

# THE MONTESSORI CENTRE

## HANDBOOK for Parents of Toddlers

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
WELCOME - From the Director of The Montessori Centre .....	1
OVERVIEW .....	2
ADMISSIONS .....	2
FEES .....	3
PAYMENT .....	3
WELCOME TO OUR WORLD .....	3
ORIENTATION .....	4
SCHOOL HOURS .....	4
SCHOOL CLOSURES .....	5
OVERTIME CHARGES .....	5
AUTHORIZATIONS .....	5
REQUIREMENTS .....	5
ENTERING OUR ENVIRONMENT .....	6
JEWELRY .....	6
NOURISHMENT .....	7
SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME .....	7
PERSONAL AND SCHOOL BELONGINGS .....	7
POTTY TRAINING .....	8
INCLEMENT WEATHER .....	8
PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDINGS .....	8
HEALTH ISSUES AND ACCIDENTS .....	8
PARENT/GUARDIAN ACTIVITIES .....	10
TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE GUIDE .....	10
TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE GUIDE .....	11

Dear Parents and Guardians

Welcome to The Montessori Centre.

This handbook presents an overview of our Toddler Programme as well as answers to many of your typical questions about toddler care at The Montessori Centre.

Caring for the young is a challenging activity. We want our toddlers to be happy and lively, to mature with ease and grace and to demonstrate positive social and communication skills. As the Director of the centre, I aim to create a caring and stimulating Toddler Programme. I also aim to create a friendly and fun filled environment for children and adults alike.

You may be assured that the members of staff at The Montessori Centre are totally committed to the children entrusted in their care. However and regrettably, from time to time things do go wrong. If you ever have cause for complain, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with the head of class or the Administrator. I too am available if parents specifically need to see me.

I thank you for affording us the opportunity of being able to contribute towards the overall development of your child and ask for your full cooperation in making your child's tenure with us, as rewarding and enjoyable as we would all like it to be.

Remember, you as parents/guardians and we as care givers each acting alone can only do so much, but together as partners we can do ever so much.

**Myrtle John Murray**  
**Director**

## **OVERVIEW**

We encourage parents/guardians to read this handbook as well as the newsletters and correspondence we send out from time to time. We ask you to cooperate with and be supportive of the caregivers and also invite you, in general, to give your moral support.

The Montessori Centre is located in Rodney Heights, Gros Islet. The Toddler Programme is one part of the service provided by The Montessori Centre, whilst the other parts are the Pre School and Elementary programmes. The Montessori Centre encourages parent participation in all the centre's activities.

At present the Centre can accommodate up to about 40 toddlers. The staff of four (5) qualified Early Childhood Educators and 2 assistant caregivers thus assures one care giver for every 6 toddlers.

The Montessori Centre is committed to providing the following:

- ◆ a stimulating Montessori environment;
- ◆ a high quality of service for parents;
- ◆ on going training for staff;
- ◆ Parent Education Workshops in order to build a partnership with parents/guardians.

When you enroll your child at our centre, we assume the responsibility of assisting you with special needs relative to your child's adjustment, growth and development. You may request a conference at any time to discuss your child's progress. In addition to our normal Parent Education Programmes, we will conduct a meeting on any pertinent topic at the request of three or more parents/guardians.

## **ADMISSIONS**

The Montessori Centre Toddler Programme is open to all children between the ages of 18 months and 3 years who may benefit from the programme.

Due to our set capacity a parent/guardian desirous of registering a child for admission would be advised to come in or call the administrative office to have the child's name placed on our list. As soon as your child can be admitted you will be notified and invited to collect, fill out and return a registration form with the child's health passport to the administrative office. Do make sure that the child's immunization records are up to date as this is

important for admission to our toddler programme. You are also required to provide two (2) passport size photographs of the child, for our records.

## **FEES**

When your child has been accepted at the centre and having taken care of the required documentation (see above), that documentation with the registration, and materials fees should be submitted to the administrative office. School fees are paid monthly and are due by the first week of each month. ***Fees paid later than that time will be subject to a late fee charge of 10% of the tuition fee only.***

Fees can also be paid per term by 4 months.

A school security fee is charged per term and is charged per child, per immediate family. This fee is to be paid at the beginning of each term.

***If a child is absent for two (2) or more consecutive weeks in a month, whether by virtue of illness or holiday, 60% of the due tuition fee only, will be charged. Any snack/lunch fees already paid for that time will be refunded or credited.***

***For a child to be first admitted to his/her class the registration, materials, security and tuition fees due, must be paid.***

Registration, materials, tuition, food and security fees are detailed in a separate Stepping Stones School Fees Schedule.

## **PAYMENT**

Fees can be deposited at First Caribbean International Bank in the account of The Montessori Centre, Account Number 2696450. A copy of the deposit receipt must be submitted to the Administrative office at The Montessori Centre as proof of payment. Fees can also be paid at the administrative office.

## **WELCOME TO OUR WORLD**

We welcome you to our environment and look forward to working with you and your child. Thank you for sharing your child with us as we appreciate

your show of trust and confidence in our centre. We now ask for your support and cooperation in helping your child to become his/her best.

## **ORIENTATION**

After being informed of the acceptance of your child to our toddler programme you will be invited to attend an orientation meeting where you will be briefed about the programme. Your expectations will be discussed and you will also have an opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns that you may have. After that your child will go through a period of orientation at the centre, usually of about two hours a day, for about one week. A parent/guardian or the helper from home would be expected to be present during that period. Following that your child should be fully ready to start the toddler programme. However, depending on how your child settles, the period of orientation may be extended.

Additional information regarding the period of orientation can be obtained from the head of class or the Director.

Parents/guardians are required to attend both the orientation meeting and have their child go through the period of orientation.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

The Montessori Centre operates Monday to Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Hours for the full week toddler programme are as follows.

- ◆ Mornings                    8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- ◆ Half Day                    8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- ◆ Full day                    8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- ◆ Extended day            8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Part week schedules are also offered and that information is available at the administrative office.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

The Montessori Centre Toddler Programme operates from Monday to Friday, every week in the year.

Exceptions are:

- ◆ public holidays and closures due to inclement weather;
- ◆ every third Friday of the month where there will be a half day for toddlers and all other students as those times will be utilized for Staff Professional Development sessions;
- ◆ a two (2) day mid-term break once every school term;
- ◆ centre organizational days where the centre will be closed for the last two (2) weeks in the month of August.

## **OVERTIME CHARGES**

***There is an overtime charge of \$10.00 for toddlers who are not picked up within ten minutes of their scheduled departure time.***

## **AUTHORIZATIONS**

At pick up time, children are released only to their parents/guardians or persons authorized by them. If there is to be a change in that, the parent/guardian must give the office prior ***written or verbal notification***. ***No child will be released to a new person without such notification.***

If any legal situation pertaining to the child arises and which can apply to the child's presence in school, egs. picking up of the child by any one parent, visitation rights, the Director must be immediately notified in writing.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

A cubby is assigned to each toddler for storing the child's personal belongings and if the child's schedule extends after 1 p.m. he /she is also assigned a cot for rest periods.

Care of toddlers at The Montessori Centre is individualized. The caregiver changes and dresses your child as needed. Further, the caregiver engages your child in "developmental playtime", reading and playing with him or her.

In order to support the daily routine followed at The Montessori Centre parents/guardians need to supply certain items daily.

The necessary requirements for each toddler are:

- ◆ two sets of clothing;
- ◆ four disposable diapers;
- ◆ disposable wipes;
- ◆ a crib sheet, bath towel, wash cloth, soap, comb (only for children who stay beyond 1 pm);
- ◆ any other items that the child normally uses during the day.

The Montessori Centre encourages you to select simple and comfortable clothes that are free from complicated fastenings when dressing your toddler for the environment. Think of your child's comfort.

## **ENTERING OUR ENVIRONMENT**

### **FOR CHILDREN WHO CAN WALK**

When you drop your child in the morning, please allow your child to walk into the building by him/her self. This lets him/her feel like a "big kid" and more in control of his/her environment. We do not use pacifiers in our environment. Please do not let your child come into our building with a pacifier. You can tell them that a pacifier is not for school. There are many reasons for this policy, such as the delay in language development that a pacifier causes and that we encourage self calming in our children. Thank you for your help and support in this matter.

## **JEWELRY**

We recommend that children do not wear jewelry to the centre. Some jewelry items present a safety hazard and can be easily damaged or lost. Girls with pierced ears should wear studs or small earrings.

## **NOURISHMENT**

Your child's meals should be nutritious and should not have a lot of sugar. The amount in his/her lunch kit should be a quantity that he/she can eat. To encourage healthy eating habits ***no potato chips, candy, corn curls, cheese balls, and chocolates*** should be packed in the lunch kit. If your child brings these items to the school they will be sent back home.



Due to health related issues the centre does not allow children to bring peanuts or peanut products to school. We are now a peanut free environment.

## **SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME**

The centre has a school feeding programme and nutritious meals are prepared at the school for an additional fee. Two menus are available and they are rotated. ***If your child does not eat certain foods, please let us know.*** Food is prepared every school day of the week.

## **PERSONAL AND SCHOOL BELONGINGS**

Please do not bring pillows or dolls for the child's naptime, or "love objects" such as a bear or a doll. Since we are striving to assist your child to depend on him/her self for comfort, these items tend to hinder this process. Also, do not give your child toys to bring into the environment as this disrupts our classroom and encourages confrontations. If your child has something special to bring to school, such as a book, please ask the care giver if it could be brought in for circle time.

***Do label things that belong to your child, even shoes,*** as this helps reduce the chance of misplacing his/her belongings. We will send his/her crib sheet home on Fridays to be washed and returned on Mondays.

Before coming to school please check your child's pockets to see what they may contain. Check especially for small "home" items. Similarly, check when your child comes home for unfamiliar objects, as they may be part of school material.

## **POTTY TRAINING**

We will begin potty training a child when about two years of age. Please assist us by doing the same training at home. Our caregivers will keep you informed about your child's progress in this area.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Parents/guardians will be the best judges as to whether their child should attend school in rainy weather. We will make every effort to open the school during such conditions.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Parents/guardians wishing to have photography or video recordings done of their child whilst in the school setting must seek the permission of the Director to do so. The centre can arrange for such services if parents/guardians so desire.

## **HEALTH ISSUES AND ACCIDENTS**

At The Montessori Centre we are very conscious of health issues. We discuss good health habits with the children as part of our curriculum. If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school as the school prohibits attendance of a child during an illness. Do remember that when children are ill they are generally unsettled and irritable and will definitely not enjoy their day at school. A good rule of thumb is to keep your child at home for one day after the symptoms have passed, especially if he/she had experienced a very high fever. A child having the symptoms of or experiencing diarrhoea, severe asthma, contagious skin infection, contagious eye infection, heavy nasal discharge or severe coughing should be kept at home.

When a child is absent from school, due to illness, it would be greatly appreciated if the secretary or child's caregiver is informed. Children absent for prolonged illnesses must submit a doctor's certificate stating that they are well enough to return to class.

Runny noses can be epidemic with young children. If the mucous is clear you will receive an alert notice indicating that your child's condition is being monitored. If the child's condition worsens to a discoloured and heavy nasal discharge it is likely that he/she has an infection and the child will be given a notice to remain at home.

We will refer to two conditions that can affect children. Head lice and ringworm can affect a child at any time and if you know your child has any of those conditions please notify the school immediately.

Our medical advice indicates that in the case of head lice the child should be ***immediately kept at home*** and treatment commenced. Two days after

the commencement of treatment he/she can return to school at which time his/her hair will be checked for the presence of live lice. **One week** after the first treatment the hair should again be treated. It is important that treatment be brought to completion as per product instructions.

In the case of ringworm again the child is **immediately kept at home** and medical advice sought. With the immediate commencement of proper treatment (physician prescribed) the child should be ready to recommence school **one day** after the treatment was started.

In a case of an accident at school, first aid will be immediately given and you will be notified as soon as possible. Staff members have been trained in First Aid Care and CPR. If you cannot be reached, the emergency number you indicated will be called. Please make sure we have up to date addresses and telephone numbers. If we feel medical treatment is needed the child will be taken to the Rodney Bay Medical Centre/EM CARE even if we have not yet contacted you or your emergency contact person.

If your child is receiving long-term medication please inform the care giver so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you need our care givers to administer medication to your child whilst at school, the medication must be clearly labeled with all important relevant information. **We will only administer medication where it requires it being taken during the time the child would be at school, or to be taken, as required.** Where it is to be taken as required, the symptoms necessitating the administering of the medication must be explained to the care giver.

Parents/guardians should remember to give medication to the care giver and not leave it in children's lunch kits or schoolbags. The school will not accept liability for injury to any child as a result of the child taking medication, whilst at school, that was left in his or her lunch kit or school bag.

**An authorization form to administer medication must be filled out by the parent/guardian before any caregiver administers medication to a child.**

All parents/guardians should understand and cooperate with our health policies. This is necessary so as to satisfy our obligations to provide a healthy environment for all persons at the school.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN ACTIVITIES**

We have a Parent/Guardian Social in October and conferences twice a year to keep you informed of your child's achievements. We will also keep you informed about what work your child would have done and what we are working on. We also have Parent/Guardian Meetings and Parent/Guardian Education Workshops throughout the school year.

## **TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE GUIDE**

7:15 - 10:00	Arrival/work time. Children are free to explore environment and work with materials. Self served snack available during this time. Diapering done as needed, at least once during this time.
10:00 - 11:00	Outdoor time. Activities such as sand and water work, bubbles, balls, climbing, jumping, gardening etc.
11:10 - 12:00	Circle Time. Food tasting activities, Music, books, lessons and group time. Begin or close with silence candle.
12:00 - 12:45	Table setting. Lunch time. Family style lunch served. See school Menu.
12:45 - 1:00	Preparation for dismissal.
1:00 - 1:10	1 pm dismissal.
1:15 - 3:00	Bathing and nap time.
3:00 - 3:10	3 p.m. dismissal.
3:15 - 3:30	Wake up and diaper changes. Snack.
3:30 - 4:15	Work time. Children are free to explore the environment and work with materials. Self served snack available during this time. Diapering done as needed throughout the afternoon.
4:15 - 5:00	Outdoor time. Circle time, songs, stories, basket activities, lessons and group time. Final diaper change if necessary.
5:00 - 5:10	5 p.m. dismissal.

The schedule is flexible to the needs of the children.

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The Montessori Centre  
Rodney Heights, Gros Islet, St. Lucia