



St. Joseph Montessori Preschool
Parent Handbook
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Parent Handbook

Contents

Parent Handbook	2
Mission Statement	3
Goals.....	3
Curriculum.....	3
Ages.....	3
Class Schedule.....	3
Registration.....	4
Tuition	4
Student Attendance.....	4
Calendar/Snow Delays and Cancellations.....	4
Holiday Celebrations	5
Birthdays.....	5
Snacks.....	5
Show and Tell.....	5
Clothing and Backpacks	5
Illness.....	6
Newsletter.....	6
Parent - Teacher Conferences.....	6
Arrival and Departure.....	6
Tears, Fears, and Frustration at Separation	7
Outdoor Play.....	7
Field Trips	7
Library	8
Atrium.....	8
Volunteer Opportunities	8
Discipline.....	9
Preschool Disciplinary Plan	9
A prayer for our families	9

Mission Statement

St. Joseph Montessori Preschool believes in the education of the whole child. We feel that each area of his/her development is of equal importance. We offer each child a stimulating environment where intellectual, social-emotional, spiritual, and physical growth is nurtured through an integrated curriculum, presented by caring adults.

Goals

The following are areas of development you can expect to see in your child:

1. Love of God
2. Learning through discovery
3. Independence
4. Self-confidence
5. Self-discipline
6. Joy of learning
7. Concentration
8. Attachment to reality
9. Love of order
10. Ability to choose.
11. Enjoyment of quiet

Curriculum

The Montessori curriculum is a broad curriculum that utilizes a full range of Montessori materials designed to enhance your child's intellectual, social, and emotional development. There are seven different learning areas: Practical life, Art, Language, Sensorial, Science, Geography and Math, with activities ranging from fine motor development to Zoology. The classroom is carefully designed to allow children easy access to a variety of learning experiences. The Montessori program is based on the principle of freedom of choice and designed to develop independence and responsibility through self-correcting materials. Teachers continuously give individual and group lessons, encouraging the children as they learn at their own pace.

Ages

Children beginning our Montessori Preschool must be 3 years old by December 31; fully potty trained and do not wear pull-ups. Parents with a child who is not independent in the bathroom after the first month of school may be asked to pause preschool and then restart when their child is ready. Montessori believes in a mixed age classroom because, the younger children learn by watching the older children and older children gain self-confidence and reinforcing skills by working with the younger children. This builds a sense of community, gentleness, and cooperation within the classroom community.

Class Schedule

Morning (4 days): Monday – Thursday from 8:00 to 11:00 am

Afternoon (4 days): Monday -Thursday from 12:00 to 3:00 pm

Registration

St. Joseph Montessori two open enrollment periods per year. Children who are 3 on or before December 31 and are fully potty trained and independent in the bathroom may register for preschool up until November 1 and again during the month of January. If our program is full, it's not unusual for things to change so don't be afraid to be added to our waiting list.

All documents included in the registration packet must be completed and signed prior to their first day of school. You'll receive instructions on how to enroll in our easy payment system. Your child's registration won't be complete until all forms and fees are current and turned in to the school's main office.

*The registration/curriculum fee assures each child a classroom placement. This fee also pays for the materials and supplies your child will use during the school year and is non-refundable.

- Each year the registration packet must be fully completed and signed where necessary by a parent.
- The emergency information form must be filled out and signed by the first day of school.
- The immunization form must be completed and returned before the first day of school for state requirements. Your child's registration is not complete until these forms are up to date and into the office.
- Three or four small pictures of your child are required. These will be used on his/her work box and work card. New photos are needed each year.

Tuition

Preschool will use the same billing system as the K-8 program uses.

Note: Late payments are subject to a late fee.

Student Attendance

If a child is absent due to illness, an out-of-town trip, or any other reason, the full tuition is still due for that month. In addition to our tuition, 15 service hours for Preschool are required. We prefer for half of service hours to be for fundraising, and the other half for general volunteering. Per the tuition contract found in the enrollment packet, incomplete service hours are subject to a \$35 per unfinished hour fee at the end of the year.

Calendar/Snow Delays and Cancellations

A calendar for the school year can be found at www.sjske.org. Please keep this handy for reference. Your classroom teacher will email you a monthly calendar. In the event of bad weather, please listen to KONA 620AM radio. We will send out emails, texts, and post on our Facebook page with information regarding closures or delays. We usually follow the Kennewick School Districts decision regarding bad weather. When the KSD delays school until 10:00AM due to bad weather, we will have a modified schedule.

AM class will be from 10:00AM to 11:45AM and PM class will be from 1:15PM to 3:00PM.

Holiday Celebrations

We observe holidays here at St. Joseph Montessori with special celebrations. We enjoy a party for Halloween, complete with the children wearing costumes, if they wish. Thanksgiving is celebrated by the children preparing a feast and creating their own traditional costumes at school. For the celebration of Jesus' birth, the children perform a nativity program for their families. On Valentine's Day, the children decorate sacks and may bring "signed" Valentines to give to all their classmates. Please avoid addressing the envelopes. For Easter, the children celebrated the gift of new life in their classrooms. They watch the miracle of life as caterpillars change into butterflies, and eggs hatch into baby chicks. The children also decorate and hunt for eggs filled with small treats. We have a field day and luncheon during the last week of school, and everyone is invited. We will have a graduation ceremony for students who will be moving up to kindergarten in the fall. This is usually on the last day of school.

Birthdays

The children may enjoy their birthday celebrations at school. If you'd like, your child can bring a special treat and be the host on that day. For the children having summer birthdays, we will assign a special "Summer-birthday" celebration during the school year. We avoid passing out invitations to the children during class unless the whole class is invited. Please give party invitations to your child's teacher, to put in backpacks.

Snacks

After the first week of school, parents will be sent a snack calendar. Parents will then receive a calendar at the end of every month for the following month. Children will be selected for their special snack day on a rotating basis. You will be asked to provide snack approximately once a month. We ask that it be something nutritious. Teachers will let you know if there is an allergy or food issue we need to modify for.

Show and Tell

We think that Show and Tell is a valuable time. It is an opportunity for language development, enrichment of a special lesson or theme and as a confidence builder. Please check the snack/share calendar. Show and Tell day is the same day as the child's snack day.

Clothing and Backpacks

We ask that you please mark all jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, boots, etc. with your child's name for easy identification. We prefer clothing that will not be damaged by a spill of paint, clay, or similar materials. Please dress your child in clothes they can easily remove for the bathroom. It's also important that you send your child with an extra full set of clothes labeled and in a Ziploc bag. As the weather changes, we ask that parents make sure their child's extra set of clothes is weather appropriate. Sometimes that set that was in there in September doesn't work so well in January.

Backpacks should be big enough to hold the spare clothes, a library book, and other items that may be sent home. Typically, a 9"X12" backpack is large enough to hold everything and still fit in their cubby. Please make sure to write your child's name on their backpack.

Illness

If your child stays home from school, please contact the school office via phone or email. Sick children must be kept home until they are well. This helps to protect the sick child as well as the other children in your child's class. Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. If children get sick at school with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, vomiting/diarrhea, we will contact parents to pick up the child as soon as possible. Children must be free from vomiting/diarrhea and temperature for 24 hours without the help of medication before returning to school.

Newsletter

Once a week, parents are emailed a school bulletin with information about what is going on around the school. Once a month, a newsletter will be sent home regarding the Montessori Preschool's current events.

Parent - Teacher Conferences

Please feel free to request a conference at any time. You may email your teacher directly or call the school-office and request that the teacher call you back after school hours if you have a concern or a question. We have two scheduled conferences during the school year in October and April. We want to promote open communication between parent, teacher, and child. Please contact your child's teacher if something happens at home (i.e., health problems, etc...) that would affect your child's behavior or general well-being.

Arrival and Departure

We ask that your child arrives promptly at their start time (8:00am for morning, 12:00pm for afternoon) to avoid any disruptions. Please walk your child to their classroom and say goodbye at the door. We encourage parents to allow their child to walk into the classroom independently and put away their own belongings. This helps the child make the transition much easier. We also ask that parents do not visit with other parents inside the classroom. This is very disruptive. It is also important that you be on time when picking up your child. The teachers need time for their lunches and classroom preparations. Drop off and pickup takes place at the exterior classroom doors. Please make sure to sign your child in/out at every arrival and departure. Children must walk in/out with parent or adult supervision. Children are not permitted to walk around the campus unsupervised. Anyone picking up your child must be on their pickup list and have picture identification, you may be asked for identification on any day. For example, if your normal teachers are out of the classroom for the day. Anyone picking up a child may be asked for picture ID. The safety of our students is our number one priority. Drive slowly and cautiously in the parking lot, as there are many children present at dismissal time. Please allow all students to be dismissed from preschool before allowing your child to play on playground equipment after class. Thank you.

Tears, Fears, and Frustration at Separation

It is very helpful for parents to realize that frustration is a natural growth experience. Children often get frustrated when things do not go exactly as they plan. Separation from you is sometimes a bit emotional for you and your child. Separation is really an accomplishment that is necessary and healthy. You can help your child through this difficult time by:

1. Being perfectly honest about your intent. "I'll take you to school and I'll return at 11:00".
2. Hearing what he or she says and thinking about his/her feelings. If the child says, "I do not want to go," or "It's too long to stay," or "I want you to stay", your response could be, "It is hard sometimes to go to school". Or "It seems like a long day for you to go to school." Just hearing and reflecting is very therapeutic. This does not change your expectations but it helps a child know they have been listened to.
3. Free yourself from doubt and fear. Your child will adjust very well. If your child says, "I'm not sure about this." Your response could be, "Thank you for telling me how you feel. I can't wait to see you when I pick you up."
4. It's fine to let the teacher know when your child expresses fears. She can help you work with your child.
5. A very positive, quick, sure "goodbye" lets your child know of your certainty. "I hope you have a good day," is better than such statements as "Be good! Learn something." Please free him/her to develop and pursue his/her own interests at his/her own pace with our guidance.
6. If you've ever questioned your child about his day and he gave you a one- or two-word answer, you may try saying, "I hope your day was good!". Often, kids want to share but they don't want to be questioned.

The teachers at St. Joseph Montessori are experienced at comforting worried children. We will help to make sure that your child feels secure, and interest them in the classroom activities as soon as possible. The child may briefly feel sad after their parent leaves, but they quickly become engaged and happy. If a serious problem occurs during class or a child is simply inconsolable, we will call you. If you would like to telephone, we will be glad to give you a report. The worst possible thing you can do for your child in a tearful situation is to draw the goodbye out. Please say goodbye and leave quickly.

Outdoor Play

We try to play outside every day, depending on the weather. Children need the freedom to run and get those large muscles moving. They also need the fresh air. Please dress children appropriately for the weather. Outdoor play during cold weather is at the discretion of the classroom staff. Children cannot stay inside for an illness related reason. If they are unable to go outside, they will need to stay home or will be picked up early.

Field Trips

We take the children on field trips several times a year. We will send out parent authorization sheets as well as parent volunteer forms. These trips will be announced in our newsletters and reminder notices will be sent out so that all the children may go. We must have a signed authorization form for every child and a car insurance form on file for each driver prior to the field trip. To drive for a field trip you also have to meet the volunteer requirements, see the volunteer section. Each child must have a car seat. The experience is rewarding and fun. If we do not have enough drivers for any given field trip, the field trip may be cancelled.

[Contents](#)

Library

We are very fortunate here at St. Joseph Montessori to attend the school library once a week. At the library, the children are read a story and get to check out a book to take home. The children bring the book back to the library the next week, and then check out another book. Please help your child to remember to bring library books back. Any fees for lost or damaged books can be paid in the office so the student can check out another book.

Atrium

Your child will go to the atrium once a week. This is a room specially prepared for the spiritual formation of our students. They spent 45 minutes doing works rooted in the bible and the liturgy of the Church, using Montessori educational methods.

Volunteer Opportunities

At the beginning of every school year, we send out signup sheets for anyone interested in volunteering opportunities. Volunteers assist with various tasks the teachers need completed. Library helpers take care of check in/out our library books and reading the children a story. To be a volunteer in the classroom you will need to have a background check form filled out (good for 6 years), Virtus training completed, for field trips driver form on file. Other opportunities are Fun Run, PTO classroom rep, "Art and Wine" class project coordinator.
Talking With Your Child about School

Children may not always bring home examples of their work or art projects to share with you. This should not be cause for concern. The Montessori classroom is a hands-on learning experience; much of the work is done with concrete materials. As you may know, classroom activities are referred to as "work". Maria Montessori used the word "work" because she believed it represented the amount of effort the children put into their activity. You are welcome to come into the classroom to have your child show you their works and experience what they are learning and working on firsthand.

Discipline

If there is a behavior concern with a child, we will remind the child of our classroom rules and try to redirect the child to something interesting. If the problem continues, we take the child aside and try to find out just what is causing the behavior and again explain why their behavior is inappropriate. If there is still a concern, the child is then asked to leave the activity and think over his/her behavior. When they feel they have themselves under control, they then asked the teacher if they may join their friends. If the behavior continues, your child will be sent to the office to talk with the principal. A call to the parent or a conference may be scheduled. Individual plans will be implemented by staff and parents. If a child is asked to stay home for a few days due to disciplinary issues, they may also not stay at the childcare.

Preschool Disciplinary Plan

THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED IN THE ST. JOSEPH MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL. TO ADDRESS AND IMPLEMENT REPEATED DISCIPLINARY INFRACTIONS:

- Time-in: Child with teacher or para, shown proper expectations.
- Step #1: Documentation will be made as determined by the teacher.
- Step #2: Documentation as noted by the teacher.
- Step #3: Parent/Guardian will be notified through email or if necessary by phone.
- Step #4: student may go meet with principal or be asked to go home for the day.
 - The parent will receive a written incident report with the infractions or concerns, to be signed and dated by parent.
 - It may be necessary to have a teacher/parent conference to develop solutions to help the child succeed. The principal may also be requested to attend.
 - If the child's behavior does not show improvement, the child may be suspended from preschool. The number of days is dependent upon the circumstances. If child is excused from preschool they may not attend Childcare
 - Continued inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the Montessori Preschool program.
 - Students who are permanently excused from the childcare program may also be permanently excused from the Montessori preschool program.

A prayer for our families

Lord, we thank you for the blessings of our children and of our parents and teachers who look after them. We ask you to guide us in all that we do so that our children become faithful members of our Christian community. Bless us Holy Spirit and protect our children from harm as you help us be their faithful guides. St. Joseph, pray for us. St. Mary, Pray for us. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.