



Parent Handbook

1398 West 11TH Ave Escondido CA 92029

760 855 9078

www.windmillmontessori.com

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Mission statement

Windmill Montessori School is committed to following Montessori principles and creating wonderful opportunities for children to grow freely and at their own pace. Montessori education enables children to become confident, self-motivated and independent citizens of our world. Our classes are child centered and prepared with their emotional, social and physical needs in mind. We embrace the three different ages, combined within one class and all it has to offer. The child learns socially and academically from their older friends. We focus on the role of the environment and our responsibility to the Earth. Respect for all people is fostered through cultural education and a love of our world.

Philosophy

Our class welcomes children between the ages of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ (and toilet trained) and 6 yrs of age. This class offers the benefit of a 6:1 teacher to student ratio in an intimate home setting. Your child will receive pre-school lessons in a prepared Montessori environment by an experienced teacher.

Our emphasis is balanced evenly between academics and learning to become part of our young children's community through social development. Respect for our natural world and each other are practiced daily through grace and courtesy lessons. We are free to do our work in the class or in the garden. Gardening and maintaining our vegetable boxes give us opportunities to learn about our natural world and connects us with plants and the creatures with which we share our earth. This concrete experience reminds us of the origins of our food and thus begins good nutrition.

Math and pre reading exercises are experienced directly through the Montessori materials and are presented, as your child is ready for them and not according to a timeline. Children learn so much through observation. A child standing and watching another child has asked permission to watch and is free to do so without disturbing that child. The ultimate goal of reading and numeracy is achieved by each child in their own unique order. This is especially obvious if your child is allowed to complete the 3-year cycle with us. Enjoy and trust in the marvel of your child's growth rather than

comparing them to other children or your own pre-conceived ideas of development.

A Montessori class is rich in language and is experienced through the Sensorial, Language and Cultural materials. The child is surrounded by new words and experiences. The three age levels give younger children opportunities to use and hear advanced vocabulary. Older children take time to explain to younger friends, all the while consolidating what they know. Your child's interests and questions are explored through spontaneous, individual lessons.

Your child learns independence on a social and academic level. Our child sized practical life exercises engage the child in everyday activities that they watch you as parents perform. These delight them while giving them the skills to take care of themselves. They work to engage in the process, not to achieve an end result as adults do. This independence gives rise to high self-esteem and confidence as they gain control over their world. This is no small task and as adults, we often forget this work builds the very skills that we take for granted. This is why it is so important to allow the children to do for themselves. Parents need not anticipate their child's every need.

Children are given lessons and then given the trust and freedom to explore the materials on their own without interference from the teacher or other students. They are also encouraged to choose work on their own in order to become self-motivated young people. Montessori children are given freedom within limits. They may work alone if they are responsible with the materials. They know to exercise self-restraint and work quietly, so as not to disturb other children's work cycles. Once a child has been attracted to and has begun to concentrate on work, the adult respects this choice and concentration and does not disturb the child.

All these social graces lead to a wonderful, respectful young childrens' community. This community is often so quiet that people wonder how 'we do it?' Children who are engaged in meaningful work are building themselves and experience a deep sense of contentment. They are able to control their movements and become responsible beyond our expectations. As adults we need to take them more seriously and raise our expectations. They will surprise us.

Parents should encourage independence at home to reinforce what is happening in the class. Parent education evenings are valuable ways to learn more about Montessori principles.

Admissions

We accept children as young as 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -6 yrs, (they must be toilet trained.) This is essential for the child's sense of independence and the hygiene of our class. Accidents do happen, so a labeled change of clothes should be sent. These should include socks, underwear and clothes appropriate to the season. Check regularly that your child has not outgrown their clothes.

The class promotes social and emotional growth. In order for your child to most fully benefit from their Montessori environment, a three-year commitment is recommended. The social and academic benefits of the program can be best observed in our children's third year.

Our goal is to assist your child in becoming an independent, motivated and self-directed person. If your child is enrolled in WMS we assume you share our goal. Encouraging independence eliminates pacifiers, comfort items and diapers.

Communication

Please remember to schedule an appointment rather than talking about issues in front of your child. The teacher is available for quick, daily info during the arrival time but cannot discuss tuition or a child's progress at this time. We need to greet all families and watch the children.

Please write a note regarding questions about tuition or other concerns. You can also call and leave a message on the school phone and your call will be returned promptly after the children have left. If there is a situation that you feel could affect your child's day, please give us a note at arrivals.

Newsletters and all paper work will be placed in your mailbox for you to pick up at dismissals. Please sign that you have received these so that no misunderstandings occur.

Please check the notice board in the class from time to time. Please do this after school.

Conferences

Parent- teacher conferences are held in October and March. Parents schedule an appointment on conference day to discuss their child's social and academic progress. In January and June an Academic progress report is sent home.

Arrivals and Dismissals

The roadside directly in front of the school is unfortunately not available for parking. We suggest that you use the parking area to the west side of the school and walk your child carefully along our curbside and down our drive. You are welcome to come down the drive if you don't have a low clearance vehicle. There is space to park 2 cars. We need parents to look carefully at the NO Parking postings on our street, as there are many of them.

Please make the separation from your child as quick and painless as possible for your child and yourself. Young children of course find this difficult and take the lead from you. If you are holding your child in your arms this doesn't send the message that they are independent or that you are sure that they are going into a safe place. This also makes it difficult for the teacher who has to remove your child from your arms, which is unpleasant for all concerned.

Please walk your child to the side gate and encourage them to walk into the play area alone. We discourage parents coming into the classroom at arrivals as it disrupts the natural flow of the morning especially if you are late. It can upset a child who is trying to be brave and missing their parent and disturb a child who is already busy at work. You are welcome to come and

observe after 6 weeks when the children have settled in and are able to choose work. This enables you to observe our classroom environment.

Families may arrive between 8.30am and 8.40am. Please be punctual as we like to start our work and learning on time. This allows us to go into the class all together and means we won't be disturbed during our work cycle. The teacher will not be able to greet your child personally, if she is already giving a lesson.

Please be sure to pick up your child between 12:20pm and 12:30pm or 2.20pm and 2.30pm. A late fee of \$20 for every ten minutes late will be charged when a child is picked up after 2:30pm. This will be due on the day you are late and not with your tuition.

Please sign your child in at arrivals. Sign out at dismissals on the same Sign In Sheet. We will use the school clock to record your child's dismissal time to avoid fee discrepancies.

Emergency Evacuation Plan.

Fire and Earthquake drills are conducted throughout the year. In the event of an evacuation from the school site, your child will be escorted to the parking lot of the

The Self Realization Fellowship
1840 Del Dios Hwy
Escondido
760 480 1161

In the event of an isolated problem at the school site e.g. a flood, your child will be taken to the neighbor on the east side of the school

Terry and Renee Matson
1392 W 11th Ave
Escondido

Please fill in your emergency information and keep it current, especially your contacts that are not immediate family.

Dress code

Children should be dressed comfortably in clothing appropriate to the season. The child should be able to dress him/herself. Overalls and shoelaces are often frustrating for the child. Boots are discouraged as they are difficult to run in. Logos on T- Shirts are inappropriate and unacceptable. Jewelry and watches are strongly discouraged as they are distracting.

On the first day of school children must bring an extra set of clothes in a labeled plastic bag. Jackets, sweaters and outerwear must be labeled. We encourage the children to take responsibility for remembering to take their clothes home each day.

Health Policies

The staff will administer first aid for minor accidents. When your child bleeds for any reason an incident report will be sent home. If your child bumps their head you will be called as soon as possible and given the opportunity to come and pick your child up. An incident report will be given to you. In the case of a more serious accident your emergency contact numbers should be correct so that we can call you to collect your child.

If your child is ill you will be called to come and collect your child even if you have just dropped them off. This often occurs when a child wakes up with a fever and is given a fever reducer such as Tylenol, which wears off in a few hours. They must be collected within $\frac{1}{2}$ hour as it is in their and the schools best interests to do so.

Please send your child to school healthy in order to keep our school healthy. Wait 24 hrs after your child has had a fever before sending them back to school. Please inform the school if your child is absent due to illness.

All communicable diseases must be reported immediately and a doctor's written release may be required before re admission. Some of these illnesses include but are not limited to:

Infectious Conjunctivitis	Hepatitis A	Lice
Impetigo	Scarlet Fever	Ringworm
Chicken Pox	Scabies	
StrepThroat		

In extreme emergencies 911 will be called.

Medication

All medicine should be labeled with your child's name and in the original container. We will give the child their medication at lunchtime, if you have filled in a medication form. The dosage and length of time the medicine will need to be administered should be written on the Medication Form we provide.

No medication, either by prescription or over the counter, is to be in your child's lunch box as other children may accidentally take it.

Immunization

We require proof of immunization at time of admission. Please bring your current immunization record with your application forms. Remember to update our records during the year if your child has shots after their start date.

Nutrition

In a society where obesity is on the increase WMS promotes good eating habits. The children are so proud of their lunches, especially if they have a hand in preparing them and choosing from a healthy selection. A good rule to follow is to send food that is as close to its natural form as possible. Food that is low in salt and sugar is encouraged. Lunchables are not a healthy choice.

Children are required by law to eat 1/3 of their daily nutrition at lunchtime. We suggest sending a sandwich or crackers, some fresh fruit or vegetables. These should be in a container that your child can easily open. We serve water only at lunch and this is to promote the healthy choice of water and to prevent sticky juice or sour milk on the carpets that we sit on to do our work. For the same reason we do not allow Gogurt at school.

Please send small containers of yogurt as children seldom finish whole pots. We ask that you send a soft-sided lunch bag, labeled with your child's name. We have limited space.

Lunch is an important learning opportunity and we make this as realistic as possible. Your child will use china plates and glasses as we show your child that we respect their ability to use real things and to take care of them. We use cloth napkins that your child will have folded and placed in their metal napkin holder. The children will lay the tables in preparation for our well-mannered lunch. The uneaten lunch will be sent home to give you an indication of your child's likes and the quantity that they are eating.

Discipline and Guidance

The teacher will redirect inappropriate behavior and help the child use their words to solve conflicts. If this inappropriate behavior continues the child will be asked to observe how the other children behave. They may be isolated from the situation by being invited to sit next to the teacher.

Serious repeated misbehavior or dangerous behavior, such as kicking, biting, rock throwing or disrespectful language may warrant a parent being called to take the child home. WMS will decide the return date.

Removal of students

It is the policy of WMS that a student may be dismissed from the school when

- 1) The child's needs are not being met. This includes either disruptive behavior to the routine of the school or behavior that can result in injury to other students or staff.
- 2) If WMS feels that the needs of parents are not being met due to dissimilar academic expectations or a difference in philosophy, a child may be asked to leave.
- 3) Failure of a parent to pay tuition.
- 4) Lack of parental support.
- 5) Inability of the child to adjust to the routine of the school or if the child is in obvious emotional distress.

The process of removing a student is as follows: -

- 1) Parent -Teacher conference is scheduled as soon as problem arises.
- 2) If dismissal is considered, the child will be immediately dismissed and a letter confirming this will be sent to the parents.

Steps may include immediate, temporary or permanent removal of a student with or without warning.

Sharing

Wednesdays are sharing days. Your child may bring in items from other countries, items from nature or home made crafts. Soft toys or character toys are inappropriate and do not belong at school. Please help your child choose their sharing the night before and explain inappropriate choices before you get to school. It is difficult for your child to understand when their sharing is sent home.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a wonderful time to join the class for your child's celebration. We have a Sun ceremony and special birthday snack that you bring in on the morning of the celebration. Again we ask that you choose a healthy snack. This avoids upsetting children whose parents adhere to this policy. Although a chocolate cake seems fun, please keep this treat for home. Muffins, fruit, bagels, celery with peanut butter are all good examples. Make sure that the portions are small.

You will receive a birthday packet in your mailbox at the beginning of your child's birthday month. This will contain a reserved date for the celebration and the birthday pages for you to write a brief biography representing each year of your child's life. Please attach a photo of each year. Remember to give the pages to the directress on the morning of the celebration.

We will read each page of your child's life as they walk around a candle representing the sun in the center of the circle.

Cultural celebrations

We welcome any special celebration that you would like to share with us. These celebrations make our class more diverse and appreciative of other cultures.

The Staff

Samantha Otte BSC, NCME

Samantha has been a Montessori teacher since 1994

. She initially trained in Johannesburg, South Africa where she first qualified and then taught for four years. After living and teaching in London, England for five years she arrived in San Diego and taught in Poway for four years.

In addition to her Bachelors degree in Science, Samantha also holds the National Center for Montessori Education certificate, a Children's Yoga

diploma, current First Aid and CPR certifications as well as having completed a course in preventative health.

Jan Edwards has assisted at the school since fall 2007. She brings a rich variety of craft and artistic skills to the children. Sewing, paper crafts, clay and endless patience. She also gives the children an opportunity to watch and participate in gardening. They grow both flowers and vegetables for our gardens.

Location

WMS is conveniently situated between I-15 and the 78 on a lush and hilly half-acre in Escondido. The classroom is specifically set up in accordance with Montessori principles and allows children to work both indoors and outdoors. The school is a licensed day care center.