



INFORMATION FOR NEW FAMILIES

Montessori: Learning for life

We are pleased to welcome you and your child to our Preschool and hope that your time with us is a positive and rewarding one.

For many children this will be their first experience away from home and we aim to make this transition as gentle as possible. We hope that the information contained in this booklet will assist this process.

Each child will bring with them to Preschool a variety of abilities, experiences, values and attitudes that have already been constructed in the context of their family and social settings.

We aim to broaden this existing knowledge and provide the next step in each child's education as we work with them in an interesting and stimulating environment.

We believe that the Montessori programme we offer has many benefits which will develop your child's skills, attitudes and habits, while providing an excellent foundation for all of their future education.

We are sure that your child will really enjoy their time with us. Please take the chance to get to know each of the staff members and feel free to approach your child's teacher with any comments, questions or concerns you may have.

Montessori education

Montessori education derives its name from Dr Maria Montessori who was the first female doctor in Italy in the early 1900's.

Dr Montessori developed her approach during her many years of observing and working with children. She believed that the first six years of life are the most formative with patterns of learning developing during these years.

Dr Montessori designed materials to aid a child's learning. Her materials and philosophies are common to all Montessori schools throughout the world.

The environment within a Montessori classroom caters for purposeful activity providing children with the freedom to practise skills at their own pace to develop independence and self confidence.

Montessori curriculum

The Montessori classroom activities are divided into the following three main groups:

Practical Life

Practical Life activities provide the child with an understanding of the environment and how it works. Through these activities students gain skills needed for everyday living like pouring water, sifting flour or doing up buttons and shoe laces.

Sensorial Materials

Sensorial Materials use the child's powers of observation to understand the world around them. Children use the materials to differentiate and learn about height, weight, length, colour, smell and shape.

Academic Materials

As children show an interest and readiness to advance, they are introduced to pre-reading and pre-maths activities. These activities are combined with academic materials and offer excellent preparation and provide logical, fun progression.





The Montessori materials offer exceptional teaching by incorporating Montessori activities with other kindergarten methods providing a creative environment for all children.

Montessori activities

Montessori activities are introduced to students on an individual basis as they show an interest and a readiness to learn. Parents will often ask their child, "What did you do today?" to which the child will reply "Play." Other parents may measure their child's level of activity by the number of paintings they bring home at the end of a day.

We would like to highlight that with Montessori activities there is often not anything for the child to physically show for their period of play. The belief that children will always produce something to take home places value on the product rather than the process.

When children are actively involved in these activities they will not have as much to bring home because they are very busy with equipment which is teaching and developing them in so many ways.

Montessori staff work as a team to plan a programme offering a diverse range of activities and experiences.

When programming for individual children we identify their strengths and areas which require further development and address each of these appropriately.

A summary of our planned programme for each week is displayed in the Bag Room. We encourage parents to follow up any particular theme or topic covered at home with your child.

eNewsletters are distributed through email at different times throughout the Terms. Any further information other than what is in the eNews is placed in a basket of folders labelled with your child's name. We ask that parents check this basket regularly to receive up to date information.

The Montessori page on the Trinity College website is also a valuable communication tool. The website features the most current Montessori eNews, term dates, upcoming events, news and photos. Visit www.trinity.sa.edu.au

Teachers

Sue Reynolds

Dip T. (Early Childhood) Director - Early Learning Centre.

Sue was a kindergarten teacher and Director at Kingscote on Kangaroo Island where she was also in charge of a mobile Kindergarten and worked to establish a centre at Penneshaw.

She was the Director of the Burra Preschool before moving to Gawler and establishing the College's Out of School Hours Care Programme and the Montessori Preschool.

Michelle Heath

B Ed. (Early Childhood), Grad. Cert. Ed (Learning Difficulties) Assistant Director - Preschool.

Prior to establishing the Montessori Preschool in 1996, Michelle taught at Trinity College North Junior School. She has broad experience with working with young children, and has also completed a range of Montessori studies.

Donna Skoda (Dip T)

Teacher

Donna has had a range of teaching experiences and has also completed Montessori training which enables her to combine the best methods of early childhood education when teaching children.

Sue, Michelle and Donna have completed all of the Montessori Curriculum Workshops, are members of the Montessori Association of Australia, and have links with Montessori Preschools around the state.

Julie Dorey (B Ed.)

Teacher

Julie has had a long association at Trinity College as a parent, relief teacher and with the Music Programme. She now teaches part time at the Preschool.

Class Assistants

Jodie Both, Janine Gilland, Tracy Longrigg and Andrea Ball

Jodie, Janine, Tracy and Andrea work with the teaching staff to provide much needed support.

This creates a 'child to teacher ratio' of at least 1:10. All teachers work together to implement a new, fun and rich learning environment for the children at each session.

Enrolment Officer

Anita Borchard

Anita is responsible for enrolments, invoicing, phone enquiries and all other day to day Montessori matters.

Early beginnings

Our Early Beginnings programme for children from two and a half years of age is an excellent way to settle the younger children into our Centre.

The children are involved in activities that introduce them to our staff, the routine of a Montessori classroom, age appropriate Montessori activities and equipment. The environment is informal and fun allowing children to make new friends easily and adapt quickly to any apprehension they may feel when separated from parents.

Children would usually stay in this class until they are around three years of age and are ready to move into the Preschool classes.

Daily routines

Morning Session: 8.45am to 11.30am

Afternoon Session: 12.30pm to 3.15pm

It is important for the children to arrive on time so that they benefit from the full scope of the day's programme.

Sessions are planned to include the following routines. The order may vary depending on weather and other factors.

Activity time

As well as art and craft, construction games and drawing activities, the children are free to choose their own activities inside from our prepared environment which fosters their desire to experiment and learn. The equipment that your child uses will help them develop concentration, coordination, and working habits which will stand them in good stead for all future learning.

The programme is purposefully structured to reinforce self discipline, independence, responsibility of equipment, manners, cooperation and the caring and respect for others and their environment.

All activities are 'hands on' and include all areas of the curriculum for example: Practical Life Activities, Art and Craft, Science, Geography, Social Studies, Technology, Maths and Language.

All children have the opportunity to work individually, in pairs or in small groups. The staff will observe, interact and invite children to take part in individually planned lessons. Records and checklists are kept of individual progress and necessary follow up which is discussed with parents on a regular basis.

Snack time

As well as being a time to satisfy hungry children, this is a wonderful chance for social interaction. The children eat morning or afternoon tea sitting at a table or enjoying a picnic with their friends.

Story and group time

Stories, singing, dance and sharing are all part of group time. The children enjoy this time as a class group where they discuss the theme for the session - the days of the week, months of the year or seasons and descriptions of weather.

It is a valuable time for the children to practise concentration, listening skills, manners, and speaking to a group. In addition, we may also demonstrate the new activities which will be available during the session



Outdoor free play

Because the children have been working so hard and their minds have been absorbing so much, this is a time to relax and unwind. Outdoor play involves exercising gross motor skills, socialising and simply allowing the children to release excess energy. This time of relaxation and play may also incorporate activities such as playdough, bike riding, bubble blowing, chalk drawing and gardening. Each class may also have the opportunity to visit the College facilities such as the Library, Agricultural Centre, STARplex Gym or one of the three Trinity College ovals.

If your Child is continuing their education at Trinity College, they will benefit from a comprehensive, ongoing transition programme.

Sessions

Sessions will not begin before the allocated time as it is important that the classroom is prepared and the teachers are ready to greet each child as they arrive. If you need care before the session, please advise us of your requirements otherwise we would appreciate it if you would wait with your child in the reception area until the classroom is open.

Car parking

Car parking is available at either side of the centre. We ask that your child is collected promptly after each session unless Out-Of-Hours Care has been arranged.

Absences

It is College policy that we are unable to make up sessions or refund fees due to holidays or illness. Please speak to the Enrolment Officer regarding exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to notify us by phone on 8522 0660 before 9.15am if their child will be absent from their session.



Assessment

As previously mentioned, continual assessment of your child and their progress is made by the teachers in charge of their session. Each term a written report on a different aspect of your child's development will be provided. When students move to school a portfolio will offer a significant record of their time at Montessori.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss your child's progress with you directly. Please approach us after the session to make a convenient time.

Christian education

We are a part of Trinity College which is a Christian School aiming to share God's love with the children. This occurs quite naturally in everyday activities such as music, stories, prayers, and grace before meals. It is also evident in the way we treat the children and in the way that we encourage them to treat each other, with love and respect.

School transition

Children attending Trinity College will commence their schooling in Term 2 for the mid year intake and Term 4 for those starting the following year. This programme includes visits to the classrooms, a chance to meet their new teacher and assists with a smooth transition for all involved. This formal programme will complete your child's familiarisation with Trinity College.

Fees

A fee account is mailed out each term. In accordance with the enrolment contract, one term's notice in writing of intention to leave is required. (Alternatively, one term's fees are charged in lieu of this notice.)

Please address this advice to our Enrolment Officer.

Uniform and lunch requirements

We ask that children wear their Montessori jumper or T-Shirt which is a uniform requirement and not an option. These are available for purchase at the STARplex Uniform Shop. To each session your child also needs to bring a bag which contains:

- A complete change of clothes.
- A piece of fruit for morning or afternoon tea and a packed lunch and two pieces of fruit if your child is enrolled for the day.

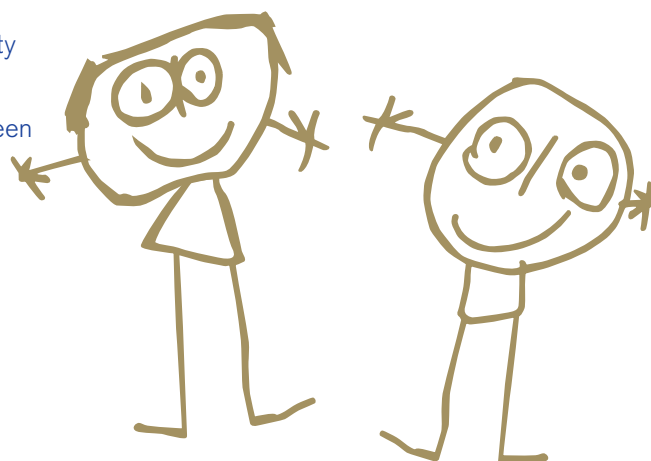
It is a requirement that each child brings a labelled drink bottle of water to each session.

Please do not send cake, lollies, nuts, popcorn or chips

Throughout the year, our outdoor policy is 'no hat - play in the shade'. Hats are an important part of the Montessori uniform and may be purchased at the STARplex Uniform Shop.

The children require comfortable shoes suitable for a day of activity (no crocs or thongs).

It would be helpful if during the summer months you apply sunscreen to your child before they arrive.



Property

Please ensure that everything your child brings to Preschool is clearly named. This includes all items of clothing, lunch boxes and bags. We ask that children do not bring toys from home.

If your child has something special to share then they are able to do so during group time, once a week. We are unable to accept the responsibility for lost or damaged property.

Medications

If your child requires medication, either regularly or on an occasional basis, a medication form completed by the prescribing doctor/physician must be held at the Preschool.

The medication will be administered when required and according to the doctor's written instructions and staff will keep appropriate records. We are unable to administer over the counter medicines. For further details, please talk to a staff member.

Infectious diseases

Our policies follow those of Trinity College and we provide the following for your information.

Disease	Exclusion period
Chicken Pox/Slap Face	Seven days from on set or until the last lesion/ rash has healed.
Measles and Rubella	Seven days from appearance of rash or medical certificate of recovery.
Mumps	Minimum fourteen days after onset of symptoms.
Head Lice	Extremely common in schools. Please examine your child's hair regularly and where evidence of lice is discovered, consult your chemist.
Impetigo (school sores)	Until healed, especially on exposed parts of body.
Conjunctivitis	See Doctor immediately. Child should be absent during acute stage of the infection.



Settling your child into a new centre and programme

Feeling confident

Your child will be able to sense if you are confident about leaving them. They will feel a lot more secure and settle more quickly if you show that you feel this is a good place to be. On the other hand, if you are hesitant and uncertain about leaving your child this will add to their anxiety.

It's not unusual for children to cry when their parents leave – after all they like being with you!

Staff are skilled at settling children; and you can have every confidence that the distress will not last for long.

Saying goodbye

When the time has come to leave your child – do it confidently, quickly and with a minimum of fuss. Don't drag out your goodbye, but do say goodbye.

Your child may seem upset when you leave but most children settle down quite happily as soon as their parent is out of sight. If you are worried about how your child has settled, you are very welcome to ring and find out. We will of course contact you if your child becomes too distressed and we are unable to settle them.

We are confident that your child will settle quickly into Montessori, and enjoy their time with us.



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