

Prince George Montessori Education Society

Parent Handbook



PRINCE GEORGE
MONTESSORI
EDUCATION SOCIETY

Our care of the child should be concerned not by the desire to make him learn things but the endeavour always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence. “

Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activities in Education

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Welcome to the Prince George Montessori Early Learning Centre, Child Care Centre and Out of School Care Programs.

“The secret of good teaching is to regard the child’s intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination”

Dr. Maria Montessori

The Montessori Program in Prince George is the result of the efforts of a group of dedicated parents and teachers who became associated through their shared interest in a child-centered learning. After much work, they were able to hire and interested local teacher, Vicky Williams, to begin operating a one-room private Montessori School. In the spring of 1985, School District #57 approved the establishment of a “primary alternative” program. Now, as a public rather than a private school, Montessori became a choice for elementary level education available to all who were interested. Today, the Montessori Community School has an enrolment of 270 students in kindergarten through to grade 7 at Highglen Montessori Elementary and an enrolment of 20 students in grade 7 through to grade 9 at the Prince George Senior Secondary Montessori Program. In 1989, the Prince George Montessori Education Society (PGMES) started the Pre-School by purchasing the school from Marga Konig. In the fall of 1993 the program was extended to include full day preschool and out of school care. Today these programs are housed in the Montessori Early Learning Centre and Montessori Child Care Centre and have expanded to include morning, afternoon, and full-day preschool, childcare and out of school care options.

The programs are located at the following locations and we encourage all interested parents to contact us for additional information or to arrange on-site tours:

Elementary Program:

Gladstone Montessori Elementary School

7005 Gladstone Dr.

Contact: Karin Paterson; Principal

Phone: (250) 964-7743

Email: kpaterson@sd57.bc.ca

Early Learning Centre Programs:

Montessori Early Learning Centre

1448 5th ave

Contact: Shelley Bond; Learning Centre and Childcare Coordinator

Phone: (250) 562-6560

Email: Shelley_bond@hotmail.com

Childcare Program:

Montessori Childcare Centre

1448 5th Ave.

Contact: Shelley Bond; Learning Centre and Childcare Coordinator

Phone: (250) 562-6560

Email: Shelley_bond@hotmail.com

Out of School Care Programs:

Contact: Shelley Bond; Learning Centre and Childcare Coordinator

Phone: (250) 562-6560

Email: Shelley_bond@hotmail.com

High school Program:

Prince George Senior Secondary School

2901 Griffiths Dr.

Contact: Michelle Scott

Phone: (250) 562-6441

Email: mScott@sd57.bc.ca

Additional Sources of Information:

Prince George Montessori Education Society Website: www.pgmontessori.ca

Please keep this booklet for year round reference.

The Mission of the Prince George Montessori Education Society

“Preventing conflicts is the work of politics, establishing peace is the work of education.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

We exist to ensure the vitality and integrity of Montessori Education in Prince George. We believe that children will develop inner peace as a way of life in a learning environment that encourages their natural curiosity, cooperation, independence, and respect for themselves and their world.

Benefits of the Montessori Approach to Education

“Investment in education always pays the best dividends”

Benjamin Franklin

A Montessori education is an “education for life”. Learning is a hands-on approach where students learn by trial, error and discovery. This approach is responsive to individual learning styles and allows the child to progress at their best pace. Each child becomes fully engaged in the learning process.

We believe that by helping each child to discover their own unique talents and possibilities we prepare them to succeed in the real world of ideas, enterprise and challenging perspectives. We help children “learn how to learn” so they will be ready for the ever changing world of tomorrow by:

- ξ Inspiring children to think for themselves. Instead of presenting the “right answer” we try to ask the “right question” and challenge them to find new solutions and discover the answers for themselves
- ξ Helping students to become effective, self-organized learners by encouraging them to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions
- ξ Keeping their joy of learning alive by providing intriguing learning materials and encouraging them to investigate, explore, discover and think creatively
- ξ Exposing students to diverse perspectives and teaching them to respect different points of view which provides them with valuable life skills such as peaceful conflict resolution and interpersonal communication
- ξ Teaching them that we can all make a difference in this world thereby instilling a tradition of community service

Montessori educated children tend to grow up to be

- ξ a life-long joyful scholar
- ξ independent
- ξ responsible
- ξ self confident
- ξ able to think for oneself
- ξ compassionate and kind
- ξ enthusiastic

Early Learning Centre and Child Care Centre Information

Admissions, Procedures and Tuition Policy:

\$25.00 registration fee per child, plus a payment plan in place (direct deposit, credit card).

The child is ONLY considered registered and eligible to enter the program when completed registration forms are in place, fees have been paid, and parents have attended an orientation session. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure their child's fees are current and any changes to the registration information are communicated to the staff.

Parent's who receive subsidy are responsible for paying their portion of the fees and ensuring their child's fees and subsidy documentation is current.

A \$10 fee is applied to all N.S.F. cheques.

If you are in arrears or are experiencing any financial difficulties please contact the PGMES Early Learning Centre and Childcare Coordinator to discuss alternative arrangements.

Starting a Program:

The child must be at least 30 months old, as of September of the year of attendance and must be toilet trained and bathroom independent at the time of admission.

Child Care Centre (5th Avenue) Location:

Gradual entry will be applied for the first two to three days of school and is determined based on the individual situation.

If you are registering after the start of the school year, an individual gradual entry plan will be developed based on the needs of the child.

Many young children and their parents feel a bit nervous when they leave one another in an unfamiliar situation. A few tears may even be expected. On the first day of school, please do not linger too long in the class or react with alarm if your child is hesitant about the separation. It is very important to reassure your child that you will return for them and leave. The teachers are wonderful and have experience in helping children through this situation.

Arrival and Dismissal:

Please observe and adhere to these drop-off and pick-up times to ensure that the staff may prepare the classroom for all children in the program.

After these time-frames, a \$5.00 per 10 minute period or part there-of fee will be charged. Charges may be deferred, if prior arrangement and/or a phone call are received before the end of class time.

Late pick-up fees are due monthly. Parents will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that they have been late picking up their child, with the respective times and dates.

Early Learning Centre(5th Avenue) Location:

Times of Arrival:

ξ No earlier than five minutes before class.

Times of Pick-Up:

ξ No later than five minutes after class.

Please ensure prompt pick-up of your children. No child will be released to a person not pre-approved by the parent/guardian who enrolled the child. We **MUST** have written authorization whenever possible for changes.

Child Care Centre (5th Avenue) Location:

Times of Arrival:

ξ No earlier than 8:00am and no later than 9:00am

Times of Pick-Up:

ξ No later than 5:30pm

Withdrawal:

We require one calendar month's notice of withdrawal. Failure to do so by the first of the month will result in the parent being charged full fees for the following month. (Serious illness or family emergencies could cancel this requirement). No partial refunds will be issued. The registration fee is non-refundable. Fees have to be paid in full up to and including the month of withdrawal.

Absences:

Irrespective of reason for absence (i.e. illness, injury, holidays, etc.) full fees are required if parents wish to hold their child's place.

School Calendar, Holidays and Pro-D Days:

The Early Learning Centre program follows the same calendar as the Elementary School, from the **second** day after Labour Day to the end of June. It is closed for the Winter Break, Spring

Break and all statutory holidays. The Child Care Centre program is open year-round with the exception of the week before school begins in September and between Christmas and New Years as well as all statutory holidays.

School Telephone Numbers and Other Information:

The phone number for the Child Care Centre and Early Learning Centre programs is (250) 562-6560. Calls will be answered between 8:00 - 9:00am and again between 11:30 - 12:00pm and 4:00 - 5:30pm. The teachers will check messages periodically through the above times.

Parent Teacher Meetings:

Within the first few weeks of school, an information evening on the Montessori Philosophy and Curriculum will be presented. All parents are encouraged to attend.

At Christmas an oral report will be given, if requested by parents. At the end of the school year, a written report will be prepared and an oral report will be given upon the request of parents. Notices of times and dates of parent/teacher meetings will be posted and/or announced in the monthly newsletter.

Observation of Classes:

Parents are invited and urged to observe the children at work. Please contact the teachers to inform them of when you would like to visit. Unless arrangements have been made in advance the teacher may not have time to speak with you. You will want to see the class at its normal routine and not responding to the novelty of your presence; therefore, when you visit, please sit in the designated visitor's chair in the classroom.

Observation times are available anytime after your child's first month of attendance.

In order to make the most of your observation time, we ask that consideration for the whole group be kept in mind when in the classroom. Please remain seated on the sidelines and avoid walking about the room, handling materials, and talking to children or other adults. Questions are welcome after your observation time. Please remember that children often behave differently when observers are present and it is always advisable to ask the staff if the day you observed represented typical behaviour, work selection and socialization.

Children should not be performing for the parent watching the class but rather carrying on with normal activities. Because free choice work is encouraged, please refrain from suggesting activities to the children. It is their spontaneous activity, which reveals their true interests and personality growth.

Open House:

The teachers of the Montessori Early Learning Centre and the Montessori Child Care Centre will hold one to two Open Houses throughout the school year. This will give the parents an

opportunity to follow their child's lead and observe their child's activities without the whole class dynamic. This is also a great time to bring interested family and friends for a visit.

Nutrition:

The Early Learning Centre location will provide a nutritious snack each day. Any food allergies will be taken into account when planning daily snack.

The Child Care Centre location will provide a morning snack as well as a special afternoon snack on Thursdays.

Parents are responsible to ensure their child puts perishable lunch items in the fridge or that the lunch item is packed with an ice pack.

Special Activities:

Birthdays:

We celebrate birthdays at circle time by singing "Happy Birthday" and having a "Walk Around the Sun". Please bring photos/stories about the child at birth, one year, two years, etc for the "Birthday Walk". Parents/guardians are invited to share this event with the child. The bringing of treats is left to the discretion of the parent. Please do not bring sugar-filled treats. Beautifully displayed fruits, dips, cheese and crackers are welcome. Other examples may be oatmeal cookies or carrot cake with a cream cheese icing.

Field Trips:

We will take occasional field trips beginning in October. A blanket waiver, on the information form, needs to be signed at the time of registration. Transportation is supplied by teachers, parent volunteers or shuttle bus.

Holidays:

Any ethnic holidays' presented to the children will be presented in such a way as to respect the beliefs of each child in the group.

Sharing:

Please remember that the children should not bring toys to school. Objects brought for sharing can be from the world of nature – objects which inspire discussion about different cultures and countries are also welcome.

Toys can be lost or broken and this can be distressing for both the child and classmates.

Small blankets and stuffed animals or a pillow can be brought from home for quiet time at the full-day programs.

Discipline and Guidance:

All teachers shall adhere to the following value statements:

We believe discipline is helping children, as unique individuals, learn acceptable behaviours rather than stopping them from behaving in undesirable ways. We want to assist children in developing self-control, confidence and sensitivity to others by using a positive, non-punitive approach.

We do not practice corporal punishment (i.e. slapping, shaking and spanking). We believe in a positive approach to child rearing. We do not humiliate, confine or deprive children from meals, snacks or toilet use as a form of discipline.

We will accomplish this by:

- ξ Providing an aesthetic, adequately sized, organized work space which will allow children to work in a relaxed manner and avoid conflicts which may arise from crowded work areas or areas designated for adults
- ξ Following a flexible routine so that children gain trust and security
- ξ Providing a variety of activities and materials which will stimulate cognitive, physical and emotional growth
- ξ Approaching children individually, establishing eye contact and using a calm controlled voice
- ξ Ignoring minor incidents
- ξ Discussing acceptable behaviour and setting limits at a level children understand as a group
- ξ Using positive reinforcement in words and actions, focusing on what to do rather than what not to do
- ξ Encouraging caring and co-operative relationships
- ξ Allowing children to make choices where applicable
- ξ Reminding children of limits as a group
- ξ Redirecting a child's interest when necessary
- ξ Assisting children to problem solve

- ξ Giving a warning cue that will indicate a coming change in activities
- ξ Using logical consequences (i.e. if a child spills milk they will be expected to wipe it up)
- ξ In consultation with parents, a Behaviour Action Plan may need to be implemented for some children

Monitoring and reporting infractions to the supervisor are the responsibility of all staff.

Discipline Policy

Our policy is to use inappropriate behaviour as an opportunity to teach and guide the preschool aged child. This is done individually with the child and/or with the whole group. Our goal is to support the children to become self-directed, self-motivated, confident and self-disciplined.

Issue	Action Type	Actions
Rude Language	Indirect	Teacher talks to the children as a small or large group Children remind that rude language is not okay
Aggressive Behaviour		
Physical/Verbal	Direct	Stop physical aggression and help victim Use reflective language to help children solve problem
	Indirect	Teacher talks at group times about feelings and problem solving techniques
Physical/Verbal Directed at an adult	Direct	Move away/let go of child if touching (happens when child is very upset or angry) Talk to child when calm about other ways to deal with problem
Clean-up	Direct	Give clear directions and/or show how If child resists - wait then try again (the child may need to take a short break before trying again)
Leaving Classroom	Direct	Follow and give clear directions to return to the room Distraction can also be used to have child return without engaging in a power struggle
Running in the Classroom	Direct	Make eye contact and help child return to work
Misuse of Materials	Direct	Child participates in clean up and a teacher can present work if child is interested

All classroom rules as well as social rules are discussed continually at circle time

Curriculum:

Our program is a multi-age class for children ages three through six. It is a child-sized world allowing each child a place to explore life at a level she or he can understand. The materials used are designed to lead a child from the simple to complex. It is an individualized program that allows the child to progress at his or her own pace.

The curriculum consists of five main areas of concentration:

1. Practical Life

Through the use of Practical Life materials and exercises, the child will build a framework for future growth. The child will:

- ξ Learn to care for themselves and their environment
- ξ Develop coordination of movement
- ξ Social independence
- ξ Develop habits of concentration, initiative and persistence
- ξ Pay attention to detail

2. Sensorial

Sensorial materials help to develop and refine the senses. Each material isolates one sense at a time to assist the child to discriminate and refine each sense. These materials aid in the ability to discriminate differences and recognize similarities, as well as the development of memory, imagination and consequently the readiness skills for the appreciation and interpretation of the fine arts.

3. Mathematics

The mathematics materials allow the child to discover for him or herself the rules of mathematics, acquiring the necessary skills to calculate in the decimal system and other bases. The child's learning goes from the concrete to the abstract.

4. Language

We use a phonetic approach for reading. We also incorporate sight words and whole language when it is appropriate. Each area in language has activities that emphasize beginning, middle and ending sounds, word building and reading words. Handwriting is a built in feature of the language area and children learn as they are learning the sounds.

5. Cultural

There is a basic introduction to Geography, Science, Art and Music appreciation. This will form the foundation for elementary education.

Out of School Care (Kindergarten through Grade Seven)

Our out of school care programs are available throughout the year. We offer a broad range of activities for the children to choose from. For example, community service projects, art, gardening, board games, computer time, sports and field trips. The children are involved in the planning and implementation of this program, which assists them in developing valuable life skills such as cooperation, self-confidence and social awareness.

Admission Procedures and Tuition Policy:

\$25.00 registration fee per child, plus a payment plan in place (direct deposit or credit card).

The child is ONLY considered registered and eligible to enter the program when completed registration forms are in place, fees have been paid, and parents have attended an orientation session. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure their child's fees are current and any changes to the registration information are communicated to the staff.

Parent's who receive subsidy are responsible for paying their portion of the fees and ensuring their child's fees and subsidy documentation is current.

A \$10 fee is applied to all N.S.F. cheques.

If you are in arrears or are experiencing any financial difficulties please contact the PGMES Early Learning Centre and Childcare Coordinator to discuss alternative arrangements.

Starting School:

The first day of school is generally not a full day, so care will be available for children for the remainder of the first day.

Arrival and Dismissal:

Please observe and adhere to these drop-off and pick-up times to ensure that staff may prepare the classroom for all children in the program.

After these time-frames, a \$5.00 per 10 minute period or part there-of fee will be charged. Charges may be deferred, if prior arrangement and/or a phone call are received before the end of class time.

Late pick-up fees are due monthly. Parents will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that they have been late picking up their child, with the respective times and dates.

ξ No earlier than 7:30pm and no later than when the school day starts

Out of School Care Program Special Information:

Care will be available at Highglen for all Professional Development days, Spring Break and Winter Break. Please inform the Learning Centre and Child Care Centre Coordinator if you intend for your child to attend any of these extra days.

Withdrawal:

We require one calendar month's notice of withdrawal. Failure to do so by the first of the month will result in the parent being charged full fees for the following month. (Serious illness or family emergencies could cancel this requirement). No partial refunds will be issued. The registration fee is non-refundable. Fees have to be paid in full up to and including the month of withdrawal.

Absences:

Irrespective of reason for absence (i.e. illness, injury, holidays, etc) full fees are required if parents wish to hold their child's place.

School Telephone Numbers and Other Information:

The telephone number for the Highglen Out-of-School Care is the Early Learning Centre number (250) 562-6560. The phone will only be answered on school days between the hours of 8:00 – 8:30am, 11:30 – 12:00pm and 3:00 – 6:00pm. At all other times the answering machine will be on. Morning calls will be answered at lunchtime and afternoon calls after 3:00pm.

Nutrition:

Parents of children in out of school care must supply lunch and a snack. This should follow the Canadian Food Guide. Lunches should not contain pop, chips or candy-like snacks.

Parents are responsible to ensure their child puts perishable lunch items in the fridge or that the lunch items are packed with an ice pack.

Discipline and Guidance:

All teachers shall adhere to the following value statements:

We believe discipline is helping children, as unique individuals, learn acceptable behaviours rather than stopping them from behaving in undesirable ways. We want to assist children in developing self-control, confidence and sensitivity to others by using a positive, non-punitive approach.

We do not practice corporal punishment (i.e. slapping, shaking and spanking). We believe in a positive approach to child rearing. We do not humiliate, confine or deprive children from meals, snacks or toilet use as a form of discipline.

We will accomplish this by:

- ξ Providing an aesthetic, adequately sized, organized work space which will allow children to work in a relaxed manner and avoid conflicts which may arise from crowded work areas or areas designated for adults
- ξ Following a flexible routine so that children gain trust and security
- ξ Providing a variety of activities and materials which will stimulate cognitive, physical and emotional growth
- ξ Approaching children individually, establishing eye contact and using a calm controlled voice
- ξ Ignoring minor incidents
- ξ Discussing acceptable behaviour and setting limits at a level children understand as a group
- ξ Using positive reinforcement in words and actions, focusing on what to do rather than what not to do
- ξ Encouraging caring and co-operative relationships
- ξ Allowing children to make choices where applicable
- ξ Reminding children of limits as a group
- ξ Redirecting a child's interest when necessary
- ξ Assisting children to problem solve

- ξ Giving a warning cue that will indicate a coming change in activities
- ξ Using logical consequences (i.e. if a child spills milk they will be expected to wipe it up)
- ξ In consultation with parents, a Behaviour Action Plan may need to be implemented for some children

Monitoring and reporting infractions to the supervisor are the responsibility of all staff.

Conflict Resolution for Out of School Care

1. If a conflict occurs, it will be stopped. The child(ren) will be calmed. Separation may be necessary. If there has been a physical injury it will be tended to first. When the child(ren) are calmer resolution can begin.
2. A staff person will talk to each child to find out what the problem is and will let the children express their feelings.
3. The children will be (if necessary) guided to come up with solutions and ideas on what could have been done differently. A child will be asked to come up with a plan to help the other child or children involved if they verbally or physically harmed them. They would also be asked to come up with a plan if someone's work was ruined. A staff person would be involved in this process.
4. A child may be asked to leave the area where the conflict happened for a brief period of time to allow them to calm down after losing control. This halts the behaviour so the child can re-orient themselves towards positive behaviour and regain self-control. At this time the children and staff would go back to step three.
5. Staff will ensure that the parents or guardians are aware of any reoccurring, unresolved or serious problems or conflicts that take place during their child's time in the program.
6. Behaviours, which endanger other children, staff, or the child themselves, will be documented.
7. In discussing the child's serious reoccurring or unresolved behaviour with parents, it will be emphasized that we want to help but we need the parent's support and perhaps outside help. Parents will be asked to agree to one of the following:
 - ξ If parents deny situation, they will be asked to observe their child
 - ξ Bring in a resource person to observe and make recommendations

- ξ Set up a Behaviour Action Plan individualized to the specific child. It will be clarified what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour and what the consequences will be of the child's action. A plan will be put into place if there has been no progress made in a three month period of time.
8. Behaviour Action Plans – If there is a reoccurring problem or conflict (physical and/or verbal), a Behaviour Action Plan will be developed by the Out of School Care staff in consultation with the parents. If a resource person has been in to observe they will be asked for their recommendations. If the Child Development Centre has become involved, they will lead the development of a Behaviour Action Plan.

All staff will follow a child's Behaviour Action Plan.

If a parent or guardian is not willing to follow step seven, they will be asked to remove their child from the program.

Information for All Programs

Grievance Procedures/Information:

For parents who may have a concern or want some more information about their child please use the following procedure:

1. Speak to the teacher concerned. Make an appointment to see him/her after school hours.
2. If the result is not satisfactory, see the Learning Centre / Child Care Centre Coordinator and make an appointment for after school hours.
3. If the result is still not satisfactory, get in touch with the PGMES Child Care Liason.

Dress:

Children are required to have the correct indoor and outdoor clothing for school. One child ill equipped may spoil an activity for the whole group so please ensure your child is equipped appropriately each day.

Please mark all children's clothes, footwear and lunch bags with their name. All clothing should be easy for the child to put on and take off by themselves as the Montessori approach stresses independence and we encourage children to dress themselves. Please ensure the clothing worn to class is generic and non-commercialized as well. Parents are responsible for providing appropriate clothing for prevailing weather conditions. It is NOT the responsibility of the staff to ensure the child's warmth outdoors.

We strongly advise all parents to leave an extra set of underwear, pants and socks in case an accident arises.

Children must be prepared to go outside each day. We go outside if it is not less than minus 20°C.

Children must have a pair of runners or rubber soled slippers for indoor use, left at school at all times.

We are not responsible for lost/stolen or stained clothing.

Health and Safety

Fire Drills:

Fire drills are a regular part of the program, carried out every month. We will carry our first aid kit and emergency cards and meet at designated areas.

Emergency Preparedness:

In case of emergency evacuation, we will follow the same guidelines as the fire drill. Parents/guardians would be contacted to pick up their child.

Accidents:

The staff is trained in first aid and has a properly stocked first aid kit on hand for the treatment of minor scrapes and cuts. In the event of a more serious accident, the staff would contact the parent or emergency contact person. If immediate medical attention is required an ambulance will be called (provided the registration for was signed giving permission to call one) to take the child to PGRH. All serious accidents are immediately reported to the parent or guardian and the health unit. All accidents are report to the child's parents and an incident form is filled out and kept on file.

Illness:

For the protection of the sick child and the other children, a child who is running a fever of 38°C or more, has diarrhoea and is vomiting or coughing severely is NOT to be brought to school. If your child requires medication to control a fever, they are not well enough to attend school.

The staff will notify parents whenever their child has been exposed to a contagious illness.

Parents must inform the school within 24 hours of a serious illness in the family. Even if the child is kept home, it is necessary to be aware of the infection so as to warn other families using the facility.

Children with known communicable diseases (i.e. chicken pox, mumps, lice, etc.) must be kept at home for the length of time recommended by the Northern Interior Health Unit.

Over-the-counter and prescribed medication will be dispensed to your child only when the appropriate form has been completed and signed.

If your child is too sick to go outside for 20 minutes each day, he or she should be kept at home.

Children with infected skin or eyes or with undiagnosed rashes are to be kept at home.

If your child becomes ill at school or during Out of School Care, the staff will contact the parents and the child must be picked up immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, the designated emergency contact person will be contacted to pick up the child. The school has no facilities to look after sick children; therefore, they must be kept home until they are certified ready to return.

Parents must inform the staff of any allergies the child may have or develop, which affects the child's daily nutritional intake. The parent may need to supply alternate food.

Custody:

Recent Separation:

If in the case of a recent separation a parent wants the school to withhold the child from the other natural parent, the staff will advise him or her to seek legal counsel. The school cannot assume responsibility for withholding the child from either parent, unless a copy of a legal court order to this effect is presented.

Actual Custody:

When a child is placed in the school by one parent/guardian, he or she supplies the names of people authorized to remove the child from the school. The policy is to release the child only to the parent or person authorized by that parent/guardian.

Most Commonly Asked Questions

1. Who started the Montessori Method?

Dr. Maria Montessori, over 70 years ago, was Italy's first woman medical doctor. Using her scientific background, she began observing children in the children's houses of Rome. Based on unbiased observations she developed unique materials, a child-centered environment, and was one of the first persons to revolutionize educational thought by stressing respect for the child, freedom of expression, self-education, and training through use of movement and senses.

2. What is the Montessori Method of Education?

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

3. What is the purpose of the Montessori Method?

The main purpose of the Montessori Method is to develop an environment where the child can unfold spontaneously and manifest the greater person inside. According to Dr. Maria Montessori, "The child is the father of man". As the child begins to develop this inner self, his love of life and learning expands continuously.

4. Who is the Montessori Method designed for?

The Montessori Method is an "approach to learning" and as such has no distinction of class or intelligence. It has been used successfully in all parts of the world and in all types of programs geared to children with varying education needs.

5. What is in a Montessori classroom?

The Montessori classroom is a child-sized world. Whatever is in the world outside can be incorporated meaningfully in the Montessori classroom. To a child, the world is unmanageable... it is too big, too complex and too confusing. By careful selection of materials by the teacher, an environment is set up that allows the child to explore life on a level he can understand. The materials or exercises are designed to stimulate independent exploration. This prepared environment entices the child to proceed at his own pace from simple activities to more complex ones. Through this process, the child's natural curiosity is satisfied and he begins to experience the joy of discovering the world about him.

6. What is the role of the Montessori teacher?

The Montessori teacher facilitates the classroom activity. She carefully plans the environment in the interests of the children and she helps the children progress from one activity to the next. She is trained to deal with each child individually allowing him to choose from many activities within his range of ability. She stands back while a child is working and allows him the satisfaction of his own discovery.

7. With all the freedom, isn't there confusion?

The concept of freedom within the classroom is one of freedom within limits. A child is allowed to work freely so long as he does not disturb others. Actually, the children having the freedom to follow their interests are generally happy and busily involved with their work.

8. How do children interact in the environment?

As the children develop their sense of pride in their "work", a feeling of confidence, well being and joy begins to manifest itself in the child. A "new child" is born. A classroom of Montessori children is a joy to watch. There seems to be a spirit of respect, love and cooperation among the children.

9. What about socialization and group work?

Socialization is very much a part of the Montessori Method. In the classroom, you will notice children interacting continuously, choosing work and projects together and older children helping younger ones. Each day there is some group activity and play outside.

10. How do Montessori children adjust to public school?

Children who have been in a Montessori environment are generally very flexible and adjust quite easily to the public school situation. They are generally better students and spend their time in more productive ways because of their self-direction and positive attitude towards learning.

11. Does Montessori employ current research and theory in education methods?

Montessori is not a static or closed system of education. While there are certain materials and methods that have been proved effective during the years, Montessori is as much an attitude about education and children as it is a specific method.

Prince George Montessori Education Society (PGMES)

Purpose of PGMES

- ξ To promote quality Montessori educational opportunities for children in Prince George
- ξ To promote and enhance the understanding of Montessori education
- ξ To facilitate professional development for teachers working in the Montessori programs
- ξ To promote a cooperative relationship between parents and staff

Membership in PGMES

All parents and guardians with children in a Montessori program supported by PGMES have the ability to be a member of the Society. Voting members are those who are parents and guardians of children enrolled in the program, staff and administration involved with the Montessori program and parents of former students. Non-voting membership is open to anyone else who has an interest in the Montessori program and paid employees of the Society. Members are required to complete a membership form each year. This provides an important record for the Society and is mandatory in order for a member to vote.

Members are encouraged to keep informed by reading the monthly newsletters and other materials as well as attending parent education seminars. Please feel free to communicate your ideas and/or concerns to the Board of Directors and volunteers are always welcome.

PGMES Meetings

The Society holds three main types of meetings:

1. Annual General Meeting held in June of each year. The Board of Directors is selected for the upcoming year and is open to all members.
2. Committee Meetings: Committees are established throughout the year to work on various projects and meetings would be held as required.

Parent Participation

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has”

Margaret Mead, anthropologist

Volunteering: The Gift of Time and Talent

The Prince George Montessori Education Society is a community of students, parents and teachers. Our ideas often help to shape the future and the PGMES is very responsive to all suggestions and concerns.

We encourage families to participate in the broader life of the school through social and educational activities. Family members who give their time and talent share with their children special memories of experiences and friendship that will endure a lifetime.

All offers of help are appreciated and there is no expectation of a set time commitment.

Some of the ways that you might be able to help our school are:

- ξ Lend you time and support to our fundraising efforts
- ξ Help organize special events
- ξ Serve on one of the school committees
- ξ Help the teachers organize field trips or special lessons
- ξ Volunteer to be an Ambassador Family to parents new to the school
- ξ Share a skill, or talent, such as a musical instrument that you play, a second language that you speak, a craft you enjoy, or a field that you have studied
- ξ Join in at open houses and parent discussion seminars
- ξ Donate material as requested by teachers

Fundraising

The Montessori Elementary program is funded by the School District on the same per student basis as all other schools in the district. These funds cover all the basic requirements of the classroom but a successful Montessori program requires unique learning materials and teachers with specialized training. Therefore, fundraising is essential to providing each of our students with the best educational opportunities.

Activities such as our annual Dinner Dance and Auction, Family Fun Days, and sales of labels and cookie dough are just some of the examples of our ongoing fundraising events.

Fundraising also takes place through the annual giving campaign. Donations to the PGMES are tax deductible and a receipt will be issued.