

Southern Montessori Academy

Parent's Handbook



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Welcome

Welcome to Southern Montessori Academy. We consider it an honor and a privilege to be part of your child's life during these most important, formative years. We appreciate the opportunity to learn with your child. Our goal is to meet each child's needs so that his/her potential is realized, and so they develop a good foundation academically, socially, physically and psychologically to prepare them for life!

We have prepared the classroom for your child to learn to love learning and become a responsible and caring individual in our society. It is our intention to communicate openly with parents and work together to help your child reach his/her full potential. By choosing Southern Montessori Academy for your child, you are showing that you want the best for your child, and we are committed to this goal. We hope that each of you will show your support by being actively involved, so that together we can make this the best school possible for our children. Together we can provide our children with the best pre-school experience possible.

Mission Statement

The mission of Southern Montessori Academy is to inspire a passion for excellence. We strive to nurture the curiosity, creativity, and imagination born within us all. To develop a set of universal values including self-respect, respect for others, honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, and a sense of concern for others, warmth and a love of community. The care we provide seeks to awaken the human spirit of every child and provides an educational experience that will foster their love of learning forever.

Admission Policies and Criteria

The following admission policies and criteria have been designed to maximize the compatibility among select students, their families and the school. They

therefore take into account not only evidence of a student's academic achievement but also the family's long-term commitment to developing the whole child and productive school-family system that will support such growth.

Admissions decisions require, and are made contingent upon receipt or completion of all required forms, student records, student and family visits and interview information, and other forms included in the Application pack. We practice a policy of non-discrimination relative to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or national origin. (For more information see the section on Non-Discriminatory Policy)

We respect the rights of privacy of all prospective students and their families, and honor the confidentiality of all reports, records, interview information, and any other information or materials obtained as a part of the administrations application process.

While embracing the philosophy that each child develops in a unique way and therefore welcoming applications from a wide variety of students, we also recognize our limitations in meeting some highly complex or specialized learning abilities. Our admissions procedure will therefore take into account our ability to accommodate particular student's needs without disruption to our program as a factor when evaluating applicants for admission. Students with special needs that fall within our ability to address may be accepted on a provisional basis, with additional support (such as a requirement for tutor or therapist assistance).

All admissions decisions will be made by the Executive Director, and any other relevant professionals or specialists who may be appointed by the Executive Director. Decisions will be based on a careful and comprehensive review of all the material submitted. The Admission decisions will be based on the following general criteria:

Primary Students

- Is able to cooperate in a social group
- Show respect for authority
- Shows respect for other children
- Is independent in toileting skills
- Is able to understand and follow school and classroom guidelines
- Demonstrates eagerness to learn
- Is developmentally functional in all aspects of daily school routines

Families

- Through understanding of and commitment to Southern Montessori Academy philosophy and principles
- Understanding their role in partnering with the school (e.g., volunteerism, attendance at school meetings and activities)

Clothing

ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE LABELED!

There are many similar hats, coats, sweaters and sweatshirts. Be sure all your child's outer garments are labeled with his/her name.

Simple play clothes are the best for the children. Clothing which allow a wide range of motion is best, as much of the work done during the day is on the floor. The children also enjoy recess outdoors when the weather permits. Please understand that the outfit your child wears to school may come home with paint or clay on it, so "special outfits" may not be appropriate.

Soft soled shoes are best for school. Fancy shoes and sandals are difficult for the children when on the playground, and with large motor skill activities in the classroom.

The toddler students should always have a change of clothes (including underwear and socks) each day of school. The 3-6 children should also have a change of clothes labeled with their names at the beginning of the school year. This is for any unavoidable "accidents" or messes that require a change of clothes. Having their own clothing helps the children feel more comfortable when accidents happen.

Health/Sick Policy

Unfortunately children, when together, spread sickness- especially during the winter months. The Southern Montessori Academy works very hard to keep the spread of germs minimal. The materials in the classroom, including desks and other areas are cleaned on a daily basis. It is very important that you keep emergency contact and other personal information up-to-date so that in the event of an emergency arises someone can be contacted concerning your child.

Our policy at the Southern Montessori Academy on sickness is that your child cannot be at the school with a fever. The child must also be free of fever for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

The Southern Montessori Academy's lice policy is that your child must remain out of school until free of lice and eggs. The child must be inspected prior to admittance into the classroom following a lice finding.

We will contact you if your child is sick or injured at school, and expect immediate pick-up.

Role of the Teacher

The teacher is responsible for all the children in the classroom. In each classroom, there are multiple ages, which is essential to the Montessori philosophy. The teacher has a teacher assistant to help with the children.

The Montessori teacher has undergone specialized training in the Montessori philosophy, principles and methodology. The teacher's role is to guide the child where needed and introduce the learning materials. The teacher carefully observes each child so that she may assist his/her growth and development. The classroom environment is prepared so that it meets the intellectual, psychological and physical needs of the child, in a manner that is motivating.

The materials are introduced and often presented with a certain unit of study or with the current theme (often related to a holiday or season).

Curriculum

The Montessori Method consists of four areas: Sensorial, Math, Practical Life and Language. Children are encouraged to explore each area. These areas are enriched with Art, Geography, Science, Music, Library and Movement.

Sensorial

These materials help your child to classify and understand all that he takes in through the senses. Each of the sensorial materials isolates one quality such as texture, size, shape, color or sound. The child's full attention is focused on that quality. It is the aim of Montessori to not only introduce the child to new impressions, but also to help him understand those things that he is exposed to everyday.

Math

Dr. Montessori demonstrated that if children have access to mathematical equipment in their early years, they can easily and joyfully assimilate many facts and skills of arithmetic. The children work first from concrete examples of numbers-number beads, then chains and then finally to the abstract.

Montessori gives the child concrete objects for the hand in order to help the understanding. The math equipment isolates one concept for the child to absorb. The materials are concrete and represent all types of quantities which the child is free to manipulate as he counts. He not only sees the quantities for 1, 10, 100, 1000, etc. but he can hold them in his hand. Later, he is shown the written symbols, or number for that quantity. When the child is ready for the mathematical operations like addition, he can actually perform the operation with concrete materials. There are a variety of materials

the child can use for the same operation. This variety not only maintains the child's interest, but allows for much repetition. In this way, the child gains a true understanding of the operation.

Practical Life

Practical Life exercises are everyday life activities which form a link between house and school. They include such exercises as hand washing, polishing shoes, metal and wood, plant care, and dressing frames for practicing such everyday routines such as buttoning and tying. These activities assist development of controlled and coordinated movements, concentration, independence and the completion of an activity. They also form the foundation for the later work in the Montessori classroom. This area is a favorite of all students.

Language

The Montessori language material helps the child to classify his/her world by broadening their vocabulary. Through pictures and real objects, the vocabulary is materialized. Reading begins when the child is introduced to the sounds of the letter. Next, he is given the letter for that sound, and finally he is shown how to put the sounds together to form words. Reading and writing are introduced simultaneously in the environment and the child develops these skills throughout the curriculum.

Classroom Community

Montessori philosophy fosters a natural sense of community in addition to respect for each individual. In the classroom, the children are given freedom of choice within a well-defined set of ground rules. These rules have been carefully established to provide fair and clear expectations for the working community, along with a consistent set of guidelines and consequences for one's actions. The teachers, assistants and children work cooperatively to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which to grow and learn.

Discipline

There is rarely a need for discipline within the classroom. Children are corrected by their teachers when behavior is unacceptable. If the behavior does not conform to the rules of the classroom, then the child may be asked to leave the activity or the line until he/she can control themselves and return to the class activity.

If there is a continuing problem, you will be notified by the teacher and asked to address the problem.

School Closings

The school calendar is published at the beginning of each school year and updated when necessary. Additional school closings may become necessary for hurricanes or other events beyond our control. In the event the school is closed for such an emergency, the Southern Montessori Academy will contact the local television and radio stations, and information will be broadcasted. If we need to close the school during the school day, you will be notified and advised to come and pick up your child.

Share/Toys

Toys are not allowed in the classroom. Once a week, or as your classroom teacher indicates, your child will have a “share” time where they may bring in items that are special to him/her. Toys are not allowed for these share times. Items such as photographs or artifacts that pertain to the unit of study, and other items such as this are appropriate for share items.

Birthdays and Holidays

Birthdays are a special time for every child. It marks another year since birth, and is an exciting time for each child in the classroom. Each classroom allows for a special birthday treat, but each classroom is different and has its own procedures. The toddler classes recognize a birthday with a special treat and a song. The 3-6 rooms

Recognize a birthday with a poster board showing each year of the child's life, a special treat, a ceremony and a gift for the classroom. The gift usually pertains to the unit of study, or is an item from the classroom. The birthday child opens the gift and presents it to the classroom.

Holidays are celebrated in each classroom at the discretion of the teacher.

Current Information

All changes in your personal information such as address, phone numbers (including cell numbers), emergency contacts, physicians, etc... must be given to the Southern Montessori Academy in writing. It is the parents' responsibility to make the school aware of current information.

Room Mothers

Each classroom has at least one room mother who assists the teacher with any projects, classroom needs, classroom parties, graduation and holidays. The room mother is the teacher's resource for any needs she might have throughout the year.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Southern Montessori Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school administered programs.



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