



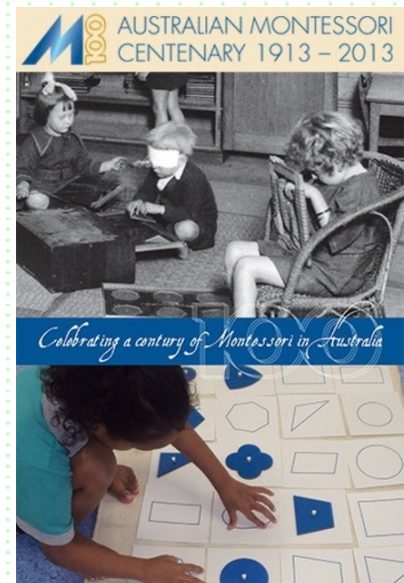
**Yass  
Montessori  
Pre-School Inc  
FAMILY HANDBOOK**



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All quotations used throughout this book are cited from Dr Maria Montessori (her books are listed in Further Reading).

We gratefully acknowledge the photographs of our pre-school used throughout, taken and donated by Camilla Duffy at Camilla Duffy Photography - <http://www.camilladuffy.com/>







#### **FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Wendy Diggelmann

*I believe a Montessori approach to teaching seeks to assist each child to learn at their own pace. The Montessori classroom is nurturing of each individual child's desire to seek order and autonomy. The Montessori Philosophy offers links between your child's home environment and the early learning classroom, offering specialised resources and tools to stimulate the child's thinking, assisting them to be independent learners and preparing them for school.*

*The Montessori educator works in collaboration with your child, encouraging them to explore the world for themselves, modelling for children a sense of wonder and care for their environment.*

*I would like to leave you with this view, "Childhood only happens once, a Montessori educational experience ensures that your child will have the opportunity to make the best of their early childhood learning experience".*

#### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Stephanie Harding

*Sending your child off to pre-school is a momentous occasion for parents. All we can hope for is that the carers and educators we entrust with our children will embrace their individuality and inspire in them a love of learning, passion for creativity and the desire to lead a fulfilled life. Yass Montessori Pre-School offers all of this and more with staff who feel passionate about working with and educating our children.*

*The Committee is the foundation of any community pre-school. The Committee ties the pre-school to the community, sets its mission and philosophy and is an important support to the invaluable staff.*

*For many people being part of the Yass Montessori Pre-School Committee is a great opportunity to get involved in the pre-school and be part of their child's education. It is an exciting chance to gain new skills, make a difference and get involved in our wonderful community.*

*Welcome to our pre-school!*

#### **FROM THE PATRON**

Kate Walker

*Dr Maria Montessori developed an educational philosophy and practice. Children, she observed, when provided with appropriate tools and a supportive environment could explore, observe, make choices, communicate, create, and analyse the task before them. As her students grew in confidence and competence, Dr Montessori discovered that each child was able to demonstrate empathy and generosity.*

*As a teacher I greatly appreciate Dr Montessori's insights—creating tools that are self correcting and assisting children to realise a sense of achievement when they can complete work by themselves.*

*As a parent and grandparent of Yass Montessori Pre-School pupils, I treasure this special educational environment. It has had a profoundly positive impact on my now adult children. It gives me great pleasure to see the happiness my grandchild feels for her school, her friends and her teachers.*

*A Montessori education is much more than the acquisition of skills; it is an education for life.*

## STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

At Yass Montessori Pre-School we aspire to be a pre-school that provides a Montessori educational experience that is accessible to all.

The pre-school supports an environment that is respectful of cultural diversity and actively promotes an inclusive sense of belonging, for each child, their families and members of our wider community.

As a pre-school we value the individuality of all people involved with our pre-school and respect and honour their involvement, feedback and support.

Dr Maria Montessori recognised parents as the child's prime educators of life. Dr Montessori also recognised that children develop at different rates and

have the best opportunity to achieve their potential when the approach to education takes this into account.

A Montessori classroom environment is constructed specifically to meet the child's needs at different stages of development and recognises children's natural love of learning and the importance of learning at their own pace.

### *Help Me To Do It By Myself*

The Montessori philosophy encourages and teaches children how to be independent in the classroom and you are welcome to try these methods at home.

If you are interested in learning more about Montessori at home, there are books and free websites such as:

[www.dailymontessori.com](http://www.dailymontessori.com)  
[www.montessoriathome.com.au](http://www.montessoriathome.com.au)



## WHAT IS MONTESSORI?

The Montessori philosophy is to enable children to develop self-confidence, self awareness, independence, the ability to concentrate, social skills, motor skills and creative intelligence. Children learning under the Montessori system develop a joy for learning. Children work in multi-age groupings at their own pace.

Dr Maria Montessori was truly a remarkable woman who was ahead of her time. She became well known for her advocacy of social reform through the education of children.

She was born in Charitable, Italy in 1870. She became the first female doctor in Italy when she graduated from medical school in 1896. Her clinical observations in her medical practice led her to analyse how children learn, how they construct themselves from what

is in their environment. When Dr Montessori became a director of a school for intellectually challenged children, she became interested in the work of Itard and Seguin. She was able to achieve remarkable results and these children competed successfully in public examinations. Dr Montessori began to wonder at the possibilities for all children to achieve.

In 1906, Dr Montessori accepted the challenge to work with 60 children of working parents in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. There she founded the first Casa dei Bambini or Children's House.

The Montessori method of education developed there, based upon Montessori's scientific observations of the children's effortless ability to absorb knowledge from their environment, as well as their sustained interest in

manipulating developmental materials.

Her method was developed based upon what she observed children did naturally themselves, unassisted by adults. Children taught themselves. This simple but profound truth formed the cornerstone of Montessori's life-long pursuit of educational reform, a reform that was built upon the child's self-creating process. She realised that children have a natural love of learning and that education is an 'aid to life' and must be provided in a secure and harmonious environment.

Today there are Montessori schools all around the world both in the independent and public sectors and Dr Maria Montessori's work continues to grow, serving the needs of the world's children.





A young Maria Montessori



Dr Maria Montessori in a classroom (circa 1951).



Dr Montessori with children

## About Yass Montessori Pre-School

Having operated in the Yass district for over 30 years, Yass Montessori Pre-School is very much a part of the local community. We have a dedicated and caring team of staff and enjoy the support and involvement of a strong parent committee.

Our children are with us from ages three years to school age, during which time we strive to encourage each child to develop their independence and use their own creativity and imagination to learn and play in the Montessori philosophy.

The children are our focus. Their ongoing happiness and enjoyment of the pre-school and what it has to offer the children will continue to inform all we seek to do and achieve. We are not affiliated with any religion and welcome diversity in our classroom.



*“Character formation cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation.”*



## Our Approach

At Yass Montessori Pre-School we believe that each child is unique and has the right to be treated as an individual.

Children need to know that they will be listened to and that their views are important.

Our role as a pre-school is to support children in their growth towards independence and their quest to understand the world around them.

The Montessori classroom spans a three year age range, corresponding to the developmental stages of the child. The pre-school believes that this model develops community amongst the children who consolidate their social skills by interacting with each other.

It is our aim to provide a classroom environment that is

safe, ordered, diverse and innovative, where children may learn and develop through interaction, exploration and discovery.

A curriculum underpinned by the Montessori Philosophy and Early Years Learning Framework, promotes balance and a deeper absorption of information for the child.

We aim to recognise every teachable moment as a window of opportunity to offer your child a specific lesson and not to rush them so that the lesson is not lost. We believe children given responsibility and independence will grow in confidence in themselves, mastering simple everyday tasks.

The pre-school believes that children should be given the opportunity to be children, where learning is enjoyable, in an environment that inspires

children to reach their fullest potential through a Montessori approach to lifelong learning.





## ***Our Committee***

In addition to fundraising and assisting staff with practical issues from time to time the role of the Committee is to act as the Management Board of the pre-school. The Director is responsible to and reports to the Committee. The Committee's role is to ensure that the operation of the pre-school is in accordance with relevant legislation, regulation and the long-term philosophy of the pre-school.

The key documents that guide the operation of our pre-school are the Constitution and Policy and Procedures Manual. There are also government regulations that are relevant to our day-to-day operation.

## ***Calling all Parents and Carers!***

We would love for you to get involved, have your say, and have fun on the Committee.

The Committee are a friendly bunch and always looking for volunteers. Even if you are very time poor, you may be able to assist us from time to time remotely, or offer ad hoc help for things like fundraising events. Got specific skills? We'd love to know!

General committee meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm, and all parents are welcome to attend.

Please see the Administrator if you are interested in nominating at the Annual General Meeting in March.

## ***Fundraising***

We very much appreciate any financial contribution you are able to make to our fundraising efforts, no matter how small.

We run fundraising drives with products or services that you are able to take advantage of. This helps to give the pre-school additional income to spend to improve our service. We appreciate your support.

Our major fundraisers sometimes need volunteers, so if you are not able to assist on our Committee, maybe you could help at a one-off event, or in supervising an excursion. Volunteer involvement keeps our costs lower to keep fees affordable for families. You'll meet people and have fun too!

## Our Classroom

We enrol children aged between three and six years. Each child is generally enrolled for between one to three days per week, with a maximum of 29 children attending each day.

In a Montessori classroom there is a special atmosphere of cheerful orderliness, calmness and purposeful work. The Montessori environment provides children with materials and activities which are especially suited to the child's intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs at each stage of development.

We offer an enlightened pre-school experience. Children are supported to develop independence and to use their own creativity and imagination to learn and play. Montessori-specific equipment and educational aids are used, as

well as a range of other books, play and craft equipment.

We also organise regular incursions, where visitors come to the pre-school and excursions like visits to local attractions, workplaces, theatre performances, picnics and many, many more. We make every effort to keep these free, or low cost to ensure everyone can attend.



*"It is true that we cannot make a genius.  
We can only give a child the chance to fill  
his potential possibilities."*



## Our Education Program

Our educational program is based on the national law and national regulations. Our program is based on an approved learning framework (we use both the Early Years Learning Framework and the Montessori Method) and based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and takes into account the individuality of each child.

Our program contributes to our children having a strong sense of identity, being connected with and contributing to his or her world, having a strong sense of wellbeing, are confident and involved learners and effective communicators.

A detailed educational program is displayed weekly on the notice board assisting you to follow your child's development. In the foyer, you will also



*"Growth comes from activity, not from intellectual understanding."*

see our Daily Reflection Journal. Each afternoon you can read the journal to find out what has happened in our classroom so you can be more involved with your child's learning.

Our program includes a combination of self-directed play and group activities including music, art and craft, singing, reading, dance,

cooking demonstrations, food preparation experiences, group discussions and news.

## Observing Us

You can observe your child doing their work and see how our class runs by making an observation appointment. Please write your name down on the roster on the notice board.

When observing, you come inside the classroom and can see how your child spends their time with us.

Montessori education is child centred and based on individual independence and self-directed concentration. The children become very restless if there are too many adults present, and so we hope you will understand that we are trying to establish a work environment suitable for concentration.

We ask that when observing, you stay for **30 minutes only**, and remain seated on the observation chair the whole



*"It is the child who makes the man, and no man exists who was not made by the child he once was."*

time. Please do not interrupt the children or teachers in their work. If the children ask you a question, please answer it.

If you are bringing your child with you, please let him/her participate in activities shown by the educators. If your child wishes to remain with you, please help us by speaking to him/her in a quiet manner.

We ask that parents respect the children's work cycle within the classroom, by not bringing younger siblings with you for the observation appointment.

We assure you this helps the children to concentrate.

## Important Policies and Procedures

Our full operational policies were revised in 2013 to meet our legislative and funding obligations. The policies are available for review in the policy folder in the foyer. The following extracts are taken from policies offering important information.

### Fees

All fee notices must be paid by the due date on the invoice. If fees remain unpaid at the end of the term, your child's enrolment may be cancelled. Genuine financial hardship causing difficulty in paying fees should be discussed with the Director or the Administrator at the earliest opportunity. This will be treated with sensitivity, and in the strictest confidence. The full day fee is still payable regardless of how long your



*"Never help a child with a task at which she feels she can succeed."*

child attends on a particular day, or if they do not attend for illness, injury or holiday. The fees we collect are supplemented by funding from the NSW Government to cover our costs.

Yass Montessori Pre-School is a Registered Childcare provider so families who meet the work/study requirements may be entitled to claim a rebate from the

Family Tax Office. Registered Childcare Receipts can be issued upon full payment of each term's tuition fees. Receipts can be then lodged with the Family Tax Office (at Centrelink) to claim the childcare rebate.



## Enrolment Priority Rules

All NSW pre-Schools are required to adhere to the Early Childhood Education and Care Grants Program Priority of access guidelines. These guidelines and recent Government funding model changes require services to give priority of access to children at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective) over all children at all times.

We must abide by these guidelines and consider enrolment applications in the following order (in order of date of receipt of the enrolment form):

- Enrolled children who already attend who are continuing the following year;
- Four and five year old siblings of enrolled children;
- Other four and five year old children;
- Three year old siblings of enrolled children; and

- All other three year old children until vacancies are filled.

All effort is made to satisfy the preferences of parents for their requested days of the week. However, allocation of days will be in date order of re-enrolment forms received so it is best to get your re-enrolment form back early.

## Backfill Days

From time to time, parents may request that a child attend on a day they are not normally enrolled. Please ask the Administrator to see if a temporary (day) vacancy is available when you need it (ie. another child may be away on holiday or unwell for a period). If a day vacancy is available and your child attends, an invoice will be issued.

As a courtesy, if you know your child will be away on particular

days, please let the Administrator know. If your child is ill unexpectedly on a day they would normally attend the pre-school please call the Administrator by 9am to let her know your child will not be attending that day. The daily fee is still payable.





*"The child becomes a person through work."*

## **Our Daily Routine**

Parents are asked to adhere to school hours strictly to ensure the safety of all children attending the pre-school.

We are open from 8.45am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday in NSW School Terms. We cannot accept children any earlier than 8.45am and you must collect your child before 3.30pm. We are not licenced to have children after 3.30pm and we need to set up for the next day. Please respect these hours.

Fees may apply if you collect your child after 3.30pm at a rate of \$5 per minute.

## **Dropping off your child**

Please try to arrive between 8.45am and 9am so children

can settle in before the daily Montessori program commences at 9am.

An educator will open the door and greet your child. If all of the educators are busy at the time, please see the Administrator and she will gladly let your child into the classroom. Please say goodbye to your child at the door.

## **Collecting your child**

When collecting your child, please let the educator know which child you are collecting at the door. An educator will assist your child to pack their belongings and will open the door to let them out and say good bye. This is a well-recognised Montessori method that fosters grace, courtesy and independence.



*“Such experiences are not just play..... It is work he must do in order to grow up.”*

## **Signing in and out**

Please sign your child in when you drop them off in the morning and please sign them out when you pick them up in the afternoon.

If your child is going to be picked up by someone that you have not included as an authorised person on your enrolment form, please provide us with a signed letter with their details.

## **Sick Children**

Please do not bring your child to the pre-school if they are unwell.

The Director is not permitted to accept a child into class if they are not well enough to participate in normal activities,

have an infectious disease, or if they have been vomiting or had episodes of diarrhoea.

Children who have been vomiting or have had diarrhoea are not permitted to return until 24 hours after the last vomiting episode or last loose bowel movement.

If a child becomes ill at the pre-school, they will be made comfortable and their parent or guardian will be contacted to collect them. You will be contacted if your child requires medical aid or medication.





## Illness and Medication

Please feel free to discuss any child health issues with our staff at any time. Medication must only be administered as prescribed by medical practitioners and first aid guidelines to ensure continuing health for the child and for the child's safety and wellbeing. We strictly follow legislative guidelines and standards in order to ensure the health of children, families and educators at all times.

Staff will not administer any medication without the authorisation of a parent or person with authority – except in the case of an emergency — when the verbal consent from an authorised person, a registered medical practitioner or medical emergency services will be acceptable if the parents cannot be contacted.

Staff will ensure that parents or emergency contact of a child are notified as soon as practicable if medication is administered to the child in an emergency.

If you bring medication for your child to have at pre-school, please ensure that the administration is authorised and prescribed by a registered medical practitioner. Please also ensure the medication is in the original container, with the original label clearly showing the name of the child and that the

medication is not left in your child's bag. For short term medicine use, you can advise staff verbally on the day and we will ask you to fill in any required forms.

### Paracetamol

We do not keep paracetamol on the premises. If your child needs paracetamol, families must provide their own for use as directed by a medical practitioner. To minimise the risk of masking the underlying reasons for high temperatures, educators will only administer paracetamol if it is provided by the family and is accompanied by a medical practitioners letter stating the reason for administering the dosage and duration it is to be administered for.



*“We found individual activity is the one factor that stimulates and produces development.”*

## **Fever**

If your child develops a fever, you will be notified immediately and asked to collect your child as soon as possible. You will be encouraged to visit a medical practitioner to find the cause of the temperature.

## **Known Medical Conditions**

Staff need to know if children have any ongoing medical conditions or are taking any regular medications. If your child has chronic or ongoing medical conditions, we need to have this in writing on your child's file with appropriate medication forms or treatment plans eg Asthma Plans. Plans must be updated as the child's medication needs change.

## **Allergies**

Please ensure that we know about your child's known allergies, both in writing and verbally. We need to have an action plan from your general practitioner which educators will follow should they need to treat your child.

## **Asthma**

If your child suffers from asthma and does not recover within a reasonable time of the administration of asthma medication given according to their Asthma Action Plan, you will be contacted to collect your child as soon as possible.





## Healthy Eating

Please remember that we are a 'Nut Aware' pre-school.

When packing food, family assistance is appreciated by choosing nut free products.

The pre-school has a healthy eating policy and educators are trained in implementing health and hygiene practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children. Educators will ensure all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to, so please notify staff if your child has any dietary requirements or food allergies.

We ask families to pack fruit and a healthy snack for morning tea in a separate box to your child's healthy lunch. As part of the practical life component of Montessori, children are asked to bring a screw top drink bottle filled with water. In the classroom we have filtered water to refill their bottles. The children eat their fruit whenever they get hungry between 9am and noon. There is no need to send lunch in an insulated bag as lunch boxes are stored in the fridge until lunch time.



Please do not pack foods that are high in saturated fat, salt and added sugars such as biscuits, cakes, desserts, pastries, chips, lollies and chocolates. These foods should be eaten only rarely, and in small amounts.





*“To give a child liberty is not to abandon him to himself.”*

## **“Munch and Move”**

We engage children in learning experiences that are fun and enjoyable and incorporate key messages around healthy eating. This includes food preparation as a Montessori curriculum activity and based on the “Munch and Move” program.

Children are encouraged to prepare healthy snacks to eat in the classroom, using fresh produce in season from the edible garden and other healthy food preparation activities. We implement learning experiences (guided by the Early Years Learning Framework principles) and incorporate the child’s interests.

## **Need Nutrition Ideas?**

For nutrition information and lunchbox ideas please refer to [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)

If you need help to choose appropriate food for your child, please ask us.

Food that does not meet Healthy Eating guidelines may be sent home with a healthy eating brochure.





*"The land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth."*

## **Sun Protection**

We are a registered SunSmart pre-school. It is essential that you apply SPF30+ (or higher) sunscreen to your child each morning before you leave home.

All children must wear a sun safe hat (that is, a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket style hat) whilst outside and have their shoulders covered. We will re-apply sunscreen before they go outside for lunch. If your child has sensitive skin, please supply their specific sunscreen clearly labelled with their name to be kept in the classroom. All outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas.

Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area

protected from the sun (that is, under shade, verandah or indoors) or, if one is available, they may be provided with a spare hat.

Please dress your child in clothing that covers their shoulders to protect them from the sun. Sun safe clothing covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. For example, cool, loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline or cool, longer style skirts, shorts and trousers. Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection.



*“The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.”*

### **Appropriate clothing and footwear (and labelling)**

Send your child in clothes that they can manage independently when toileting. Please also put a spare change of clothes and underwear and shoes in their bags. For safety reasons send your child with either closed in shoes or sandals that cover their heel and toes. We prefer children to be wearing closed in shoes because we use small glass jars during the practical life component of Montessori. Thongs, gumboots and crocs are not permitted. We keep a lost property box in the foyer of the pre-school. Check regularly if you loose something.

**Please make sure all items of clothing, bags, hats, shoes, drink bottles, jumpers, etc. are labelled clearly with your child’s name. We are not responsible for identifying unlabelled belongings.**

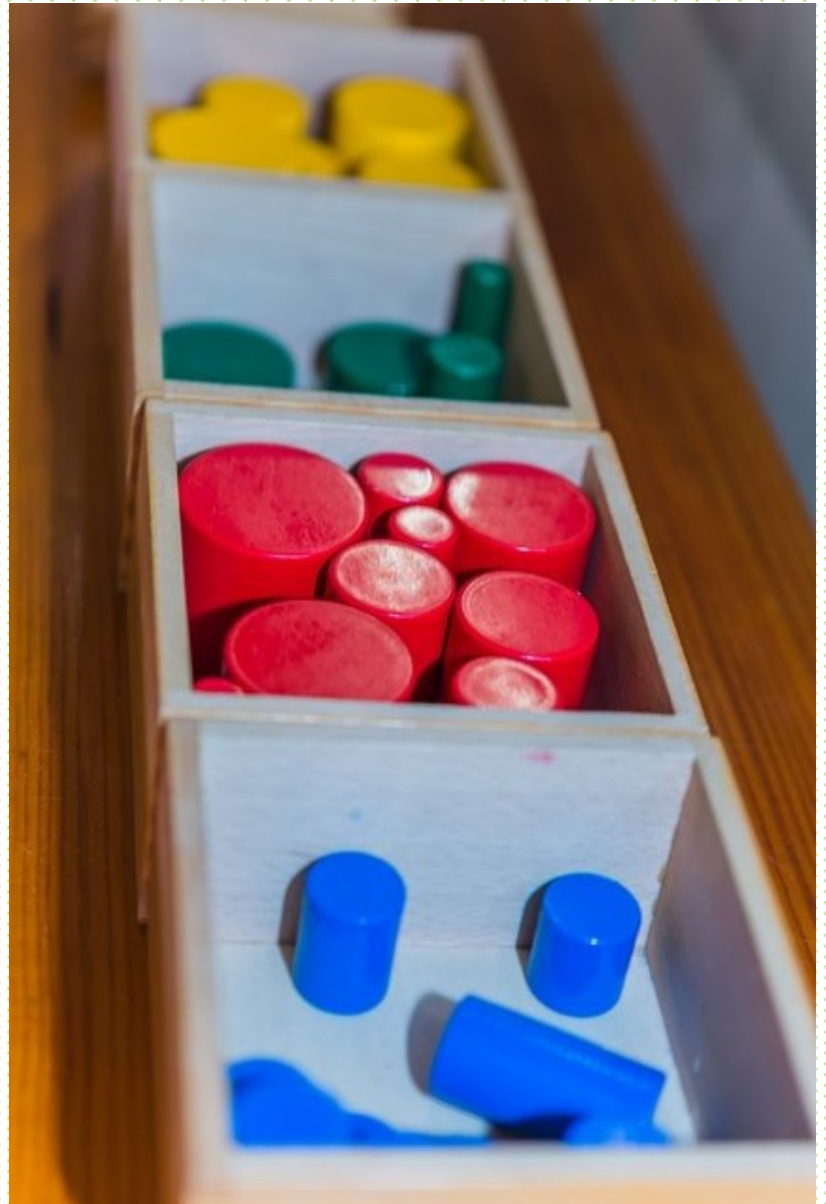


*"Of all things love is the most potent."*

## Quiet Time

Children who ask to have a sleep or rest are able to do so. Please dress your child for sleeping comfort if you request that they be offered a rest. No child will be forced to sleep or rest against their wishes and needs, and staff are not available to pat a child to sleep.

Rest and relaxation exercises such as Tai Chi and Yoga stories are offered in the afternoon directly after outdoor play as an alternative to a sleep routine.



## Toileting Help and Learning

Please ensure that your child is toilet trained before they commence at the pre-school. If they are still in pull ups, please let us know. All children should have a change of clothes packed in their bags. If your child has a toileting accident, we will assist them to change using spare clothes that you have packed for your child.

## Parking

Please park your car in the Woolworths car park and bring your child through the main entrance located next to the furniture store. Please be careful of passing cars and watchful when reversing. **NEVER** leave children in the vehicle, no matter what the weather - it is illegal.





*"Within the child lies the fate of the future."*

## **Family Involvement in our Pre-School**

Each child has a drawer in the foyer where we will put important notes, invoices and art. Please check your child's drawer regularly.

Monthly newsletters are emailed to parents through

which the Director and the Committee communicate with parents to keep you informed. Please check your emails regularly, or let the Administrator know if you require hard copy communications. We are trying to reduce our paper usage for the environment, but if you do not have regular access to a

computer we are able to print correspondence for you. We also have a Facebook site if you would like to "like" us and keep up to date on events and fundraising information throughout the year.

## **Feedback and Suggestion Box**

A Feedback and Suggestion Box for families to use is located in the foyer, with a notebook and pen next to it. We always welcome feedback from our families. Your contribution assists us to implement strategies promoting best practice ideals to support your child's learning. You can speak with the Director, or provide written feedback (named or anonymous) in the box.





*“The child’s parents are not her makers but her guardians.”*

### **Further Reading By Dr Maria Montessori**

The Absorbent Mind  
The Advanced Montessori Method, Vol. 1  
The Advanced Montessori Method, Vol. 2  
Basic Ideas of Montessori's Educational Theory  
The California Lectures of Maria Montessori, 1915  
Child Education (Lectures All India Radio)  
The Child in the Family  
The Child, Society and the World  
Creative Development in the Child Vol 1  
Creative Development in the Child Vol 2  
Education and Peace  
Education for a New World  
From Childhood to Adolescence  
The Formation of Man  
To Educate the Human Potential  
The Secret of Childhood  
What You Should Know About Your Child  
The Discovery of the Child (The Montessori Method)  
Dr Montessori Own Handbook: A Short Guide to Her  
Ideas and Materials

### **By other authors**

Education for Human Development - Mario Montessori  
Montessori: the Science Behind the Genius - Angeline  
Stoll Lillard  
How Babies Talk - Golinkoff & Hirsh - Pasek Maria  
Montessori - A Biography - R. Kramer  
Maria Montessori - Her Life and Work - E.M. Standing  
Montessori Today - Polk Lillard  
Montessori: A Modern Approach - Polk Lillard  
Montessori From the Start - Paula Polk Lillard, Lynn  
Lillard Jessen  
The Hand - Frank Wilson  
Touching - Montague  
Understanding the Human Being - Dr Montanaro  
What's Going On In There? - Lise Eliot  
Your Child's Growing Mind - J. Healy  
Endangered Minds - J. Healy  
Failure to Connect - J. Healy  
Montessori Madness - Trevor Eissler









*"The things he sees are not just remembered;  
they form a part of his Soul."*

