

Montessori Parent & Child Community

What is the Montessori Parent Infant Program?

For 9 weeks, we will meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30am to 10:00 am. During that time, you will experience our Montessori infant/young toddler environment alongside your baby. A guide will be there to lead parents in the art of observation. The environment is designed with infant's developmental needs and interests in mind. The Montessori environment enables infants and young toddlers to explore in a safe space.

This is not a play group, but a parent/child community, helping to bridge the gap between Montessori education and a Montessori way of life.

During the weeks, the guide will cover basic topics regarding Montessori and the infant. These a few of these topics will be an overview of Montessori, the importance of sensitive periods, observation, language/communication, independence, and environmental design.

In the environment you will find activities, which encourage:

- *Gross & Fine motor movement
- *Sensorial development
- *Music
- *Independence

- *Language development
- *Development of the hand
- *Social relationships
- *Concentration

What will the day look like?

Arrival Children and adults will gather at the garage. From there, a guide will lead you inside and up the stairs to the infant environment. Children and adults will remove shoes in the upstairs hallway, just outside of the room. Hang bags on the hooks inside the infant environment. *We will be traveling through the Primary environment where children will be starting their day.*

Greeting The guides will greet the parents and the children, as they enter. "Good morning, how are you today?" The guide builds a relationship with the child gradually.

Observation The key to Montessori is that it helps parents and caregivers to understand the infant. Parents allow the infant to explore the environment, as they are able, and observe them as they make their own choices.

Discussion Exchange of ideas through sharing experiences. Discussion of themed topic for the week.

Community An opportunity to build bonds and lay foundations within the Montessori community.

Classroom The environment is designed for infants to use as they feel comfortable. If your child is mobile, they can decide what activity they need as they explore the space. The child is free to explore the environment and the materials in it, as the parent observes. It is important not to over suggest or guide the child toward a certain material.

Farewell The guide will dismiss the group at 10:00 am with a simple farewell to you and the children.

Follow the Child *All materials are free for the child to explore and work with, at any time, for as long as they wish. Freedom to choose is fundamental in Montessori. In this way, the child shows others how they are developing. Making choices builds their independence and self esteem, "I can do it myself!"*

The Role of the Parent in the Community

- Sit rather than stand, as much as possible.
- Observe all of the children, as well as your own.
- Let your child choose his or her own material.
- Refrain from assisting. Allow your child to do everything for himself. At first the parent might need to be close to the child, but as your child becomes engaged slowly and quietly move away, so that you can sit back and observe.
- Always ask a child before intervening, "May I help you?"
- Keep adult noise level low. Use a low tone of voice. As long as we stay in our roles as guides, the children will work as if we do not exist.
- This is a time to enjoy peace away from the usual pressures of the day, and to be together with other parents and children building a foundation in Montessori education.

As you learn a little more each week, you will be able to observe how your child is growing and changing with knowledge and respect.