



KW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



THE CANADIAN COUNCIL
OF MONTESSORI ADMINISTRATORS
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ADMINISTRATEURS
DES ÉCOLES MONTESSORI

527 Bridgeport Rd E., Kitchener, ON, N2K 1N6 • (519)742-1051
www.kwmontessorischool.com

MISSION STATEMENT

KWMS is committed to facilitating the development of the “whole child” through nurturing, encouragement and guidance. We provide a specialized secure environment allowing for the fulfillment of the potential of each child and fostering a lifelong love of learning, independence and self-worth.

VISION

For 50 years, KWMS has provided a trusted, inclusive Montessori program while valuing the individuality of each child. Within our school community, children are given the best care and attention throughout the entire day which allows us to develop positive, long-lasting relationships with the children and their families. We create a unique learning environment in which every child learns in a prepared and peaceful environment. Our faculty are caring, highly trained professionals who passionately aid in developing self-confidence and self-esteem at every stage of a child’s development.

School Hours and Schedule

Program Names and Ages

Young Children's Community (YCC)	18 mths - 3 years old
Casa	2 ¹ / ₂ – 6 years old (includes JK/SK)
Lower Elementary	6 – 9 years old (Grades 1 -3)
Upper Elementary	9 – 12 years old (Grades 4 – 6)

General Daily Hours

Before Care Program	8:00 - 8:45 a.m.
Drop off Period (all programs)	8:45 – 9:00 a.m.
Morning YCC/Casa Session	9:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Full Day YCC/Casa Program	9:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Elementary Program	9:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Pick Up Period	3:30 – 3:45 p.m.
After Care Program	3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Before/after school care is available at an additional cost. Please note that your child must be registered for these programs. Lunch supervision/care is only available for full day children. Our Casa program is licensed under the Ministry of Education and follows the requirements of the Child and Early Years Act (CCEYA). Our Elementary program is registered with the Ministry of Education.

CONTACTING THE SCHOOL

If you wish to talk to the teachers directly about your child, we suggest that you pre-arrange a time so that they can be sure to be available. If you need to contact the office, please contact the school by phone or email at:
admin@kwmontessorischool.com

KW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1972, our school is dedicated to providing children with high quality education based upon the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. Our Young Children's Community and Casa Programs are offered 5 days a week with the option of a half or full day for children ages 2 to 6. Our elementary program provides full day classes for children 6-12 years of age (grades 1-6).

KW Montessori School provides a balance of individual and social experiences for children 24 months to 12 years of age. The Montessori Method is based upon a three-year cycle of learning focusing on each stage of development (YCC, Casa, Lower Elementary & Upper Elementary). In its entirety, our program has been developed to guide the child in both academics and to attain greater independence, social competence and self-fulfillment.

Our Montessori program offers:

- Fully equipped Young Children's, Casa and Elementary classrooms
- A solid foundation for academic development
- Physical education, drama, art and music
- French Instruction
- Group activities - songs, stories, games, physical activities and outdoor play
- Individual creativity - expressed in music, arts and crafts.
- Outdoor playground - supervised unstructured playtime for all full day students

PHILSOPHY

Montessori education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. Over 100 years ago, through observation and research, Dr. Montessori recognized key factors in childhood development. She created an environment that was filled with developmentally appropriate materials which allowed children to develop into self-motivated, independent learners. Dr. Montessori named her first school 'Casa dei Bambini' which translates to 'Children's House'.

One key factor that Dr. Montessori identified was The Absorbent Mind. She recognized that young children have an innate ability to absorb information from the world around them. They effortlessly and unconsciously take in information from their surroundings, learning while also developing an understanding of the world in which they live. Dr. Montessori recognized that adults can play a key role in fostering the absorbent mind by providing appropriate and purposeful activities.

Dr. Montessori also recognized that each child moves through stages of development; ages 0-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12. During these stages, children also experience sensitive periods where they most easily absorb and learn with greater ease and intensity. The Montessori Philosophy recognizes these stages and children are offered, or directed towards materials and activities that meet the needs of their current stage or sensitive period.

Through a carefully prepared environment a Montessori child learns independently, at their own rate, in an orderly atmosphere of freedom. Children seek hands-on experiences and the ability to learn through repetition. Authentic

Montessori materials offer children the ability to refine their senses, practice key, isolated concepts, and also the chance to learn through self-correction.

A Montessori classroom is a mixed-age grouping, built on the concept of 'freedom within limits'. As long as a chosen activity or task does not impose on another child, and they are working with a material that has been introduced to them, they are free to choose and direct themselves independently. Children at different ages learn from each other and thus have the opportunity to help and share their skills with others. The classroom mimics a community; a place of collaboration and cooperation.

The Montessori teacher is called a 'Directress/Director' since they are there as a guide to the child, aiding them in their own self-directed learning. All materials and activities are carefully selected, purposeful, and for the children 'work' and 'play' become one in the same. The Montessori Directress/Director carefully observes the child, and guides them based on their interests while also ensuring they take part in all areas of the classroom and curriculum.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Our Montessori program strives to develop and promote:

- a lasting love of learning
- confidence and competence
- cooperation and collaboration
- an ability to self-regulate
- exploration and inquiry
- skills and study habits that build strong academic foundations
- a positive and secure social environment
- initiative and self-confidence
- respect for the dignity and individuality of each child
- respect for oneself, peers and the environment
- the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children
- positive interaction and communication among children, parents and staff

Program Statement
(as required by CCEYA)

PROGRAM

The KW Montessori School provides a balance of individual and social experiences for children 18 months to 12 years of age. The Montessori method is based upon a three-year cycle of learning, at each level of development (Young Children's Community, Casa, Lower Elementary & Upper Elementary). In its entirety, our program has been developed to guide the child to attain greater independence, social competence and self-fulfillment.

We offer a fully accredited Montessori program that includes practical life materials, sensorial and cultural education, language and mathematics, physical education, as well as drama and music activities. We also offer a French program that includes basic vocabulary, conversation, games and songs. French is conducted in small groups that leads to speaking, reading and writing French at the elementary level. Our program also includes group activities that involve songs, stories, games, physical activities and outdoor play. We promote individual creativity by allowing children to express themselves in music, art and various craft activities. We offer supervised unstructured playtime in our fully equipped and fenced, outdoor playground, promoting physical activity and free play.

Quality Assurance Policy

KWMS engages in activities to ensure quality and each year we strive to improve the quality of our program. We are a fully accredited CCMA school which upholds and implements the fundamental, unchanging values and principles of Montessori Education.

Teachers

Each class is staffed with a Montessori educated Directress and one or two assistants, depending upon the class size. In a Montessori school the title "teacher" is replaced by "Directress/Guide" as these titles suggest subtly, the style of learning, in a Montessori classroom.

In the Montessori environment, the adult has four primary functions: to observe each child and assess his/her needs, to maintain the rights of each child, to provide a stimulating environment and program, and to provide adequate links between the child and the environment.

She/he functions as a guide or directress/director rather than as a source of learning. The child is encouraged to do everything he or she can for him/herself. The Montessori educator has been trained to design and maintain the environment, present the materials available to the child as he/she is ready for them, carefully observe the child's stage of development in many areas, guide the child in choices and use of the environment and relationships with others.

Relationships Among Children, Families, Staff & Community Partners

We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff by communicating, promoting and adhering to our 'Values' and our 'Code of Conduct.' These are communicated in our staff policies, in the parent handbook, in our monthly newsletters, calendars and on the classroom pages of our website. They are applied to all members of the KWMS community – staff, students, parents, interns, volunteers, observers and visitors.

Positive Self-Expression, Communication & Self-Regulation

We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their ability to self-regulate by having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years. This provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves, and with the teachers. We also have a Code of Respectful Conduct that is applied consistently throughout the school but according to the maturity of the children involved.

We foster children's exploration by having fully equipped Montessori classrooms that are academic and inquiry based. Children learn about academics and the world around them through materials and activities that are work/play based. Our classrooms are learn/play environments in which activities are specifically designed for a range of three ages. Our classrooms and materials/activities assist children with the following.

Parent Engagement & Communication

We foster ongoing and open communication with parents about the program and their child's progress. Parents can access their child's teacher by phone, through email, or by chatting **briefly** at the door during arrival and dismissal. Parent education evenings are scheduled during the school year in order to foster a connected community and learn more about the goals of the Montessori philosophy. Monthly newsletters are sent to parents in order to ensure they have an overall school update.

Health, Safety, Nutrition & Well-Being of Children

We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care by providing Canada's Food Guide, catered lunches and snacks, performing fire drills and crisis response drills. Appropriate bedding is provided for those who nap. We diligently meet all the requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15.

Community Partners

We involve local community partners and specialists, inviting them to support the children, their families and staff. We welcome specialists from K-W Habilitation, KidsAbility and find spaces for them to work with our children. We meet with the parents and these specialists as necessary.

Supporting Staff in Continuous Professional Learning

We support our staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning by meeting every August at which time all staff review and complete all necessary documentation required by ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. At the beginning of each year, our staff also set goals for themselves in discussion with their direct reports and we plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. We have a budget dedicated to Professional Development days set aside each year to meet as a whole staff and in smaller groups to review our work and plan for improvements or attend workshops. We have a Principal/Supervisor who walks about the school regularly, observing in classes and then engaging the staff in conversation about their observations. We also meet regularly to discuss ongoing issues or topics of particular interest. Each staff member also spends time at least once a year observing in each other's class.

Documenting & Reviewing the Impact of KWMS' (Learning) Programs

We document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families through observation, conversation, meetings, surveys, etc. The intention of this Program Statement is to strengthen the quality of KW Montessori School's program which will lead to positive outcomes related to children's learning, development, health and well-being.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Support Plan

Individual Education Plans (IEP) will be developed in consultation with a parent or legal guardian of the child and any regulated health professionals who work with the child in a capacity that would allow the person to help inform the plan. An initial meeting is to be held with all persons involved to identify modified/alternative learning expectations given in the curriculum for the appropriate grade. Any accommodations/special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations will also be identified. Once all information is gathered an IEP is developed that includes instructions relating to the child's use of the supports, aids or adapted environment. The plan will include descriptions of any supports, aids, environment adaptations or other modifications to the physical, social and learning environment. The plan will also describe how the school will support the child to function and participate in a meaningful and purposeful manner. Once in place, the classroom teacher, principal/supervisor and parents will sign the IEP, the original will be placed in the student's OSR (file) and a copy will be given to the parents. An IEP review meeting will take place annually after the initial meeting to discuss any changes or updates required. Any necessary changes to a student's program will also take place throughout the school year as needed. IEP update meetings will continue to take place annually until the child no longer needs an IEP or upon leaving the school.

Prohibited Practices

The KW Montessori School prohibits:

- Corporal punishment of the child
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of

supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent

- Locking the exits of the school premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

***If a prohibited practice is observed, the individual who has observed the incident must make the report directly to a children's aid society. For more information on the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* and the duty to report, see *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Your Duty*. ***It is also important to note that registered early childhood educators (RECEs) are expected to be accountable for their actions as early childhood educators and to abide by the *College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* as well as all applicable legislation, regulations, by-laws and policies that are relevant to their professional practice.

KWMS PROGRAM DETAILS

YOUNG CHILDRENS COMMUNITY (18 mths - 3 yrs)

Our Young Children's Community is intended for children between the ages of 18 mths and 3. This program meets the unique needs of the developing toddler. The Young Children's Community (YCC) aims to develop functional independence, self-expression, gross and fine motor skills, social skills, language development, and toileting (washroom) independence.

The YCC program follows the Montessori curriculum appropriate for this stage of development, largely focusing on Practical Life, Sensorial and Language activities. The environment supports healthy interactions and provides positive role-modeling, helping the child to develop relationships with their peers, adults and their surroundings.

Children entering this program should be 'toilet ready', being at the stage of beginning the transition into underwear. Students in this program wear training underwear and learn to use the toilet on a schedule with teacher assistance. Children in the program need to feel comfortable sitting on a toilet and parents will also need to support and be part of the toilet learning that occurs as a key of the program.

Half-day and full-day options are available. Catered lunches are required for full-day students. As a child becomes more independent and has consolidated several skills,

we may begin to transition them into the Casa Program. Transitioning to the Casa Program also is based on the spaces available during each school year.

CASA PROGRAM (2 ½ - 6 YEARS)

The Montessori Casa program is based upon a balance between freedom and structure. At its core is an environment filled with carefully devised materials that meet a child's natural needs. The child can choose, within certain limits, "work" that appeals to his/her own inner interests.

There are five main areas of the Montessori classroom:

- Practical Life – Grace and Courtesy, care of self, motor skill development, coordination, promote independence
- Sensorial – refining the senses, classification, familiarity of shapes, comparison, pre- language skills
- Culture – Geography, History, Science, Art and Music are all explored
- Language – pre-writing and pre-writing skills, phonetics moving to reading, printing/cursive writing, vocabulary development, grammar, reading comprehension
- Mathematics – number sense (symbol and quantity), moving from the decimal system to basic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division)

Physical education, French and music are all part of our Casa program. In their third year of the casa program, students are able to take on a leadership role, sharing their knowledge with the younger students. Third year students demonstrate responsibility and confidence and are well prepared for level one (grade one) of our elementary program.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM (6 – 12 YEARS) Levels 1 to 6

The Elementary program continues with the philosophy and principles of the Montessori approach. At this age level, emphasis is placed upon mathematics, geometry, language, history, geography, botany, zoology and science. Physical education, French, computer, art, drama and music are also part of the program.

Our elementary curriculum meets Ministry standards while adhering to the key Montessori principles. Students continue to learn through hands-on materials that are taught sequentially according to each student's needs. Concepts are explored on a deeper level so that students understand the 'hows' and 'whys' further developing their ability to shift from concrete thinking to the abstract. Students are encouraged to achieve their full potential while being provided with endless opportunities of co-operative, social interaction among a mixed age grouping. Children continue to develop their love of learning, relationships, respect for the rights of others, and self-confidence.

For more details about the Montessori curriculum, please refer to other Montessori curriculum resources such as on www.ccma.ca and www.amshq.org.

FRENCH PROGRAM

The Casa French program provides an introduction to basic French and takes place three times a week commencing in October for approximately 20 minutes in

duration. At this level, the children learn vocabulary and conversational skills while singing songs and playing games. A variety of teaching materials are used. All children are encouraged to participate even if English is not their first language.

At the elementary level the students receive French instruction four times per week for 30 minutes. The elementary children learn to speak, read and write French using the AIM Program. AIM is an Accelerated Integrated Method which consists of hand gestures associated with basic French vocabulary. The children acquire new vocabulary through themed stories, songs and activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Movement is a natural part of the Montessori classroom at all levels. Our physical education program promotes healthy, active living, movement and wellness. Physical education occurs on a regular basis for all levels and is designed to encourage increased competence in motor skills, appropriate to the child's age level, as well as increasing listening skills and social cooperation.

For indoor activities, Elementary students are required to wear a school T-shirt, white socks, plain navy or black sweat pants or shorts and running shoes for physical education.

MUSIC PROGRAM

The basic aim of the Casa program is to help children discover music through personal experience. A response to rhythm and melody, as well as music appreciation developed through extensive use of movement, singing, listening and instrument playing (bells, tambourines, maracas, rhythm sticks, glockenspiels/music makers, etc.) will be the goal.

The elementary students learn about music through a play-based curriculum called Musicplay, written by Denise Gagne. It is a joyful, fun filled curriculum that includes:

1. Beat & Rhythm
2. Melody & Harmony
3. Instrumental Technique
4. Creating & Expression
5. Cultural Context
6. Listening & Form

New musical concepts and theory are prepared, presented and practiced in a cooperative learning environment. Learning music is like learning a language. Children need to experience music before labelling it.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please see our current Fees and Payment Schedules on our [website](#).

Please note that at this time The K-W Montessori School is not enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program.

TUITION

Tuition is an annual fee. There are payment options that include monthly and full-year payments. No refunds are given for illness, vacations, school breaks or snow days. Further information is provided by using the link above.

CATERED LUNCH

As an accredited Montessori school, each Casa classroom has a three-year age span. As per the CCEYA requirements, any child who is less than 3.9 years of age is required to take part in the catered lunch program. Catered lunches are provided by [Virtuous Kitchen](#). Children who are 44 months or older, or select a non-catered option, are able to bring their own bagged lunch from home. The policies surrounding bagged lunches can be found in the Anaphylactic Policy and in the 'Lunch and Snack' section of the handbook.

ADMISSION POLICY

To start the admission process, parents are to contact the school or complete an Inquiry Form. All families are required to attend a school tour before registration information can be provided. Our program runs from September to June of each year based on a school year calendar. New students may be accepted throughout the year if spots are available. Since the Montessori program is based on a three-year age span in each classroom, there are limits to how many children of each age level can be accepted into each classroom. CCEYA also places certain restrictions on the numbers of children that may be enrolled in certain programs, at certain ages.

- Young Children's Community: students should be between the ages of 18 mths and 3yrs of age.
- Casa program: students should be between 2 ¹/₂ and 4¹/₂ years of age by the start of the school year. Casa children must also be toilet-trained.
- Elementary program: students must be 6 yrs of age by December of the school year in order to enroll. A copy of a birth certificate must be provided with registration. Previous Montessori experience is beneficial but not mandatory.

Please refer to the website for other [terms and conditions](#).

DAILY PROCEDURES

STAGGERED COMMENCEMENT

Young Children's Community/Casa

Children new to the YCC/Casa program will begin classes on the Tuesday after Labour Day. Returning YCC or Casa children begin classes the following Monday. This staggered entrance allows the new students a chance to have the necessary individual attention so they can become familiar with their surroundings before the returning children arrive.

Elementary

All elementary students begin classes on the Wednesday after Labour Day.

Points to remember:

- Casa classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. and end at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Elementary classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. Punctuality and regular attendance are a priority.
- A supervising adult must accompany Casa children to the school door, a staff member will ensure they arrive to their classroom.
- Once your child is in school and your child's teacher knows he/she has arrived, please leave promptly, avoiding prolonged good-byes.
- In order to allow each child a sense of independence, your participation in the arrival and departure should be brief.
- School doors will remain locked during class times. If you have an unavoidable late arrival, please ring the doorbell for admission into the school. Staff will already be engaged in programming so please be patient waiting for the door to be answered

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

To ensure continuity and minimal disruption, please have your child arrive at school on time. **The program begins promptly at 9:00 am.** Supervision will be provided for up to 15 minutes before and after class. Beyond these time frames, additional charges will apply for early arrivals and late departures. Under the new Safe Arrival Policy, parents must notify the school of a child's absence or late arrival. We are required to contact parents if we do not have a confirmed late/absence noted.

Please pay special care and attention to your child(ren) on the school property and parking lot during arrivals and dismissals. The parking lot is a very busy place and we want to ensure all of our students are safe. All students must be accompanied to the school doors at arrival, and all students must leave promptly when dismissed. We ask for your cooperation to ensure children do not run in the school hallways. Students are not permitted to stay and play on any of the school property. **Once a child leaves the school/school yard in the company of a supervising adult, his/her safety and well-being are no longer the responsibility of the staff.**

Children will only be allowed to be picked up by parents or approved adults that have been provided to the school in writing. Please send a note or call the school ahead of time if your child will be picked up by someone other than a parent or approved adult. We cannot release your child to any unapproved individual, including a classmate's parent. Please refer to the "Arrival and Dismissal Policy".

Important:

Please enter the school parking lot off of Hamel Avenue which is located behind the school. DO NOT USE the driveway in front of the school/church facing Bridgeport Road.

PROBATION PERIOD

There is a six-week probationary period during which a new child's adjustment to the program is observed. If, after a month to six weeks, the Directress/Director feels that a child is having difficulty adapting to the program, the parents will be invited to the school to discuss the situation. If, at this time, it is decided that it is in the best interest of the child and/or the school for the child to leave, all subsequent cheques for tuition will be returned.

At any time, KW Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss a student if we feel the child is not benefitting from the Montessori program and curriculum that we offer. In this case, any future payments owing will become null and void.

WITHDRAWAL OF CHILD

As the success of the Montessori approach depends on the child's regular attendance over a continuous 3-year period at each level of development, it is the general policy of the school to discourage the withdrawal of children during the school year. However, if it is necessary that a child be withdrawn because of moving, illness or like cause, one month's written notice must be given to the school of the proposed withdrawal. The last day of notification to withdraw a student during the school year is November 1st. If provided with 30 days notice, subsequent monthly payments will be refunded/cancelled. Deposits remain non-refundable. As enrollment is a commitment to a full school year, there are no refunds provided after November 30th and payment is owed for the remainder of the school year.

ABSENCE CHECK

Please notify the school if your child will not be at school on that day. If the answering machine is on, please leave a clear message stating your child's full name and the reason for the absence. We are required to keep track/report any outbreaks to the Region of Waterloo Public Health. Please refer to the "Safe Arrivals Policy" for further information.

ILLNESS

If your child complains of feeling ill before school, please do not send them that day. Please be considerate to other students, families and staff and help us prevent the spread of illness/disease. We understand that leaving or missing work to pick up a sick child can be difficult and frustrating. We thank you for your cooperation. Please make sure that the contact numbers you have provided are people who can be easily reached during the day.

A child should not be sent to school after being administered medication (i.e., Tylenol/Advil) due to a cough, fever, flu or similar symptoms. Although we are no longer experiencing a pandemic, parents/guardians are encouraged to continue to monitor for Covid-19 as recommended by Waterloo Public Health. The screening tool link is [here](#).

ILLNESS - Continued

Children should remain at home until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours, if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever/Chills
- Cough, Sore throat, Runny Nose
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Extreme tiredness
- Discharge from nose or eyes
- Headache
- Abdominal Pain
- Pink eye
- Decreased or no appetite

Children should remain at home for 48 hours (from the last occurrence) if they have the following symptoms:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (2 or more liquid stools or a change in normal pattern of bowel movement)

If your child is absent due to disease or illness, please inform the school of symptoms when you notify us of the absence. For the safety of other children, and to comply with public health regulations, parents should report any communicable disease promptly to the school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Closure of KW Montessori School due to inclement weather will follow procedures similar to those of the Public and Separate School Boards. If the school boards are closed, our school will also be closed. In other situations, we will consider the conditions. If, in our opinion of the situation, weather stations indicate conditions that are detrimental to the safety of our staff and students, then our school will be closed. Please check your email for updates on a school closure. You can also check <http://www.570news.com/> for closure updates. Decisions are made and posted between 6:30 and 6:45 am.

LUNCH AND SNACK CASA AND ELEMENTARY STUDENTS (3.8 yrs – 12 yrs)

Full day non-catered Casa and all Elementary students are required to bring a nutritious lunch daily, following Canada's Food Guide (**please-no candy, chocolate bars, chips, gum or pop**). **Your child's name must appear on the outside of their lunch bag.** We encourage parents to be aware of the food that they pack for their children's snacks/lunches and how they impact learning.

We discuss nutrition with the students throughout the year and are hopeful that we can contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Students wash their hands before they eat and are expected to clean up after themselves. Since we do not have any facilities for heating children's lunches, please heat food at home and place it in a labelled thermos. Children are encouraged to take any uneaten food home. An extra snack and drink for after school care should also be included, if your child is enrolled in the extended-day program. More information can be found at <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>.

LITTERLESS LUNCHES

Our school also promotes litterless lunches. In order to be environmentally friendly and to reduce as much waste as possible, we encourage all non-catered Casa and elementary students to pack their lunch/snacks in labelled re-useable containers. We would like the students to be aware of how garbage can be reduced and that they can help keep our environment clean and healthy. We also have a composting program and promote recycling whenever possible.

SNACK

All Casa students are provided with snack from our caterer. Students under 3.8 yrs of age who wish to bring their own snack from home, must have a signed permission form in their file. The Child Care and Early Years Act requires that nutritious between meal snacks consist of foods that promote good dental health. For example, a blueberry oatmeal muffin (2 food groups), or half a banana and wheat crackers, or apple slices and cheese, etc.

According to regulations, home baked goods are not acceptable if providing snacks for the class i.e. birthday snacks. Baked items served in class must be made in inspected bakeries. All ingredients must be clearly listed. The school provides students with water as needed during the school day. Please note that not all children choose to have a snack each day so there will be times that your child is unable to, or chooses not to, eat their snack.

Listed below are some suggested items to bring for a snack:

- crackers & Cheese
- fruit to go bars & baby carrots
- sliced fruit & yogurt
- raisins/dried cranberries & seeds
- rice crackers & celery
- vegetables & dip
- nutritious cookies or muffins
- granola & apple
- fruit breads (banana, carrot, etc.)
- mini pitas/bagels & cream cheese
- wrap & cream cheese

LUNCH AND SNACK

Catered Program – YCC & Casa Students (18 months - 3y8m)

The Catered Program for students ages 18 months - 3y 8m provides a nutritious lunch on a daily basis as well as a morning and afternoon snack. The children will have supervised outdoor time first, before eating lunch. They are taught eating skills, etiquette and how to clean up after themselves when finished. In the YCC room, students then proceed to have a nap/rest, followed by a snack and circle/story time. As needed, Casa students have a nap/rest period, followed by a short work cycle, snack, circle/story. Other full-day students have a quiet period and then engage in a work cycle for the remainder of the afternoon, ending with a circle and story. Children are under complete supervision at all times.

SLEEP/REST PERIOD

Parents of children who regularly sleep at school will be advised of policies and procedures regarding sleeping children. Students in the YCC program are offered a nap and Casa students have a rest period after lunch daily. Students who nap on cots or rest on mats will be provided with a sheet. Napping students may bring in a small blanket but should not bring in stuffed animals, pacifiers, etc. to be used at this time. At the end of each week, bedding will be sent home to be laundered and returned the following Monday.

NUT AWARE SCHOOL

We are a nut aware school. To reduce the risk of accidental exposure we respectfully ask for your cooperation, particularly with the snack/lunch items that are being sent to school. To ensure that the environment is as allergen-free as possible, DO NOT send any products containing *any nuts*. Ultimately, the teachers will be checking the ingredients of any items sent and determining whether or not it is safe. We will be erring on the side of caution so please do not take offense to any items being sent back home. We appreciate your understanding and thank you in advance for your assistance in making our classroom safe for all our students.

PLAYGROUND

Students have a supervised, unstructured play period in the playground at scheduled times, weather permitting. Children should come dressed appropriately on a daily basis. Students enrolled in the before/after school care and the full day program have outdoor playtime in the playground daily.

Weather is consistently monitored. If the temperature or wind-chill temperature is below -15 °C, YCC and Casa students will remain indoors, whereby they will have an unstructured play period. Elementary students may have a shortened time outdoors, but will remain inside if temperatures drop to -20 or below. Staff will continuously monitor the temperature during scheduled outdoor times.

As per the Region of Waterloo Public Health guidelines for Smog Alerts it is suggested that children's outdoor work, play or exercise be reduced when the air quality is poor. Therefore, when a Smog and Air Health Advisory (SAHA) is issued by ECCC and Air Quality Ontario, the student outdoor time will be rescheduled or cancelled. This will apply to scheduled outdoor breaks during the school day and for after school programming.

FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Field trips are arranged from time to time throughout the school year. A general permission slip as part of your child's registration form must be signed for all trips. You will be sent advance notice about each individual outing. School buses will be rented for field trips. It is the parents' responsibility to make substitute arrangements for their child if they choose not to have their child participate in a particular field trip.

Any parent wishing to attend as a volunteer on a possible field trip is required to have a Vulnerable Sector Check on file with the school. Please ensure that any newly submitted VSC has been completed within the last 6 months.

OBSERVATION OF CLASSES

Once students settle in their classrooms in the first term, parents are invited to observe a class in session for 20 minutes. Parents can book a time through the office typically after mid-October. Your visit should not interfere with the classroom structure, teaching or classroom management. The recommended viewing times are between 9:15-10:45 a.m.

Observations in a Montessori classroom are a regular occurrence. A general rule of observing a Montessori classroom is to watch without interrupting or involving yourself in the children's activities. Children often behave differently when parents are present. Some may be very shy, while others may want to show all their skills and knowledge. In order to get the most accurate picture of the class and your child, we ask that you sit in a chair provided by the teacher and interact with the students as little as possible. While you are observing, your child must continue to follow all classroom rules.

Parents are also invited to schedule a one-hour visit to their child's classroom during mid to late February or early March. During this visit, you are invited to move around the class with your child. Siblings and other children are not to accompany parents during their visit because they can be disruptive to the class in session. Please do not take photos at any time in the classroom environment.

Please remember that during the school day, the teacher is responsible for the care of all children. Please do not engage her in conversation or discussion at the classroom door. The teacher's responsibility during class time is to the children in the classroom.

REPORTING AND PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Casa progress reports will be sent home on the last day of school. Elementary reports will be sent home at the start of February and the last day of school. Elementary interim reports are also sent home in mid November.

Conferences for Casa parents are scheduled at the beginning of December, in the spring, and as requested by the parent. Elementary conferences are held at the end of January and again in the spring as requested by the parent.

You are welcome to arrange a time with the teachers at any time during the year to

discuss your child's progress. If you have specific concerns, please speak to the teacher and make an appointment for a mutually convenient time to meet in person.

IN CLASS VISITS

Parents or friends with a special talent, career or hobby are encouraged to share their knowledge through a presentation to the children. Tips on a variety of resources available for use in the classroom are always accepted. We also enjoy having parents bring, send or present pictures or objects relevant to other cultures or ways of life. Please feel free to discuss this with your child's teacher.

CHILDCARE TAX RECEIPTS

A child care tax receipt will be issued in February for payments made during the previous calendar year. For the elementary program, a child care tax receipt is issued for the extended care programs only.

DRESS

Please mark all clothes and footwear which your child wears to school with his/her name. All students are to have a pair of indoor running shoes (not crocs, dress/party shoes/slippers) to be left at school all year especially for physical education. All clothing should be easy to take off and put on by the child, since we encourage the children to dress and undress themselves (i.e. not a pullover sweater over top of difficult snaps or belts).

Casa children are to have a complete change of clothing, appropriate for the season, which must be left at school. Socks, underwear, pants and shirt should be included and all extra clothing must be marked with your child's name. Children have a bin/cubby, labelled with their name, for storing their change of clothing in case of an accident in the washroom or a spill. If dirty clothes are sent home, replacement clothes must be brought in the next school day. Please also send in a plastic bag for soiled clothing.

Elementary students are to keep their gym clothing in their school tote bag at school. Clothes will be sent home to be laundered on a regular basis.

Children are to dress according to the weather conditions each day, as activities take place outdoors throughout the year. We recommend removing drawstrings from clothing to minimize all choking hazards. Necklaces and dangling earrings get lost easily and also create a safety issue.

We expect students to dress appropriately while attending school and on school trips. The following types of clothing are prohibited:

- T-shirts depicting violence or that could be considered insulting
- Torn, dirty or explicit clothing

A lost and found box is located in the main foyer of each school location. Please check periodically for articles of clothing, which may have gone missing.

CLASS LISTS

We will not release compiled class lists at any time without written consent.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Books pertaining to the Montessori approach to education are available through our Resource Library located in the main foyer and hallway. These provide a useful background to help you understand your child's classroom experiences and to aid in applying Montessori principles in the home. Books must be signed out and we ask that you adhere to a 3-week borrowing time.

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

The monthly newsletter is an important communication tool between the school and families. It contains pertinent information on classroom activities, upcoming events, administrative updates and other news. It is very important to read this newsletter because it is the primary tool for communication within the school community. For scheduled activities during the year, you can find the monthly calendar on our website www.kwmontessorischool.com.

BIRTHDAYS

In a Montessori classroom, birthdays are used to illustrate change and the passage of time. We have a special in-class activity to celebrate birthdays and we ask your co-operation in providing photos of your child at birth and each year after. On the back of each photo, please label your child's age. We ask that you send the photos a few days before your child's birthday.

Children enjoy sharing a special snack with their friends on their birthday. We ask that you send a nutritious treat but we do allow 'healthier' cookies, plain or lightly frosted cupcakes, muffins, Timbits, fruit, vegetables or cheese; **however, please do not bring in a full cake to be cut and distributed.** Candles, balloons, and piñatas are not permitted and loot bags are discouraged.

If you wish to hand out invitations to individuals, we ask that you do not distribute them at school. **We will not help to distribute invitations unless they are given to the entire class.**

TOYS

Many times, small, interesting objects find their way home. Please return any small objects to the school that may come home, even if they seem to be of no value. We ask that you return them to your child's teacher.

Toys from home are not permitted. They present a distraction and frequently get lost or broken. Children are also not to bring toys to Before or After Care programs. We do welcome special objects from home. Some examples are: special pictures, books, music, natural objects, personal collections, art objects, and artifacts.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

In our extended-care program, your child will have an opportunity to play, socialize and participate in a variety of activities. Children enrolled in our extended day program bring the following on a daily basis:

- appropriate clothing for the day's weather
- Non-catered students must bring a snack

Monthly and occasional costs are listed on tuition and fees page of our website. Occasional care will be billed at the end of each month and is due upon receipt. We ask that, when possible, parents give the school as much advance notice as possible so the necessary staffing arrangements can be made as we may not always be able to accommodate your request due to our required teacher/child ratios.

Before school care is available from no earlier than 8:00 a.m. until 8:45 a.m. when the children go into their own class. After school care is available from 3:30 p.m. until and no later than 5:30 p.m. All students not picked up by 3:45 p.m. from their own class will be taken to "The Extended Care Program" and a charge will apply. Students who arrive at school before 8:45 a.m. will be taken to "The Extended Care Program" and a charge per child will apply.

We ask that you please be prompt. A late charge will be billed when a child is picked up from the school later than 5:30 p.m. Please refer to the tuition and fees information on our website for updated late fees.

PARENT EDUCATION

Parent education about the Montessori philosophy is very important. Throughout the year we present various opportunities for parents to learn and engage with the school community. Notices will be sent home with the children prior to any event. We encourage everyone to make it a priority for one or both parents to attend.

As the focus of any education evening is to provide a wealth of information for the parents, you are asked not to bring children with you. If childcare will be offered at any event, advance notice will be given. We welcome any topic suggestions for future parent information sessions.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The school counts on the active involvement of its parents, so we appreciate and welcome your contribution, whatever form it takes (attending Open Houses and parent information evenings, fundraising and special event planning, introducing the class to your profession/special talent, field trip assistance, etc.).

PRIVACY STATEMENT

The school is committed to protecting the privacy of our students, parents and staff. We limit the collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information to purposes appropriate to fulfilling our mission and for an effective employment relationship with our employees. The school makes reasonable efforts to have in place appropriate physical, electronic and managerial controls to prevent unauthorized access, maintain data security and use the information correctly.

Personal information is never shared with any organization outside The K-W Montessori School unless express permission has been received from a parent, or as may be required by law. The Director has overall responsibility for compliance with our Privacy Policy. All staff members are required to keep confidential general and personal information according to our Privacy Policy. Violations of our policy may result in disciplinary actions. In keeping with our Privacy Policy, we ask that you do not use your personal cameras or cell phones to take photographs of any of our students during field trips or on the premise of KWMS unless it is a special family event such as the Christmas concert or end of the year picnic.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

STUDENT CONDUCT

Every student has the right to work, learn and play free from the disruption of others. Students at the Casa level are introduced to appropriate social behaviour. Being made aware of proper social interaction helps students learn to respect each other's need for privacy, space and consideration. The greater the responsibility shown by the children, the more freedom they are able to exercise.

At the elementary level students are expected to have respect for themselves and the school. They are expected to show appropriate conduct and be courteous and considerate to other students and staff. Students and staff share the responsibility for a clean and secure environment and must treat school property with respect including the property of other students. Students should be on time and prepared for each class.

In order to protect each student's right to learn in a safe environment, The K-W Montessori School will not tolerate bullying in any form.

BEHAVIOUR DIRECTION

In the classroom and on the playground, conflict resolution, activity redirection and limit setting are used as the first form of discipline. These are highly effective behaviour direction tools. If however, these methods are ineffective, discipline must be appropriate to the development level of the child and should assist the child to learn appropriate behaviour. A disruptive child may be asked to take some time to collect and calm himself in order to re-establish his own cycle of activity. The teacher will discreetly talk to the child so that the child learns to take responsibility for his/her actions. On rare occasions, staff may decide to temporarily remove a child from the class or the playground and send him or her to the school office. Most situations can be resolved in the classroom by teachers and staff however, it may sometimes be necessary to involve parents.

Parents should enforce KW Montessori School rules of behaviour at all times when visiting the school or when participating in school activities. The success of all behaviour direction efforts of the school rely on the cooperation between staff and our students' families.

The KW Montessori School prohibits deliberate, dangerous, severe misbehaviour (i.e. punching, hitting, biting, destruction of property, profanity, threats, socially unacceptable behaviour). The Directress/Director will immediately intervene and, if necessary, remove the child from the situation to assure everyone's safety. Such repeated misbehaviour will be dealt with by the school in the following fashion, at the discretion of the Principal/Supervisor:

- Teachers will keep a record of the ongoing difficulty and discuss with the teaching team.
- Teachers meet with the parents/guardians
- If teachers feel the problem is serious enough to merit professional assistance (i.e. behavioural assessment by qualified consultants), then the teachers

involved and the Principal/Supervisor will meet together to decide what recommendations, can be made to the parents

- Phone parent/guardian to pick up their child
- Suspension from school
- Withdrawal from the program

*All meetings will be documented and kept on file.

Parental Issues and Concerns Policy

(As required by CCEYA)

PARENTAL CONCERNS

General

The KWMS supports positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, and staff. The KWMS strives to foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible. Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

If parents have a particular concern about their child's progress or individual class program, please discuss this with the teacher directly. If after speaking with your child's teacher, there are still some areas of concern, please do not hesitate to speak with the principal/supervisor. If deemed necessary, the Principal/Supervisor will meet with the teacher(s) involved to address the area of concern. A response to the concern will be provided within 24 hours. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved. At the K-W Montessori School, we seek to do what is best for everyone, parents and children alike.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

The KWMS maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childremsaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Emergency closing of K-W Montessori School due to inclement weather will follow procedures similar to those of the Public and Separate School Boards, based on our opinion of the situation. If the local weather stations indicate conditions that are detrimental to the safety of our staff and students, then our school will be closed. Please go to the school website and look for email updates for school closure.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

- In the event that an emergency evacuation of KWMS is required, the students will be taken beside the school to the Lancaster Wellness Pharmacy conference room at 493 Lancaster St W, Kitchener.
- A sign will be left at the school specifying the location of the place of safety. The Principal or designate will call 911, if deemed necessary and ensure that all students and staff have safely left the premises before leaving, taking the keys for the school.
- The Principal/Supervisor will provide supervision of the entire school.
- The Directress will line up all students, take them outside and then take attendance to ensure all children are present. The assistant teacher will check hallways and washrooms for any child not in line. Teachers will take their attendance book, emergency files, floor plans and building keys, first aid kit and the before/after care bag.
- Each classroom Directress is responsible for the students in their classroom and ensures appropriate supervision. Each classroom assistant will be available to assist any student(s) in their classroom requiring extra assistance with special medical/mobility needs. Assistant teachers will provide additional support to those students or adults with mobility and/or medical concerns (i.e. Anaphylaxis-Epi-pen, Asthma-inhalers, Diabetes-insulin, etc.).
- In the event of evacuation those students/adults unable to be safely evacuated will be guided to the multi-purpose room with one Casa assistant teacher and await further instructions.
- Teachers will take attendance once outside and a safe distance from the building. The students will remain at the emergency shelter until the school is deemed safe to return to or if necessary, until parents or guardians are contacted by the Directress or Principal/Supervisor and arrive to pick up their children. Please refer to the Crisis Response Manual for further information, available upon request.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the event that an emergency evacuation of KWMS is required, the students will be taken beside the school to the Lancaster Wellness Pharmacy conference room at 493 Lancaster St W, Kitchener. A sign will be left at the school specifying the location of the place of safety. The Principal or designate will call 911, if deemed necessary and ensure that all students and staff have safely left the premises before leaving, taking the keys for the school.

The students will remain at the emergency shelter until the school is deemed safe to return to or if necessary, until parents or guardians are contacted by the Directress or Principal/Supervisor and arrive to pick up their children. Please refer to the Crisis Response Manual for further information, available upon request.

Role of Principal or Designate

- The Principal/Supervisor will provide supervision of the entire school.

Role of Directress/Director

- The Directress/Director will line up all students, take them outside and then take attendance to ensure all children are present.
- The Directress/Director will take their attendance book, emergency files, floor plans and building keys, first aid kit and the before/after care bag.
- Each classroom Directress/Director is responsible for the students in their classroom and ensures appropriate supervision.
- Classroom Directress/Director will take attendance once outside and a safe distance from the building.

Role of Classroom Assistants

- The Classroom Assistant will check hallways and washrooms for any child not in line.
- Each classroom assistant must be available to assist any student(s) in their classroom requiring extra assistance with special medical/mobility needs.
- Classroom Assistants will provide additional support to those students or adults with mobility and/or medical concerns (i.e. Anaphylaxis-Epi-pen, Asthma-inhalers, Diabetes-insulin, etc.).
- In the event of evacuation those students/adults unable to be safely evacuated will be guided to the multi-purpose room with one Casa Classroom Assistant and await further instructions.

POST EMERGENCY- SUPPORT-RECOVERY

Once the emergency is over and the facility has been cleared by the responsibility party (i.e. police, fire, health) KWMS will resume normal operations as soon as possible. In some instances, it may be necessary to relocate to a temporary facility. In this instance parents will be updated by phone and/or mass email, and also by notice on our main entrance door. The Ministry of Education will be notified of a temporary change of address, caterers will be notified of a change in delivery and our insurance provider will be notified.

Dependent upon the type of emergency experienced, some students and staff members may suffer some post emergency distress. KWMS is committed to the health and wellbeing of all students and staff members, as such if it is felt to be required, a counsellor will be provided to address the distress and concerns of students and staff as a group. If additional counselling is required staff members are eligible to seek medical treatment through The K-W Montessori School extended health care program. Students and parents requiring additional medical treatment will be referred to a public facility.

Once the emergency is declared over a debriefing will be held with administration and responsible authorities (i.e. police, fire, health) to implement procedures to minimize the risk of such an emergency reoccurring and if required, to determine when normal operations will start at KWMS facility (if temporary facility is utilized).

This debriefing will be shared at an all parents/staff meeting along with representatives if required from (i.e. police, fire, health) at the earliest possible time (to be determined) and a written note will go to parents.

Supervision Policy for Volunteers and Placement Students

General

Students and volunteers will always be supervised by an employee and will never be permitted to be alone with any child or group of children who receive child care.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Licensee

The Licensee will ensure that Parent and Staff handbook is reviewed with all volunteers and student placements prior to the person(s) being accepted into any work-related position with KWMS. The volunteers/students will then review any policies annually if applicable to their placement. The Principal/Supervisor will:

1. Provide an orientation for volunteers and students
2. Ensure that volunteers and student teachers are monitored on an ongoing basis.
3. Record any observed occurrences on the Observation Feedback Form

All volunteers and students are expected to follow the same guidelines as staff members. The classroom Directress is directly responsible for the supervision of any classroom volunteers/student placements, with the classroom assistant as designate. At no time will a volunteer or student be left alone with the task of student supervision. In addition, at no time will a person under the age of eighteen years be placed in a supervisory position.

All staff members are expected to assist volunteers and student placements in understanding the Montessori philosophy and mentor them in student and classroom management as well as teaching skills.

MEDICAL/MEDICATION POLICY

A medical history must be submitted to the school by the child's first day of attendance. This is a requirement of the Waterloo Regional Health Unit and is strictly monitored by them. Returning students' medical forms are on file and a new one is not needed unless there are changes to your child's medical needs/status. Please inform the school, in writing, of any updated inoculations that your child may have received. Any student requiring an immunization exempt form needs a signed affidavit whether for medical or religious reasons. Any change with your child's health throughout the year must be provided to the school in writing. If your child has a particular medical problem which could occur during school hours (such as asthma, epilepsy, food or drug allergy), it is essential that the Directress/Director or administration be notified immediately in writing and that the appropriate paperwork is completed

Whenever possible, parents are encouraged to administer drugs or medications at home. Prescription and over-the-counter medications for acute, symptomatic treatment will only be administered to a child where a parent of the child has given written authorization to do so by completing the school's Authorization for Medication Administration Consent forms must also be filled out before any prescribed medication will be administered to a child (penicillin, puffers for asthma, epi-pen, etc.). The medication must be given directly to your child's teacher (not left in your child's lunch bag or backpack). The medication must be in the original labelled container with the prescription clearly printed and clearly identified with your child's name. The consent form you signed at the time of registration will be used to administer any non-prescribed medication.

All drug or medication containers must be clearly labelled with:

- The child's full name;
- The name of the drug or medication;
- The dosage of the drug or medication;
- Instructions for storage;
- Instructions for administration;
- The date of purchase of the medication for prescription medications; and
- The expiry date of the medication, if applicable.

Drug and Medication Handling and Storage:

All drugs or medications will be kept inaccessible to children at all times in a locked container or area (e.g. in a refrigerator, cabinet, cupboard or drawer).

There are exceptions for emergency medications as outlined below:

- Emergency medications will never be locked up and will be made easily accessible to all staff while being kept out of the reach of children, including during outdoor play periods and off-premises activities.

- o Where a child has written permission to carry their emergency allergy or asthma medication, precautions will be taken to ensure that these medications are not accessible to other children (e.g., in cubbies or backpacks that are unattended).
- o All staff, students and volunteers will be made aware of the location of children's emergency medications at all times.
- o Emergency medications will be brought on all field trips, evacuations and off-site activities.
- o Any topical products or drugs/medication in the first aid kit will not be used on children to clean or treat wounds.
- o All drugs and medications for children will be stored in accordance with the instructions for storage on the label.
- o Where drugs or medications are past their expiry date, they will be returned to the parent of the child, where possible, and this will be documented on the Authorization for Medication Administration Form.
- o Any drugs or medications remaining after the treatment period will be returned to a parent of the child which will be documented on the Authorization for Medication Administration Form.

Medication Record-Keeping

Records of medication administration will be completed using the "Authorization for drug/medication Administration Form" every time medications are administered. Completed records will be kept in the child's file for 3 years.

ANAPHYLACTIC POLICY

Purpose

The KW Montessori School has an Anaphylactic Policy. This policy provides consistency with other school policies and reduces the health and safety risks for children with severe allergies.

Definition

Anaphylaxis (*anna - fill -axis*) is a serious allergic reaction. It can be life-threatening. Food is the most common cause of anaphylaxis, but insect stings, medicine, latex, or exercise can also cause a reaction. The most common food allergens are peanuts, tree nuts, seafood, egg and milk products.

Anaphylaxis affects multiple body systems: skin, upper and lower respiratory, gastrointestinal and cardiovascular. Anaphylactic shock is an explosive overreaction of the body's immune system to a triggering agent (allergen). It can be characterized by swelling, difficulty breathing, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, circulatory collapse, coma and death.

Symptoms of anaphylactic shock tend to develop rapidly although the initial presentation can be delayed and/or deceptively mild. The victim may become uneasy, upset and red in the face. They may also develop a rapid heartbeat, prickling and itchiness in the skin, throbbing in the ears, sneezing, coughing and difficulty breathing. Shock may then follow, in which blood vessels become leaky, blood pressure falls and the person becomes cold, clammy and faint.

Policy

This policy is composed of four components:

- 1) A strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents
- 2) A communication plan for staff, parents, students and caregivers
- 3) Development of a child's individual plan and emergency procedure
- 4) Training for staff and caregivers

1. Strategy to Reduce Risk

Individuals at risk must learn to avoid specific triggers. Upon admittance to the school of a child with a known allergen, the school will take the following steps to minimize the risk of exposure. KWMS is a nut-aware school and no foods/products containing any nuts will be allowed.

- o The list of allergens will be reviewed when a child with a life-threatening allergy enrolls in a class as well as food handling measures
- o All parents of children in a classroom with an allergic child will be advised of the potential allergic reaction and be asked to comply with measures that will reduce the risk of exposure. This may include the banning of a specific food from the classroom or school.
- o If the allergen is to a food/food ingredient, the child will be allowed to eat only those products provided from their home unless the product is packaged, labelled and approved by the parent.
- o Where food is provided from home, parents will check food labels before sending lunches. Student lunch boxes must be clearly labelled on the outside with the child's name.
- o All children will wash their hands before and after meals and snacks
- o The affected child will be asked not to share any food or utensils with other children
- o The affected child should not place food directly on a table but rather use a napkin or clean mat or paper plate
- o Staff will check children's lunches for causative agents and if found your child will not be allowed to eat that food. You will be contacted immediately.
- o If causative agents could be used in sensory play or crafts, these will be removed from the class
- o Specific measures will be put in place if a child should be at risk for other allergens such as latex, chemicals, fabrics, bee stings, etc.

2. Communication Plan

- o Upon enrolment the parent/guardian informs the school on the registration form of any medical concerns and the risk of an anaphylactic reaction. If the child has medical concerns the parent/guardian fills out a medical permission form outlining in detail the concern and appropriate medical response to be provided by staff. If after enrolment a child develops an allergy, the parent must inform the Principal/Supervisor and provide information on the medical permission form.
- o An allergy list will be posted in the food storage/preparation room and in the child's classroom. An allergy list will also be provided to Before/Aftercare

staff. The allergy list will be revised when a new student with allergies enrolls at the school

- This policy is reviewed with all new staff members upon hire and again annually with all staff members just prior to the start of the school year. All new parents to the school are informed of the policy during orientation.
- The individual plan for children at risk is posted in food eating areas, and in the staff room at all locations. This also includes a listing of potential causative agents for each affected child.

3. Individual Plan

- In conjunction with the child's parent/guardian an individual plan will be put in place including information on emergency procedures. This plan will include:
 - a photograph of the child
 - description of the child's allergy and causative agents
 - monitoring and avoidance strategies
 - signs and symptoms of anaphylactic shock
 - action to be taken by the staff
 - permission to take action
 - emergency contact information
 - dosage, type and expiry date of the epinephrine auto injector (Epi-pen)

4. Training

Where a child has an anaphylactic allergy, staff (including student on placement) are provided with training from a medical professional or a parent on the procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer medication. This training will be reviewed yearly or upon any changes to a child's individual medical plan.

Summary of Required Health Forms

Concern	Name of Form
Child with an Anaphylactic Allergy	<input type="checkbox"/> Anaphylactic Training & Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Anaphylactic Emergency Plan
Child with Medical Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Individualized Plan for Child with Medical Needs

Waiting List Policy

General

KW Montessori School (KWMS) will strive to accommodate all requests for the registration of a child. Where the maximum capacity of a program has been reached and spaces are unavailable for new children to be enrolled, the waiting list procedures set out below will be followed. No fee will be charged to parents for placing a child on the waiting list.

Procedures

Receiving a Request to Place a Child on the Waiting List

KWMS will receive parental requests to place children on a waiting list by means of a completed Inquiry Form. Once the Inquiry Form is received, parents wishing to be placed on the registration waitlist must book a tour with the school. Children must attend the tour with the parent(s). Once the tour is complete, a spot on the registration waitlist will be confirmed. KWMS will place a child on the waitlist in chronological order, based on the date and time that the request was received, along with a completed tour.

Determining Placement Priority when a Space Becomes Available

When space becomes available in the program, priority will be given to siblings of children currently enrolled and children of staff. Once these children have been placed, other children on the waiting list will be prioritized based on program room availability and the chronology in which the child was placed on the waiting list.

Offering an Available Space

Parents of children on the waiting list will be notified via email that a space has become available in their requested program. Parents will be provided a timeframe in which a response is required before the next child on the waiting list will be offered the space. Where a parent has not responded within the given timeframe, KWMS will contact the parent of the next child on the waiting list to offer them the space.

Responding to Parents who inquire about their Child's Placement on the Waiting List

Parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's place on the waiting list can contact the administration. Administration will respond to parent inquiries and provide the child's current position on the list and an estimated likelihood of the child being offered a space in the program.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waiting list will be provided to parents.

Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE POLICY

Definition:

KW Montessori School takes pride in delivering services that promote the health, safety and well-being of your children. We are accountable to parents and the Ministry in demonstrating that our services are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies. All staff and volunteers (including student placements) will review policies and procedures annually or when any necessary updates/changes are made to policies and procedures during a school year.

Under the new Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) and in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, centres are required to report any 'Serious Occurrence' that happens in any licensed facility. A Serious Occurrence is defined as:

Ontario Regulation 137/15

- a. the death of a child who received child care at a home child care premises or child care centre, whether it occurs on or off the premises,
- b. abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre,
- c. a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a home child care premises or child care centre,
- d. an incident where a child who is receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or
- e. an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a home child care premises or child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the home child care premises or child care centre.

Reporting a Serious Occurrence

- Staff will notify the Principal, or designate of a serious occurrence as soon as they become aware of the incident.
- All serious occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education in the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) within 24 hours of the Principal, or designate becoming aware of the occurrence.
- Identifying information such as children or staff names will not be included in the serious occurrence reports.
- If CCLS cannot be accessed (e.g. where CCLS or an internet connection is unavailable), the Principal, or designate will notify the program advisor (PA) assigned to the licence by email or by telephone within 24 hours of becoming aware of the occurrence. A serious occurrence report will be submitted in CCLS as soon as the system can be accessed.
- Where a Ministry of Education PA cannot be reached by telephone, a voicemail message will be left to notify the PA of the incident.
- All updates to serious occurrences will be reported in CCLS through update reports until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education. Where the Ministry of Education requests updates to a serious occurrence in CCLS, these will be provided as soon as possible through update reports.
- Serious occurrences reported to the Ministry of Education will be documented in the daily written record.

Posting a Serious Occurrence Summary (Notification Form)

- Within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious occurrence, the Principal, or designate will complete a Serious Occurrence Notification Form in either CCLS or using the form available in Appendix A.
- The form will provide a summary of the serious occurrence and of any action taken by the school.
- The summary will not include identifying information (e.g. names and ages of children, staff, or program rooms) and will contain gender-neutral language.
- The summary will be posted at the school in a place that is visible and accessible to parents for a minimum of 10 business days, regardless of the serious occurrence type and the status of any related investigation.
- All serious occurrence summaries will be retained for 3 years from the date they are created or last updated (whichever date is most recent).

Note: Information regarding outbreaks must only be reported in CCLS as a serious occurrence if the local public health department has deemed it an outbreak.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

- If any person, including a person who performs professional duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered, or is at risk to suffer, physical or emotional harm or sexual exploitation or molestation inflicted by the person having charge of the child, the person will report the suspicion directly to a children's aid society (CAS).
- Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be, in need of protection must make the report directly to a children's aid society. The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his/her behalf.
- A report to a children's aid society must be made for all situations where a child is, or may be, in need of protection, no matter where the alleged abuse or neglect took place.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Purpose

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

KW Montessori School will ensure that any child enrolled in our program is only released to the child's parent/guardian or another authorized adult (as listed on the registration form or in writing to the school). KW Montessori will not release any child from care without supervision.

Arrival

Upon arrival, a student will be greeted by program staff at the school door/classroom door. If a child has not arrived as expected and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message/email, or have previously advised staff), the staff in the classroom must inform the administrator/supervisor on site. The school will commence contacting the child's parent/guardian (by phone/email) no later than 10:00 am in order to confirm the child's whereabouts.

Dismissal

Staff shall only release a child to the child's parent/guardian or other authorized adult. The parent/guardian will have identified other authorized adults on the registration form or by submitting the authorization in writing at another time. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual), they will

- confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
- where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

When a child has not been picked up at the end of program/as expected, staff will contact the parent/guardian by phone and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall begin to contact the emergency contact listed on the registration form, as well as any other authorized individual.

Glossary of Key Montessori Terms

(as seen on <https://montessori-ami.org/>)

The Montessori approach, much like any science, has its own set of vocabulary and terminology. Montessorians share a very specific set of brief references that evoke the world of the child as described by Maria Montessori.

Absorbent Mind

A mind able to absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly. Montessori said the child from birth to six years has an absorbent mind.

Adaptation

Related to the idea of an absorbent mind (Haines, 1993) is a special power of the young child that can be called the power of adaptation. This power is a process whereby the young child uses the environment to develop and, in so doing, becomes a part of that environment. The young child absorbs the culture of her time and place, taking in all the spirit, the customs, the ambitions/aspirations and attitudes of a society simply by living in that society.

Analysis of Movement

A technique used by Montessori teachers. The adult, when showing a complex action to a child, breaks it down into its parts and shows one step at a time, executing each movement slowly and exactly. The action thus becomes a sequence of simple movements and the child has a greater chance of success when 'given the liberty to make use of them.' (Montessori, 1966, p. 108)

Children's House

The English name for Montessori's Casa dei Bambini (Italian). A place for children from 3-6 years to live and grow. Everything necessary for optimal human development is included in a safe and secure environment.

Classification

Sorting. Allocating or distributing according to common characteristics. The young child engages in classification activities because the process is essential for the construction of the intellect. The Montessori classroom offers many opportunities for classification.

Concentration

Recognising that 'the longer one does attend to a topic the more mastery of it one has,' the great American psychologist William James remarked, 'An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.' (1892/1985, p. 95) Montessori, who knew of James, set out to do just that. She believed that if environments could be prepared with 'objects which correspond to...formative tendencies' (1949/1967, p. 169) the child's energy and interest would become focused on that aspect of the environment which corresponded to the developmental need.

Concrete to Abstract

A progression both logical and developmentally appropriate. The child is introduced first to a concrete material that embodies an abstract idea such as size or colour. Given hands-on experience, the child's mind grasps the idea inherent in the material and

forms an abstraction. Only as the child develops, is she gradually able to comprehend the same idea in symbolic form.

Control of Error

A way of providing instant feedback. Every Montessori activity provides the child with some way of assessing his own progress. This puts the control in the hands of the learner and protects the young child's self-esteem and self-motivation. Control of error is an essential aspect of auto-education.

Coordination of Movement

One of the major accomplishments of early childhood. Through the child's own effort, she wills herself to refine her muscular coordination and consequently acquires increasingly higher levels of independent functioning. Because of this developmental need, children are drawn to activities that involve movement and especially to those which demand a certain level of exactitude and precision.

Creativity/Imagination

Imagination involves the forming of a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses. Creativity is a product of the imagination and results from the mental recombining of imagined ideas in new and inventive ways. Both are dependent on mental imagery formed through sensorial experience.

Cycle of Activity

Little children, when engaged in an activity which interests them, will repeat it many times and for no apparent reason, stopping suddenly only when the inner need which compelled the child to activity has been satisfied. To allow for the possibility of long and concentrated work cycles, Montessori advocates a three-hour uninterrupted work period.

Development of the Will

The ability to will, or choose to do something with conscious intent, develops gradually during the first phase of life and is strengthened through practice. The Montessori environment offers many opportunities for the child to choose. Willpower, or self-control, results from the many little choices of daily life in a Montessori school.

Deviations

Behaviour commonly seen in children that is the result of some obstacle to normal development. Such behaviour may be commonly understood as negative (a timid child, a destructive child, etc.) or positive (a passive, quiet child). Both positive and negative deviations disappear once the child begins to concentrate on a piece of work freely chosen.

Discipline from Within

Self-discipline. The discipline in a well-run Montessori classroom is not a result of the teacher's control or of rewards or punishments. Its source comes from within each individual child, who can control his or her own actions and make positive choices regarding personal behaviour. Self-discipline is directly related to development of the will.

Exercises of Practical Life

One of the four areas of activities of the Montessori prepared environment. The

exercises of Practical Life resemble the simple work of life in the home: sweeping, dusting, washing dishes, etc. These purposeful activities help the child adapt to his new community, learn self-control and begin to see himself as a contributing party of the social unit. His intellect grows as he works with his hands; his personality becomes integrated as body and mind function as a unit.

False Fatigue

A phenomenon observed in Children's Houses around the world-often at approximately 10 a.m. The children seem to lose interest in work, their behaviour becomes disorderly and the noise level rises. It may appear as if the children are tired. However, if the Montessori Educator understands this is simply false fatigue, they will return to work on their own and their work will be at an even higher level than before.

Grace and Courtesy

An aspect of Practical Life. Little lessons which demonstrate positive social behaviour help the young child adapt to life in a group and arm her with knowledge of socially acceptable behaviour: practical information, useful both in and out of school.

Help from Periphery

The periphery is that part of the child that comes into contact with external reality. The child takes in impressions through the senses and through movement. Help from the periphery means presenting objects and activities in such a way so as to evoke purposeful movement on the part of the child. 'We never give to the eye more than we give to the hand.' (Standing, 1957, p. 237)

Human Tendencies

A central tenet of Montessori philosophy is that human beings exhibit certain predispositions that are universal, spanning age, cultural and racial barriers; they have existed since the dawn of the species and are probably evolutionary in origin. 'Montessori stresses the need to serve those special traits that have proved to be tendencies of Man throughout his history.' (Mario Montessori, 1966, p. 21)

Independence

Not depending on another, with various shades of meaning.' (OED, p. 836) Normal developmental milestones such as weaning, walking, talking, etc. can be seen as a series of events which enable the child to achieve increased individuation, autonomy and self-regulation. Throughout the four planes of development, the child and young adult continuously seek to become more independent. It is as if the child says, Help me to help myself.

Indirect Preparation

The way nature has of preparing the intelligence. In every action, there is a conscious interest. Through this interest, the mind is being prepared for something in the future. For example, a young child will enjoy the putting together of various triangular shapes, totally unaware that because of this work his mind will later be more accepting of geometry. Also called remote preparation. the deeper educational purpose of many Montessori activities is remote in time.

Indirect Presentation

Because of the absorbent nature of the young child's mind, every action or event can be seen as a lesson. It is understood that children learn by watching other children work or

by overseeing a lesson given to another. In the same way, they quickly absorb the behaviour patterns and the language used by the family, the neighborhood children and even TV.

Isolation of a Difficulty

Before giving a presentation, the Montessori teacher analyses the activity she wants to show to the child. Procedures or movements that might prove troublesome are isolated and taught to the child separately. For example, holding and snipping with scissors, a simple movement, is shown before cutting curved or zigzag lines; folding cloths is shown before table washing, an activity requiring folding. A task should neither be so hard that it is overwhelming, nor so easy that it is boring.

Language Appreciation

From the very first days in the Montessori classroom, children are given the opportunity to listen to true stories about known subjects, told with great expression. Songs, poems and rhymes are a part of the daily life of the class. The teacher models the art of conversation and respectfully listens to her young students. Looking at beautiful books with lovely, realistic pictures is also a part of language appreciation.

Learning Explosions

Human development is often not slow and steady; acquisitions seem to arrive suddenly, almost overnight, and with explosive impact. Such learning explosions are the sudden outward manifestation of a long process of internal growth. For example, the explosion of spoken language around two years of age is the result of many months of inner preparation and mental development.

Mathematical Mind

All babies are born with mathematical minds, that is, they have a propensity to learn things which enhance their ability to be exact and orderly, to observe, compare, and classify. Humans naturally tend to calculate, measure, reason, abstract, imagine and create. But this vital part of intelligence must be given help and direction for it to develop and function. If mathematics is not part of the young child's experience, his subconscious mind will not be accepting of it at a later date.

Maximum Effort

Children seem to enjoy difficult work, work which tests their abilities and provides a sense of their growing power. They exult in giving their maximum effort. For example, a tiny child will struggle to carry a tray with juice glasses or push a heavy wheelbarrow whereas school-age children, if allowed to make up their own problems will prefer to sink their teeth into a challenging equation $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4... + 10)2$ rather than drill on $3 + 5 = ...$ and $6 + 2 = ...$.

Mixed Ages

One of the hallmarks of the Montessori method is that children of mixed ages work together in the same class. Age groupings are based on developmental planes. Children from 3-6 years of age are together in the Children's House; 6-9 year olds share the lower elementary and the upper elementary is made up of 9-12 year olds. Because the work is individual, children progress at their own pace; there is cooperation rather than competition between the ages.

Normalisation

If young children are repeatedly able to experience periods of spontaneous concentration on a piece of work freely chosen, they will begin to display the characteristics of normal development: a love of work, an attachment to reality, and a love of silence and working alone. Normalised children are happier children: enthusiastic, generous, and helpful to others. They make constructive work choices and their work reflects their level of development.

Obedience

Obedience is an act of will and develops gradually, showing itself 'unexpectedly at the end of a long process of maturation.' (Montessori, 1967, p. 257) While this inner development is going on, little children may obey occasionally, but be completely unable to obey consistently. As their will develops through the exercise of free choice, children begin to have the self-discipline or self-control necessary for obedience.

Points of Interest

Montessori realised that if children spent too long a time on a complex task or failed to master the necessary details, the exercise would cease to interest them. Therefore, she suggested that points of interest be interspersed throughout each activity. These points guide the child toward his or her goal and stimulate repetition and interest by offering immediate feedback, or what Montessori called control of error. The child's performance becomes refined through trial and error, the points of interest acting as signposts along the path to success.

Prepared Environment

The Montessori classroom is an environment prepared by the adult for children. It contains all the essentials for optimal development but nothing superfluous. Attributes of a prepared environment include order and reality, beauty and simplicity. Everything is child-sized to enhance the children's independent functioning. A trained adult and a large enough group of children of mixed ages make up a vital part of the prepared environment.

Presentation

The adult in a Montessori environment does not teach in the traditional sense. Rather she shows the child how to use the various objects and then leaves her free to explore and experiment. This act of showing is called a presentation. To be effective, it must be done slowly and exactly, step by step, and with a minimum of words.

Psychic Embryo

The first three years of life is a period of mental creation, just as the 9 months in utero is a period of physical creation. The brain awaits experience in the environment to flesh out the genetic blueprint. Since so much mental development occurs after birth, Montessori called the human infant a psychic embryo.

Repetition

The young child's work is very different from the adult's. When an adult works, he sets out to accomplish some goal and stops working when the object has been achieved. A child, however, does not work to accomplish an external goal but rather an internal one. Consequently, she will repeat an activity until the inner goal is accomplished. The unconscious urge to repeat helps the child to coordinate a movement or acquire some ability.

Sensitive Periods

Young children experience transient periods of sensibility, and are intrinsically motivated or urged to activity by specific sensitivities. A child in a sensitive period is believed to exhibit spontaneous concentration when engaged in an activity that matches a particular sensitivity. For example, children in a sensitive period for order will be drawn to activities that involve ordering. They will be observed choosing such activities and becoming deeply concentrated, sometimes repeating the activity over and over, without external reward or encouragement. Young children are naturally drawn towards those specific aspects of the environment which meet their developmental needs.

Sensorial Materials

The sensorial materials were created to help young children in the process of creating and organizing their intelligence. Each scientifically designed material isolates a quality found in the world such as colour, size, shape, etc. and this isolation focuses the attention on this one aspect. The child, through repeated manipulation of these objects, comes to form clear ideas or abstractions. What could not be explained by words, the child learns by experience working with the sensorial materials.

Simple to Complex

A principle used in the sequence of presentations in a Montessori classroom. Children are first introduced to a concept or idea in its simplest form. As they progress and become capable of making more complex connections, they are eventually able to handle information that is less isolated.

Socialization

'The process by which the individual acquires the knowledge and dispositions that enable him to participate as an effective member of a social group and a given social order.' (Osterkorn, 1980, p. 12) 'Optimal social learning takes place when the children are at different ages.' (Hellbr_gge, 1979, p. 14)

Sound Games

Many children know the alphabet but have not analysed the sounds in words nor are they aware that words are made up of separate sounds (phonemic awareness). From the age of two (or as soon as the child is speaking fluently), sound games can make them aware of the sounds in words. In England, they use the nursery game "I Spy." The sound of the letter and not the letter name is pronounced.

Three-Hour Work Cycle

Through years of observation around the world, Montessori came to understand that children, when left in freedom, displayed a distinct work cycle which was so predictable it could even be graphed. This cycle, with two peaks and one valley, lasted approximately three hours. In Montessori schools children have three hours of open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat to their own satisfaction.

Vocabulary Enrichment

The young child's vocabulary increases exponentially in the years from 3-6. To feed this natural hunger for words, vocabulary is given: the names of biology, geometry, geography, and so forth, can be learned as well as the names of qualities found in the

Sensorial Material. The child's absorbent mind takes in all these new words 'rapidly and brilliantly.' (Montessori, 1946, p. 10)

Work

From an evolutionary perspective, the long period of childhood exists so children can learn and experiment in a relatively pressure-free environment. Most social scientists refer to this pressure-free experimentation as play (e.g., see Groos, 1901), although Montessori preferred to call this activity the work of childhood. Children certainly are serious when engaged in the kind of play that meets developmental needs and, given freedom and time, will choose purposeful activities over frivolous make-believe ones.