

Montessori 101 - A Parent's Guide to working ins and outs of our school

History: Monroe Montessori School was started by Allan and Gayle Washburn in 1978. For many years the school rented a facility on Lewis Street. The first school building on Village Way was completed in 1994, the second in 1998 and the third in 2001. The school now employs 18 people and 5 specialists.

Admission: ages 3 - 12. Students are admitted on the following priority basis: families currently enrolled, families with a child who previously attended Montessori, families new to Montessori. Mid year starts are typically done in January for pre-school age children. The first three days of class the child follows an abbreviated schedule. New elementary students complete a classroom visit and the parent a 30-45 minute classroom observation before the first day of elementary class.

Registration: Each year registration for the following school year begins in February. Families return the commitment slip by February 10th and complete the registration papers by February 15th.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Montessori is a method of education used world wide by both public and private schools. It is not religion based but does seek to inspire in the child a love of the universe and a sense of awe about life. Monroe Montessori does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, gender, age, sex, handicap, or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, hiring or other school administered programs, and makes every effort to promote diversity within its student body and as a value in its curriculum. We hold periodic parent education nights to help parents understand the philosophy of Montessori and how it assists the development of their child. Additional information about our school curriculum as well as parent tips can be found at www.monroemontessori.com.

Volunteer Requirements

There is an 10 hour parent volunteer requirement per family each school year. Parents wishing to work in the classroom are required to attend a Volunteer Orientation Meeting and submit information for a Washington State Patrol background screening. The screening is good for two years. Volunteer job opportunities are posted in individual classrooms. There are also jobs available outside the classroom. Check the school website for details.

Extended Care Policies

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Parent Access/Observation Guidelines

A parent may visit the school and classroom at any time their child is in attendance. The parent must first check with the office to get visitor permission. A parent may have unsupervised access to their own child within the school. The administrator at his discretion may limit the amount of time the parent remains in the classroom if it is deemed upsetting to the students or disruptive of normal routines. Parents wishing to volunteer in the

classroom will need to fill out a Washington State Patrol criminal background check form and attend a Volunteer Orientation meeting. Additional background checks from DSHS , fingerprinting and a TB test may also be required. Typically we begin asking for parent volunteers the second month of school. If you would like to set up a formal observation time please read our Observation Guideline document and check with your child's teacher.

Immunizations

All children attending school are required to have immunizations up to date and a signed record on file with the school. A state approved Immunization form is available on-line or in the office. Additional questions can be answered by visiting the Washington State Department of Health Immunization website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/>

Field Trip Permission

All field trips require parent consent. Walking field trips in the neighborhood, to the library or to the park are covered by the field trip permission form in the enrollment contract signed each year. While the staff will attempt to notify a parent of a walking field trip in the neighborhood, the decision to go is weather dependent and often made at the last minute. All field trips involving transportation off of school grounds require a separate permission form for each outing or group of outings. Children ages 4 1/2 and up may ride on the Montessori school bus. Children younger than 4 1/2 will need alternate transportation such as a commercial bus. On occasion a child may be transported by private car. If parents agree to be volunteer drivers, each parent whose child is going must supply a booster seat or car seat and install it in the volunteer driver's car. Parent drivers are limited to field trips less than 25 miles unless special permission is granted. Drivers must supply a copy of their driver's license and insurance to the office. A first aid kit and cell phones for each driver is required as part of the parent car caravan. The school has a policy of not allowing smoking, use of illegal drugs or alcohol by staff, parent volunteers or students during school including field trips.

Emergency Pick Up

If an emergency arises during the day and the people listed on the Child Information Sheet are not available, alternate pick up arrangements can be made over the phone with a staff person. If the person picking up your child is not known to the staff, we will need information from you about the person so that they can be correctly identified. They will be asked to show photo identification to verify the information you provided, and will be expected to sign your child out if in after care.

Late Payment

Tuition for the school year may be paid in full at the start of the school year or in equal monthly installments. Installments are due by the 5th of each month until the tuition is paid in full. Typically this is from August to May each year. Installment payments more than 5 days late are charged a late fee of \$15 unless prior permission is granted in writing. If installment payments are late twice, parents will be asked to switch to paying weekly for the remainder of the year. Failure to make timely payments will result in the account being turned over to Na-

tional Management Collection Agency. Once the account is assigned to them, jurisdiction of the debt, additional fees, court judgments, liens on vehicles, etc. become the property of National Management. The school typically receives less than 40% of the total due after National Management is paid in full.

Medical Management

It is the school's policy not to administer medication to students. If the student needs medication during school hours a parent will need to come to school. If the child is old enough to self-medicate, a staff member will stand by and observe the child. The parent will sign a permission form allowing the child to bring and use a daily single dose of medication. If medication is needed for on-demand situations such as an asthma inhaler, the parent will fill out a form instructing the school on the safe use of the medication by the student that is signed by a physician. Complete information about medical management is included in our Health Care Policy.

Illness Prevention

"Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection." -U.S. Center for Disease Control. We follow this advice and encourage our students and staff to thoroughly and frequently wash their hands during the school day. Students are reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet. When the teacher has students participate in food preparation during a lesson, students are required to wash their hands. Before a child eats lunch or snack it is part of our normal routine to allow time for hand washing. Proper hand washing procedures are posted near each sink. Hand sanitizers (Purell dispensers) are also used to prevent the spread of infection.

Allergies

Please notify the office and your child's teacher of any known allergies. Food allergy information will be posted by the sink area listing the child's name. Building A is a nut free building. Building B & C are not.

Sunscreen

As per licensing requirements, staff is not allowed to put sunscreen or other types of lotion on your child's skin. It is the parent's responsibility to purchase and apply a type of sunscreen on their child that will effectively protect their child's skin in outdoor activities that may take place during the day including exposure to mid-day sun. We recommend parents take extra precautions if their child burns easily by instructing their child how to protect their skin, and or coming to school, (attending field trips) and personally applying additional sunscreen throughout the day.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency the staff will assess the situation, respond with appropriate CPR/First Aid and call 911. The decision to transport the student to the hospital will be made by the EMT's. In the event of accidental poisoning, the decision to administer syrup of ipecac will be made by the EMT or on advice of a consulting Doctor. If a child is taken to the hospital a staff person will accompany the student if the parent is not available. Parents will be notified as rapidly as possible using information provided on the child information form. Each student needs a current Emergency Medical Care Authorization Form on file as well. This form accompanies the child to the hospital in

the event of an emergency.

Body Fluids

We treat all body fluids including blood as potentially harmful. There is no known way to rule out a student or parent having HIV/AIDS. Staff has been trained in proper safety procedures in dealing with blood, urine, feces, saliva, drainage from rashes, open sores, open cuts, etc. Prophylactic gloves are kept in each classroom and in the office.

Sick Policy

Bringing a child into our school with any of the symptoms listed in our Sick Policy puts other children and staff at risk of getting sick. If all parents keep their sick children at home, we will have stronger, healthier and happier children. In the long run, this means fewer lost work days and less illness for parents and staff, too. If your child becomes ill at school you will be asked to pick your child up. Your child will be waiting in the hallway next to the office door. In the event the school can not reach you we will call the emergency contact numbers listed on the child information sheet. Information will be logged by the teacher on the Illness/Injury report form.

Our school follows the advice of the Snohomish Health District in preventing children with certain symptoms of communicable diseases from attending our school. If your child has any of these symptoms, please keep them home, or make appropriate arrangements for their care. In the event of certain types of unusual communicable diseases or food poisoning the Snohomish County Health District will be notified by the school.

Injury Policy

If a child is injured at school, the teacher will assess the situation. If it is a minor injury the teacher will treat the child on the spot. Typically this might include putting a band-aid on a cut, assisting the child in removing a splinter, putting ice on a bruise, etc. The staff person will write the incident in the Injury Log and make direct contact with the child's parent either in person or by phone on the day of the event.

Sanitation

It is a school policy to use a light bleach solution (1 to 10 ratio) on a regular basis to sanitize common hard surfaces and or materials used by students.

Evacuation Plan

We practice fire/earthquake drills each month. The emergency plan is posted in each classroom. The common meeting area for students and staff during a drill is in playground #1. In the event we need to evacuate the school, students will be moved to the Boys and Girls Club/ the East County Senior Center or other facility as directed by emergency personnel. These buildings are located next to the Sky River Park and are about a block away. A sign will be left on the building indicating where we have set up temporary quarters. During a real emergency you will need to go through our Reconciliation Station before removing your child from school. If you are one of the first parents to arrive you may be asked to assist the staff in setting up the Reconciliation Station or other such duties as deemed necessary.

Child Abuse/Neglect

It is understood in the event of suspected child abuse or neglect by a parent or other person that the school will notify Child Protective Services without consulting or notifying the parent as required by Washington State Law.

Corporal Punishment

Monroe Montessori School prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining a child. This includes binding a child/prohibiting the child from using the bathroom or denying the child food and water. In the event a child has to be restrained to keep from hurting himself or other children, the teacher will approach from the backside of the child and hold her arms around the child. If the child is a danger in the classroom and can not be safely restrained, the administrator or teacher will call 911. At that point the actions of the student become a police matter. The incident will be written in the Incident Log in the office and the parent will be notified by the teacher or an administrator as well as the police. Such action usually results in expulsion from school.

Code of Conduct

The Montessori program nurtures self-discipline, which develops over a period of many years. The basis of discipline is respect: respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. The adults and children in a prepared environment such as ours set limits for behavior based on the group's need for a safe and mutually respectful community. At Monroe Montessori School it is important that each child clearly understands the need for community rules and possible consequences for violating such rules. Sexual harassment of any kind by students, staff or volunteers is expressly prohibited.

Behavior Management

A major goal of the program will be to help children develop positive feelings about themselves, other people, and the world. Monroe Montessori staff will focus on providing a warm and pleasant environment where children are encouraged to explore, test their own ideas, and learn through trial and error. Developmentally appropriate strategies will be used to ensure children also learn to respect other people, property, and materials. Children will be treated with respect. When behavior must be corrected, it will be in a kind and gentle manner consistent with the circumstances and the child's cognitive development. The staff follows a philosophy based on the work of the Love and Logic Institute in Colorado. More information about Love and Logic is available on their website at LoveandLogic.com. Classes on Becoming A Love and Logic Parent are offered periodically through the school.

Discipline Procedures

The rules at school are simple in nature. A student is free to remain a part of the classroom community as long as his or her actions don't cause a problem for the teacher or any other person. If a student has difficulty following the rules of the community, the response will be age-appropriate. Personal attention, distraction, substitution and /or removal from the situation are typical approaches. Many instances resolve themselves as the student, within the bounds of safety and common sense, experiences the logical consequences of his/her actions. (i.e. repairing/replacing

an activity that has been misused)

If the student disregards the rules of the classroom community, the teacher seeks the underlying causes in order to help the student understand the inappropriateness of his/her actions and to find a constructive alternative.

If such behavior occurs with high frequency (chronic), the teacher may request another teacher to observe and offer consultation. The child is expected to resolve the problem. A child may experience the process of "recovery" within the room or in an adjoining classroom. He or she is welcome to return to the group or class as soon as he or she is "together" and are able to exhibit enough self control to not cause the problem to re-occur. The teacher personally communicates the problem with the child's parent(s) or has the child write out what caused the problem, why it is a problem for others, and how they are going to "fix" the problem.

Serious Misbehavior & Possible Consequences

Fighting may lead to out-of-school suspension. Unruly conduct in the classroom may lead to isolation from the peer group. (visiting the office) Playground problems may lead to temporary suspension from playground activities. In addition our school complies with all state laws regarding consequences of a student's action to do serious harm to another or to school property while at school. These consequences may include holding the parent liable for their child's actions.

Dismissal, Referral, Suspension, Expulsion

Dismissal usually occurs because of poor attendance or failure to pay tuition. *Referral* takes two forms. For unusual behavior problems we suspect are beyond a child's control, we refer the parent to outside professional help. Referral of the child to a different school is appropriate when it is clear that a multi-age, open-ended classroom is not the most suitable environment for that child. *Suspension* is for repeated harm to property or to the physical safety of other children and is done at the sole discretion of the administrator in consultation with the teacher. A conflict between students leading to *Expulsion* of one or more students is done under the protection of a Peace Conference procedure (see Peace Conference) and involves a number of steps. The steps are: 1) a clearly definable problem, 2) a written copy of the conflict noted on the Parent/Student Concern Form from both parties, 3) parent notification and mandatory involvement in helping their child successfully resolve the issue, 4) at the discretion of the administrator or teacher mandatory participation in the Peace Conference, and 5) students given a chance to work through their classroom differences in a respectful and peaceful manner.

Children are our most valuable gifts

There is no doubt we all agree that our children are our most valuable gifts. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to function as social assets rather than social liabilities. It is important this understanding is reflected in methods of discipline used at home and at school. Here are some general guidelines we follow that work well in both places:

- Hold the student to standard: he or she will rise to the expectation.
- Redirect the child from destructive, negative behavior.

- Verbalize/model appropriate behavior.
- Separate the “Denial” / “Hurt” / and “Suffering” of growing up from real deprivation.
- Let *natural consequences flow* from inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain strong, effective discipline by seeking consistency and clarity.
- Make rewards Internal, not External.
- Catch the child “doing something right.”
- Use humor to support and defuse, not to deflate. Sarcasm bites and hurts.
- Engage, involve, spark the interest of the student.
- Be respectful. Maintain a position of unconditional love.
- Love of your child is not a “bargaining chip” to manipulate desired school behavior.

Dress Code

Our school does not have uniforms. Each Thursday is school shirt day. Participation is optional. During warm weather we ask students to follow these clothing guidelines: Shorts need to extend below the student's fingers when placed at their side. Tank tops need to have shoulder straps that are 3 fingers wide. No bare midriff, no sheer clothing, no words/graphics on clothes that might be deemed offensive to the classroom community such as sexually suggestive words/graphics encouraging drug use, alcohol use, violence, discrimination or hatred.

Use Of The Parking Lot

The inside lane closest to the building is used for *through traffic* unless the staff is actively dismissing students. You may temporarily park in the lane closest to the city sidewalk up to 5 minutes during drop off or pick up. Staff will escort students to waiting cars during dismissal at the end of the academic day. Please do not leave your vehicle during this time. If you would like to take a few minutes to visit with the teacher, it works best if you park across the street. For the safety of our students you agree to comply with the legal rule not to leave your vehicle running if you step away and leave it unattended and not to exceed 5 mph while in the parking lot.

Personalizing the learning experience

At the beginning of the year preschool families attend an ice cream social, elementary (K-6) families have a classroom potluck. Parents fill out a Parent Survey form to assist the teacher in knowing what might work best with their child. The parent ed night in September covers curriculum and what a typical day is like. By the first of October elementary students have a parent teacher conference and parent volunteers begin to work in the classrooms. In November at Back To School Night, the child teaches the parent. Grandparents/Special Person Day in November gives the child a chance to share their work with people important in their lives. All families have a parent-teacher conference in February and receive a written report of progress in June. Teachers often give small bits of information daily at dismissal time on what a child worked on. Each year the school publishes 5 whole school newsletters where the teachers take a developmental theme and explain how they apply the idea in the classroom. Phone conferences, email updates, and additional conferences may be requested by the parent as needed. Additional curriculum covered by enrichment specialists is detailed each semester by the art, music, nature study or foreign language teacher.

Typical Social Events

Sept.	Ice Cream Social, Classroom Potlucks Sally Foster Wrapping Paper Fund Raiser
Oct.	Pumpkin Patch Outing Biography Day-elementary. ,Book Character Costume Day, preschool-kindergarten
Nov.	School Pictures Food Drive Back To School Night, Grandparents Day
Dec.	Toy Drive, whole school assembly, Adopt A Family Giving Tree
Jan.	Winter Concert - elementary Music Sharing Day - preschool, kindergarten Whole School Art Display Science Fair - elementary
Feb.	Parent Teacher Conferences, Valentine’s Party
March	Spelling Bee - elementary School Auction - main fund raiser for the year
April	Family Swim-pizza party April 25th - last day to turn in hours for Parent Volunteer work to avoid \$110.00 invoice
May	Teacher Appreciation Week Nomination of new PBC board members
June	Volunteer Appreciation Gifts End of the year picnic - all family event
July/Aug.	Summer School events

Parent Booster Club

From the articles of incorporation the stated purpose of the Monroe Montessori Parent Booster Club is to raise funds to benefit and enrich the learning lives of the young students attending Monroe Montessori School. All parents who have children attending Monroe Montessori School are members of the PBC.

The PBC takes responsibility for putting on one main fund raiser each spring and one smaller fund raiser in the fall.

While the PBC takes responsibility for making each event happen, they choose, in cooperation with the school, a chair person (s) to run the events. The chairperson works with both the PBC and the school staff to assure a smooth and successful fund raising event.

Money raised by these events is accounted for by the PBC treasurer. The school staff then proposes a budget for the best use of available funds donated by the parents. The PBC discusses, votes and has final approval of the actual distribution of funds. In the past approximately \$5000 was immediately set aside as working money to front expenses for the next year’s auction. Remaining funds available are then gifted to the school for direct use by the school. The majority of such funds goes to support the enrichment program established at the school. Additional money is used to purchase new Montessori materials for the classroom, teacher made materials for the classroom, or enhancements to the school grounds (playground equipment, growing beds, etc.).

The school tuition alone does not cover the costs of the programs offered at Monroe Montessori School. As many are aware, Monroe Montessori School is one of the least expensive Montessori schools in the Puget Sound area. Keeping tuition at affordable levels is one of the main goals of the founders. PBC funds do not pay for the total cost of the enrichment programs or the purchases of classroom materials but rather supports and offers additional funds to enhance the ability of the school to deliver these programs. Records of how past money was used are kept in a PBC notebook in the office and are available for public viewing by a parent. Parents may also set up an appointment to talk with an individual teacher to check which of the materials in the class-

room have been purchased through past fund raisers or are direct gifts to the school.

Over the years the PBC's role has expanded to include newsletters informing parents of upcoming events and to actively promote a sense of "school community" by assisting in social events. Past events have included one or more school assemblies and purchasing food or refreshments for such things as welcoming events in the fall, the pumpkin patch outing, parent-teacher conferences (Oct, Feb.), back to school night in Nov., swim - pizza party in April, teacher appreciation week the first week in May, and parent volunteer appreciation gifts the first week of June. Assemblies generally range from \$600-\$1200, the swim party approximately \$700, teacher appreciation week approximately \$400, volunteer gifts approximately \$400, and misc. food or refreshments for social events \$350. Special situations such as replenishing student earthquake kits are usually handled by asking for voluntary donations.

Extended Care

We offer extended care both before school and after school to currently enrolled students. Our program has a limited number of spots available. We use a flat rate payment system as a way of simplifying what we offer. Typically Extended Care is full early in the school year, with all spots taken by Full Time users.

Space in the program is assigned during the school year in the following priority: 1) full time users, 2) part time users, 3) occasional or drop in users. Only full time users, once registered for extended care, have a guaranteed spot for the school year. Part time users will be accommodated as best as possible with the understanding they are not guaranteed a place if a full time user needs the space. Before the space is filled however the part time user has the option to upgrade to full time user status.

If my child only uses extended care 3 days a week do I still need to pay for a Full Time User Status?

If you are using our program three or more days per week your child is using a full time space and will require registration in our extended care program to guarantee a spot will be held and available when your child uses Extended Care. (The space is not given away to another family if your child misses a day or two but rather is held for their exclusive use.) The rates for using Before or After Care three or more days a week are posted by the office.

Occasional Use Sign Up & Restrictions

Currently we try to leave open 2 drop in spots for part time users in the morning and 2 drop in spots for part time users in the afternoon. The availability of these spots may change as more families request or pay for full time user status. If space is temporarily granted for an occasional part time user it is with the understanding that they may get bumped from their space. Once you put your name on the part time/occasional user sign up sheet you lock the spot for that date. You will be invoiced for that date whether or not your child attends. There is a limit of no more than 2 days a week that you may sign up for as an Occasional User regardless of the number of days open on the calendar at the time you sign up.

The sign up sheet to secure a particular day as a part time/occasional user is located on the Parent Bulletin Board next to the phone in Room A2. If the day you want has been taken by an-

other family, you may want to consider switching to full time user status for a guaranteed spot or begin exploring alternatives for before or after school care.

Early Dismissal Days (conferences, holiday dismissal)

Available between 12:00-3:30 on early dismissal days.

Following Early Dismissal Care, After Care is available from 3:30-6:00.

Occasional Late pick up after class

To assist the occasional late parent after school care until 4:00 is \$5.00.

School Holiday Clubhouse Care

Offered by advanced sign up only. Minimum number of students needed to offer Club House Care on non school days. \$50 flat rate. Available between the hours of 7:30-5:30

Additional documents related to Extended Care

Additional documents related to Extended Care including the school's sick policy, allergies, medicine, emergency contingency plans, max hours, safety training, etc. are available in the office or are posted on the Parent Bulletin Board by the office. You may also request to see the latest copy of any State Inspection.

State Agency reimbursement of Extended Care

It is a financial policy of our school not to accept preschool age students whose tuition or extended care is billed to a state agency. Please see the office for additional details.

Posted Policies

School policies, health care details, extended care information and other documents are posted in the hallway and on the school's web page at monroemontessori.com

Allan Washburn
Administrator