



SHIR HASHIRIM
MONTESSORI SCHOOL



P A R E N T H A N D B O O K

*“Montessori education is based on the study of life,
it is pure creativity, as all life is creation. Children
are given the opportunity for intellectual explora-
tion with the freedom to grow in social grace, inner
discipline and joy ...”*

MARIA MONTESSORI

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WELCOME TO ALL FAMILIES

Welcome to Montessori Shir-Hashirim. This handbook will help you get better acquainted with our school and its policies and goals. You can help your child get more from his or her Montessori experience by taking a few minutes to read this booklet. Montessori is different. We expect many questions about Montessori teaching and practices and we hope you will freely ask them. Everyone gains from your interest and participation.

Montessori Shir-Hashirim was founded in 1985. We offer programs for children from 2 years old up to 6 years old. We admit students and employ faculty and staff without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.

The educational principles of our school are based on the pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. Dr. Montessori developed a program designed to foster in each child the growth of a self-disciplined, confident individual able to contribute significantly to society by fulfilling his or her highest potential.

Our school is staffed by specially trained Montessori teachers. They prepare a carefully arranged environment scaled physically and conceptually for children and sensitive to their needs for order and meaning. In the prepared environment, children may choose activities according to their diverse needs and desires.

The self-correcting materials help children to develop motor and sensory skills, to lengthen concentration span, to discover problem solving techniques, to learn to care for themselves and to work with others.

The teachers' role in the Montessori classroom is to guide children by introducing them to new materials and activities as they gain greater levels of mastery. Cooperative projects help children bring together individual talents to accomplish common goals.

Our school program also incorporates the studies of art, music, drama and movement. Special summer classes are also available.

The mission of Montessori-Shir-Hashirim is to provide a developmentally based learning environment founded upon Montessori principles, which guide and nurture the natural unfolding of the whole individual.

OUR VERY SPECIAL PROGRAM

OUR CURRICULUM is designed for children from 2 to 6 years old. We are a developmentally based school using hands-on activities that make learning interactive and fun. Our program is Montessori. While using a multi-sensory approach to teaching, we also embrace the unique qualities of each child. We honor diversity, which is reflected in our varied economic and social population. We strongly believe in the cognitive, social, emotional and physical well-being of all children and address their needs in all areas.

THE PROGRAM IS DIVIDED INTO TWO SESSIONS. The first session runs from September to June and the second session begins mid July and ends mid August.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO ARRIVE BEFORE 8:00AM

This signals the beginning of directed learning time. This also helps the child's transition easier.

HOW WILL THE TEACHER TEACH MY CHILD? By offering a variety of curricular activities, the child is given the opportunity to expand their understanding of their world. The curriculum is balanced to include periods of active and quiet play. Activities that develop Language, Fine and Gross Motor Skills, Socialization, and Cognitive areas are the foundation of the curriculum.

IN ADDITION TO THE CURRICULUM AREAS presented by the classroom teachers, specialists instruct the children in Dance, Music, Spanish, Mandarin, French, Drama, Violin, and Karate.

TEACHERS ARE FULLY CERTIFIED and renew their CPR, emergency preparedness and first aid training annually. Our staff participates in workshops and in-service training to continually expand their expertise while providing nurturing care along with a wide variety of learning activities.

Children are accepted on the basis of readiness and their ability to benefit from the program.

TWELVE POINTS OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD

- 1 It is based on years of patient observation of child nature.
- 2 It has proved itself of universal application. Over several generations it has been tried with complete success with children of almost every civilized nation. Race, color, climate, nationality, social rank, type of civilization – all of these make no difference to its successful application.
- 3 It has revealed the small child as a lover of work, intellectual work, spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy.
- 4 It is based on the child's imperious need to learn by doing. At each stage in the child's mental growth, corresponding occupations are provided by means of which the child develops his/her faculties.
- 5 While it offers the child a maximum of spontaneity, it nevertheless enables child to reach the same, or even a higher level of scholastic attainment as under the old systems.
- 6 Though it does away with the necessity of coercion by means of rewards and punishments, it achieves a higher discipline than formerly. It is an active discipline which originates within the child and it is not imposed from without.

7 It is based on a profound respect for the child's personality and removes from him/her the preponderating influence of the adult, thus leaving the child room to grow in independence. Hence, the child is allowed a large measure of liberty (not license) which forms the basis of real discipline.


8 It enables the teacher to be present with each child individually in each subject, and thus guide him according to his individual requirements.

9 Each child works at his/her own pace. Hence the quick child is not held back by the slow, nor is the latter, in trying to keep up with the former, obliged to flounder along hopelessly out of his depth. Each stone in the mental edifice is "well and truly laid" before the next is added.

10 It does away with competitive spirit and its train of baneful results. More than this, at every turn it presents endless opportunities among the children for mutual help – which is joyfully given and gratefully received.

11 Since the child works from his/her own free choice, without competition and coercion, he is freed from danger of overstrain, feelings of inferiority, and other experiences which are apt to be the unconscious cause of profound mental disturbances in later life.

12 Finally, the Montessori method develops the whole personality of the child, not merely his intellectual faculties, but also his powers of deliberation, initiative and independent choice, with their emotional complements. By living as a free member of a real social community, the child develops those fundamental social qualities that form the basis of good citizenship.

A vertical decorative border on the left side of the page, composed of a dense pattern of small, overlapping circles of varying shades of gray.

*“...humanity can hope for a solution of its problems,
the most urgent of which are those of peace and
unity, only by turning its attention and energies to
the discovery of the child and the development of
the great potentialities of human personality in the
course of its construction.”*

MARIA MONTESSORI

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Application process for entrance into Montessori Shir-Hashirim:

151 north Berendo, Los Angeles, CA 90004; or 6047 Carlton Way, Los Angeles, CA 90028

Step 1 – SCHOOL TOUR

We welcome prospective families to visit our school. Please call or email our office to schedule a tour. Tours at Berendo are on Tuesdays at 9AM, and at Carlton Way on Wednesdays at 9AM. We believe that the best way for you to become acquainted with our program is by visiting the school during regular operating hours. So that we may focus our attention on your interests, please do not bring children to the tour.

Step 2 – PARENT AND ME PROGRAM

After your initial tour, we require a completed application form to participate in the Parent and Me program, which is essential to understand Montessori and whether the school is the right program for your family. Children must be 20 months old to participate. You can check the schedule and download the application from our website.

Step 3 – THE ACTIVE WAITING POOL

After having participated in the Parent and Me program, the next step is to submit your application for the Primary Program. Once this form is complete, and the application fee has been paid, the student is placed on the active waiting list.

Step 4 – THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS

When an opening occurs which is appropriate for your child, an enrollment meeting will be scheduled. All enrollment forms, doctors' papers and contracts will be presented along with our Parent Handbook, which outlines the school's policies and procedures.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

School is open from Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:30pm.

We offer a half day (8:00am to 2:30pm) or full day (8:00am to 5:30pm).

We serve the ages of 2 - 6 years.

PARENTS. PARENTS. PARENTS ...

The successful operation of our school relies heavily upon the volunteer efforts of parents. Whether helping teachers make materials, sharing a special subject, or lending a hand with maintenance and repair jobs that pop up around the school, volunteers are always appreciated.

Parent participation is essential. It serves as a wonderful social network for new or 'veteran' parents, and has become a large part of our Institutional Advancement. This is one of the best ways to get involved as a supportive parent and help advance your children's school.

Several times during the year, the school will provide parent education events. Parent education happens through back to school nights and class parent evenings. These are intended as an opportunity to discuss child development and Montessori principles, and to get to know the staff and each other better. We encourage parents to attend and to give us suggestions on topics and formats.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The Absorbent Mind – Maria Montessori

The Secret of Childhood – Maria Montessori

Montessori, A Modern Approach – Paula Lillard

From Childhood to Adolescence – Maria Montessori

Your Child's Self-Esteem – Donna Briggs

Positive Discipline – Jane Nelson

Parents in Charge – Dana Chidekel

APPROPRIATE SCHOOL CLOTHES

Dress should be simple, comfortable, and appropriate for the activities at school. To foster independence and self-esteem, clothing that can be managed by the child is necessary. Children should be adequately prepared for outdoor activity, even in cool and wet weather. We try to permit the children to play outdoors, and only on the most severe windy, cold, or rainy days will we stay indoors as a group. A warm cap or hat is particularly important as is some form of rainy gear.

We find that the atmosphere of the classroom is enhanced if children wear clothes which reflect the fact that this is primarily their place of work, just as most adults dress appropriately for their work. For example, clothing which features themes as super heroes (or clothing otherwise designed to be especially attention getting is not appropriate for school. We encourage you to help them select appropriate school clothing when shopping and when choosing what to wear each day. Shoes that fit them and that are safe.

Often, items such as sweaters, coats, gloves, boots, etc. are left at school for a time and go unclaimed. We suggest that you mark these with your child's name. After due notice, unclaimed items are donated to worthy organizations or other charitable service organizations.

SNACKS & LUNCHESES

The school provides a small, nutritious morning snack. It should not be relied on to compensate for an inadequate breakfast.

Morning Snack 9:50am | Afternoon Snacks 2:10pm and 4:00pm

Lunch should be brought from the home. We strongly recommend packing healthy lunches for your children. We suggest a lot of fruits, vegetables, protein, and a bottle with water.

Please notify us immediately if your child suffers from any allergies that we should be aware of. If your child has dietary restrictions, you must notify the school, even if your child is capable of monitoring him/herself.

We encourage good nutritional habits. Many foods contain additives, preservatives and sugars of varying kinds; some children are adversely affected by these. We ask that parents pay close attention to the food in their children's lunch. As the children get older, we encourage their participation in their own lunches.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

According to new state codes, all children must be signed in and out at school by the parent or adult dropping off or picking up the child. Please wait with your child until the classroom is open. Never leave your child without being certain that teachers are aware of his/her arrival.

You will be provided with a school calendar listing all closures and early dismissals for holidays, or late openings due to inclement weather as well as earthquakes.

Our main concern at Montessori Shi-Hashirim is for the safety and happiness of your child. We provide a wide variety of activities including sports, games, music, drama, and special events. Again, all parents are required to sign their children out at the end of the day to insure the safety of all children. Sign your full name and time at drop-off and pick-up. No initials please.

SIMPLY STATED

1. Please call and notify the school any day your child is absent.
2. Please make every effort to be on time when dropping off or picking up your child.
3. All children must be signed in and out each day that they are in attendance.
4. We strongly encourage families to form car pools since we do have a parking and space problem at drop-off and pick-up time. The school must be notified of all car pool arrangements and must be notified in advance in writing if anyone other than yourself or those on your emergency form are to pick up your child.
5. We ask that drivers exercise extreme caution when parking and driving around the school.
6. The school has its own way of recognizing a child's birthday. Please contact your child's teacher a week or so before the event to select the date for the birthday celebration.
7. Please do not allow your child to bring toys, gum, candy, cosmetics, or medicine to school.
8. Please read the School Newsletter and all class handouts, as well as the communication boards outside of the office and classrooms.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We can celebrate birthdays at school. Please call us to select a day for the special birthday celebration. We require that a timeline be prepared. Also a favorite book can be shared with all the kids at school. Birthday celebrations are always at 1:45pm.

COMMUNICATION LINES

All concerns about your child's classroom day should be taken directly to the Director of the School. Please request a meeting by calling the school or sending an email.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

It is difficult for staff to remember verbal messages when several individuals are involved. If you have a specific request regarding your child, please give send us a written message, or call us to schedule a private meeting.

You should know that we make it a policy never to discuss your child in front of him or her. If you have a concern you would like to discuss with someone on the staff, please call the office and leave a message and the appropriate person will get back to you.

You child should never be left unattended in the classroom or outside while you are having discussions with the staff.

The teachers are available for conferences at any time during the year, not just specific times in the fall and spring. If you have questions or a problem that needs discussion, please get in touch. We welcome any questions, comments, complaints or compliments. Be assured that if a problem should arise in the classroom, your child's teacher will contact you immediately.

OUR DISCIPLINE POLICY

Montessori Shir-Hashirim believes in a non-punitive approach to discipline, accompanied by creative and context-specific approaches to resolving conflict.

Ideally, children and teachers cooperate in creating an environment conducive to work and growth. Within each class, there is frequent discussion of appropriate behavior. As much as possible, we try to have natural consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The school's policy is to form consequences not only appropriate to the incident, but also to the child.

If the child abuses a material, for example, then he/she may not choose to work with that material for a time. If a child seriously abuses the social environment, as in hurting another child, a natural consequence is removal of the privilege of being in the classroom, and the child may be sent home for the day.

In case of discipline problems, the staff will notify parents and set up a meeting during which time the parents, child and staff may work toward a solution.

Teachers will help the child to socialize with the other children in a safe and loving manner.

- First, we use time out
- Second, we explain appropriate behavior
- Third, we call parents in for a meeting to discuss a plan of action
- Fourth, if antisocial behavior continues, family will be contacted to pick the child up from school.

After trying everything possible and the child is still not able to socialize and continues to be a threat to himself or others, we will ask the family to remove the child from school.

ENROLLMENT

The school reserves the right to request the dismissal of any student from the school after conferences with the parents and upon notification of them by the School Head.

In addition to the application form filled out before the child is accepted into the program, we need to have on file an emergency treatment form, an immunization form, and a signed enrollment contract before a child begins. The law also requires that a child have a medical form on file at school and conform to immunization standards, or face expulsion from school. Please notify the school's office whenever your child is given additional vaccinations so that the form is kept up to date.

WITHDRAWALS

Montessori Shir-Hashirim considers the records of all students to be confidential information available to a student's parents or guardian upon request. Records will be released to schools or other agencies only with the written permission of the parent or guardian and after all accounts are paid in full.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE & TUITION DUE DATES

This school is a private corporation supported by your tuition payment. A long-standing policy of the school is the advance payment of tuition in order to provide the necessary "operating capital." Without prompt payment, our school would be severely burdened by an ongoing cash flow problem. Please pay on time.

Our policy regarding overdue accounts is as follows: Tuitions are due on the 1st of the month, and payment is overdue after the 5th of that month at which time a 5% late fee will be added to the tuition payment. Unpaid tuitions at the end of the month will subject your child to suspension from the school until your account is brought back in balance, unless prior arrangements are made in writing to the office.

We need your cooperation. Our desire is to provide your child with the very best education possible and the highest quality environment available.

All families re-enrolled in January will be given first choice to reserve a class spot for children for the following school term. An annual enrollment fee is due at this time to reserve a place for your child. And full payment of the month of September of the following academic year, which will be used in September. Once this date has passed, all unreserved spaces will be available to the community at large.

All families shall be notified at least 30 calendar days prior to any rate change.

REFUND POLICY

Once the contract is signed for the entire year, no refund will be given. And the family accepts full financial responsibility for the entire academic year.

No refunds will be given if child withdraws from school.

No credits will be given for early withdrawal or for absences or incomplete attendance at each monthly session.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH POLICIES AND HEAD LICE INFESTATION

The most important consideration is communicable diseases. We notify parents by placing an announcement on our bulletin board or via e-mail. We would appreciate a call to our office should your child develop any communicable disease.

If you notice any sign of illness, please do not send your child to school for at least 24 hours. However, if your child should become ill at school, we will do our best to make him comfortable until you can pick him up. Home is the best place for a sick child.

Report any communicable disease to our office as soon as possible and ask a doctor for guidelines on when you can safely return your child to school without infecting others. If nits and/or Lice are found on children's heads, please notify the school immediately. The school has a policy of no nits no lice, to avoid widespread infestation. Children should be treated immediately and will be welcomed back at school once they are lice/nit free. It is the responsibility of the parents to check for lice/nits for three weeks following an incident, as infestation can continue after treatment.

If the school finds lice and /or nits on children's head, the school will notify the parents immediately to arrange for pick up and treatment.

Inform our office and your child's teacher of any special health problems such as allergies or dietary restrictions.

We can administer prescription medicines only, when accompanied by a written statement from a health provider. All medicines must be accompanied with a signed prescription detailing dosage, date and usage. Our staff cannot administer medicine at their own discretion or "as needed." Please download the Medication Consent form from our website and fill it out. All medication must be properly labeled with the child's name and in the original container. The school cannot administer ANY over the counter medication without written instructions from an authorized health provider.

EMERGENCIES

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In cases of extreme medical emergency, every effort will be made to reach the parents. However, when the parents cannot be reached, the child will be taken to the nearest medical facility for treatment. **Parents are therefore required to fill out and sign the Emergency Treatment Authorization Form.**

Because children do have accidents and/or become ill while at school, it is essential that the school have on file the names of at least two local persons who can be contacted in a parent's absence to care for a sick child. This information should be included on our Emergency Form. Contact the office immediately when there are changes in emergency information.

We find it important for our teachers to be aware of changes that occur at home. Because serious problems such as separation, illness or death affect the child's behavior, the teachers can be sensitive to those problems if they are so informed. We believe that school should be a joyful and positive experience for each child. To achieve this end, we wish to emphasize the importance of sound communication between parent and teacher.

IMMUNIZATIONS

State law requires that all children entering school be immunized against the following:

NUMBER OF IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIRED TO ENTER, BY AGE OF CHILD

	CHILD CARE					SCHOOL		
	2-3 Months	4-5 Months	6-14 Months	15-17 Months	18+ Months	4-6 Years	7-17 Years	7th Grade
Polio (OPV/IPV)	1	2	2	3	3	4 ¹	4 ^b	
DTP/DtaP	1	2	3	3	4	5 ^a	3 ^b	
Td Booster								[1 ^c]
MMR				1	1	2 ^d	1 ^d	2 ^d
Hepatitis B	1	2	2	2	3	3		3 ^e
Hib	1	2	2	1 ^f	1 ^f			
Varicella					1 ^g	1 ^g		

- a This number includes kindergarten boosters. If your child is 4-6 years old, entry requirements are met with only 3 polio and 4 DTPs if at least one polio and one DTP dose were after your child's fourth birthday.
- b For children 7-17 years old, entry requirements are met with only 3 polio and 3 DTP or DT/Td if at least one polio and DTP or DT/Td were after your child's 2nd birthday. For students age 7 and older, pertussis immunization is not required.
- c A Td booster is recommended but not required.
- d One dose on or after the first birthday is required for grades 1-6 and 8-12. Mumps immunization is not required for students age 7 and older.
- e Two doses of the 2-dose formulation along with provider documentation that the 2-dose formulation was used for both doses and both doses were received at age 11-15 years will also fulfill this requirement.
- f One dose must be on or after the 1st birthday regardless of any doses received earlier. The Hib requirement applies only to child care children under age 4 years and 6 months.
- g If a child had chickenpox disease, ask your doctor to note it on the immunization record to meet the requirement.

If your child's record is missing some doses, please contact your doctor or clinic now to obtain the full immunization record or any doses needed. If your child recently received immunizations and needs an immunization later in the year, he/she can be allowed to attend, provided you get the remaining doses when they become due.

The intent of the law is to protect California children from the dangers of diseases that are preventable by immunization.