things for your child is a statement of lack of faith and can be very discouraging.

Do recognise effort not results - focus on strengths and utilise the child's existing interests.

Do insist on mutual respect.

Do practise kindness and firmness. Kindness expresses respect for the child, and firmness and consistency evokes respect from the child.

There is a difference between punishment and consequences. Punishment is the exerting of power and is mistakes related to the misbehaviour ... your logical consequences implies no moral judgement but relates directly to the misbehaviour.

Do give reasons. Even if they don't change behaviour, your explanations show the child that reasons are important (avoid getting into lengthy negotiations though). Rules are more meaningful if the viewpoint of others is explained. Of course, to be most effective the adult must also follow them and enforce them consistently!

Do ensure the child is impressed with the needs of reality, not with the power of the adults.

Do say what you expect once in a firm and friendly voice. If there is no response, don't talk – act! Don't become involved in procrastination or a power struggle. Withdraw from the provocation but not from the child.

Do listen when the child begins to talk about problems or conflicts. Say as little as possible and avoid making critical comments. Instead give responses which invite the child to say more. Let them suggest solutions and encourage problem-solving.

Do resist physical punishment. There is always a better way.

Do remember expectations reinforce behaviour. Give the child the feeling you are confident their behaviour will be appropriate. If the child's behaviour is unacceptable and the child will not listen to reason, then simply remove yourself from the situation. Refuse to be involved in the power struggles. If this is not possible or practicable, then remove the child from the situation. Explain that the child's behaviour is unacceptable and you simply will not be around such behaviour. If the child wishes to rejoin you or others then they must modify the behaviour.

When conflict arises there are three possible avenues to pursue: change the environment; change your own position; or have the child change their attitude.

When conflict arises there are three possible avenues to pursue; change the environment; change your own position; or have the child change their attitude.

- ❑ Modifying the environment can often avoid future conflicts. Consider enriching it, making it more orderly, simplifying it, planning ahead for changes, making things more accessible or less accessible, etc.
- ❑ Re-assess your own position and determine whether your request is reasonable and constructive.

- ❑ Impress the child with the consequence of their actions. Say how you feel and what your reactions are. Endeavour to develop the child's thinking skills and simply encourage them to come up with solutions to resolve conflicts.

There is an important difference between punishment and consequences. Punishment is the use of power and is rarely related to the misbehaviour. It is usually a judgment and has to do with the past. Using logical consequences (eg: if the child refuses a jumper on a cold day and then experiences feeling cold) implies no moral judgment but relates directly to the misbehaviour. The tone of the voice should always be friendly but firm, and if results are unpalatable to the child, maintain a personal disengagement.

There is also an important difference between reward and encouragement. Reward is given for achievement. Where rewards are habitual, the absence of a reward can result in the disappearance of the required behaviour and may also suggest to the child that they have failed. Encouragement is given with or without success.

Encouragement vs praise

"The promotion of self-esteem in children is one of the most important tasks facing parents and teachers. The role of encouragement in this process is central and should not be confused with praise, which should have no place in our parenting or teaching". Dr Maurice Balson.

Praise is in essence a value judgement, increasing in children the pressure to perform. Praise sets up unrealistic expectations of continued success which can lead to a child avoiding tasks out of fear of failure.

Becoming dependent on praise can lead to approval seeking behaviour. The reason for giving praise is often based on enhancing performance, promoting a certain kind of behaviour, or helping someone to feel good about him/herself. Praise fails to achieve these aims and in most cases even acts counterproductively.

*"The role of encouragement ... is central and should not be confused with praise" (Dr Maurice Balson)
Encouragement is given with or without success.*

Encouragement on the other hand, focuses on the process rather than the product, the action rather than the actor. When your child performs an activity, encourage the effort, eg: "you cleaned the table well, you worked very hard dusting the chair, you placed those groceries carefully on the shelf." "Good boy/girl" does not recognise the effort the child has made. Try to avoid praise that sets up competition such as "You are the best in the class", rather use expressions such as "You

seem to enjoy learning."

Encouragement implies faith in the child and fosters self-esteem by focussing on the child's assets, improvement, efforts, contributions and enjoyment of activities. Expressions of encouragement leave the child with a sense of self determination, encourage risk taking, lead to an increase in self motivation and maintain a healthy relationship with the child.

Sleep

Maria Montessori observed that learning begins when children focus their attention on something that interests them. To best facilitate this in the classroom it is desirable that children have 10 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night. Any less can affect their ability to focus, perform to their potential or benefit from educational opportunities school provides.

1 ½ - 5 years a child should have about 11-12 hours of sleep (inc. naps).
5 – 12 years a child should have about 10 hour's sleep.

Screen Time

It is strongly recommended that children do not watch or play games on television, DVD's, mobile phones or computers *before school*. Children who watch or play games on electronic media before school are less able to energetically interact with the Montessori environment or settle and focus when they arrive at school. Electronic media can have a profound effect on children. Viewing can have different effects on different children – some become passive, some agitated or frightened and some lose their sense of reality.

It is strongly recommended that children do not watch or play games on screens before school ... it means they are less able to settle and focus when they arrive.

Practical life in the outdoor area

Practical life activities are necessary and can be extended to the outdoors.

"One cannot awaken the conscience by talking about it." (Maria Montessori "From Childhood to Adolescence")
While the young child is engrossed in outdoor play, which will sometimes be messy, the child can: develop skills and hand-eye coordination, clarify concepts, eg: heavy/light, sink/float. They can gain understanding about nature's wonders, eg: roots, stones, etc... experiment with shape and form and line and colour.

The following exercises can be organized outside:

- ❑ Unstructured sand play Using various implements such as bowls, cups, measuring spoons and sifters the child explores dry sand. Vary activity by wetting sand & changing the implements.
- ❑ Sweeping Using a child sized broom, the child sweeps path, verandah, etc.
- ❑ Raking Using a child sized rake, the child can help rake the leaves.
- ❑ Painting Using a small amount of paint and a small paint brush the child can help you paint a wall or fence.
- ❑ Scrubbing You will need a bucket of water, scrubbing brush, soap, sponge for rinsing and drying cloth. Child can scrub the concrete, tables, BBQ.
- ❑ Window washing Spray the window from a plastic container. Using a bladed window wiper, the child wipes the window in a downward stroke, wipes blade with drying towel and repeats wiping and drying motion. Mirror cleaning too.
- ❑ Hammering A large tree stump, a child sized hammer and a container of nails. Nails are hammered into the log, or you can help make something together, a toy barn for the child's farm animals.
- ❑ Obstacle course Plan a course in the shape of a broken circle, square, octagon or u-shaped (this will allow the child to begin again once they have completed the circuit). Provide a broad variety of motor experiences, eg: balance, climb, slide, jump, tumble, push, pull and swing.

Maths

"Numeracy is having the skills to use numbers and mathematical ideas and understanding the ways they work".
(IESIP Preschool profile)

Maths is more than counting and recognizing numerals. At home we can sing songs about it, read books with numbers, count, measure when cooking, add up whilst shopping, sorting washing and sharing board games.

A clear clock helps the child learn to tell the time. Measure family members' heights. Play games like dominoes. Let your child pay for bread or milk etc. at the shops. You can help read traffic speed signs. There are so many opportunities to explore and develop your child's numeracy skills as you go about your daily routine. When walking have a look at shops, how many doors do they have, what shape are the windows and what number in the street. At the beach see how many shovels it takes to fill the bucket, is it heavy or light now?

You can tell stories, sing songs and finger plays as they also provide an opportunity for developing a greater understanding of mathematical language.

- ❑ *Number*– recognition of quantity, groups, counting forwards, backwards.
- ❑ *Size*– small, smaller, smallest, tall, huge, wide, thin, fat, long, short, the same.
- ❑ *Time*– days of the week, night time, day time, sequence of daily events, special events, recognition of clock face time.
- ❑ *Speed*– slow, steady, fast. *Shape*– circle, square, triangle, oval, ellipse, rectangle.
- ❑ *Mass*– heavy, heaviest, light, lightest, easy to push-pull-lift.
- ❑ *Temperature*– experiences relating to weather, seasons, warm, boiling, icy, cool.
- ❑ *Position in space*– in, out, over, under, through, behind.
- ❑ *Money*– shopping and using money as an exchange, coin, dollar, bill, pay.

Problem solving is a process where children use different ways to find a solution to a problem.

- ❑ At bath time – how many cups can you fill from the bottle?
- ❑ While cooking – how many potatoes do we need for 5 people?
- ❑ Table setting – how many more knives and forks do we need?
- ❑ While shopping – can you put 2 tins in the trolley?
- ❑ Pack away time – sorting toys into cars, animals etc.
- ❑ Working on puzzles – let's find all the corner pieces.

Language

One of the earliest, longest, most difficult and wonderful of the sensitive periods in a child's development, according to Montessori, is that period concerned with the acquisition of spoken language.

"Without the help of reason, without lessons, and without conscious effort, he learns to pronounce the language he hears around him with perfection." (E.M. Standing, "Montessori Her Life & Works").

Games help your child focus attention on skills needed for reading and provide a way for your child to interact through language in an interesting and relevant way.

The following language activities can be used at home:

Model for language Expose your child to good speech examples by talking to the child in slow, quiet speech using clear pronunciation, precise usage and varied word choice.

Listening Play the silence game with your child. Invite the child to relax and listen with concentration to the sounds around him.

Memorisation Simple songs, poems and rhymes, which appeal to children, are easily memorized and can amplify sounds and rhythms of language.

Reading Introduce your child to the rich heritage of his language by reading books to him on a regular basis.

Increasing Vocabulary A variety of activities and games can help your child increase his spoken vocabulary and help him relate spoken language with written language.

- ❑ Labelling – the child's name is written on his favourite cup and coat hook. (use lower case letters except for first letters of proper names).
- ❑ Making a scrapbook – with your help the child cuts and pastes a picture in a scrapbook. Beneath the picture a word or phrase is written. Re-read the books often and let the child 'read' them too.
- ❑ Collecting – a collection of objects provides a good basis for naming. Start with familiar objects (eg: fruits, vegetables, animals etc.)
- ❑ Shopping – name objects on the shelves as you put them in your trolley.
- ❑ I spy – a collection of objects is in front of the child and play I spy (use a variety of objects and beginning sounds).

How can a house be for both adults and children?

Some thoughts for you to consider:

- ❑ How can each room be designed for adult, child and adolescent co-existence?
- ❑ What in your house belongs exclusively to adults?
- ❑ What belongs exclusively to children?
- ❑ Is there a place that is off-limits to children? Should there be?
- ❑ How does your child respond to the idea of 'exclusive' belongings?
- ❑ How do you view the belongings of your child or adolescent?
- ❑ What are your needs at different times of the day (morning, dinner, bedtime, etc)?
- ❑ What are your child's needs?
- ❑ What occurs when adult and child needs are in harmony?
- ❑ What occurs when they are in conflict?
- ❑ When Montessori says "*an adults seeks to perfect the environment; a child seeks to perfect himself*" what distinction is being made between the adult's work and the child's?
- ❑ How are the child's time and pace different from the adults?
- ❑ When you take a walk, go shopping, or run errands with a child, what does the child like to do? Do you make time for it?
- ❑ When a child pours, sweeps or cleans up, what is the real benefit for that child's development?
- ❑ Have you ever discouraged (directly or indirectly) your child from doing an activity in the home because you anticipated obstacles to success?
- ❑ When an activity is not successful, what analysis is necessary to find out what works and what does not?

Consider: how can each room in your house be designed for adult, child and adolescent co-existence? What occurs when adult and child needs are in harmony or in conflict? How is your child's pace different from the adults?

Appendix F:

Local Area Excursion Map

