

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE OUR MONTESSORI PROGRAMME TO PARENTS?

Montessori Works provides children with a Montessori environment that supports their development from 2 to 6 years old in a **mixed group** setting. Children learn/observe from each other! We enable children to come 2 or 3 days per week as well as 5 days per week in a long day setting. This is an important factor for some parents in selecting Montessori Works preschools as traditionally Montessori Preschools only have 3 and 4 year olds three hours a day usually from 9am to 12 noon for 5 days per week and those children over 5 years coming 5 full days a week. Different isn't it?

We therefore may need to explain how our preschools function with extended hours and how we cater individually for the children in our care:

Hours earlier than 9.30am and after 3pm are times of **relatively free play**. Activities maybe set up indoors or outdoors and although children help pack them away this is a different type of environment from our prepared Montessori classroom experience from 9.30 am to 3pm. **We are respecting the flow of children and parents on arrival/departure** as children who come along each morning are not disturbing children in deep concentration, it is just free play with the emphasis on free. Interactions therefore are between the children themselves and staff do not need to interfere in the socialisation process. **Staff are observers** during free play! Watching from a distance allows staff to observe and to **use these findings later in programming "grace and courtesy" lessons helping to empower children with necessary language to work through the challenges of socialisation.**

It is much different when children line up to go into the **prepared Montessori environment**. We enter an environment where children need to be aware of others at work. We have one rule: to be kind to one another, we must respect each other!

In the Montessori environment the shelves are arranged with an array of hands on activities that children are encouraged to select for themselves and work with for as long as they like. **(Independence and choice)** Often these activities are repeated as children need this repetition to work through **a process of mastering aspects/procedures** of the **activity/work**. **There is only one of each activity**. There are distinct areas full of different types of activities: These consist of Practical life activities, Sensorial activities, Language activities, Mathematic activities, Geography and Science activities, Craft activities include collage, painting, cutting with scissors and drawing. Often play dough or clay is also included.

On our website www.montessoriworks.com.au we have listed all the activities with the **Direct Aim and Indirect Aim**. **We also have weekly workshops on a Tuesday evening from 7.00pm to 8.30pm** for anyone wishing to know more about each area and the specific activities how to use them and what children actually learn from repeating such activities. These workshops are especially for parents as children who come 2 or 3 days per week need the support of a home environment that understands and values independence and how children learn. The schedule for these workshops is also on our website. Everyday the staff observe children working and give new lessons to children. As we are open 49 weeks per year, all children receive at least one new lesson a week and are encouraged to become familiar with the letters of the alphabet through Sandpaper letters also each week as well as repeating work that they enjoy the staff are able to relate these activities to the Parents daily.

Every day a new set of focus children are written on the white board. This is for the parents to see how dynamic the classroom is and it also helps individual parents to go home and look up the Aims of the materials that your child just had a lesson on from our website. This is valuable written communication of what your child is working on, the area of work and you have individual feed back. These individual lessons, observations work samples and photos contribute to **each child's portfolio** which are continually being updated. **The Montessori day from 9.30 am to 3 pm is pretty full on with all staff working with and documenting observations/lessons of individual children or in small group activities.**

As we work with children daily we see their needs, their strengths and weaknesses. This is often different from what you see as children act differently in our environment. **We value independence, responsibility, a calm and happiness that come from inner confidence. Self esteem, self respect, self discipline and resilience are built up in this type of environment.**

Please come for an observation during our Montessori morning session to see the classroom in action. Ask the staff for an appropriate time to do this.