

Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten

Parent Handbook 2025/2026



Okotoks
Montessori
Preschool

Ages 3 to Kindergarten

Welcome to Okotoks Montessori!

*We are so pleased to welcome you to our Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten programs for 3-6 year olds in a multi-aged school environment, guided by caring, dedicated teachers and staff. This handbook is developed in consultation with the Government of Alberta, Alberta Education, Alberta Health Services, and the Town of Okotoks. This handbook was created to help parents and teachers keep the year running smoothly. **Please read through completely.** Thank you!*

Our Vision

Our vision is a peaceful world, filled with respect for all life and people, reached through the only path that can truly lead us there - our children.

As Dr. Montessori said, "The children are the hope and promise of mankind".

Our Mission

To inspire in children a passion for a lifelong love of learning in an environment which nurtures independence, creativity, confidence, and tolerance while developing a sense of responsibility for self and community based on the principles and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori.



“Show me, and I’ll
remember today, Teach me,
and I’ll remember
tomorrow,

Allow me to discover, and
I’ll remember FOREVER!”

Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten Parent Handbook 2025/2026



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As this handbook continues to be updated, additional review dates per section or policy will be **noted, and highlighted.**

"We acknowledge that we are on traditional territories of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Alberta and express gratitude and respect for the land we use, pledge to end systemic racism, commit to advancing reconciliation and partnering with Indigenous peoples in our work with school councils."

Okotoks Montessori School | 2025-2026 CALENDAR

AUGUST '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

25 – Staff Learning Day (no school)
26 – 1st day of Orientation
27 – 2nd day of Orientation
28 – 3rd day of Orientation
29 – no school

FEBRUARY '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

1 – Public Registration for 26/27 year
12 – Valentine's Party & Dress up day, Wear Pink or Red
13 – Reporting Day in-lieu (no school)
16-20 Family week (no school)
26 – Pink Shirt Day
14 Instr

SEPTEMBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

2 – First Day of School!
3 – Picture Day
4 – Fall Picnic, Big Rock School
8/9/10 – ZOOM PARENT MEETINGS
17 – Dress up day: Favourite colour
25 – Parent Night
30 – Truth and Reconciliation Day (no school)
20 Instr

MARCH '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

4 – Dress up day: 100 year old
17 – St. Patrick's Party, wear green
20 – PD Day (no school)
26 – Parent Night
21 Instr

OCTOBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

13 – Thanksgiving Day (no school)
15 – Dress up day: Wacky Hair
24 – PD Day (no school)
30 – Halloween Hunt/Party @ Lions Park - Parents welcome
21 Instr

APRIL '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

2 – Easter Hunt behind school – Parents welcome
3-10 – Easter Week (no school)
15 – Dress up day: Favourite sound/letter
22 – Earth day, lights off
17/24 – Kindergarten P/T Interviews
16 Instr

NOVEMBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

11 – Remembrance Day (no school)
19 – Dress up day: Favourite Animal
21 – Light up Okotoks booth
24 – PD Day (no school)
27 – Parent Night
28/Dec 5 – Preschool P/T Interviews
18 Instr

MAY '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

1/8 – Preschool P/T Interviews
7 – Mother's Day Tea
15 – PD Day (no school)
18 – Victoria Day (no school)
20 – Dress up day: Favourite book Character
19 Instr

DECEMBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

4 – Saint Nicholas Day
5/12 – Kindergarten P/T Interviews
TBD – Christmas Concert
18 – Dress up day: Christmas PJs, last day before Winter break
19 - Jan 2 – Winter Break (no school)
14 Instr

JUNE '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

11 – Kinder Field Trip
18 – Father's Day Party
19 – Kindergarten Graduation (no school)
24 – Dress up day: Beach wear
25 – Last Day of School!
18 Instr

JANUARY '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

5 – Back to School!
5 – Returning Registration Opens for 2026/2027 Year
17 – OPEN HOUSE
21 – Dress up day: Wacky outfit
29 – Parent Night
20 Instr

Contact Us:

*Please text absences, permission pick ups to 587-890-3450.

*Please send classroom correspondence by email to your classroom (see Program Handbook > Communication)

*For payment inquiries, please email:

admin@okotoksmontessori.com.

*Please note that changes may be made to the above dates,

always refer to the monthly newsletter for official dates.

Instructional days: 181 ■ School closed ■ Event day

Registration Fees & Times

(updated April 2025)

2025/2026 Okotoks Montessori Fees (updated February 2025)

PRESCHOOL CHILDCARE PROGRAM (3 & 4 year old) HALF DAY OPTIONS

AM 8:30-11:30 am PM 12:00 – 3:00 pm Either AM or PM

<input type="checkbox"/>	Program Option	Fees before grant reduction	What you will pay
AM	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 days/week T/W/Th	No grant	(40 hrs) \$200.00
PM	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 days/week M-Th	\$784.30	(50-99 hrs) \$230.00(P)

PRESCHOOL CHILDCARE PROGRAM (3 & 4 year old) FULL DAY OPTIONS

8:30 am - 3:00 pm

Program Option	Fees before grant reduction	What you will pay
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 days per week T/W/Th	\$784.30	(50-99 hrs) \$230.00(P)
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 days per week M-Th	\$1206.62	(100+ hrs) \$326.25(F)
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 days per week M-F	\$1206.62	(100+ hrs) \$426.25(S)

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (5 year old) HALF DAY OPTIONS Through Alberta Education

AM 8:30-11:30 am PM 12:00 – 3:00 pm

5 days per week M-F	\$0/month Funded through Alberta Ed
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KINDERGARTEN CHILDCARE PROGRAM (5 year old) FULL DAY OPTIONS

8:30 am - 3:00 pm (attending childcare during school hours)

Program Option	Fees before grant reduction	What you will pay
3 FULL days, 2 half days per week. Tues/Wed/Thur FULL ***Half day preference: <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	No grant	(40 hrs) \$230.00
4 FULL days per week, ***1 half day FRIDAY <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	\$756.19	(50-99 hrs) \$230(P)
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 days per week M-F	\$756.19	(50-99 hrs) \$330(S)

*** please note AM and PM half day placement will be determined by the school

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE AGES 3-6 OPTIONS (subject to availability)

BEFORE CARE 7:30 – 8:30 am

<input type="checkbox"/> 3 days per week	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> T <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> Th	Included in flat fee rates
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 or 5 days per week	<input type="checkbox"/> M-Th <input type="checkbox"/> M-F	

AFTER CARE 3:00 – 5:30 pm

<input type="checkbox"/> 3 days per week	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> T <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> Th	Included in flat fee rates
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 or 5 days per week	<input type="checkbox"/> M-Th <input type="checkbox"/> M-F	

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE FULL DAY 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

<input type="checkbox"/> 3 days per week	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> T <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> Th	Included in flat fee rates
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 or 5 days per week	<input type="checkbox"/> M-Th <input type="checkbox"/> M-F	

Registration fee (non-refundable):

3 year old NEW: \$100
3 year old RETURNING OR NEW SIBLING: \$70
4 year old NEW: \$100
4 year old RETURNING OR NEW SIBLING: \$70
5 year old KINDERGARTEN: \$250

P – Part time. A flat fee of \$230/month will be paid by parent for their children attending our program **50-99 hours**, according to the **Affordability Grant**. This may include Before and/or After care, subject to availability.

F- Full time. A flat fee of \$326.25/month will be paid by parents for their children attending our programs **100+ hours**, according to the **Affordability Grant**. This may include Before and/or After care, subject to availability.

S – Supplemental programs. Extra-curricular programming will occur on Fridays. Supplemental fees are \$100 in addition and include enrichment programming in: French, Music and Yoga.

Additional School Information

- Our yearly school calendar **aligns closely with** the Foothills School Division and Christ the Redeemer School Division, for school closures for Winter Break, Family week and Easter week, open from September to June each year. Our PD days are unique, please check our yearly calendar for our school closures.
- Students must be turning 3, 4 or 5 years old by December 31, 2025.
- All students must be potty-trained.
- Kindergarten students need to be registered by September 30th to be fully funded by Alberta Ed

Orientation for New Students

(updated July 2025)

Orientation is a special time for us to get to know new students and begin to show them lessons and help them become more familiar with their classroom and teachers over 3 day sessions. New students will attend **all 3 days of Orientation**, before regular school begins. This occurs the last week of August each year: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday for 2 hours each day (August 26, 27, 28, 2025). Please check your email for your child's orientation schedule. Regular school hours will commence the Tuesday after each September Labour Day (September 2, 2025).

Payment Policy

(updated May 2024)

PAYMENTS: Monthly fees are due on the 1st of the month. Payments will be made through Kindertales or cash will be accepted for monthly payments. If you are paying via Kindertales, please login and set up your payment information for direct withdrawal on the 1st of each month.

Your child is registered to attend our program from September – June. We have set their space aside and our lessons plans include a school year worth of the Montessori curriculum.

- If you go away internationally for a month, you must pay for the month(s) missed to keep your child's spot in our program. Please tell us well in advance of your departure. We are a school and discourage lengthy absences - it's difficult for the child & teacher to get caught up on lessons.
- There are no adjustments for sick, holiday, or other missed days. Please do not ask to change or make up missed days. Due to scheduling and consistency within the classroom, and fairness to all parents, no exceptions will be made.
- One month's notice, in writing, is required if you wish to discontinue attending the school. If you do not give sufficient notice, you will be invoiced for the final month.
- NSF transactions will be charged a \$40.00 fee.
- Okotoks Montessori reserves the right to issue 30-day written notice to parents of upcoming contract and / or fee amendments on a go-forward basis. Families who do not wish to continue in the program due to these changes must respond with written notice within the 30-day period.

Alberta Government Affordability Grant

(updated May 2025)

All fees include the Alberta Government's Affordability Grant and are set by the Province.

If your child is attending:

P – Part time. A flat fee of \$230/month will be paid by parents for their children attending our program **50-99 hours, according to the Affordability Grant.** This may include Before and/or After care, subject to availability.

F- Full time. A flat fee of \$326.25/month will be paid by parents for their children attending our programs **100+ hours, according to the Affordability Grant.** This may include Before and/or After care, subject to availability.

S – Supplemental programs. Extra-curricular programming will occur on Fridays. Supplemental fees are \$100 in addition and include enrichment programming in: French, Music and Yoga.

*"The child gives us a beautiful lesson – that in order to form and maintain our intelligence, we must use our hands."
~Maria Montessori*

Arrival and Dismissal Policy & Procedures

(updated May 2024)

If your child is half days, they will receive Preschool or Kindergarten programming in Classroom 1, 2 or 3. Kindergarten students are automatically enrolled in 5 half days of Kindergarten.

If your child is **full** days, they will have two programs – one will be their Preschool or Kindergarten programming in Classroom 1, 2, or 3, and they will have **extended** Montessori learning, either in Classroom 4 or 5.

DROP OFF and PICK UP:

Please refer to the classroom schedules for your door # to drop off and pick up.

Half day and full day students (Half: 8:30-11:30am or 12:00-3:00pm/Full: 8:30am-3:00 pm):
please go to your classroom door (1, 2, 3 or 4/5)

Before care students (7:30 -8:30 am):
please go to Classroom 4/5 door

After care students (3:00-5:30 pm):
please pickup at Classroom 2 door

Time: Morning Class - 8:30 am drop off: doors open at 8:25 am and are **locked at 8:35 am**. Circle time begins promptly at 8:35 am.

Dismissal begins promptly at 11:25 am.

Time: Afternoon Class - 12:00 pm drop off: doors open at 11:55 am and are **locked at 12:05 pm**. Circle time begins promptly at 12:05 pm.

Dismissal is promptly at 2:55 pm.

***TIP:** Sometimes children or parents may suffer separation anxiety on the first days of school or after a break from school. We want to assure a happy and successful school experience for your child. The teachers are well experienced in managing separation anxiety and have found that a short and positive “see you soon!” is easiest for the child. Please do not carry your child to the door. Also, prolonged good-byes makes the separation more difficult. Early in the year, please feel free to text the school for reassurance that your child has settled in and is adjusting well, we love to send pictures and updates.*

LATE PICKUPS: A \$5 charge will be implemented for late pickup after dismissal time (Morning pickup: 11:30 am/ Afternoon pickup: 3:00 pm/Aftercare pickup: 5:30 pm). This late charge will be invoiced to you and paid to the teacher who stayed with your child until you arrived. Everyone's time is important to them, including your child's and those looking after them. Being on time shows respect for them. Thank you.

CHANGES IN PICK UP: Please notify the school, on Kindertales, of any changes regarding persons who are allowed to pick your child up from school, in your “Authorized to Pick up/Drop off”. In an emergency, you may text the school with instructions to release your child to another individual, please note that the pick up person will need to provide ID.

TARDINESS: This is a gentle reminder: we begin our program right at 8:35 am MORNINGS and 12:05 pm AFTERNOONS. As teachers, the day is pre-planned to get in all the lessons that are scheduled. As the year progresses, some parents may begin to experience tardiness. If you arrive 5, 10 or 15 minutes late then we have a gap in which your child must now wait for another day to have that lesson or they miss being helper of the day, beginning at circle time. It's hard to keep track of this all! On the dismissal end, when you are late in picking up, children are left waiting at circle, without their peers to visit with and they feel singled out. Also, we may need to entertain your child. This takes away from record keeping, planning lessons, tidying of the classroom, or eating our lunch. We really appreciate that you drop them off 5 minutes prior to the arrival time and are waiting to pick them up 5 minutes prior to their program end. We understand that unpredictable events may take place, please remember to text us at 587-890-3450.

FRIDAYS: Kindergarteners will meet together in Classroom 2 each Friday, please drop off at this door.

Okotoks Montessori Health/Medication Policy

(updated May 2024)

Please note the following policies for sick children to refrain from attending school. Parents/guardians should assess their children daily for new symptoms of illness. It is recommended that symptomatic individuals stay at home until they are feeling well, are able to fully participate in all normal school activities and have reached the end of the recommended isolation period (as applicable).

A child should not be sent to school if:

- **Temperature** - if he/she has a fever above 37.8°C, 99.5°F, please take your child's temperature daily. We will also be taking temperatures daily. A fever means your child is sick and needs time to rest and heal.
- **Vomiting** - if he/she has vomited within the past 48 hours or if a family member has vomited in the past 12 hours
- **Diarrhea or loose stool** - if he/she has had diarrhea within the past 48 hours or if a family member has had diarrhea in the past 12 hours
- **Cold/flu/covid** - if he/she had a runny nose with green mucus.
- **Cold/flu/covid** - if he/she is coughing chronically (all the time) and/or has been administered cough medicine within the past 24 hours.
- **OTC medications** - if he/she has had any OTC (over the counter) medicines such as Tylenol, Advil, anti-diarrhea, or cough medicine etc. within 24 hours of coming to school. They must have **not** taken any OTCs 24 hours before returning. If your child has been prescribed antibiotics, please inform us.
- **Lice** - if he/she shows any evidence of lice infestation, please quietly inform the teaching staff.
- **Pink eye** - if he/she has evidence of conjunctivitis (pink eye), antibiotics need to have been administered 24 hours before returning to school, or if a sibling has pink eye, please keep your Montessori child at home for a minimum of 24 hours in case they show signs of pink eye
- **Strep** - if he/she shows any evidence of sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
- **Chicken pox** - if he/she has had chicken pox and the sores are not crusted over
- **5th disease** - if he/she has had 5th disease and the rash is still evident

1. A child who shows any of these signs after he/she has come to school will be isolated from the group, and the parents and /or emergency contact will be immediately called to come and take the child home. The child will be provided with a disposable mask, chair and blanket, if necessary (these articles will be sanitized after each use). The parent, or emergency contact or a person arranged by the parent **MUST PICK UP THE SICK CHILD WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF THE STAFF CALL.**
2. A child may return to school when all symptoms have ceased and they have gone 24 hours without OTC medicines (Tylenol, Advil, etc).
3. The staff reserve the right to determine if a child is well enough to be at school. Staff have been trained in recognizing and managing communicable diseases and will greet each child each day and determine if that child is illness-free and can stay in school that day.
4. Administration of Medicine: The school does not administer OTC medication (Tylenol, Benadryl etc) to children.
5. Pre-existing Conditions: If your child has pre-existing conditions that require medication to be left at the School (EpiPen, insulin, etc), a Medication Administration Form must be completed online in Kindertales. Medication must be current (expiry indicated) and clearly labelled in original packaging from the prescribing pharmacy with the child's prescription and name. Medication is stored out of reach of children, but within quick access if needed. Medication is carried off-site, as needed.
6. If your child does not have current vaccinations, you will be required to complete a Waiver related to reportable diseases – please fill out the Immunization Waiver form on Kindertales.
7. Absences from school will invariably happen. It is most important that children who are sick are not sent to school. This is for your child's good as well as for the welfare of the other children in the class and the staff! A quick text to alert us of their absence is important to us and is appreciated.
8. Our policies are updated with guidance from AHS. Please refer to the most recent Health/Medication Policy posted on classroom windows and bulletin boards.

Full Day Information

(updated July 2025)

- **Classroom:** Please refer to the emailed schedule (sent prior to Labour Day weekend) to know what classroom door to drop off at and what door to pick up from
- **Lunch:** please refer to Snacks/Lunches and Healthy Eating below
- **Recess:** It is the PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY to bring outdoor gear **daily** to school. This will include checking the weather and bringing: rain pants if it's a rainy day and if it's a chilly morning, please bring fuzzy mittens and a toque. On snowy days, please provide waterproof mittens, toque and snowpants. Hot, warm days please bring a sunhat. These will go back home DAILY.
Outdoor Recess will ALWAYS occur unless is -15 Celsius, including windchill, at 11:00 am of that day according to Environment Canada. Again please check the weather daily before sending your child to school!
- **Indoor Recess** will consist of indoor active play activities. Please refer to the Weather/Outdoors Policy below.
- **NO BACKPACKS PLEASE!** Backpacks are simply not needed, we provide extra clothing for any accidents, and daily work gets glued into a scrapbook/artbook that comes home at the end of the year.

Snacks/Lunches and Healthy Eating

(updated May 2024)

Due to dietary restrictions, children will bring their own **LABELLED** snacks and lunches (for full days only) each day.

Half day students snacks: Please bring in daily:

A labelled snack box with suggested cracker/fruit/vegetable, that's ALL they need! No water bottles please, we provide water in the classroom that the children help themselves to throughout the day and at recess.

Full day students snacks and lunches:

Please label (1) morning snack, (2) lunch, and (3) afternoon snack. If your child is in Before Care, please provide a small breakfast snack (4). If your child is in After Care, please provide another small snack (5). Please refer to Half day student snacks for snack ideas.

Lunch ideas include a ½ sandwich or ½ wrap or thermos, fruit bar/cookie. No candy please! **Water only (no milk or juice please).** We do not provide a microwave or refrigeration, please feel free to include an ice pack. Hot lunches will be offered, beginning in September, for purchase, 2x per week, details will follow in late summer.

IMPORTANT: Please provide a lunch kit that these items **can fit into easily**, and the side pouch must carry a water bottle easily. The water bottle cannot be clipped to the handle, nor can it be carried loose. The students need to be able to carry their lunch kit in one hand and hold a partner's hand in their other.

Your child will be responsible for unzipping, organizing, and zipping up their lunch boxes daily, please help them practice!

Supply List Information

(reviewed July 2025)

Students will provide supplies once a year in each of their classrooms, if they are full day, they will have two classrooms. We are always in need of glue sticks as the students do an abundance of arts and crafts that are glued into Scrapbooks that come home at the end of each year. Please see the last page, page 23 for the current Supply List.

Weather and Outdoors Policy

(reviewed January 2025)

Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten has deep appreciation for the benefits spent in the outdoor classroom. Children and staff spend time outside, in most weather conditions. Time outside can range from 20 minutes to 1 hour, depending on activities. Half-day students will have outdoor time each day in early Fall and late Spring, and during late Fall and Winter months will go outside each Tuesday and Thursday. Please watch the monthly newsletter for updates. Full day students will have outdoor recesses daily.

On forecasted sunny days, please apply **sunscreen** prior to arriving. We will reapply sunscreen for afternoon recess. Parents are welcome to provide specific sunscreen.

Children who arrive without proper weather gear may be refused entry to the School at drop off to protect the child's best interests.

The School uses Environment Canada as our single weather resource for official decisions:

<https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca/weather/alberta/okotoks>

Outdoor time may be limited in length or cancelled for temperatures below -15 degrees Celsius, poor air quality above 7, above 25 degrees Celsius, or where conditions render any beneficial activity pointless or high-risk. The best interest of the children and the likelihood of ability to conduct beneficial learning activities will always be considered (for example, shaded activities and drinking plenty of water for hot days; shelter from wind and exposure to sun where possible).

Kindergarten & Special Needs Supports

(updated May 2024)

We are pleased to provide funded Kindergarten as well as special needs programming such as PUF (program unit funding), MM (mild/moderate), ESL (English Second Language), and GT (gifted/talented) supports geared towards the individual needs of the child in both Preschool or Kindergarten. Certificated teachers are hired to teach the Preschool & Kindergarten curriculum according to the [Kindergarten Statement](#) and updated curriculum, and an annual Teacher Growth Plan and evaluations are governed according to the [Teaching Quality Standard](#) and [Teacher Growth Supervision and Evaluation Policy](#).

SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS: Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten believes in early intervention to assist children that may need extra supports in their early years. We provide therapists and supports such as 1:1 aides, speech intervention, occupational therapy, physio, and behaviour support as needed. We are here to help your child succeed and screen students early Fall.

KINDERGARTEN EXPECTATIONS: Our Kindergarteners are typically returning students and are well prepped for their final year in our program. We send home monthly homework each month from September to May. We also send home Take Home Reading as the student learns to phonetically read. We ask for Take Home Reading to be returned **the following day** to receive new reading books. Our Kinders are such strong readers, with your help!

We plan and teach your 3 and 4 year old child with the expectation they are returning for our Kindergarten program. Your child works diligently and is prepped with all necessary skills to be in our Kindergarten program. We feel our Kindergarteners graduate our program and are fully prepared for Grade 1 at any school. Please note that Big Rock School (next door) offers Montessori for Grades 1-6 (register early as they have limited spaces).

Communications to Parents

(updated August 2021)

Effective communication between parents, teachers, and child is essential.

It is very important that all families are kept aware of our School activities. The following communication vehicles are used to ensure families are informed:

- School calendar (page 3)
- E-mail communications monthly, check your emails please! We try to limit emails to the monthly newsletters with a calendar that contains all the information needed. Occasionally we send out additional emails if timely information needs to be relayed. Parents, please read your emails and newsletters and mark down all school activities as this is our official communication tool used
- Re-posting important documents on the outside classroom windows and bulletin board in each classroom, please come in and take a look

The School does not take responsibility for parents' misunderstanding or lack of awareness of School schedules and activities. It is up to the families to ensure they are aware of their child's upcoming activities, PD days, vacation periods, etc contained in our correspondence.

It is important that parents feel they can connect with their classroom teacher. Often teachers won't have time at the door for a chat, but can arrange to meet you after 3 pm. Please ask us for our time, we love to chat about your child. Please feel free to contact the school with any concerns or information by email. The school texting number is 587-890-3450 and is used for absences/pickups. For payment and administration inquiries, please email: admin@okotoksmontessori.com. Please email your classroom teacher as indicated below:

CLASSROOM CONTACT EMAIL:

Classroom 1: classroom1@okotoksmontessori.com
Classroom 3: classroom3@okotoksmontessori.com
Speech: speech@okotoksmontessori.com

Classroom 2: sharlene@okotoksmontessori.com
Classroom 4/5: extendedday@okotoksmontessori.com
Aftercare: sharlene@okotoksmontessori.com

Clothing Policy

(updated August 2021)

INDOOR DRESS: Please ensure your child has a pair of practical indoor slippers, please, no CROCS or stuffy-type slippers as they don't fit in our cubbies, nor open heel as they slip off while sitting or kneeling during carpet work. Rubber bottomed slippers are the most durable in the classroom. **Label** the slippers clearly. Please dress your child comfortably for school, with long sleeves on chillier days. Please do not send them in an extra sweater or hoodie, these invariably end up in our Lost and Found as the students don't recognize what they wore! We keep the classroom warm and comfortable for all of us. We will be painting, sitting on the floor, and making the best use of our day, and will need to be dressed comfortably and in casual attire. Please do not send your child in a costume outside of Halloween or costume paraphernalia due to distraction and regulation of the child and their peers.

OUTDOOR DRESS: Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor activity each day they come to school. During the school year, your child will have Outdoor Education, including listening walks, nature walks, use of playground equipment and plain good 'ole exercise. For outdoor shoes, please send your child in shoes they can put on themselves. We do not accept lace up shoes or flip flops. Please include a jacket each day. We like to teach the students to hang their coat by the 'label loop', as this helps it from hanging on the ground. **Please LABEL EVERYTHING – including your child's coats and outdoor shoes & SNACK/LUNCH BAGS/WATER BOTTLE.** Please note we have the right to refuse a child at arrival without suitable outdoor clothing. See Weather & Outdoors Policy for additional information. **NO BACKPACKS PLEASE.**

Field Trips

(updated August 2024)

Kindergarten: We have one monthly field trip planned to the Okotoks Public Library each month **on a Friday**. The date will be written on the monthly calendar. The librarian will read a story to our students and our students will get to take a library book home. Library books will need to be returned each week. We love to promote literacy and are so pleased to have the support of our local library. If you do not have a library membership, we have a coupon for 3 months that the Library has provided, for extended home family reading.

We have a June Kindergarten Field Trip planned and will alert you in the monthly newsletter. As we have prior years, we will ask for parent volunteers to help accompany the child on the field trip. A field trip form will be required to sign. Children love to have their parents come!

Preschool & Kindergarten: We have in-class Field Trips for Preschoolers and Kindergarteners, where a presenter will bring their information to all our children. These guests will always be supervised with the children, and will be from qualified providers of educational programs for children (Royal Canadian Legion, local Dentist office, local Fire Department, local law enforcement, etc.).

The School may take planned or spontaneous walking field trips to nearby locations. We will notify you a minimum of 2 business days in advance of any field trips with proper consent/waiver forms. Parent volunteers may be asked to accompany us on a walking field trip into the community.

Toileting Policy

(updated August 2021)

POTTY-TRAINED: All children must be potty-trained and wearing big boy/girl underwear. We do not accept pullups. We do not require extra clothes to be sent with your child, we have lots of extra clothes in the washroom and we help change our children as needed as we understand accidents occur. **A gentle reminder to ask your child to use their home toilet just before coming to school as we start our day with circle time, and there are less interruptions during circle.** Students freely use the washroom throughout their day.

Birthday Celebrations

(updated August 2021)

We honour your child's birthday and invite the parents and family to come for their child's celebration. Montessori birthday celebrations focus around a ceremony called 'The Earth Goes Round the Sun'. The children sing a special song, and the celebrated child walks one year around a symbolic sun for each year of life. On each circulation, the parent (or teacher, if parent cannot attend) shares memories from that year of life, assisted by the pictures. We find that this is a wonderful way to recognize the journey of the child as a person and their accomplishments to date. Closer to your child's birthday, you will be given a detailed handout on this. We will celebrate August birthdays in September and July birthdays in June.

We welcome you and your immediate family for the 20 minute birthday celebration. We will provide a PARENT CONTACT LIST at the start of the year so that invitations can be distributed in person at arrival or dismissal (parent to parent), by mail or email/text. We ask that you do not ask the teacher to hand out birthday invites.

For children with special dietary needs, ie. gluten or dairy free, parents will need to provide LABELLED pre-packaged special treats for classmates' birthday celebrations every few months.

Okotoks Montessori Health Practices

(updated August 2022)

It is a daily challenge to keep ahead of germs in the classrooms. We are governed by Alberta Health Services, and they come for yearly inspections, or sooner, as requested by the School. We have a designated Staff Cleaner whose job is to clean and disinfect materials all day, and as well, Staff regularly clean and maintain their classrooms and common areas. We rely on our parents following the Okotoks Montessori Health/Medication Policy to help keep us all healthy!

Additional Information

(updated August 2022)

MATERIALS: Please do not send stuffies or favourite toys with your child. Toys are better kept at home as they may become lost or damaged, other children may think they are theirs, and they distract the children from their Montessori work. We have cute and sparkly objects at school and invariably there are some students who would love to take them home! Kindly check pockets for unfamiliar objects when your child returns home; we appreciate them being returned as they are part of school equipment and are hard to replace or render the material unusable to other children.

PETS: There are occasions when we have pets in our classroom. Children are given this opportunity to learn more about the world around us. Children use proper hygienic procedures of thorough hand washing at all times as well as safety protocols. We even like to 'borrow' pets from our parents, please let us know if you have any pets you may share within the classroom for a limited time! Please note neither students nor staff can handle reptiles due to salmonella or other waterborne germs.

DAYCARE/DAYHOME DROP OFF/PICK UP: It is the parents' responsibility to inform daycare/dayhome providers of the school times for drop off/pick up, please provide them a copy of this Parent Handbook (copies are available at the school). Please ensure your Portable Record is updated with their contact information, and please provide your classroom teacher with your daycare/dayhome contact numbers/email.

*"The child does not work in order to move or in order to become intelligent. He works to adapt to his environment. It is essential that he has many experiences in the environment if he is to do this."
~Maria Montessori*

Parent Participation

(updated May 2024)

We encourage parents and families to get involved in our School! There are many ways to participate throughout the year.

Mandatory Fall Parent meeting - we will have a mandatory parent meeting in the Fall for each age group, ages 3, 4 and 5's, to review the year's expectations and answer questions

In-class and special day volunteering – See Parental involvement below.

Parent-teacher interviews – See below. Interviews may be in person or by ZOOM.

Parent Evenings – Occurring 4x a year, we host Parent nights! Parents can experience their child's learning in the classroom by coming for an hour in the early evenings. Watch for announcements and sign up via lists on the classroom windows or by email.

Participation on social media – Promoting our school on Facebook and Instagram channels.

Philanthropic opportunities - Donate your used books, craft supplies, and toys. There is also an opportunity for sponsoring a student – donate an amount that you prefer to the School and be issued a tax receipt.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: We welcome you! We love our parents to share their talents and knowledge, so please let us know if you would be willing to share skills or information with the children! If you are a working parent and would like to volunteer, please let us know; we often have cutting/colouring that we can send home with your child. We host a Halloween Hunt, an Easter Hunt, a Mother's Day Tea and a Father's Day Party that parents are invited to attend during program hours. As indicated above, we also host multiple Parent Nights, in addition to a mandatory Parent Orientation meeting. Please remember to refer to our monthly newsletters for scheduled events to attend. Volunteer parents are required to have a current criminal background check with vulnerable Sector check and to sign in and out.

Some additional ways to be involved include:

- Helping your child at home with the sounds of the week
- Helping your child prepare for a class sharing time
- Helping to provide photos and a favourite story for birthday celebrations
- Preparation for events (We will ask for volunteers via email)
- Reading to your child at home

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES: Shared communication is an integral part of providing an optimum experience for your child.

We have parent-teacher interviews twice each year, please refer to the yearly calendar and monthly newsletters for official dates. Invitations to book a time are posted on the classroom windows and well as by e-mail. Interviews may be held in person or by ZOOM conferencing.

Special meetings outside conferences may also be arranged. Should you need to address a teacher regarding a concern, please email admin@okotoksmontessori.com so that Administration can set up a meeting. A gentle reminder to respect the teachers' teaching times, as their attention must remain on the children.

PARENTS' CONTACT LIST: A Parent Contact List is maintained in each classroom, and distributed to parents. This list is voluntary and compiled with parents' and child's name, addresses, and telephone numbers. It is useful for playdates, carpools, and for birthdays. Please note we do not permit the Parent Contact List to be used for solicitation of any type. The Parent Contact List is emailed at the beginning of September each year. Please save it for the year!

"The hands help the development of the intellect. When a child is capable of using his hands, he can have a quantity of experiences in the environment through using them. In order to develop his consciousness, then his intellect, and then his will, he must have exercises and experience.."
~Maria Montessori

Photography Policy

(updated August 2022)

SCHOOL PHOTOS: To stay connected with parents, teachers take photos of children completing lessons and work to showcase to parents how their child operates in the classroom environment. These photos are only available to administration, teachers, and the registered parents / guardians of the child. From time to time, we may text you a picture of your child and ask if we can use it on social media. Please note we will never post a picture of your child without your consent. All school photos of your child are compiled into a Kindergarten Graduation Photobook when they graduate!

PER-CHILD PHOTOS: We provide a professional photographer to take student pictures and a class photo in September. In order to have your child participate in our class photos and individual photography, we require your permission at the time of the photo session, which is provided by signing up for your child's photo to be taken. The photography session is provided free of charge; proofs and an order form are provided by the photographer.

Technology Policy

(updated August 2021)

As part of Montessori philosophy, technology is minimized in the teaching of the child. From time to time, we may feature a show or movie as part of our planned theme Days, or for special parties such as Christmas, Valentines and St Patrick's Day. All shows will be appropriate for children and focus on themes and topics pursuant of educational learning. We may also use a 1-2 minute video for our theme videos, from NatGeo for Kids etc, for additional learning.

Program Review & Improvement Policy

(reviewed November 2022)

Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten aims to continuously improve and grow to meet the needs, ideas and expectations of our community, staff, parents and attendees.

Parents of current children are invited to provide feedback on their experience with the School, as well as their thoughts around overall School programming, once a year through formal surveys. The surveys may be distributed electronically through a tool such as SurveyMonkey. Parents can also provide face to face feedback about their child / family experience during parent-teacher interviews in winter and late spring each year.

Questions for our surveys are developed using recommendations on best practices for School from across Canada, Provincial Childcare Licensing, and consultation with our Board.

Of course, we welcome informal feedback at any time of the year. Parents, community members and staff have the following avenues open to them to communicate with the School:

- E-mail us at admin@okotoksmontessori.com
- Talking to a teacher or administrator through a scheduled meeting
- Phoning into the School at 403-938-0400 after regular school hours (after 3 pm)

Feedback that is gathered is analyzed as a collective whole and provided to the administration of the School and the Board for consideration. Where possible, we take feedback into consideration as we plan for future growth of the School, including investment of time, money and resources.

"It is interesting to notice that where life is simple and natural and where the children participate in the adult's life, they are calm and happy."

~Maria Montessori

Evaluation of Children Policy

(updated November 2022)

Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten assesses and observes learners on an ongoing basis, with the primary purpose to improve child experience and meet the needs of learners. Kindergarten students are governed by Alberta Education and the Kindergarten Statement and have 3 reporting periods on the Kindergarten outcomes. Preschool students have 2 reporting periods within the year.

Methods of evaluation may include:

- Small group and individual question-and-response opportunities; group games; collaborative participation lessons with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge
- Completion and self-correction of various self-directed Montessori activities, and forward progression through various levels of difficulty under self-motivation
- One-on-one activities between a child and teacher
- Observation of a child's activities from a distance

'Tests' (isolated, timed events where each child is expected to perform a series of activities) are not part of the assessment methods at our School. Our education activities focus on a broad range of outcomes across the social, emotional, and academic perspectives of the whole child. Assessment interactions are always appropriate to the child's age, developmental and cultural background; are constructive; and focus on what a child can do.

Assessments encourage movement forward to overcome areas of difficulty, linking new learning to what a child already knows and can do successfully. This information is used by teachers to be informed about, to reflect upon and to initiate activities that enhance the child's learning.

Especially in a Montessori environment, children are involved in their own assessment on a daily basis. This gives them internal motivation and responsibility for their own learning.

Diagnostic observations

All Okotoks Montessori teachers are trained in how to observe, assess, and communicate areas where a different approach to learning may be needed. This helps ensure that potential learning difficulties are recognized early and that families can be connected to supports. It also helps us provide more challenging activities as children become ready.

Communicating observations

Communication regarding assessments and observations in class take place in a wide variety of ways at Okotoks Montessori, including:

- Photos and observations
- Two parent-teacher conferences per year
- Additional parent-teacher conferences as requested or required
- Annual progress available on Montessori skills, social, emotional and developmental growth, as well as Kindergarten program reports according to Kindergarten outcomes and reporting governed by Alberta Education
- Child work samples sent home on a regular basis as well as a Scrapbook at year end that encapsulates their year

*"Growing is a succession of acquisitions of independence. At first they are physical acquisitions – teeth, walking, language – each comes at the right time if the child is allowed to live naturally, for nature has assigned a definite order of these acquisitions."
~Maria Montessori*

Supervision & Participation Policy

(updated August 2021)

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN:

Every child at Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten is supervised constantly, actively and diligently. This involves ensuring staff members are always in a position to observe each child, respond to the individual needs and intervene if necessary.

Our supervision tactics include:

- Arranging the classroom to enable close monitoring of children
- Accounting for the number of children entering the classroom at start times and
- Referencing attendance records throughout the day at key points of entry / exit into class
- Providing an appropriate ratio for supervision of teachers to child as per Alberta Provincial Childcare Licensing
- Ensuring that doors to outside doors are secured and / or monitored
- Educating children about the importance of informing staff members before leaving the classroom space to the bathroom, and supervising children with float staff while in the bathrooms to provide assistance as needed
- Engaging each child regularly throughout the day
- Visibility and accessibility in areas in which the children are engaged in activity and lessons, including calling for an additional staff member when necessary
- Being alert to and aware of the potential for incidents and injury throughout the classrooms
- Ensuring that no child or group of children are left alone at any time throughout the day without an educator being present
- Supervising children's daily arrival and departure from the School and being aware of the person who has authority to collect a child
- Evaluating supervision practices regularly

All staff members must complete and have a current Police Criminal Check Record including vulnerable sector categories before being employed by the School, must hold a Alberta Childcare Certification, and must carry valid First Aid certification. The ratio of adults to children as per Alberta Licensing is a minimum of 1:8 for ages 3-4.5; and 1:10 for ages 4.5 +.

OUTDOOR PLAY:

The children are lined up at their entrance door before they go outside and lined up at the appropriate entrance on their return to the classroom, to enable the staff to count them in and out.

Children may have outdoor experiences inside a fenced play space or in outside fields behind the school. Children are closely supervised at all times. In spaces that are fenced, staff spread out throughout the space and are assigned to supervise small groups of children, so every child has a direct set of eyes on them. In spaces that are not fenced, staff will spread out on an outer boundary around the children group and ensure that children do not leave the perimeter. Staff will also be assigned to watch specific children to ensure their well-being during play.

Children are encouraged to explore guided and self-guided play to help them expand their physical abilities and vocabulary. Children may use sports equipment, pretend toys and other non-traditional loose parts outdoor to encourage experimentation and creative thinking. If you are picking your child up from our outside areas at day's end, please be sure to make contact with the teachers to let them know that you are leaving with your child. Please note that once the transfer of responsibility is made from teacher to parent, the School is no longer responsible to supervise your child. Please depart the outdoor play area promptly upon pickup.

Child Guidance Policy & Procedures

(updated August 2021)

DISCIPLINE POLICY: Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten is committed to the well-being of each and every child. We have a Peaceful Classroom Model in place at all times. The program has a set daily routine but allows for flexibility. Clear guidelines are provided so that children know what is expected of them. Limits that relate to safety and protection of self, others, and the environment are clear and are enforced consistently in a positive way. Children are given time to respond to expectations. Teachers may use a variety of strategies depending on the child and the situation. These strategies include: gaining a child's attention, staying in close proximity to the child, reminding, acknowledging feelings before setting limits, redirecting or diverting, age appropriate choices, and natural consequences. Our goal is to encourage children to develop respect, self-control, self-confidence, and sensitivity in their social interactions during their time at school.

Please note that Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten will not:

- a) inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation,
- b) deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity, or
- c) use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation

EXTENDED DISCIPLINE POLICY: When a Montessori child is unable to comply with the general Discipline Policy, Okotoks Montessori proceeds to an extended discipline policy that states: "If a child is unable to comply with the Okotoks Montessori Peaceful Classroom Model, a written warning is sent home to the parents. A report of the child's unacceptable school behavior(s) is documented within the warning and support for the school from the parents is requested. If three written warnings are sent and the child is not complying, the school will suspend the child for a minimum of 3 days." The School reserves the right to return all refund-allowed payments and cancel the enrollment of a family with due process and notice to said family if the School feels that the child's needs cannot be best met by the School.

Custody and Parental Rights Policy

(updated August 2024)

All information provided to Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten regarding custody, parental access and judicial decisions are confidential and private to the school and the family involved. Request for the School to provide information to support a custody or access case is considered on a case-by-case basis, and is at the option of the School.

PARENTAL RIGHTS: It is very important that all legal guardians of a child registered at our School have the right and the information in order to participate fully in their child's experience if they choose.

As such, we require all legal guardians' contact information (full name, e-mail address, phone number, and mailing address) to appear on all registration forms. Please ensure Parent 1 and Parent 2 are completed on Kindertales.

CUSTODY INFORMATION: It is important that the School is aware of any separation or divorce situation that affects the living arrangements of the registered child. This is important insofar as it affects the primary parent from week to week and/or pickups from the School, and who the School is allowed to release the child to. Additionally, a PORTABLE RECORD must be submitted by each parent that allows permission for pickup outside of both parents.

If you have a custody agreement involving your child that has directives for their education at our School, a digital or physical copy of this agreement is required to be on-file with the School at the time of registration. If the agreement changes during the child's tenure, it is the obligation of one or both parents to provide the School with a new copy. If a new copy is not provided, the School reserves the right to maintain the custody information from the existing document for pickup authorizations and contact authorizations.

PARENTAL ACCESS: Unless a custody agreement is on file with the School, the School is permitted to release the child to either of the listed parents/legal guardians and authorized Pick Ups, on the registration form without further confirmation.

Code of Conduct

(reviewed August 2021)

By engaging in services and/or employment with Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten, all Staff, Parents, Guardians, Children and representatives of children agree to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct while in or near the School property, and in representation of the School's vision and mission.

By applying to and accepting registration / participation in this School, you acknowledge that:

- Courteous, respectful and ethical communication is expected between Parents, Guardians, Staff, Children and / or Teachers at all times
- Appropriate, respectful and ethical responses are expected between Parents, Guardians, Staff, Children and / or Teachers at all times
- Physical punishment and/or aggressive physical interaction on School grounds is not permitted by or between Staff, Parents, Children and / or Teachers
- Raised voices / yelling, swearing, cursing, threatening or otherwise aggressive speech, or aggressive acts towards any member of the School administration or teaching staff is grounds for immediate termination of your child's placement without refund
- Inappropriate / unprofessional conduct online in any forum, or in visibility of the media, that reflects poorly on the School could result in immediate termination of you or your family's association with the School without refund or compensation

As a Parent or Guardian, you also agree that your child will be taught about, and be held accountable, for age-appropriate applications of this Code of Conduct, and that you as Parent / Guardian will assist us in working with your child to uphold this Code of Conduct.

The School reserves the right to refuse further care or education to any Parent, Guardian, or family members that breaches these terms.

Grievance Policy

(reviewed August 2021)

Your concerns are important to us. We will strive to do our best as a School, to provide the best education to all children. In the event parents have concerns, it is always best to approach the School, in writing, with your concerns, to: admin@okotoksmontessori.com.

Allegation against a staff member or the School

If an allegation is made against a member of staff it may come from a parent, or from a child's disclosure, it must be reported in the same way as any other child protection referral. If it appears from the result of the investigation that the allegations are justified, Administration will instigate disciplinary procedures. This will always be done in full consultation between Administration and legal counsel. It is important to remember that allegations don't necessarily mean that the alleged incident has taken place. The staff member concerned must be supported and treated with concern and respect. False allegations are very upsetting and stressful, and it is important that the staff member is not judged until the result of the investigation is made known.

A parent who is uneasy about any aspect of the School's provisions should first discuss these concerns with the School's Administration. We believe children and parents are entitled to expect careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community, and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our School program at any time. See Program Review & Improvement Policy.

General grievance procedure

Individual concerns should be e-mailed to admin@okotoksmontessori.com. Administration will consult with the teaching team to gather information, and then will set up an in person or ZOOM meeting or a phone call with parents to discuss. If needed, a third-party mediator will be retained and involved to help all parties come to an abiding, written agreement on how to proceed. Collaboration between all parties is essential. The School reserves the right to return all refund-allowed payments as per signed child contract and cancel the enrollment of a family with due process and notice to said family if a mediated agreement cannot be abided, or if the School feels that the child's needs cannot be best met by the School.

Safe and Caring Inclusive School Policy

(reviewed August 2021)

Okotoks Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten is committed to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment free from fear of physical and emotional harm for all children and staff. Employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and are treated with respect and dignity as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Staff, and enrolled families/child will not be discriminated against as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We are dedicated to developing a safe, effective learning environment, based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori which:

- Challenges all learners to strive to reach their personal learning potential;
- Encourages each learner to be independent and accountable for their learning and behavioural choices;
- Supports and nourishes the development of a caring, inclusive community with dignity and respect for all;
- Encourages effective partnerships among educators, learners and parents;
- Fosters development of self-esteem, self-regulation and personal responsibility;
- Nurtures learner creativity, risk-taking, reflection and an understanding of lifelong learning;
- Facilitates the development of strategies and problem-solving through the use of the prepared Montessori environment and Montessori materials; and
- Incorporates the element of intrinsic fulfillment into the learning process.

The relationship between home and school, as well as the family and staff commitment to the Montessori philosophy, is the key to fostering growth in our child.

A safe and caring school provides for:

- a respectful and caring school culture;
- safety and security;
- a focus on teaching and learning;
- positive relationships among children and staff;
- social and behavioral expectations; and
- community involvement.

We believe all children have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the:

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- The Alberta Human Rights Act
- Alberta Education Act

“Adults move because their will directs them, but not so with the small child. The small child is urged by nature.”
~Maria Montessori

Incident/Illness/Injury Reporting Policy

(updated August 2021)

For any occurrences, injuries or illness, no matter how minor, staff must advise Administration immediately upon occurrence. Incidents/illness/injuries include but are not limited to:

- Bathroom accidents
- Collision or physical incident between two or more children, intentional or accidental
- Independent injury (child trips, falls, etc.)
- Slips and falls
- Bumps, finger pinches
- Temporarily misplaced child / cannot find child
- Choking
- Allergic reaction
- Feeling generally unwell, reported or observed
- Visible illness symptoms, no matter how minor (excessive sneezing every hour, runny nose that does not clear up with nose wiping, chronic coughing, etc.)
- Serious emotional or psychological upset / potential upset (swearing, discussing inappropriate topics at the School (horror, violence, guns), violence, bullying actions

For any occurrence that requires emergency services, we will call 911 FIRST. Then an Administrator will contact parents by phone using the information provided on their Portable Records Form.

For ALL OCCURANCES OUT OF NORMAL OPERATIONS, no matter how minor, staff document their experience using an Occurrence Form. We will include the time and date of the incident, and the time and date that the form was completed. Every situation is reviewed by Administration and notes added to the child's file are kept with the School. Parents will be requested to review and initial an Occurrence Form specific to their child.

In a serious incident / when required, the Administration Team will also complete an Incident Reporting Form and submit to Provincial Childcare Licensing. The following incidents must be reported as per law:

- An emergency evacuation that is unplanned
- Unexpected program closure
- An intruder on the program's premises
- A serious illness or injury to a child that requires the School to request emergency services and/or requires the child to remain in the hospital overnight.
- An error in the administration of medication by a program
- An unexpected absence of a child from the program on a day they are registered to attend (ie. a child who does not attend the program, and the parents cannot be reached to confirm the absence)
- A child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian
- A child left on the premises unattended

*"The real purpose of education is to prepare the orientation for future generations, who will progress to a new plane."
~Maria Montessori*

Emergency Policies

(updated August 2022)

Portable records

In order to meet with licensing requirements, a Portable Record (on Kindertales) is maintained for each child at the School. These emergency records are printed off to be easily accessible to the staff in case of an emergency. These records specific to each classroom are taken off the School premises on nature walks, during fire drills, during outdoor time and in the event of an emergency evacuation. It is very important to keep us informed of any change in your child's information as they occur by updated your Portable Record on Kindertales.

Snow / extreme cold or heat days

There are days when weather makes travel difficult or attendance unsafe. The School follows the recommendations of Environment Canada, Ministry of Children's Services, and Alberta Health Services when we make decisions that affect our School community. On these days of extreme or severe weather, classes may not be held or care may be ended early at the School's discretion. Please watch your e-mail for official notice of closures and early end days.

Refunds are not provided for occasional days (1-2 times per year) when the School is closed due to weather.

While the School attempts to provide reasonable notice (24-48 hours) prior to closure, sudden changes in temperature or weather conditions can lead to less-than-ideal notification windows.

The School reserves the right to make these closures in extreme situations as needed to protect our vulnerable population, and for the safety of the entire School community. In the case of severe snow/ice or other emergencies, a same-day early closing may become necessary. If this should become necessary, parents will be informed and asked to pick up their child(ren) early.

Security procedures

Your child's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off the School premises. Every attempt is made by enforcing our security procedures and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of the children is maintained at all times. An intruder can present an emergency situation in any School setting. The Staff are trained to approach all unidentified or unauthorized persons as intruders. In order to prevent instances of unwelcomed intruders, we facilitate and are strict with our locked door policies and our ID identification requests.

Approved pickup people still must show ID at pickup if they are not known to School staff. We highly recommend advising staff at drop-off if someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, to avoid end of day confusion. Please advise your person picking up that they will be asked to provide ID. If teachers are unsure of the pickup arrangements, we will phone and confirm with a parent before releasing the child. We appreciate your patience as we work to keep your child safe.

Uncollected children

If a parent or caregiver fails to collect a child, the following procedure will be followed:

- Telephone the parent or caregiver
- If they are unable to be reached, we will then call the emergency contact on the child's Portable Record.
- We will keep trying until someone is reached and the situation is resolved.
- In the event that a parent or an emergency contact cannot be reached within a 30 minute period past the closing of the School, we will call the local RCMP.

Reporting child abuse

We are required by law to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Alberta Childcare Licensing Intake Line. The teachers do not investigate or determine whether or not child abuse has occurred.

Evacuation Policy

(updated November 2022)

To be prepared for potential evacuation at any time, all children in the School are required to wear indoor shoes at ALL TIMES. Indoor shoes should be sturdy and close securely, with solid treads on the bottom. Please refer to Clothing Policy: INDOOR DRESS

We are required by Alberta Childcare Licensing as well as the Okotoks Fire Department to practice unannounced fire drills once a month. There is a fire evacuation plan and a fire extinguisher placement floor plan posted throughout each classroom. The staff conduct a fire drill review monthly to ensure all staff are comfortable with the procedure in the case that a real fire should occur. Evacuation routes are posted in each room.

In a drill situation, we will ring the class bell, and have all children exit through the main doors of the School buildings to the assigned muster point, Big Rock School Bike Racks. We gather immediately outside to be counted / do attendance in our cohorts. We then return inside as quickly as possible to minimize exposure of children to the weather, as they will not have their coats on (to simulate a real emergency). While we attempt to select days that have better weather, we also are required to prepare children and staff for a potential evacuation in less than ideal conditions.

We also practice 'shelter in place' scenarios, to prepare for the emergency of a potential intruder, natural occurrence such as a tornado, or wild animal on the property. Thank you for your support and understanding around these important practices.

In the event of a true emergency that requires us to leave the immediate building, staff gather their class calmly and exit using the signed exit door closest to their location and gather at their muster point. Teachers are instructed to take the class Backpack, which contains Portable Records for children in the class and medications for children requiring them.

Administration will call parents for early pickup. The situation will be discussed and where the children can be picked up from. In the event that parents/ guardians cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be notified.

*"Into this environment we must put everything that is good for the mind, along with an understanding and affectionate person."
~Maria Montessori*

Unforeseen Large-Scale Events Policy

(updated August 2022)

Okotoks Montessori and attending families / staff agree that unforeseen, large-scale events may occur. These events would affect at minimum the entire structure that the School is located in, and at most potentially, the entire continent and / or world.

Examples of unforeseen large-scale events can include but are not limited to:

- Disease / pandemic
- Health emergency (fatality, serious injury, tainted water, sewage backup, etc.)
- Fire / explosion
- War
- Natural disaster (tornado, flood, windstorm, earthquake, etc.)
- Change in land ownership / sudden lease cancellation of space the School occupies

In the event of an unforeseen large-scale event occurring, the School and every family's priority must be focused on following direction from the appropriate authorities (Provincial Licensing, Alberta Health Services, the Town of Okotoks, the Province of Alberta, Federal Government, etc.).

The School will endeavor to the best of its ability to provide communication to registered families regarding next steps specific to the School. However, in the event of unforeseen large-scale events, registered families acknowledge that communications may not be possible in a timely manner. As available, communications will be transmitted by e-mail, posted at the location if possible, and / or through the School's phone voicemail.

Registered families and staff acknowledge that the School will not be equipped to provide immediate information requests, especially regarding refunds and withdrawals, and will not respond to requests for such. As information becomes available, and Okotoks Montessori Administration is able to form next steps, information will be communicated to families and staff. Until other notice is provided, the School's standard policies will continue to apply. Regardless of the above, Administration commits to working with all registered families and staff and the appropriate authorities as best able to provide equitable resolutions considering the reality at the time of the unforeseen event.

*"The child is the hope and promise for mankind."
~Maria Montessori*

*Thank you for reading this all!
What a wonderful year we will have together.*

2025/2026 Montessori School Supplies List – Classrooms 1, 2, 3

Due SEPTEMBER 2nd/25

Listed below are supplies needed ONCE this please, in your child's main classroom (1, 2 or 3). If your child is in PRESCHOOL, please refer to the Preschool list. If your child is in KINDERGARTEN, please refer to the Kindergarten list. Supplies can be found at Dollarama, Staples, Walmart or online. Thank you!

PRESCHOOL

QUANTITY	SUPPLY
1	Crayola Pencil Crayons – 24
2	Baby Wipes (rectangular tubs)
6	Medium Elmer Glue Sticks (purple disappearing glue)
3	Large Tissue boxes
1	Multi-pak sorted colours Construction paper



KINDERGARTEN

QUANTITY	SUPPLY
1	Crayola Pencil Crayons – 24
1	Ticonderoga Oversized Black Pencils (3) w/ sharpener (Staples)
2	Baby Wipes (rectangular tubs)
6	Medium Elmer Glue Sticks (purple disappearing glue)
1	Dixie Cups (50)

Montessori School Supplies List – Classrooms 4, 5 EXTENDED DAY

Due JANUARY 5th/26

If your child is FULL DAYS, they will need to bring supplies again in January for their extended day classroom (4 or 5), please bring them January 6, 2025. Supplies can be found at Dollarama, Staples, Walmart or online.

Thank you!

PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

QUANTITY	SUPPLY
2	Lysol Wipes (large tubs)
3	Medium Elmer Glue Sticks (purple disappearing glue)
2	Baby Wipes (rectangular tubs)
1	Medium size Ziploc bag box
1	Large size Ziploc bag box

