

Our Philosophy

We believe each three to six year old...

- Is unique and has a potential which deserves respect and support to fully develop.
- Is a *sensorial explorer of fact* able to absorb all the environment offers.

Therefore, we believe in providing...

- A beautifully *prepared environment* where every effort is made so the child is secure, supported, loved, and free within limits to interact with teachers, peers, and materials without interruption.
 - Developmentally appropriate opportunities where the child is invited to build control, coordination, confidence, concentration, and culture and to learn about our world.
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The Montessori Method

Within the child lies the fate of the future.
-Maria Montessori

Montessori based her work on the belief that every child carries unseen within her or him the person s/he will become. To develop physically, spiritually (or emotionally, as we call it now), cognitively, and socially to the fullest, s/he must have freedom, within limits to create order and self-discipline. This is referred to as *self-construction*.

Through her research, Dr. Maria Montessori developed what she called the *prepared environment*, one which is orderly, disposes the child to develop at her/his own speed, according to her/his own capacities, and is a noncompetitive atmosphere. In this environment, the child finds materials which are designed to encourage involvement in the care of self and the environment, refinement of the senses, integration of the language of her/his culture, manipulation of number systems, and interaction with others of her/his own and other cultures in appropriate manners. This ultimately frees the child to be creative and to take her/his proper place in her/his family, culture, and the world.

Help me to do it by myself.
-The Primary Child

Although the child is free to explore, there are limits and structure to the environment as well. The materials are structured to help the child do things for her/himself and fully participate in the care of the prepared environment. Materials are limited in number, arranged in order of challenge on the shelf, and self-correcting. The teacher follows the child's lead and decides when materials are appropriate and then invites the child to the materials either individually or in a small group as appropriate to her/his development and the material. After experiencing the materials as presented, the child may begin to invent new ways to manipulate the materials and use her/his creative powers to find new relationships.

When the child is free to work in this way, Montessori called it *spontaneous education*; the child gradually learns to control her/himself to concentrate on exercises for extended periods of time in a tireless manner and when finished, feels great satisfaction. This is the work cycle that Montessori discovered when observing 3 – 6 year olds in her first *Casa dei Bambini* or Children's House. This same cycle continues to be replicated across cultural and economic boundaries today.

The Children's House she founded nearly one hundred years ago is still thriving around the globe and is still progressive in its premise. It seeks to give the child the world on the child's terms and to respect and support the natural development of the young child, while at the same time gently guiding the process. Ultimately, the education provided by the Children's House aids the child in the construction of her/his unique self by inviting her/him to be more and more independent and self-motivated in her/his quest for learning. This gives the child confidence and lays a firm foundation for further learning and success.

History

Little Ones at Rooster Road, A Montessori Children's House was founded in 2005 by Michaél Dunnivant, an experienced educator of all ages. With her husband's help, she established a Limited Liability Corporation funded by tuition, grants and donations from benefactors who are also committed to transforming children's lives through education. After years of work in the field, research, and a dream of giving the community a learning environment of the highest quality that is responsive to the child, Michaél and her husband, Dan, undertook the process of turning the present facility into a commercial site for Little Ones Montessori. Little Ones Montessori is in its fourth year of operation and has expanded its program to include a Toddler Community called the N.E.S.T. (Nurturing Environment Specifically for Toddlers) and a Lower Elementary Program for children 6-9 years old.

Directress and Faculty

Michaél Dunnivant, Directress

- B.A. and M.S. in Elementary Education
- Certified in Early Childhood, Elementary Education, First Aid and Pediatric CPR
- Music Education K – 12 Certification coursework completed at Stetson University
- Staff and Director's Credential awarded from Florida's Department of Children and Families
- A.M.I. Montessori Primary Preparatory and Elementary training in Dallas, TX

Nearly 20 years in education, including:

- 11 years classroom teaching experience in public schools, grades kindergarten, first, second, fourth and fifth, including a Research and Development site
- Voted Teacher of the Year, District Elementary Science Teacher of the Year and Teacher Aquanaut in Bay County, Florida
- Beacon Learning Center World Wide Web Curriculum Developer and Validator
- Consultant and author of *Professional Developers Training Module: Competent Assessment of Reading* ©2005 published in conjunction with SERVE, the Southeast Region Federal Department of Education's Educational Laboratory and UNCG
- Teacher on Assignment in Volusia County School's Reading Specialist's Office
- Language Arts Specialist for a Montessori School

Michaél Dunnivant is owner, directress, and a teacher of Little Ones Montessori and is responsible for its operation. Please contact her at 386 • 788 • 8800 or 386 • 843 • 2210 if you have any questions or concerns regarding the policies and procedures of the school.

Norma Bolinger, Primary Directress

- AMI certified in Montessori Primary Education
- Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education
- Three years of undergraduate study in Community Recreation
- Pre-Kindergarten Associate License from Ohio State Board of Education
- Staff credential awarded from Department of Children and Families

Twenty years teaching experience, including:

- Primary Teacher, Vancouver Montessori School, Vancouver, British Columbia, CAN
 - Treasurer of British Columbia Montessori School's Association, Vancouver, British Columbia, CAN
 - Primary and Toddler Teacher, Director of Enrichment Program, Virgin Islands Montessori School
 - Primary Teacher, Supervisor and Curriculum Consultant for Toddler and Primary programs, St. Maarten Montessori School, St. Maarten, Virgin Islands, USA
 - Pre-Kindergarten teacher, Special Needs Collaborative Teacher, Ohio Heartland Head Start and Marion City Public Schools, Marion, Ohio
 - Primary Teacher, Bahamas Montessori School, Nassau, Bahamas
 - Guest Speaker and Presenter on the Montessori Method and Curriculum for the University of British Columbia, University of the Virgin Islands, North Central State College, Mansfield, Ohio and the Marion Area Association for the Education of Young Children, Marion Ohio
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Parent Roles

Little Ones Montessori is committed to providing a thoughtful education for your child. By working in partnership with parents, teachers can better attend to the growth and development of each child and communicate regularly with home. As parents, you can help by informing teachers of changes in your child's life, illnesses, or home situations. In this way, teachers can serve the emotional needs of your child.

In addition, we therefore encourage the following:

- Observation of the classroom
- Attendance at Orientation and Parent Education Evenings
- Participation in volunteer and fund raising events
- Attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences
- Reading the Rooster Report Newsletter and other recommended readings
- Bridging Montessori Education into the Home – What parents can do to help

Observation

All parents are encouraged to observe their child's classrooms at least twice a year, prior to conferencing. This is an important and effective way of learning how your child responds to the Montessori environment. Observations will begin mid-October. Please call for an appointment. Parents may enter the classroom at anytime during the day and throughout the year without an appointment.

Orientation

Parent Orientation is scheduled and **attendance is required**. It is imperative that you attend so you and your child start off with common understandings of how and why procedures and policies are as they are. Please make every effort to attend. Parent Handbooks should be brought to the Orientation as a reference. Classroom schedules will be distributed at that time.

Parent Education Evenings

Little Ones Montessori will provide the opportunity for parents to attend Parent Education events throughout the year. These evenings are designed to give you a more comprehensive understanding of how your child's growth and development are supported in the Montessori environment and how to partner in your child's education. We request that parents please refrain from addressing concerns specifically regarding their child at these events, please schedule a conference. Please see the academic calendar and upcoming Newsletters for specific dates.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Your child's growth and development will be monitored daily and can be discussed at any time during the year; however, there will be two scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences as noted on the calendar. Your participation is necessary for your child's optimum education. Parents will receive detailed information regarding their child's strengths, challenges, and progress at this time. Of course, if additional conferences are needed or requested, please let your child's teacher know and one will be scheduled.

Volunteer and Fund Raising Events

Parents are invited to share their talents, careers, or hobbies with the children. Please read the Newsletters for possibilities and make arrangements with the teacher. In addition, any help you would like to offer in caring for the environment, indoors and outdoors is appreciated.

Little Ones Montessori depends on the involvement and generosity of its families as well as staff and the community. Parent volunteers are actively recruited and involved in the successful operation of special events throughout the year. It is expected that *all* parents will support and participate willingly and as generously as possible in these efforts. Success in this area helps to keep tuitions as low as possible, build community support, and at the same time maintain the highest level of education.

What parents can do to help...Bridging Montessori Education into the Home

Prepare your child for school by helping him or her gain independence and responsibility in these ways:

- Allow your child to walk perhaps holding your hand instead of being carried.
- Provide your child with clothing that is easy to manage independently and teach him/her to dress him/herself as much as possible.
- Label your child's clothing and help him/her to recognize his/her name on them.
- Invite your child to work with you sharing cooking or other household responsibilities, such as folding laundry and taking out the trash.
- Teach your child bathroom hygiene, including cleaning up after one's self, and the importance of hand washing. Provide a step stool if necessary.
- Encourage your child to use common courtesies, "Please", "Thank you", "May I please have...", "Excuse me", etc.
- Model proper table manners for your child and teach your child to do the same, for example...Sit on your chair properly until it is time to be excused, use napkins, utensils properly, ask for help in passing and serving food, eat over your plate and keep food on your plate, only touch your own food, only take what you can eat and consider those around you in portions, keep your mouth closed when chewing, talk only when your mouth is empty and in an inside tone, excuse yourself to use the restroom, blow your nose, etc., clean up your spot when finished. Your child will perpetuate your habits, whatever they are.
- Encourage using hands for helping, not for hurting.
- Limit or eliminate violent images from your home environment, such as found on television, video, and electronic games. This will show your child that you value a peaceful environment rather than violent one.
- Encourage your child to make eye contact while speaking with others. Speak normally with your child to assist in the development of communication skills.
- Prepare your child for going to school by assuring him/her it will be a pleasant place and that he/she will enjoy the activities there.
- Break dependent habits like bottles, pacifiers, and sippy cups that are not available in their classrooms.
- Give your child some experiences of being away from you before school opens so the transition to school is more natural.
- Encourage your child to take care of his/her possessions and to respect the property and rights of others.
- Help your child to put away toys and other possessions. Make sure that there is a special, easily accessible place for each of the possessions. Avoid toy boxes and chests where toys are carelessly dumped. Limit the amount of toys.
- Teach your child to handle books carefully.
- Share good literature with your child on a daily basis to develop language skills and proper listening habits. Lengthen the time you spend to extend the duration over time.
- Explain to your child that the teachers are there to help him/her. Encourage your child to respect their authority as he/she does yours.
- Participate in parents' orientation and other parent education opportunities. Make use of the available literature to find out more about Montessori education.

Confidentiality

Records

All information contained in the child's records shall remain privileged and confidential. The school shall not distribute or release information on a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the express written consent of the child's parent(s) or legal guardians. The licensee shall notify parent(s) if a child's record is subpoenaed.

Parent Access to Records

The child's parent(s) shall, upon request have access to his/her child's records at reasonable times. In no event shall such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after initial request. The school shall establish information; and shall maintain a permanent written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in the child's record has been released. Each entry in the log shall contain the following: name, signature, position and date. Such log shall only be available to the parents and school staff.

Amending Records

A child's parent(s) shall have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's record.

Discipline Policy

At Little Ones Montessori, we believe in guidance and positive discipline to help children learn acceptable behavior and self-control. Every effort will be made to be proactive, endeavoring to foresee and take action before problems arise. Therefore, acknowledgement and encouragement are used when acceptable behavior is observed. When behavior is observed that needs adjustment, the teacher will speak with the child respectfully and enlist the child's participation in finding more acceptable behaviors. A range of direct guidance actions that appropriately address the problem will be attempted by the teacher to help the child address the problem, including redirection and setting clearly defined limits. In all cases the child will be treated with respect and dignity. If the problem persists, parent(s) will be asked to work with us in shaping the child's behavior to be more acceptable so we are working as a team to solve the problem.

In extreme cases or outbursts, the child may be asked to spend time in the *peaceful zone* to reflect or regain composure. When the child feels ready to discuss the incident, s/he will do so. Incidents will be reported to the families involved. Punishment is inconsistent with Little Ones Montessori philosophy for child growth and development and will not be tolerated.

Termination

Actions on the part of a child which threaten the safety of the classroom or other children (physical or emotional abuse) require immediate attention. Children who are unable to accept the limits or the logical and reasonable consequence of their behavior may be sent home immediately. Parents will be asked to attend a conference. A plan of action will be formally developed and agreed upon by all parties, including the child. If after a period of time the problem has not been resolved, the following actions may be taken by the Directress:

- Shortened day
 - Suspension
 - Dismissal
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Nutrition

Snacks

Throughout the morning hours the children help themselves to the class snack area. Parents are asked to **provide one week's worth of snack for the class two or three times a year.** A suggested list of healthy snacks is provided one week in advance from the classroom teacher.

Lunch

Your child is to bring his/her own lunch to school. Simple and nutritious should be your guidelines for packing lunches. Planning ahead with your young child to fix the lunch together can be a wonderful activity to share. We encourage the use of reusable containers whenever possible. For example, thermos for water or juice, Ziploc sandwich plastic containers as opposed to plastic baggies etc. Children are expected to open all containers and eat their lunches independently. Please label your child's containers with their initials in permanent ink. **Lunches should be packed properly as we are unable to provide refrigeration. Please send lunches that do not need warming.** In case of an emergency, if your child is served lunch by the staff, (peanut butter or cheese sandwich, fruit, and water) \$2.50 will be charged to you.

It is our philosophy to teach your child how to establish healthy eating habits and to learn to be respectful of their own bodies both inside and out. We as teachers do this not only by teaching about health and nutrition in the classroom, but by consistently modeling these healthy eating habits. As a Montessori parent please keep this in mind when packing your child's lunch.

Feed your child what you should eat yourself. A balanced meal includes proper portions of protein, natural sugars and carbohydrates. Below is a list of foods that are acceptable and unacceptable for school lunches. Foods sent to school in your child's lunch that are considered unacceptable will be sent home with your child uneaten. Healthy eating habits start early and your support is crucial to the nutritional education of your child.

Acceptable Foods

Crackers
Peanut Butter Crackers
Goldfish
Deli Sliced Meats
Tuna
Raw Vegetables
Whole Fruit
Pasta
Plain Milk
Nuts
Pretzels
Sandwiches with Whole Wheat Bread
Raisins
Air Popped Popcorn
Organic or Natural chips
Granola Bars (No Chocolate)
Natural Cheese (Not Processed)
Apple Sauce (No Sugar or Sweeteners Added)
Yogurt Eaten With a Spoon
Check label for sugar content. Avoid artificial Colors- Blue, Pink, Green etc.
Water

Unacceptable Foods

Chocolate
Candy
Pudding
Carbonated or Sugary Beverages
Chips (Cheese, Potato, Corn)
Processed Meats (Includes Lunchables)
Cookies (Graham Crackers- All Natural, Whole Wheat Acceptable)
Juice that is less than 100% fruit juice or loaded with dyes, such as Sunny D, Hi-C, Kool-Aid
Go-Gurt or squirtable yogurt
Un crustables

When substituting flavored water for plain water take note of the aspartame, sugar and sodium content. A suggestion would be to mix two parts plain water with one part flavored water.

General Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal

The Little Ones Montessori day begins at 8:30 am with drop-off times beginning at 8:00 am, depending on your child's program. All parents arrive at the back gate and sign in your child(ren). For your convenience, the Toddler and Primary play yards will be available at this time for **signed in children ONLY (no visitors, please)**! Parents must make contact with the receiving adult in the play yard before leaving your child. However, the receiving adults' responsibility is to directly supervise the children.

If parents need to speak with a teacher, please leave a note in the designated message basket at the gate or request an appointment in writing. Please refrain from entering the classrooms at this time. The teachers are busy preparing for the day and need this time to prep the environment for the children.

All children, including toddlers, are expected to walk to their classroom carrying their own belongings and to put their belongings in the designated areas independently.

When it is time to pick up your child, please park in the designated area and enter through the **back security gate**. A teacher will greet you with your child. Children will **only** be released to designated parents unless the Directress has been notified in writing in advance **and** the person is listed on the Child Care Application for Enrollment on file. The person to whom the child is to be released will be asked to show I.D. if they are unknown to the staff.

Please Note: VPK ONLY has no drop off or pick up time windows. The program is 12pm– 3pm sharp!

All parents must park and turn off their engines for arrival and dismissal. Siblings may not be left in cars unattended. We will be happy to receive your child at the gate. Remember to follow all traffic and directional signs on the premises for the safety of our children.

Tardiness

Habits of punctuality begin early; therefore, every effort should be made to arrive by 8:30 am. It is understood that unforeseen circumstances may cause you to be late on occasion. If, however, your child arrives after 8:30 am, the back gate will be locked for the safety and security of all. Please ring the bell once and wait for someone to receive your child. More than three tardies during a term will result in a fine. Fee schedule is available in the office. Please do not plan on attending if you arrive after 9:30 am, unless you have permission from the teacher beforehand.

Early Drop-off and Late Pick-Up Policy

An early or late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for every minute that a parent is early to drop off or late to pick up their child. After 5 occurrences in one month, tuition will be automatically adjusted to the appropriate program.

Rainy Day Dismissal

In case of a torrential downpour, please remain in your car and drive through the circular drive in single file. Stop at the front security gate and pick up your child at the front door.

Dress Code

Seasonally appropriate play clothes are encouraged – simple, sturdy, comfortable, and easy for the child to manage and dress **independently**. **Closed-Toe Nonskid Shoes are REQUIRED for safety. Open-toed shoes, sandals, cowboy boots, platforms, and flip-flops are not allowed.** Please expect your child to come home with paint, mud, dirt, sand and food on his/her clothes. We assure you this is a normal occurrence as we encourage exploration in and outside our classroom environments. **Any distracting clothing that advertises aggressive or inappropriate figures, lights, or costume jewelry must remain at home.**

A complete change of clothing (including socks and underwear) **labeled with your child's name** are to be in a **clear** plastic resealable bag in your child's cubby **at all times**. Please check seasonally to make appropriate changes to the wear **and return clothes the following day**, if used.

General Policies and Procedures

Birthday Celebrations

The Montessori approach to celebrations, including birthdays, is educational, calm and low-key. On your child's birthday, we encourage you to send in a healthy snack for the whole class to share and a picture representing each year of your child's life for the timeline of life ceremony.

Note: If you are planning an activity outside of school, please be sensitive and do not distribute invitations on the school premises unless all children in the class are invited. We do not want to upset children that may not be invited.

Holidays

Holiday celebrations are planned in each classroom according to the discretion of the teacher.

Toys

It is the philosophy of Little Ones, as a Montessori school, that **absolutely no toys are permitted** on campus. Any items not school related are to be kept at home. On occasion a child may wish to bring in a souvenir from a trip or a special book or nature object to show / share.

Newsletters

Please watch for the monthly Rooster Report that contains important information, dates, and times of events, along with a parent informational column.

Transportation and Field Trips

Transportation is provided only by the parent. Field trips are not generally part of the primary curriculum.

Health and Safety

Emergencies

In the event of an accident or medical emergency, we protect the health, safety, and welfare of the child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file are consulted immediately and parent(s) or pediatrician is telephoned. If it is impossible to reach either, and the emergency requires immediate medical treatment, 911 will be contacted immediately. The Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment consent form with parent(s) signature will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately.

It is *imperative* that you keep the emergency contact information up to date.

Reporting Abuse or Neglect

Information on the warning signs of abuse and neglect are provided to each staff member upon initial hiring and at periodic updates. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, the proper authorities must be notified and a report is filed with the Department of Children and Families Hotline.

Emergency Regulations

Fire and Tornado drills are held once a month as required and described on our life safety plan. Children will become familiar with the process of exiting the building quickly and quietly in the event of an emergency. Little Ones Montessori is a drug-free zone and therefore, no smoking is allowed on the premises. **There will be a \$250.00 charge to you if your child pulls the fire alarm and the Fire Department responds, unless, of course, there is a true emergency.**

Health and Safety

Health Policy

It is required by the Department of Children and Families that Health Forms and Emergency Cards are completed and signed each year and updated as needed. A copy must be on file to document all age appropriate immunizations. This includes verification of one dose of varicella (chicken pox) vaccine unless a physician certified history of chicken pox is documented.

Please see the list of symptoms to guide you in deciding whether your child should be in attendance. Sick children need to be cared for at home. We understand how difficult it can be for parents to make arrangements for last minute care, but it is also very difficult and stressful for a sick child to be away from home.

Please keep your child at home or s/he will be sent home if any of the following symptoms are present:

- A temperature over 99 degrees. Children must be **fever free for at least 24 hours** before returning to school.
- Excessive coughing or bad cold – **noses must run clear**
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Stiff neck
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Strep throat
- Contagious disease such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, or roseola
- Rashes of unknown origin or open skin lesions
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Head lice – must be nit free
- Or any other unusual sign or symptom of illness

The staff reserves the right to require a physician's note certifying freedom from a contagious or communicable disease prior to admission.

Allergies

If your child suffers from allergies we must have a doctor's note on file. This includes sinus allergies resulting in excessive mucus discharge.

Medication

Childcare centers are not required to dispense medication. If your child needs special arrangements, those will have to be made with the Directress on an individual basis.

Social Service Plan

Appropriate procedures for referring to social, mental health and medical services for a child will be followed if the school staff and/ or Directress feel that such additional services would benefit the child. A list of Local Community Resources is available upon request. If a parent chooses not to follow through with recommended referrals, etc. that would aid the child and in turn the staff with meeting the child's need, Little Ones Montessori reserves the right to refuse service. Proper documentation will be placed in the child's record.

Accident or Unusual Incident Recording Process

Little Ones Montessori staff will respond appropriately to accidents and apply First Aid, unless otherwise indicated on the enrollment form. This means cleaning and bandaging minor abrasions to prevent infection. If parent notification is warranted, parents will be contacted immediately. We will also respond to unusual incidents and handle them professionally with respect to those individuals involved.

All accidents and incidents that warrant parent notification in the teacher's judgment will be recorded on the Accident/ Incident Report provided by Department of Children and Families and discussed with the Directress. The parent will receive a copy that same day for their signature.

Grievance Procedure

Should a problem arise with a staff member, please contact the individual involved. If, following discussion, the issue remains unresolved, please contact the Directress. If still unreconciled, a formal letter may be written. Please allow proper time and consideration to address the situation and find a solution.

Inclusion Policy

Little Ones Montessori admits families of any race, color, religion, or national origin to all rights, privileges and activities made available. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, disability, political affiliations, or ethnic origins in administration of its educational policies or procedures.

Professional Memberships and Licenses

- National Association for Education of Young Children
 - International Reading Association
 - North American Montessori Teachers Association
 - Association Montessori Internationale
 - License from Florida's Department of Children and Families #C12VO0217
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littleonesmontessori@cfl.rr.com
Child Care License #C12VO0217

- Little Ones Montessori reserves the right to alter or modify policies and procedures as the year progresses to ensure the security of its clients and staff. You will be notified in writing of any such changes.