

*Dear Parents and Children.*

*Welcome to the /Sahali Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten. We are a preschool which is licensed by the Ministry of Health and we strive to offer children opportunities to experience the excitement of learning in an enriched environment.*

### **A Brief History of the Montessori Philosophy**

Maria Montessori, who lived from 1870 to 1952, was a brilliant and original educator, scientist, healer, humanitarian and philosopher.

Soon after graduating from medical school in Rome and stimulated by her further studies in psychology, she worked with children with mental and physical challenges. She based her teaching methods on principles of two prominent French physicians whose research she admired, Itard and Seguin. Remarkably, the children progressed so quickly that Montessori signed them up for ordinary school exams, which they passed without difficulty.

Montessori then turned her thoughts to the education of the ordinary child. She returned to University to further her academic work in educational philosophy, psychology and anthropology. In 1907 she organized schools in Rome. She found after careful and lengthy observation of children, that given the opportunities and thoughtfully developed materials, they could thrive and quickly absorb complex skills and sophisticated knowledge. Children under her guidance also developed self-discipline. For two decades, Montessori observed children and then tied her observations into the theories she wrote about.

Montessori Schools were introduced to North America in 1912 and now there are over 2,500 schools in North America. Today, Montessori schools are found worldwide. Montessori developed many of the materials that we see in the early childhood settings of today, for example; child sized furniture and learning toys (virtually unavailable until the 1960's).

### **A Young Child's Special Mind**

The most basic principle in Montessori's theory of education is that the learning capacity of a young child is fundamentally different from that of an adult.

Montessori frequently compared the young child's mind to a sponge. It literally absorbs information from the environment. Since the child retains this ability until they are almost seven years old, Dr. Montessori reasoned that a child could handle materials that would demonstrate basic educational information to him/her. Over 100 years of experience have proved her theory, that a child can learn to read, write and calculate the same natural way that the child learns to walk and talk. In the Montessori classroom, the equipment allows the child to do this at his/her own periods of interest and readiness.

## **Sensitive Periods**

Another observation of Dr. Montessori's which has been reinforced by modern research, is the importance of sensitive periods for early learning. These are periods of intense fascination for learning a particular characteristic or skill such as going up and down steps, putting things in order, counting and reading. It is easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive period than at any other time in her life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child the freedom to select individual activities that correspond to his/her own periods of interest.

## **The Classroom**

Our classroom is divided into learning areas, which include math, science/cultural, practical life, art, library, language, sensorial, toys and puzzles.

The teacher, on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, introduces the children to the activities in these areas. The activities begin with the simplest and progress to the more complex. Once the activities have been introduced, the children are free to choose activities on their own as their interest leads them.

Our program is designed to promote independence, respect for self and others, and to instill a natural love of learning that children can carry with themselves throughout life.

An Early Arrival Program is also offered beginning at 8:00 a.m. for morning.

## **The Teachers**

Each teacher at the Sahali Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten qualified and shares the Montessori Educational Philosophy. Each teacher is also a skilled professional chosen for the special gifts they bring to this important work. An intuitive love and understanding of children is on the highest list of prerequisites.

### **Holly Schafer, Owner/Administrator**

Holly is licensed Early Childhood Educator and Montessori Primary Teacher with over 25 years experience working with young children in many different capacities.

Prior to attending the Early Childhood Education Program at Okanagan University College, Holly taught preschool in New York, NY where she ran a program for two to three year olds called the "Two Group".

Upon completion of her studies in the Early Childhood Education field in 1993, she was hired as an Assistant Teacher at the Okanagan Montessori Preschool in Kelowna, B.C. This was a wonderful experience! Having been exposed to many preschool and day care environments, Holly found what she believed to be excellence in Early Childhood Education. Holly found her niche in the Montessori classroom and could never imagine a career that could be as fulfilling and inspiring as working with children in a Montessori environment.

Holly went on to take her St. Nicholas practical training and examination at Pacific Montessori School in Victoria during the summer of 1995. In March of 2002, she completed The Montessori Foundations Level 1 Certificate at The Western Montessori Teachers College in Port Moody, British Columbia. Because of her dedication and love for children, appreciation of the Montessori Method, and the desire to offer such a program to the families of Kamloops, she made the decision to open the Kamloops Montessori Preschool Kindergarten and Kamloops Montessori Academy in 1998.

Since the opening of our programs at our main campus at our Greystone location, we have expanded our programs to the Aberdeen Hills Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten Westsyde Country Day Montessori and the Sahali Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten.

### **Dasha Soth**

Dasha comes to us from North Vancouver, where she has been a Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten and Music specialist teacher for over 10 years. Prior to her years in the 3-6 classroom, Dasha had taught in the elementary level for four years. In addition to her ECE and Montessori Teaching Diploma, Dasha holds a Master's degree in Music and Russian Language. Dasha has moved to Kamloops with her husband and two sons and is very happy to have joined the Sahali Montessori School in the position as Directress.

### **Jonalee C. Bandoquillo**

Jonalee, who is fondly called Joy, moved to Canada from the Philippines in September 2009. Joy graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education Major in Teaching the Early Grades (K-2) from the University of the Philippines. Prior to moving to Canada, Joy attended graduate school working on her Masters in Education with a major

in Reading Education. In November of 2009, she completed her Montessori Foundations Level 1 Certificate at The Western Montessori Teachers College in Langley, British Columbia. Joy also received her Early Childhood assistant status at Thompson Rivers University in the fall of 2009. She is passionate about her work with children spanning 5 years of experience. She is delighted and grateful to be part of this pool of experienced and well-trained Montessori educators who are committed to advance the best education for preschool children.

### Enrolment

Re-enrolment will take place in February. Priority will be given to returning students, siblings and then others, respectively. Prior to applying for enrolment, parents must have toured or observed at the school.

### Parking

Parking is available in permitted areas only in the front of the school building. We ask that parents abide by the parking rules of Albert McGowan Elementary School.

### Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival times will begin at **8:30 AM (morning class) and 12:00 PM (afternoon class)**. Your patience will be appreciated at the door during the first few weeks as we sort out a routine that works for all of us.

Children may leave their outside shoes neatly on the carpets at the door. Please try to have your child at school on time as we will have our "group time" once everyone has arrived. **Classes will begin promptly at 8:30 AM and 12:00 NN.**

As there is much classroom preparation and planning required by teachers in our type of classroom environment, it is essential that children be picked up promptly.

**Pick up will be at 11:00 AM and 2:30 PM sharp**, unless the teachers have been previously notified. A late pick up fee of \$5.00 for every 10 minutes of lateness will apply. Thank you for your co-operation regarding arrival and dismissal times.

### Special Note

Parents, we ask that you please escort your child by hand, to and from the school to your vehicle for obvious safety reasons. If you require help to escort your child safely, we will be happy to assist you.

### Parental Involvement

We will hold a parent orientation evening during the first week of school. Times and dates will be posted in September.

#### **Conferences**

We will hold parent/teacher conferences in November and then again in April. This will give us the opportunity to discuss your child's development and progress. The school

Will be closed for classes on the day of our conferences.

### ***Observations***

We will also offer parent observation times in late November and late April. At this time you will have the opportunity to see your child work within the classroom.

### ***Family Events***

Parents will be invited to attend our Winter Program and also a year end Picnic.

We will offer Parent Educational Evenings regarding Montessori philosophy and method and related topics, once or twice a year. We like to bring in a guest speaker, when possible, so please mark your calendars for these special events.

We would love to know of any parents who have special talents or interests that they may like to share with our class i.e. artists, musicians, etc. Also, if you have any ideas for field trips we welcome your input.

### ***Gradual Entry***

During the first week of school, we will implement a gradual entry program. The children will attend class for one hour only on the first few days of school. This gives the children the opportunity to adjust to preschool in a gradual way. Gradual entry is an **essential** and valuable process for **all** children attending a Montessori program.

## **Absenteeism**

If your child will be absent from school, for any reason, please notify the school.

## **Discipline Policy**

Warmth, flexibility, and perceptiveness towards each child's needs and style are basic in providing care and guidance for children. Each child's persistence, creativity, learning and constructive co-operation as well as self reliance must be supported and reinforced.

We believe that involving the child through choices and consequences is important when guiding a child's behaviour. In this way, children are given opportunities to develop independence and co-operation. Whenever a child's behaviour needs correction, we will implement natural and logical consequences to give choices.

**Logical consequences** have the following qualities

1. They express rules of social living. .
2. They are related to misbehaviour.
3. They separate the deed from the doer. (Logical consequences don't imply the child is naughty because they are misbehaving, instead they communicate. Example: "While I don't like what you are doing, I still care for you".)
4. Logical consequences are for dealing with the present, not the past behaviour.

5. They are given in a friendly way.
6. They permit choice. (With choice, a child has a stake in choosing respectable behaviour rather than being told how to behave.)

As a last resort, and when other discipline methods haven't worked, we believe that a "Rest time" may be appropriate. This will be used only when a child's behaviour has become disruptive. Having a rest at our classroom "Peace Table" is a way to help the child regain control of his or her self and to empower the child to make positive choices about their own behaviour.

Having a rest at the Peace Table is also a choice. The child can choose to settle down or to take some time out. Having a rest at the Peace Table will also be a *form* of logical consequences.

In summary, we believe that children should always be dealt with in a respectful way, Effective discipline is a learning process. The goal of discipline should be self- discipline, to guide children to be responsible and co-operative.

#### Sample Daily Schedule

An example of our daily schedule would be as follows:

8:40- Greet each child at the door upon arrival.  
A circle time, good morning gathering, including songs, finger plays, news, show and tell, and perhaps an activity presentation or theme discussion.

8:40 - 10:10 Work time (children are free to choose activities ranging from toy shelf, math, language, science, practical life and cultural activities). The teachers will also work with children on an individual basis or in small groups.

10:10 AM Clean up

10:20- 10:40 Snack and story time. Also, music and Spanish lessons once a week.

10:40 AM to Outdoor time (games, balls, obstacle course, etc.)

11:10 AM Goodbye song.

11:10 AM Dismissal

This schedule may vary, depending on which classroom your child attends and what is planned for the day; e.g. we may be doing a special cooking project or craft. On "good weather" days, we may have projects outdoors, etc. We also plan at least three or four field trips for the year.

### Newsletters

A monthly newsletter will be sent home each month to keep you informed of our classroom activities, special visitors, field trips, themes, projects, etc.

### Show and Tell

Show and tell can be a wonderful opportunity for your child to develop skills in language and public speaking, which in turn enhances your child's self esteem and confidence. Your child will be assigned a day every second week to bring a special item they have chosen for show and tell (participation is voluntary). **We ask that children do not bring toys or jewellery to school.** Items for show and tell could include: items from nature, leaves, flowers, rocks, pets, books, new siblings, visiting grandparents, anything that is of interest to the child.

### Snacks

A healthy grain snack will be provided for your child at school. We have implemented a parent snack participation system. Parents are asked to sign up on a sheet posted outside. Every five to six weeks, we ask parents to contribute a fruit or vegetable for our snack time. An example is 10 apples, a small bag of carrots, raisins, etc.

Occasionally, we will have sweets at birthday celebrations, our Halloween, Winter Party, 100<sup>th</sup> Day Party, Valentine's Day, and wind-up parties (please let us know if you have any dietary/allergic concerns for your child). We do try to keep sugary foods that are being served to the children to a minimum.

### Birthday Celebrations

We have a special celebration for each child's birthday. We ask parents to send a photo that depicts the child during each year of life, e.g. age 1, 2 and 3. . Parents are invited to attend the celebration.

### Special Visitors

Occasionally we will have special visitors in our classrooms. Typically these visitors may have a skill or talent that the children can learn from, e.g. fire fighter, dental hygienist, juggler, weavers, florists, etc. Often these visits will tie into a theme that we have been discussing in class or a special interest that has been expressed by the children.

### Practicum Students

We may accept a practicum student from the Early Childhood Education program at U.C.C., from time to time. These students will be under the staff's supervision at all times. It has been my experience that having a practicum student can be of benefit to our students at the school, as many of these practicum students share new activities and

relate well with the children. We would also like to give others in our field the opportunity to experience "the Montessori way".

We will let you know in advance, if and when we accept practicum students into the classroom.

### Field Trips

Throughout the year, our classes will be taking field trips to various places of interest around Kamloops. **Parents will be responsible for transportation to and from field trips** (if this is a problem for any parent, they may initiate carpooling arrangements with another parent). When appropriate, we'd love to have parents join us on our field trips.

### What to Bring on the First Day of School in September

- ◆ A labelled drinking cup
- ◆ A labelled change of clothing (only if your child is prone to accidents or spills)
- ◆ 10 post-dated cheques dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, if not already submitted at registration.

### Winter Months

As weather permits, we will be going outdoors for a playtime. Please send appropriate clothing with your child. On snowy, cold days please send snow pants, snow boots, hat and gloves. Parents please label your children's gloves, hats, snow pants and jackets.

### Spring and Summer

Please send your child to school with sunscreen applied.

### Health and Safety

Once a month, we will practice a fire drill. This practice drill will be fully explained to the children at the beginning of the year so that they will understand that our practice fire drills are **only** a practice, and why we are required to do them.

The Thompson Nicola Regional Health Board childcare licensing facilities requires us to have a completed health form for each child on file. This is a requirement before each child can attend preschool. **Please contact the school immediately if your child contracts a contagious disease.** Parents will be notified of any contagious diseases affecting children in preschool. A child with a communicable disease will not be re- admitted into class until the period of contagion is over or until they are well.

### Accident or Illness

**In the event of a serious accident or illness, the parents will be contacted immediately. If the parent is not available, the emergency contact person will be notified.**

All staff is first aid certified, but if emergency care is needed, we will seek emergency aid for your child.

Your child will be released only to those persons who have been listed on the pick up authorization form.

#### **Releasing a Child from Preschool**

Your child will be released only to those persons who have been listed on the pick up authorization form.

#### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be respected with regards to all children's developmental information, and information about families, etc.

#### **Fees**

Fees may be paid by cash or cheque. We require post-dated cheques, dated for the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month (September through June) upon registration. Make up days will not be available for holidays and/or sick days. Please speak with the Director if you would like to make other payment arrangements.

#### **Withdrawal**

One month's written notice is required by the school if your child is to be withdrawn from the program. (Post dated cheques and parent fees will be returned at the time).

*Thank you for choosing Sahali Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten for your child. We look forward to getting to know your child and to making your child's preschool experience a positive one, full of learning and fun.*

*Holly, Dasha and Joy*



\* a division of Peace Educational Services Corp