

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

For information on Little Sponges, please visit our website (www.littlespongesmontessori.co.uk) which contains detailed and comprehensive information on the setting, photographs and contact details.

We actively encourage prospective parents to visit the setting while sessions are in progress so that they can see how we operate and the interaction between the staff and the children. We request that parents make an appointment for these visits so that they do not have an impact on the running of the session.

We request that parents complete a Registration form following the visit and send with it, a non-refundable registration fee of £35.00 to Little Sponges Montessori, 38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH. Once registered, the child will be placed on our waiting list or offered a place if one is available at the time of registering.

Before admission, we will require parents/carers to complete a comprehensive pack of documentation, namely the Admissions/ Contract Form that can be downloaded from the website. This provides the setting with permission for events such as outings and the taking of photographs and detailed information on their child, enabling us to provide continuity of care where possible, as well as meeting the child's individual needs. The Admissions/ Contract Form should be downloaded and completed. One signed copy should be sent to Little Sponges Montessori, 38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH. A deposit of £300.00 should accompany this Admissions /Contract Form and will be refunded when the child leaves Little Sponges, once all fees have been paid and four weeks' written notice, in term-time, is given. The deposit will be non-refundable if the place offered is not taken up.

A list of Policies and Procedures is kept at Little Sponges Montessori, 38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH and can be viewed at any time. However, as part of the Contract and Admissions process, parents must read and understand the Policies and Procedures which can be viewed or downloaded from the website (www.littlespongesmontessori.co.uk) before their child starts.

On admission, it is our policy to offer the child a settling-in period as the child has to become familiar with the new environment so that he/she feels safe and secure. The child will be allocated a key person to ensure they are available to provide the additional support the child may require although all staff will be involved in the child's care and education.

Little Sponges Montessori is an inclusive Nursery; all children are welcomed without discrimination. Children and families are all valued, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sex, and social and economic background. We demonstrate a commitment to working with parents to provide an environment that is suitable for their child's individual needs; this includes supporting children in developing independent toileting, and we will not exclude children using nappies.

Due to the high staff/child ratios and small, homely environment at Little Sponges, children tend to settle in more easily as they feel secure in a place that mirrors a homely atmosphere.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At Little Sponges Montessori, we are strongly committed to supporting every child's learning and development in the Montessori method of education, together with the areas of Learning and Development as identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, namely:

- **PRIME AREAS** (Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Physical Development); and
- **SPECIFIC AREAS** (Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design).

TWO-YEAR PROGRESS CHECK:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework requires that parents and carers must be supplied with a short, written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, and Communication and Language, when the child is aged between 24-36 months. This EYFS Learning and Development Progress Check is required to form part of an *Integrated Review* with the Health and Development Review carried out by the Health Visitor. Therefore, we are required to share our EYFS Two-year review with your child's Health Visitor and vice versa.

The Progress Check enables earlier identification of developmental needs so that additional support can be put into place. Information will be provided to parents in the Prime areas of the learning and development of the EYFS.

VOICE OF THE CHILD

We will also 'listen to the voice of the child'. Children have a right to be listened to and valued at Little Sponges and can become very able at thinking about and assessing their own learning and development if this is recognised and supported well. Children are encouraged to identify what they have enjoyed or found difficult. Very young children, and those with speech or other developmental delay or disability may not say anything or very little verbally, but they will communicate a great deal in other ways such as through gesture, action, and body language. We will inform and support our discussion with parents and other professionals, where relevant.

OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

We continually observe the children in the nursery and assess and plan an holistic curriculum using the specialist Montessori materials and link it to the EYFS areas of learning and development. The staff constantly responds to the child's investigations wherever and whenever they occur. We need to examine not only what the child learns but also, how, in order to appreciate the complexities of learning in the early years. The activities in the Montessori classroom have clearly defined aims and so contribute to the child's development. As well as the content of the child's learning, they represent the curriculum. This curriculum is led by the needs of the child.

Staff will note a child's achievements and actions they may make whilst playing or interacting with them. These observations are recorded in the *My Montessori Child's* web-based reporting system and shared with the family through the Parent Site of My Montessori Child. 'My Montessori Child' also reflects the links between the Montessori Curriculum and the EYFS Early Learning Goals. Other resources to record a child's progress include conversations, photographs, artwork and mark-making.

This information is then assessed and evaluated by the staff to ensure that the child is progressing in all areas of the curriculum. The assessment is then used to plan further activities for the child. The aim of Observation, Assessment and Planning is to support the child's individual development and learning across the Montessori schemas of work, as well as the areas of learning and development in the EYFS.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We reflect on the different ways that children learn. A child's individual learning characteristics will determine the way in which they respond to the teaching and learning taking place in the environment. Through on-going observation, attention is paid to how children learn and to identifying and promoting the Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- Playing and Exploring: Children naturally play and explore to satisfy their innate curiosity.
- Active Learning: Learning is effective when it is self-motivated. Children learn to concentrate and to keep trying when they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically: Children make sense of the world when they can explore it freely. They develop their own ideas, make links and develop strategies for doing things.

The Characteristics of Learning and the Prime and Specific areas of the EYFS are interconnected.

Play

We provide opportunities for children to play indoors and outdoors. The Montessori-prepared environments (indoors and outdoors) allow children to engage in play spontaneously and in child-initiated activities. Challenging environments are provided for the children to help develop them intellectually, creatively, physically, socially, emotionally, reflectively and above all, safely and happily.

We believe that children's play is closely linked to each of the five outcomes for children: **EVERY CHILD MATTERS: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Well-being.**

PLANNING FOR THE EARLY YEARS

LITTLE SPONGES brings the Montessori approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage and this guides our practice. We plan topics half-termly, which cover the Montessori principles. However, the main planning is centred around each individual child to enable staff to support a child on a one-to-one basis. Personalised learning is the key to helping the child reach his/her full potential. In addition, special events and festivals such as Christmas, Chinese New Year and Diwali, to name a few, are planned and celebrated with the children. This helps to promote cultural capital and positive attitudes towards diversity and differences within all the children.

Planning is kept flexible in order to accommodate the changing needs and interests of the children. In a Montessori environment, the adults follow and guide the child and take advantage of spontaneous opportunities as and when they arise.