

Dear Parents and Children.

Welcome to the Kamloops 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 Extended Day Program is also offered beginning at 8:00 a.m. for morning students or from dismissal until 5:00 p.m. for our afternoon students.

We also offer a Full Day Program at our campus on Greystone that is open from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm.

The Teachers

Each teacher at the Kamloops Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten and Kamloops Montessori Academy is 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, 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.

Lin Roth

A friend introduced Lin to the Montessori Method when her sons were preschoolers. She identified with the philosophy and began using many of the activities at home. She is once again using sandpaper letters and sharing in the discovery of the many wonders of our world, and enjoying every minute of it!

In addition to a Bachelor of Arts degree, Lin holds a Diploma in Early Childhood Education including specialties in Infants and Toddlers and Children with Special Needs, completed in 2002 at UCC. In addition to a Montessori teaching Diploma, Lin has a Library Aid Certificate with experience in elementary school libraries, and a background in teaching music. She began working at the Kamloops Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten in 2000.

A highlight for Lin was a trip to Italy in the spring of 2009 where she visited several Montessori schools in Rome and Naples. It was inspiring for Lin to see the site of the original Montessori school in the San Lorenzo district of Rome, which Maria Montessori began over 100 years ago, and to observe the classes there. Montessori truly is a universal philosophy of education dedicated to the whole development of children in all areas of life.

Kristin Glassel

Kristin is a long time Kamloops resident with a passion for teaching and quality education. In 2008, she completed her Bachelor of Education from the University of British Columbia. Kristin has completed her Montessori training for working with children 3-5 years of age, and she also has a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in Ceramics and a minor in Drawing. Kristin is a lifelong learner and is always striving to bring new and exciting activities and experiences into the classroom. Kristin is very excited to be a part of the Kamloops Montessori team and looks forward to her future in Montessori.

Dawn Boissonneault

Dawn was born and raised in Kamloops, BC. Being the eldest of 4 children she naturally began caring for children at an early age. She has coached preschool-age children in several sports such as skiing, soccer and swimming and ran an after school club for the City of Kamloops. Dawn began working at Kamloops Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten in 2007 and quickly discovered how amazing the Montessori Method is. She then pursued her ECE Assistant in the fall of 2008 and continues to attend various training workshops and seminars. In the spring of 2009 she moved up to Prince Rupert, BC where she worked as a support worker for a child with special needs. She had a great experience but is very excited to be back and teaching at Kamloops Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten. She looks forward to what the upcoming year will bring!

Michealla McNamara

Michealla completed her Early Childhood Education at UCC in 1999 and has since been employed at the Kamloops Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten and the Kamloops Montessori Academy. After completing her ECE education, Michealla went to Calgary Alberta, where she completed her practical training and examinations via the Montessori St. Nicholas Centre. In December 2001, Michealla received her Montessori Teaching Diploma from Montessori Centre International, London, England.

Michealla thoroughly enjoys teaching the Montessori method and plans to continue expanding her knowledge in this area through distance education and workshops.

Kirsten Pejril

Kirsten was born and grew up in Savona, British Columbia. She always had a natural admiration for children, so in 2008 Kirsten decided to follow her heart and become a teacher. In June 2010, she completed the Bachelor of Elementary Education degree from Thompson Rivers University. She also has received her Bachelor of Arts degree as well as her Early Childhood Educator Assistant diploma. Kirsten is very excited to work in the Montessori classroom and cannot wait to continue her education in the Montessori method. She is looking forward to getting to know you and working with your children. Kirsten believes that teaching is a career in which her dreams, aspirations, and deepest passions can be fulfilled everyday and she cannot wait for the upcoming school year!

Enrolment

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 front of the building on Greystone Crescent. Please use caution during the winter months, as the driveway is sometimes slippery.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival times will begin at **8:30 AM and 12:45 PM (8:45 AM and 12:30 PM for Michealla's classroom)** to allow children a staggered entry for the two classrooms. Children who may already be in the classroom before these times are enrolled in our early arrival program. Your patience will be appreciated as we sort out a routine that works for all of us.

Please remember to hold your child's hand as you bring them to the classroom door at arrival and at pick up. A teacher will be waiting to greet your child upon arrival and help with the routine of settling into the classroom. We also ask that you turn your car engines off during arrival and pick up times. We appreciate your consideration in this.

Dismissal times will be 11:30 AM and 3:15 PM sharp (11:15 AM and 3:00 PM for Michealla's classroom). For the safety of the children, when picking up from the back play area, please wait outside the gate. A teacher will bring your child to the gate and say goodbye to them. As there is much classroom preparation and planning required by teachers in the Montessori environment, it is essential that children be picked up promptly. A late pick up fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes of lateness will apply. Thank you for your cooperation at these very busy times in our daily routine.

Our extended day program begins at **3:15 PM (3:00 PM for Michealla's class) and extends to 5:00 PM.** If you are interested in enrolling your child in the early arrival or the extended day program please see a teacher.

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

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:

- 8:30 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.
- 8:50 - 10:30 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.
- 10:45 AM Clean up
- 11:00 AM Snack and story time. Also, music and Spanish lessons once a week.
- 11:10 AM Outdoor time (games, balls, obstacle course, etc.)
- 11:30 AM Goodbye song.
11:30 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. Rather than having a formal, scheduled date for show and tell, we would like you and your

child to choose one spontaneous day each month in which your child can share something interesting with his/her classmates. If your child has an item from a trip or has received an interesting object from another country, this may be shared with the class. Your child may want to bring something that can add to our thematic discussions. For example, if we are studying seasons/Fall your child may want to share some beautiful leaves with the class. Other suggestions include a special book, photo, visiting grandparents or something from nature that will add to the children's learning experiences. **We ask that children do not bring toys or jewellery to school for show and tell.**

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 special treats at birthday celebrations, Halloween, Winter Party, 100th 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 send a healthy snack for this celebration, if they wish. Parents are also 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 Thompson Rivers University 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 1st 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

With the warmer weather during the Spring, Summer and early Fall we ask that you please send your child to school with sunscreen applied and with a hat labelled with his/her name.

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 again.

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.

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 1st 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 will be returned at the time).

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

Holly, Lin, Michealla, Dawn, Irene, Kristin and Kirstin



* a division of Peace Educational Services Corp