

## **The Montessori Approach – SMILES Montessori Pre-School**

Dr Maria Montessori was born in 1870 and 26 years later went on to become the first woman in Italy to become a qualified doctor. After qualifying, she was appointed assistant doctor in a clinic within the University of Rome to work and observe children in a scientific manner. Without the usual pre-conceived educational ideas, she was able to create new techniques of education which would emphasise the “unique” development of each child. This has led to the Montessori Approach believing strongly in spontaneity and independence whereby the child is encouraged to select their own activities, explore and manipulate for themselves.

Research into this approach has shown that the earlier a child learns to interact with others, the more developed their social skills and confidence is in the future. A nursery of good standing – like SMILES Montessori, has been to aid greatly in the development of the child. “All children have an innate desire to learn”. This philosophy enthused by Dr Maria Montessori is practised by the whole school through three traditional Montessori principles. These are:-

- Observation
- Individual Freedom
- Preparation of the environment

These three principles guide teachers to “control the environment” and not the child. To look at the child as an unknown entity or being and allows the child’s true nature to freely emerge.

The school is divided into 5 classrooms, Tiny Tots, Toddler Room, Upper Toddlers, Reception Class and Pre-school. Each classroom provides a range of activities appropriate for the age and stage of the development of the child. The school also has an outdoor play area and when the weather permits, children can also take advantage of Bush Fair playground.

SMILES Montessori Pre-School is situated at Unit 1, The Fairway, Bush Fair, Harlow, Essex – Telephone 01279 422922.

## **STAFF**

It is important to us here at SMILES, that all members of staff are carefully selected based upon not only their qualifications and experience, but also their caring nature towards the children. We pride ourselves on ensuring that each member of our staff continues to develop themselves in childcare through various, relevant courses, workshops and seminars.

We work using the key-carer system, thus enabling us to assign one member of staff to each child who is then responsible for the child's development and welfare whilst at SMILES.

## **SERVICE**

SMILES is an educational establishment, our service meets the needs of a large client base that includes:-

- Parent/carers in full or part-time employment who require more than just basic childcare
- Parent/carers who wish to prepare their child for the transition into the state school system by developing their academic and social skills.

We understand that many of our prospective parent/carers work full-time so we devise the child's day taking into account their requirements and the desired length of stay.

7.30am-9.00am	Children requiring breakfast attend this social period.
12.00noon – 1pm	We close the school in order to allow those children staying for lunch to dine and relax before we re-open our school doors at 1.00pm.
4.00pm – 5.00pm	Teatime allows the children to interact with one another in a relaxed atmosphere...
5.00pm – 6.30pm	Winding down period, where the children enjoy free play and weather permitting take advantage of our outdoor play area.

While the formal school day (9.00am-4.00pm) remains the same, the full day is structured so that the social, physical and emotional requirements of the children are met.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

The foundation stage is designed to accommodate all children aged between birth and five years. The areas covered within the foundation stage are:

**A Unique Child.** Every child is a competent learner from birth, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Positive Relationships.** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers and a key person.

**Enabling Environments.** The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

**Learning and Development.** Learning and development is divided into six areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Communication, language and literacy
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development.

### **Child Development and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

All children are different and to reflect this, age ranges are overlapped in the EYFS to create broad developmental phases. This emphasises that each child's progress is individual to them and that different children develop at different rates. A child does not suddenly move from one phase to another, and they do not make progress in all areas at the same time. However, there are some important steps for each child to take along their own developmental pathway.

The EYFS fits beautifully with the Montessori Method and Ethos in that, each child is individual and will find their own way of learning, thus helping them to become independent and well rounded adults. Profiles will be sent home every 8-16 weeks depending on the age of your child, for parents to add their comments. This allows staff to plan activities for the child's individual needs.

## **ACTIVITIES**

At SMILES we ensure that the safety of the child is paramount, whilst continuing to convey a nature that is still caring, inspiring and thought provoking. We encourage the children to explore and discover any apparatus and materials on their own accord, which in turn allows the children to develop, socially and academically.

SMILES activities include:-

### **Cooking**

All children are encouraged to take part in cooking activities from which they learn basic science, food safety and health and hygiene.

### **Pre-Primary Maths, Pre-primary English and Topical Projects**

At SMILES we introduce these activities on your child's first day at school. We find that this approach makes the transition from Pre-School to Primary School a lot easier for the child.

### **French**

French is taught to the children in pre-school. The children perform both oral and written exercises with a qualified French Teacher.

### **Practical Life**

We assist the children to develop control and co-ordination in their movement. We believe this encourages independence.

### **Sand and Water Play**

Stimulates their perception of basic scientific and mathematical concepts such as capacity, volume and mass.

### **Imaginative Play**

Role-play is very important during the formative years; it provides real life experiences and it is a well known fact that it assists the children in conveying their freedom of expression. We have a variety of dressing-up clothes and moveable characters for this purpose, ensuring that communication and mathematical skills are brought into play. For example, being designated characters and re-enacting fairy tales, the children are developing their language and listening skills, whilst also being encouraged to converse and interact with others.

### **Music and Movement**

We introduce the children to a variety of easy to use musical instruments, which develops the children's expressive communication skills, whilst also allowing them to relax and enjoy listening to and participating in creating their own music. Jo Jingles is enjoyed by children throughout the nursery. A professional yoga teacher attends the school alternate weeks for all children aged two and over.

### **Construction Toys**

Develops physical and manipulative skills allowing the child to show their understanding of the world in terms that demonstrate their newly acquired developed skills.

### **School Outing**

A yearly school outing is organised for the pre-school children which reinforces the theme of the current project. The outing is not compulsory, but those who attend, the cost is payable by parent/carers.

### **Computer Skills**

Children are introduced to basic computer skills such as learning basic computer safety, clicking and dragging with the mouse. The software that the children use is designed to help children learn to problem solve such as matching and sorting as well as basic language skills.

### **Homework**

Homework for Pre-school children is given out every two weeks. It consists of one piece of language work and one piece of maths work. Parent/carers are encouraged to help their child complete this work at home.

### **Reading Books**

Children are initially introduced to word, phrase and sentence strips. When your child is ready, they move onto the New Way Reading Scheme. Worksheets are included with the reading books for you and your child to complete together to assess your child's comprehension of the book.

Although activities change on a daily basis, the fundamental daily/weekly routine is consistent thereby fulfilling the child's need to know "what comes next".

### **Other Areas of the Curriculum**

Throughout the year, children are also introduced to science, biology, geography, history, culture, creative and physical activities. These areas are all incorporated into topic work.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

We are open Monday to Friday 7.30am – 6.30pm, 50 weeks of the year. Each child under the age of 3 is required to attend a minimum of 2 sessions per week. Children over 3 are required to attend a minimum of 3 sessions per week. We close the nursery over the Christmas period and exact dates of closure are stated in our parent/carer's calendar, a copy of which is available for your collection from each January, but generally our Christmas period covers 10 days.

### **Uniform**

SMILES Montessori Pre-School sweatshirts, polo shirts, cardigans and summer dresses with the pre-school emblem are available from the office. All other items are available from leading retail stores.

Uniform is compulsory for children in Reception Class upwards.

**ALL ITEMS OF CLOTHING MUST BE CLEARLY LABELLED.** This will not prevent loss, but greatly improves the possibility of the item being returned to the rightful owner.

Yellow Polo shirt (with SMILES emblem)

Yellow Sweatshirt (with SMILES emblem)

Yellow summer dress for girls (with SMILES emblem)

Grey Cardigans for girls (with SMILES emblems)

Grey pinafore dress/skirt/shorts/school trousers or jogging bottoms

Shoes – comfortable shoes with Velcro or buckle fastening (no laces).

A bag containing spare clothes should be brought into the school in case of toilet or water accidents.

Children over 2 who are not yet toilet trained should be provided with disposable nappies or “pull-ups” and wipes on a daily basis.

### **Settling-in Process**

It is important for us to ensure that your child settles in as quickly as possible. Therefore, we encourage the parent/carer, if they feel it necessary to spend as much time as is needed within the nursery. This may vary from as little as an hour on their first day, to as long as a week. We believe it will benefit your child in the long run.

### **Security Arrival and Departure**

We understand that not only is it in our best interest, but also that of our parent/carers that our security system is effective. We use a key card system. Without this key card, access to the nursery is by ringing the doorbell. Parent/carers will be issued with one card, and should you require any additional cards, we will request a sum of £10 deposit per card which will be refunded on the cards return. Should you lose your card, a £10 non-returnable replacement fee is payable. Key cards are only issued to parent/carers whose children attend between the hours of 8-9am and 4-6pm.

We ask you to provide your child with their own password, so if there is a problem and you are unable to collect your child yourself, we will ask the person collecting your child for this password. Without it, we will be unable to let your child leave the premises.

Parent/carers who are persistently late in collecting their child will incur a late charge of £5 for each 10 minutes over their agreed times.

### **Government Funding**

Here at SMILES, we accept Government Funding. In the term your child is eligible for a grant, you will receive a Parent/carer/Carer Declaration Form which we ask you to complete and return to the nursery.

### **Voucher Schemes**

We accept a variety of voucher schemes. Should your employer be running a scheme that we do not currently participate in, we will be happy to register with your nominated scheme.

### **Children's Work**

All of your children's work will be displayed upon the walls, and then on completion of the topic, your child's work will be sent home. We hope that the children's folders will give you a clear picture of the curriculum followed during the topic. The children's language and maths workbooks are available for you to see at anytime and on completion will be given to the parent/carer/child to take home.

### **Yearly Questionnaire**

Annually, you will be provided with one of our in-house questionnaires, to obtain your feedback on the service we provide. We welcome all comments and suggestions that parent/carers have, to ensure that our continued high standards are maintained.

### **Medication**

Any medication that is required to be administered to a child will not be given without:-

- a) A label that clearly shows that the medication is in date;
- b) A signed consent form, to be signed by the child's parent/carers each day the medicine is required.

We regret, that should you child be in our care for less than four hours a day, we are unable to administer medication to them.

### **Sickness**

Unfortunately, SMILES do not have any facilities to care for sick children. We therefore urge that if your child is unwell, suffering from a raised temperature or any sort of infection, they do not attend the nursery on those days. If whilst in our care your child is found to be unwell with a high temperature we will contact you immediately to either request authority to administer Calpol or to collect your child from nursery as soon as possible. This policy is in place to protect both children and staff.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Here at Smiles Montessori Pre-School, we value children and families from all religious cultures and backgrounds, whereby everybody is treated as an individual.

Throughout the year, the children are taught and participate in various activities that relate to worldwide festivals and celebrations. We do so through a vast range of equipment, which includes multi-cultural clothing, food, maps, puzzles, dolls and project work. All children are encouraged to participate in these activities. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Montessori Method.

### **Open Evening**

We have a yearly open evening for parent/carers and prospective parent/carers to look around the nursery to gain an understanding of how children learn using our wide range of equipment and to answer any questions you may have. Unfortunately, children are not able to attend this event.

### **Parent/carers Evening**

Once a year, parent/carers of children from Reception Class and Pre-School are invited into the school to discuss with the child's class teacher about their child's progress and development. Children's work is also on display.

### **Policies**

If you would like to have a copy of any of our policies, please contact the office who will be happy to supply them to you.

### **Special Needs**

- All children attending SMILES are given equal encouragement and respect.
- SMILES' aim is to provide for the development needs of each child to ensure they reach their full potential.
- All children within the nursery are regularly discussed with the class teachers and supervisors and their development carefully monitored.

- Should any concerns come to light, these will be discussed with the class teacher, the Senco (Miss Julia Almond) and the child's parent/carers.
- Should parent/carers have concerns regarding their child, it is encouraged that they will be discussed with the appropriate staff, (see Partnership with Parent/carers Policy).
- If it is required that a child needs specialist assistance from outside agencies, the nursery will actively encourage close liaison. This may include agencies visiting the nursery for assessment and monitoring and staff carrying through prescribed developmental programmes.
- It is not uncommon for children to exhibit aggressive behaviour or inhibited types of behaviour when first attending nursery. It is a mechanism children use to help overcome the vulnerability that they may be experiencing because of unfamiliar surroundings. Therefore all observations and written notes may not go towards an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in the short-term i.e. the first twelve weeks.

### **Minor Accidents**

It is not uncommon for children of this age to experience minor accidents that may result in slight bumps, scrapes and bruises. In the event of this happening to your child, all details will be recorded on an accident form which you will be asked to sign.

### **Discipline**

- Physical punishment is NEVER used.
- We use positive language and positive discipline techniques.
- Good behaviour is always reinforced by positive praise.
- We always try to redirect a child's attention into a positive activity.
- Clear limitations are set so that children feel secure and know what is expected of them.
- We have simple rules around the nursery i.e. use quiet indoor feet in the classroom and noisy outdoor feet in the outdoor play area.
- The children are gradually made aware of the reasons for rules and they are presented in a positive way.
- Unacceptable aggressive behaviour from one child to another will be dealt with by explaining why these actions are unacceptable at nursery.
- If this behaviour persists, parent/carers will be informed so that we can all work together to find a positive solution.

### **Comforters/Toys and Personal Belongings**

Some children require a comforter during school hours, we welcome these but would prefer that toys are left at home as they can be the cause of upset in cases where children are unwilling to share or the toy is lost or broken. Any form of toy weapon is strictly forbidden. Your assistance in this matter will be appreciated. In any event, the practice of children bringing personal belongings to nursery should cease shortly after the children leave the Reception Class.

**Complaint Procedure**

If you have a specific complaint, you can speak to the Manager, Miss Julia Almond or read the Complaints Policy which is kept in the office.

**Child Protection Statement**

The nursery is committed to promoting the health and welfare of all children and if staff see signs which suggest that a child may have been a victim of abuse, staff will (as required by law) follow the procedures laid down by the Area Child Protection Team.

NB. Such action in no way infers that any parent/carer or other individual is being accused of wrongdoing. A full version of the nursery's Child Protection Policy is available upon request.

**Sequence of Priorities**

- Should an opening be made available within the nursery, we are obliged to offer it to those parent/carers with a child on the waiting list.
- Any remaining places are then offered to the parent/carers with children currently attending the nursery or those who are waiting to increase the number of sessions that their child already attends.
- Surplus places, if any, are then offered to prospective parent/carers on a first come, first served basis.

**Admittance**

We accept registration for children from 3 months to 5 years. Should you wish to register your child with us, we ask that you return your completed registration form to us along with the initial non-refundable registration fee of £30.

During your child's time with us, we require that all fees are paid one calendar month in advance by standing order. Should you wish to pay by cash or cheque, special arrangements can be made.

Should payments arrive late, a penalty of 10% may be added to the bill.

**Food, Diet and Menus**

All children who attend during the hour shown will be provided with the following meals. Should your child have any medical or religious dietary requirements, provisions will be made. Smiles currently holds an Environmental Health Gold Award for Healthy Eating and has 5 stars (excellent) for Scores on the Doors.

**Breakfast 7.30am – 9am**

Cereal, toast, juice, milk or water

**Snack 10.30am**

Children can choose from raisins, biscuits, dried fruit/seeds, fresh fruit, cheese, crackers, milk or water

**Lunch 12noon – 1pm**

Hot cooked meal, dessert, fresh fruit, juice or water

**Snack 2.30pm**

Raisins, biscuits, dried fruit/seeds, fresh fruit, cheese, crackers, milk or water

**Tea 4pm – 5pm**

Teatime consists of hot food, a variety of sandwiches, salad plate, dessert and fresh fruit. Juice or water is always available.

Menus are carefully planned and selected to ensure all meals are both nutritious and well balanced.

Lunch (12.00 – 1.00pm) may be added to any session (subject to availability)

**Dietary Requirements**

We request that should you child have any allergies to specific foods, or if for medical or religious reasons your child should not be given certain foods, that you include these details under the section on the registration form that relates to your child's health.

## **TINY TOTS**

We welcome children from three months. Our dedicated Tiny Tots Room has a sleeping, feeding and play area. The room is bright and cheerful with various toys and equipment. Activities are planned to develop and stimulate each individual child's growth and needs. We purposely take no more than 6 tiny tots at one time to ensure a cosy, homely atmosphere allowing more one to one attention.

Daily charts are kept for the younger children so that parent/carers are aware of nappy changing and feeding times, plus sleep and general behaviour during the day. We implement the Early Years Foundation Stage and profiles are sent out regularly to keep parent/carers updated on their child's progress which then in turn helps the staff to plan for the child's next steps.

### **Kitchen**

We have a separate kitchen for sterilising bottles, preparing drinks and morning and afternoon snacks. The meals are prepared in the main kitchen and they can be pureed if necessary. The nursery also provides a variety of dried baby milk. However, if your child is on medicated milk or liquid formula, parent/carers will need to provide these themselves. It will be assumed that once children move up to the Toddler room, they will then move on to cow's milk.

### **Staff**

Qualified staff will be in attendance at all times, each room has a key worker and parent/carers can discuss any matter with them. The ratio of staff for under 2's is 1:3.

### **Nappies**

Nappies are supplied as are nappy rash creams and wipes.

### **Sessions/Hours**

Monday to Friday 7.30am to 6.30pm 50 weeks of the year. We close over the Christmas period. Each child is required to attend for a minimum of 2 sessions per week.

### **Uniform**

Uniform is not required for children aged 3 months to 2½ years.

## **REGISTRATION FORM**

Please inform the Manager immediately if any details contained in this application form changes at any time in the future.

### **Details of the Child**

Child's Name:
Date of Birth:
Address:
Post code:
Home Tel:
Sex F/M:
Religion:
Languages Spoken: (Please state your child's first language at home).
Country of Origin:

### **Contact Details**

Mother's Name	Fathers Name
Address:	Address:
Occupation:	Occupation:
Home Tel:	Home Tel:
Mobile:	Mobile:
Work Tel:	Work Tel:
Work Address;	Work Address:

Sessions Required (please tick)

Sessions	Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Early Morning	7.30 – 8am					
Breakfast	8-9am					
Morning	9am-12pm					
Lunch	12-1pm					
Afternoon	1-4pm					
Tea	4-5pm					
Extended Afternoon	5-6pm					
Late Session	6 – 6.30pm					

Each child is required to attend for a minimum of 3 sessions a week once they transfer into Pre-School.

Required date of commencement:.....

Expected leaving date if known:.....

How did you hear about us?.....

I enclose a non-returnable registration fee of £30

Cheques made payable to “SMILES Montessori Pre-School”.

I confirm that I have read all the information contained within SMILES Montessori Pre-School Prospectus and agree to be bound by all policies and procedures mentioned therein.

Signed..... Date.....

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(Office Use Only)

Date form received.....

Payment enclosed Yes/NO

## **Terms and Conditions of Payment**

### **Fees**

- Fees are calculated on a weekly basis but payable by standing order calendar monthly in advance.
- Fees are payable for 50 weeks of the year. Fees are not charged during the school's official Christmas closure (usually 10 working days).
- Full fees including those for breakfast, lunch and tea are payable during all absences, holidays and sickness.
- Payment by cheque or cash may be accepted by special arrangement.
- Fees and terms and conditions of payment are reviewed yearly.
- These terms and conditions form part of our contract, entered into when coming off the waiting list and confirming a precise commencement date.

### **Extra One-off and Short Term attendances**

Subject to availability, it is possible to attend extra sessions at Smiles on days that your child does not normally attend. The fee charged will be that published on the fee sheet at the time of attendance.

It is also possible, if available and within normal opening hours, to increase the length of the day that your child attends the school on a one-off basis. However, extra one-off attendance is charged for by the hour or sessions. Consequently, the total cost of attendance will be more than the standard rate for a day. For example if your child normally attends 9am – 12noon and you extend the session until 4pm, you will be invoiced your normal fee for the morning plus the published rate for 12noon to 4pm and NOT the rate for 9am – 4pm.

### **Notice Period**

On the occasion that you no longer require your child's place at the nursery, or you choose to reduce your child's attendance, the nursery **MUST** be given a minimum of four weeks notice in writing.

### **Formal Acceptance**

Following the offer of a place at the nursery, a formal agreement confirming your acceptance of our terms and conditions must be signed prior to commencement.

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