

ABC Montessori

Private School



Est. 1995

Parent Handbook 2010 / 2011

*Committed
to
Academic Excellence*

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WELCOME TO ABC MONTESSORI

ABC Montessori was established in September 1995 at our Cawthra Road campus. Our reputation has grown throughout the years as an excellent academic school that truly cares about each and every one of our students.

Thank you for choosing ABC Montessori. We believe that you have taken an important step toward providing your child with a solid educational foundation. We will do our best to ensure that your child’s school experience is an enjoyable and fruitful one. Our curriculum will address the academic, physical, social and emotional needs of all students. From a strong academic curriculum, to a diverse set of extra curricular activities and events, your child’s education will be comprehensive and enriching.

Your child will gain the greatest benefits from his or her school experience when the home and school are in philosophical agreement. To ensure that students receive the support and encouragement they need for their development, an open relationship must be maintained between the school and parents. This relationship is based on mutual trust and respect for each other in our respective roles. ABC Montessori staff will always provide you with honest assessments of your child’s progress. Any decisions made by the teachers or school administrators, or any advice, recommendations or reports given to parents regarding a student are made with only the well being of the student in mind.

School Policies, Rules and Standards

One of the most important trademarks of any good school is that there are a set of policies and rules in place that must be strictly followed and which are not negotiable.

ABC Montessori has established the following Policies, Rules and Standards that must be adhered to by everyone in our school community. These have been put in place to maintain order, allow us to effectively manage the school, comply with government regulations, and to establish a standard of behavior. These policies and rules are not negotiable. They are in place for the benefit of everyone at ABC Montessori and they assist us in providing the best education for our students.

General Conduct:

Everyone in the ABC Montessori community, including Teachers, Students, Parents, School Management and Visitors must conduct themselves in a professional, courteous manner and treat one another with respect. Anyone using foul language, physical or verbal abuse, threatening another person, or causing a disturbance will not be permitted at ABC Montessori. Any disagreement that may arise between different parties must be solved through respectful and cordial discussion.

Payment of Tuition fees:

All fees and postdated cheques must be submitted at time of registration. We cannot receive cheques on a monthly basis / or invoice parents on a monthly basis. Any cheques returned by the bank will incur a service charge of \$25.00. If you will have difficulty making a payment or will be late with a payment, you should discuss the matter with our administration office, otherwise a late payment fee will be added to your balance owing. Late payment fees are subject to a 2% interest charge per month. If you receive an invoice and cannot pay it immediately, please contact our administration office to inform us of the date you will submit payment.

School Policies, Rules and Standards

Illness

If your child suffers from any symptoms listed below, you must keep the child at home until he / she has fully recovered.

- Elevated temperature (38 degrees Celsius or higher)
- Acute cold (Coloured nasal discharge)
- Stomach ache, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Eye or ear infection
- Skin rash or red eyes
- Coughing and sore throat

The Peel Health Department states that children must be free from the above symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.

Since illnesses spread quickly to other children, the school will not permit a sick child into the classroom. **Provincial Government and Region of Peel Health Department regulations state that a child with a contagious disease is not permitted into a classroom with other children.**

A child returning to school after an illness lasting longer than 3 days must bring a doctor’s note confirming that the child is no longer a risk to other children. Please note that the child may not be permitted to class without the doctor’s note. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

If your physician disagrees with this policy, please refer him or her to the Peel Health Department.

In case a child falls ill at school, we will immediately notify the parents / guardians and if the illness seems to be contagious , the child will have to be picked up from school immediately. In such cases, the school uses its own discretion and since children are prone to catching a disease quickly, we will always be cautious.

Picking up an ill child in the middle of school day may cause you inconvenience, but it is absolutely necessary to ensure both the safety of other children and your child.

If your child will be absent from school due to an illness, please inform the school.

School Policies, Rules and Standards

Student Information:

All information required in the application package must be complete before a student may come to school. The school is required by law to have this information in a student's file. **If you are asked to submit information that is outstanding in your child's file, please submit it as soon as possible. The information in a student's file must be up to date.** If any information you have submitted has changed, including telephone numbers, emergency contacts, etc. please inform us immediately. There are Student Information Change forms available at the campuses.

Enrollment:

When you enroll your child at ABC Montessori, you are enrolling for the full academic year (Sept – June). Should you decide to withdraw your child at anytime during the school year, we require two months notice or payment for two months. The yearly tuition is not based on a monthly rate or the number of weeks in the school year. The tuition fee is payment for the school year which may be different from year to year.

We cannot issue any refunds or reduction in tuition for a student who will be on holiday or away from school for a period of time.

Please note that the initial installment is non-refundable.

Government Legislation and Policy

ABC Montessori operates in an environment that is heavily legislated. We are inspected by the Ontario Government and Peel Health Department on an annual or semi-annual basis.

ABC Montessori complies with all Government legislation and policies.

From time to time, we may ask parents to submit information that is missing from your child’s file. We ask for this information because it is required by law. If a parent does not submit the required information or does not inform us of a change to any information in your child’s file, we are in violation of Ontario Government legislation.

Also, from time to time, the school will inform you of changes to policy that may or may not require action on part of parents. When new Government policies are introduced, a Government inspector will visit the school to ensure that we are in compliance.

Non-compliance with Ontario Government or Peel Health Department policies has consequences that parents may not be aware but have a significant negative impact on our school. Please read all information we send home and comply with any policies and practices the school requires.

School hours:

Parents should adhere to the permitted drop off and pick up times. Unless you are enrolled in the before school program, you may bring your child to school anytime between 8:45 a.m and 9:00 a.m. unless you have enrolled for the after school program, pick up time is 3:30 to 3:45 p.m for CASA and 3:30 pm to 4:00 pm for Elementary students

Late pickups charges for CASA are as follows:

| Late Pickup Window | Applicable Charge |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3:45 pm to 4:00 pm | \$5.00 per day |
| 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm | \$10.00 per day |
| 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm | \$15.00 per day |
| Beyond 6:00 pm | \$20.00 per day |

Late pickups charges for Elementary students are as follows:

| Late Pickup Window | Applicable Charge |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4:00 pm to 4:15 pm | \$5.00 per day |
| 4:15 pm to 5:00 pm | \$10.00 per day |
| 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm | \$15.00 per day |
| Beyond 6:00 pm | \$20.00 per day |

If you will be more than 10 minutes late to pick up your child, you must call and inform us.

The After school program finishes at 6:00 pm. You must pick up your child by that time. Picking up your child later then 6:00 pm is not permitted.

Tardiness:

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. Please bring students to school on time. Late arriving students disrupt the class and upset our attendance procedures. Elementary students arriving late for school may miss important instructions and notes from the teacher.

Our Education System

ABC Montessori believes that the most effective educational system combines Montessori learning with traditional teaching methods. CASA students use workbooks and readers in conjunction with their hands-on work with the Montessori learning materials. Our elementary classes use *traditional learning techniques* (not Montessori) as well as advanced multimedia resources that provide an exciting, vibrant learning atmosphere.

What is Montessori?

Montessori education is based on the work of Italian pediatrician and educator Dr. Maria Montessori, whose research in the first half of the 20th century gave birth to an educational system that has grown world wide. Through her extensive observation and insight, she developed a philosophy based on the natural development of children and their intrinsic desire to explore, discover, and learn from the world around them. She saw education not as an end in itself but as an aid to life. Learning to be kind and courteous is as important as learning the sounds of letters.

Montessori education addresses not only the academic, but also the physical, emotional and social development of the child. Thus, Montessori education is an integrated approach whose aim is to fulfill the needs of the “whole child”. The Montessori method creates a supportive and stimulating environment where the child can unfold intellectually, emotionally and socially to manifest the special self within. Rather than force-feeding information to children, the “Montessori method” provides the child with surroundings specially prepared to encourage and reward the young mind’s quest for understanding.

Our Programs

At ABC Montessori, we offer Toddler (18 months – 2 ½ years), CASA (2 ½ – 5 Years) & elementary programs (SK to Grade 6). Our Toddler and CASA programs are based on the Montessori educational philosophy while the elementary program incorporates proven traditional educational concepts.

In addition to the core curriculum in all of our programs, we emphasize French, Art, Music, Computer Studies and Physical Education.

1. Toddler Program

ABC Montessori has developed a creative Early Childhood curriculum that incorporates sound educational principles with activities to keep young minds engaged.

Toddler classes offer learning centers where children can work individually or in small groups. Teacher-directed activities are balanced by ample time for exploratory play and personal discovery. The Toddler class is a caring and responsive environment.

The Toddler Programs are specifically designed for your child to develop a sense of self, oral language skills, early socialization skills, basic cognitive concepts, sensory-motor skills, and creative self-expression.

Schedules are designed to balance structure and free choice, as well as active and quiet times. We teach a love of learning by allowing children to experience their own stage of development and helping them to feel success without pressure.

2. CASA Program

Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that in the development of the child, there are “sensitive periods”. At certain predictable stages, children pass through periods of sensitivity to such things as order, courtesy, touch, practical life and language. We combine this knowledge with the use of Montessori materials (special apparatus developed by Dr. Montessori) to provide children with a strong foundation for learning and personal growth in their crucial formative years.

Montessori educational programs promote self-discipline and social competence. The materials and exercises are designed to stimulate independent exploration and satisfy curiosity.

It puts emphasis on the process rather than the product of learning. Children who have been in a Montessori environment are generally very flexible and adaptable and adjust easily to any transition.

Our CASA Classroom

Entering a Montessori classroom, is entering a world specially prepared for the comfort and stimulation of a child. The Montessori classroom is a designed environment where children work together or individually with multi-sensory materials that invite them to touch, to think and to experience.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of a Montessori School is the total preparation of the classroom to the needs of the growing and learning child. The school itself is designed as a “developmental aid” in which materials, furnishings, and decoration are selected to offer the child an orderly yet stimulating setting for exploration. Specially designed and tested materials are arranged to attract the child’s interest to a broad range of practical life exercises, sensory skills and academic fundamentals. As the child progresses, these materials serve to build a lasting framework of knowledge based on touching, seeing and hearing. This framework is quickly filled with true understanding of the concepts required for a lifetime of learning as the fundamentals of Mathematics, English, and French language skills, Science and Geography, Art and Music are revealed.

3. Elementary Program

Our elementary programs encourage the student to expand his or her knowledge from a concrete foundation to the wider abstractions in knowledge of Mathematics, Language, French, History, Geography, Science, Computers and Music. It moves students from concrete to abstract learning. In addition to the strong core curriculum, our programs include Practical life activities, Arts & Crafts and Physical education.

Our Elementary programs foster competency and mastery of skills through a very strong academic program. Students in this program progressively explore various subject areas through independent study and personal projects. This develops individual learning skills, self-direction and a sense of responsibility. Students become good managers of their own time and talents, and are therefore better prepared for their further education and adult life. Our elementary classrooms are controlled environments, where behavior is carefully monitored and corrected.

Our elementary curriculum **exceeds** the Ministry of Education guidelines. At ABC Montessori, we use the Ontario government’s guidelines as a starting point from which to expand our own curriculum. Our curriculum has been developed over the past 14 years and has proven to be very successful and rewarding for students.

Program Hours

CASA and Toddler

9:00 am to 3:30 pm

Elementary

9:00 am to 3:30 pm

Extended Hours Care

Before school: 7:30 am to 9:00 am
CASA After School: 3:45 pm to 6:00 pm
Elementary After School: 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Our Faculty

ABC Montessori’s teachers are education professionals dedicated to giving each child the best and most complete educational experience. They believe that practical life and social skills are as important as academic learning, and building good work habits are much more important than natural ability.

The teacher serves as the link between the student and the learning environment, observing each child’s progress, introducing the next step to enable the child to master a skill.

Our Teachers are specially trained in methods of arranging, maintaining and presenting the prepared environment, in observing the child’s development, and in helping children teach themselves as only they can.

At ABC Montessori, we maintain low student/staff ratios that allow the teacher to understand each child’s own individual development and work closely with each of them to provide the best personal learning environment. Our teachers are selected not only for their experience and education but also for their personality, rapport with young children, and dedication to the total development of the child.

Meals

Children can learn to enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods if introduced at an early age. We encourage children to experience nutritious snacks and a balanced lunch comprised of the four food groups (such as milk group, bread/cereal, meat, fruits/vegetables) to develop good eating habits. CASA and Toddler students are provided with meals by a reputable catering company in the food industry. The weekly food program menus are posted in the lobby. When available, we offer an optional food program for our elementary students where nutritious lunches may be purchased.

Elementary Students who bring their own meals to school must observe good eating habits. Teachers will monitor meals to ensure students are eating healthy. ABC Montessori does not permit students to bring fast food to school on a regular basis. Students should come to school with meals as parents are not permitted to drop off food during the day.

CASA and Toddler students please observe the following snack policies:

The **only** after-school snacks permitted will be a piece of fruit or vegetables, yogurt and juice box or water. **No other food will be accepted.** Any other food brought to school by students will not be served. (Students drink milk during the day as part of our food program.)

ABC Montessori is a **NUT FREE** environment. Students and staff are strictly prohibited from bringing nuts to school.

Our **after-school** snacks will be served between 5:15 and 5:30 pm. **Please note that after-school snacks are not a necessity. If your child stays in school till 6:00 pm you may want to send a snack. For all other after-school students, snacks are neither necessary nor encouraged.**

ABC Montessori is a nut free environment.

Absences

We ask that parents inform us if their child will be absent from school. The school will call the parents/guardians on the second day of absence from the school if we have not been notified.

Birthdays

Birthday cakes may be permitted at our elementary campus only if parents have made arrangements with the teacher ahead of time and no student in the class has a serious food allergy. Parents who bring cakes or treats for birthdays must provide plates, forks, and napkins. We do not maintain inventories of these items for such purposes.

Birthday cakes or other snacks are not permitted in our CASA and toddler classes.

School Uniform Policy

The school uniform is mandatory for each child attending ABC Montessori, with the exception of toddlers. The uniform must also be worn on all special occasions and on field trips unless otherwise suggested.

School uniforms are only available for purchase at InSchoolwear. You may visit the store or shop online at inschoolwear.com.

The uniform policy can not be compromised for any reason. Any student who is not in proper uniform on any given day may be sent home. Anyone unwilling to follow school uniform policy on a regular basis will not be permitted to continue attending ABC Montessori. The school uniform is a very important part of our identity and philosophy and we thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Uniform

Available only at InSchoolWear InSchoolWear.com

Girls:

- White polo type shirt, white long-sleeve shirt or white turtleneck with **school logo**
- Navy blue tunic or pants (**CASA and Elementary Prep. Students only**)
- Navy blue socks or tights
- School Kilt or pants (**Elementary girls only**)
- Navy Blue tights (**Elementary girls only**)
- Burgundy cardigan with school logo
- Black soft-soled non-marking shoes

Boys:

- White polo type shirt, white long-sleeve shirt or white turtleneck with **school logo**
- Navy blue dress pants
- Burgundy cardigan with school logo
- Black Socks
- Black soft-soled non-marking shoes

Elementary and elementary prep. students also require:

- Navy blue sweat pants and sweatshirt
- White gym T-shirt
- Navy blue gym shorts
- Running shoes

Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather, please visit 680news.com for announcements regarding the cancellation of classes and/or transportation service. We will start announcing the cancellations by 7.00 a.m.

In case of extreme weather conditions, the school will be closed for the safety of the children. Please have alternate arrangements made for those days.

* PLEASE NOTE: We will **only** cancel school when we have reason to believe that the weather is, **or will be**, bad enough to be considered a danger for students. Because of the fact that a cancellation announcement on the radio must be made by 7:00 am, we sometimes have to make a difficult decision to cancel classes.

Notices and Letters

We will communicate the most important information to parents by sending home letters. **Please read the letters and sign and return when requested.** Letters will be handed directly to parents, put on the student’s bag or cubby (at Cawthra) or taped to the student’s locker. It is very important to read the letters carefully and respond by the due date when requested. We do not want you to be inconvenienced, or your child to miss out on an activity because of a misplaced letter. A copy of each general letter is also posted on the notice boards. Parents or guardians are asked to read the information on the boards and check the website for important information.

Field Trips

We will take our school children on field trips during the school year. Permission slips with descriptions of the trips will be sent to all parents prior to the trip. We request parents to join and voluntarily assist us in school trips. Should you be interested in helping us, please indicate so on the permission slips.

*Please take note of the dates on trip letters and respond by the due dates so we can confirm the number of students and adults with the organizations and or facilities involved.

Beginning of a School Year

The beginning of the school year is very exciting for children and their parents. Being away from parents, meeting new people and starting a new routine can be exciting for some children and cause for anxieties in others. We ask parents to discuss the school routines with their children before school actually begins. It is very important to help lessen their anxieties. Show your child that you are excited about their attendance at school and never let them see your own anxiety.

We request parents to bring their children to the classroom door and hand them to the care of the staff. It is important that you leave the school as soon as you hand over your child to the teacher. Staying with your child because he / she is crying will only prolong your child’s anxiety.

The school is not responsible if a child is dropped off in the parking area or left at the front door of the building. **Leaving a child in the parking lot is strictly forbidden. Anyone doing so will be asked to leave ABC Montessori.**

Special Activity Days

We arrange special activity days throughout the year such as sports days, pizza days, bowling days, etc. These special days will break up the daily routines, give the students a well-deserved break from academics and allow them to enjoy fun activities with their friends.

Letters will be sent home informing parents about these days. **Please read them carefully and prepare the children with appropriate clothing, etc. when necessary.**

Extra Curricular Activities

For students 4 years of age and older, ABC Montessori offers Gymnastics, Swimming and Skating as our main extra curricular activities. Each program is an eight to ten week activity, taking place once a week for the duration of the activity. These activities are meant to teach students a skill as well as to allow them to have fun and get away from the classroom routine. These programs are taught by professional instructors under close supervision by ABC Montessori staff. Letters are sent home outlining these activities in detail.

Toys in School

The ABC Montessori environment is prepared to respond to your child’s needs for stimulation and growth. The staff are trained to help new and anxious children become comfortably involved in the classroom activities. Toys are not allowed in the school, unless they form a part of a show and tell day. ABC Montessori is not responsible for the loss or damage of any toys brought to school.

Homework

CASA students will be assigned homework. The homework is intended to be done by the student, with parental guidance.

Elementary students will have homework on a daily basis. Students should do the homework by themselves, with parental supervision and assistance when required. Each elementary student will be provided with a homework agenda book in which the daily homework will be noted

It is very important that students return the homework and projects to school by the date requested by the teacher. **Any missed or late homework or project will not be graded and it will be reflected in the student’s final grade as reported on the student report card**

Communication & Parental Involvement

We believe a child’s education must be a cooperative venture. This joint partnership between parents and educator allows the child to benefit from a consistent environment in which to grow and develop.

Your child’s teacher is interested in your child’s academic as well as emotional and social progress. The teacher is also interested in the child’s home routines and behavior. Knowing what a child does at home helps to explain certain behavior and attitudes in school. Please do not hesitate to inform the teachers of any problems or insights into your child’s behavior.

We encourage parental involvement through parent-teacher conferences, parent nights, curriculum nights, special events and field trips. If you ever have any questions, please do not hesitate to call and set up a time to speak with the teachers.

We will have two formal parent / teacher conferences during the school year to discuss your child’s progress, answer any questions you may have and show you a report card. These conferences will be held during the months of January and June. Appointment sign up sheets will be posted on the notice boards. Please sign up for a conference time that is most suitable to you. We will also have informal parent nights throughout the year to discuss general issues concerning parents and students as well as discuss any new initiatives the school has planned. We will notify you about the dates of any upcoming events through school letters.

ABC Montessori

Anaphylactic Policy

2009 / 2010

This policy is in place for all CASA and Toddler students

PURPOSE:

To ensure that students at risk are identified, strategies are in place to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents, to follow an established emergency protocol, develop individual action plans for each student with an anaphylactic allergy and to establish a communication plan.

POLICY:

1. **Strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents**

To reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents, ABC Montessori has implemented the following policies and procedures :

- a. ABC Montessori is a nut free environment.
- b. ABC Montessori’s menus do not include shellfish
- c. Students are not permitted to share their food, utensils or food containers with other students.

Anaphylactic Policy Cont.

- d. Students must wash hands before and after eating.
- e. Food preparation and serving surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before meals.
- f. Any person buying food for the school will read the ingredients label before purchasing.
- g. Any person serving packaged food at the school will read the ingredients label before serving.
- h. Catered food will include allergy information.
- i. Allergy lists are posted in each classroom, kitchen and gym.
- j. Allergy lists are revised as new students with allergies enroll.
- k. Snacks brought in by students will be fruit or vegetables, yogurt and or fruit juice only.
- l. Other foods or allergy causative agents may be restricted depending on the life threatening allergies of the children enrolled.

Anaphylactic Policy Cont.

2. **Communication Plan**

- ABC Montessori provides general information on life threatening allergies, including anaphylactic, to all parents and school staff. We distribute this information to parents through a letter and parent handbook. Staff receive an information package.
- ABC Montessori obtains information from parents about their child’s medical conditions, including any risk of anaphylaxis. Parents are required to complete a medical form and discuss any medical conditions with the school before a student begins school.
- A letter is distributed to all parents and staff, advising them of any students with life threatening allergies and the foods and causative agents to be avoided.
- The strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to life threatening allergies are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The strategies will be reviewed and amended as required when a new student with allergies is enrolled at ABC Montessori.
- An allergy list is posted in all food preparation areas, eating areas, classrooms and activity rooms. The allergy list is revised whenever a new student with allergies is enrolled at ABC Montessori.
- The schools caterer is advised of any foods or causative agents not to be used in food prepared for ABC Montessori and appropriate food substitutes to be provided. The caterer is updated whenever new students with allergies enroll at ABC Montessori.

Anaphylactic Policy Cont.**3. Individual plan and emergency procedure**

An individual plan is developed for each child with an anaphylactic allergy. This plan is developed with the parents of the student and whenever possible, with input from the student’s physician.

The individual plan includes the following:

- A description of the allergy
- Monitoring and avoidance strategies
- Signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic allergy
- Action to be taken by school staff in the event the student has an anaphylactic reaction.
- Parent / guardian consent that allows the school staff to administer the allergy medication in the event their child has an anaphylactic reaction
- Emergency contact information

4. Training

Where a student has an anaphylactic allergy, the school supervisor and class teachers will receive training from the student’s parents on the procedures to follow in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how to administer medication. Once the supervisor has received training, he / she will train all other staff. Staff will review the anaphylactic policy before starting work at ABC Montessori, three times a year and whenever a new student with an anaphylactic allergy enrolls at ABC Montessori.

Anaphylactic Policy Cont.

Parents must observe the following policies. These policies are not negotiable.

1. The **only** after-school snacks permitted will be a piece of fruit or vegetables, yogurt and juice box or water. **No other food will be accepted.** Any other food brought to school by students will not be served. (Students drink milk during the day as part of our food program.)
2. ABC Montessori is a **NUT FREE** environment. Students and staff are prohibited from bringing nuts to school.
3. Our **after-school** snacks will be served between 5:15 and 5:30 pm. Please note that after-school snacks are not a necessity. If your child stays in school till 6:00 pm you may want to send a snack. For all other after-school students, snacks are neither necessary nor encouraged.

These policies may change from time to time as necessary and we will keep you informed of any changes.

There is no way for a physician to diagnose an anaphylactic allergy until a person has a reaction. The only way to be safe is absolute avoidance of possible anaphylactic causative agents. Allergies can develop at any time in life.

Conclusion

At ABC Montessori, we are always looking forward, trying to improve our programs, faculty and school environment. Our school policies, procedures and standards have been developed over the past 15 years and are in place for the benefit of our students. This handbook is given to each parent at the beginning of the school year to be used as a reference and to ensure that everyone is aware of the school's policies. We are always interested in receiving feedback from parents, so please contact us to discuss any issues or ideas you may have.

We are looking forward to another successful school year. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to be an important part of your child's life.

Please check our website at www.abcmontessori.com.