



The Primary Program at Midlothian Montessori

Overview:

The Primary Program at Midlothian Montessori is a three-year program for children from ages 2 1/2 to 5 years old. Children in the Primary Program will engage in hands-on learning and explore the world with all of their senses, as they build a strong foundation for later success in school and beyond. The daily schedule includes the morning Work Cycle, snack, group time, transitions, and outdoor/ playground time.

Curriculum:

The Primary Program features distinct areas of the classroom. Children are able to choose work in all areas.

Practical Life – this area focuses on the child's need to care for self and for the environment. The activities help to develop concentration, good work habits, eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, and control of the body.

Sensorial– these activities help the child to understand his sensorial impressions and be able to classify them. The materials are didactic and self-correcting, allowing for independent, focused work, and provide preparation for math. Each material focuses on a single quality (such as color, shape, length, sound) to make future classifications and abstractions easier.

Language – these activities are used to expand the child's vocabulary and develop a sense of order. Self-confidence is acquired through opportunities to communicate with others. Specific language materials, such as sandpaper letters, provide preparation for reading and writing.

Mathematics – this area engages a child's natural interest in the numerical language. The sequential materials, which move from concrete to more abstract, provide lessons on numbers, counting, order, place value, and decimal quantity.

Culture – this area covers a variety of subjects including geography, science, botany, zoology, and history. The geography materials provide an introduction to countries, continents, and world cultures. "Help me to do it myself."

Special Subjects: All students will enjoy special programs on a weekly basis including art, cultural activities, and the Music Together program. Students may also participate in extracurricular activities that include soccer, dance, chess, and advanced art classes and are offered for an additional fee. Our school employs nationally recognized, credentialed teachers, as well as teaching assistants who have many years of Montessori experience. We emphasize training throughout the year and prioritize staff development.

Daily Schedule and the Three Year Cycle:

Children may enter this program at any point, providing that space is available, but the students who complete all three years of the program reap the greatest benefits of this classic, well-designed cycle of education. The same Montessori program for three years allows the children and teachers to build a strong and consistent community. Children are able to concentrate on the learning process without worrying about the transition of each new school year and spending time adjusting to the new teachers and environment. Our teachers make strong connections with the students and provide support based on the individual needs of each child. Through the three year cycle, the children have the chance to experience different roles, responsibilities and expectations.

The First Year - these children are the beginners. They receive lessons not only from teachers, but also from the older students, either directly or from observing them as they work nearby. The first year children enjoy the opportunity to be part of a classroom with older students and typically learn quickly and enthusiastically. The core program for these students is called Primary I (or dubbed "half-day" or P1"). This program is open to students 2 1/2 to 4 and runs from 8:15 am to 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday. (Additional afternoon care is available by permission; child interview determines readiness to stay the longer day.)

The Second Year – these children are more independent and comfortable in the classroom at this point. They learn how to interact with both older and younger students, while developing their knowledge and skills in many different areas. This is an age of refinement of earlier skills and a time for social and emotional growth.

The second year students are offered the opportunity to stay for an afternoon program that will expand on their lessons and provide enrichment activities in art, science, math, gardening, music, and cooking. This program is called Primary II/ Extended Day or "P2". This extended day schedule picks up directly from the Primary morning and extends into the afternoon, Monday through Thursday from 8:15 to 3:15 pm (additional afternoon care is available as needed).

The Third Year – the kindergarten year features an intensive program that covers the basic skills of language and mathematics, while also focusing on science and humanities as the practical application of those skills. This year provides the children with the unique and developmentally important opportunity to be role models and community leaders in the classroom. These roles foster self-knowledge, leadership skills, and confidence. They have the opportunity to reinforce critical concepts by teaching the younger children. These students excel in our classroom and beam with pride on having attained this long desired role. They are developmentally ready for longer lessons, more group lessons, and instruction in special subjects such as art, music, physical education, and foreign language.

The afternoons are spent expanding on their academic lessons with more rigorous work in preparation for first grade. In addition, the afternoons are also spent experiencing exciting enrichment activities and special projects. The third-year students attend school from 8:15 am to 3:15 pm Monday- Thursday and Friday 8:15-12:00 (additional afternoon care is available as needed).

Transitions After Primary

Typically children who complete the three year cycle transition smoothly into our Elementary Program or into the first grade at local public and private schools. We have also served children who do not make the fall birthday cut off by opening attendance into first grade in our Elementary program at "5 going on 6." Students with birthdays that fall around the age cut off can make their transition back into convention schools by either staying with their new higher grade or by completing a Montessori "bridge year" and then entering back into their age assigned grade. We recommend parents who are interested in "redshirting," parents of children with developmental needs, or any other special considerations to approach us with questions on developing an optimal plan