

Sunshine Montessori Nursery

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The Old Village School
Bullocks Farm Lane
Wheeler End
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Dear Parents,

I am well aware of the concerns that come with finding a place that your child can grow and be happy in. I have three children of my own and have found at each step along their path of development that I have had to make decisions wondering if they were right for my child.

One of the best decisions I made, however, was to study for the Montessori diploma. I completed it believing strongly that the Montessori Method can be right for every child. It taught me the importance of a beautiful environment; it showed me how through the structure of the room and the day each child can learn at their own pace; I saw how well it allows for the development of the individual; the depth and breadth of the curriculum was eye-opening; I saw the joy in the eyes of the young child who has mastered a skill no matter how small, and the importance of a caring, sharing, quiet and peaceful environment.

This strong passion and belief in the method fuelled my desire to open my own Montessori nurseries and allow yet more children to benefit from such a unique method. These nurseries are not part of a large organisation – rather they comprise small teams of individuals working under my leadership. I care very much about your child's welfare and have chosen the staff with this thought as my main priority. You will often find me enjoying myself teaching and caring for the children alongside other staff, and I aim to make myself available every day to answer your queries if necessary.

I do hope the information in this brochure enlightens rather than baffles you, and I look forward to seeing you, and even more so, your child in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Virginia Roden B. Ed (Hons), Mont Dip, EYPS
Principal

Sunshine Montessori Nursery

Providing a place where children and their families are cherished

A full daycare nursery for children aged 3 months to 5 years

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The Montessori Method

Dr. Maria Montessori (born 1870) was a most remarkable woman of her time. She was the first female doctor of medicine in Italy, and through her interest in paediatrics, psychiatry and educational theory, she proposed her own philosophy of child development. This forms the basis for a most successful and enduring method of upbringing and teaching now known as the Montessori Method. Some of her main points are outlined below: (To aid conciseness, I refer to your child in the masculine - apologies to all the girls!)

* **All babies, toddlers and children have 'absorbent minds'**

They have a phenomenal inborn ability to learn with ease, especially from birth to the age of 6 years, but to reach their full potential their environment must be rich with learning opportunities. Whatever your child's age, once he has joined our nursery he will instantly have access to a great range of activities appropriate to his stage of development, both indoors and outdoors.

* **Babies and children have an inborn drive to learn**

In the Montessori world learning is not imposed on your child. Rather his inborn drive to learn is harnessed, with staff gently guiding your child within a safe, secure, happy, carefully structured environment designed to help him reach his full potential.

* **Babies and children learn through being active**

Few young children are good at sitting still! They learn in an active, concrete way. Our Montessori equipment encourages children to learn through exploring and experimenting with this unique material. From their earliest days babies and children alike are introduced in a fun and practical way to a far-reaching range of activities from first-learning toys to a broad and balanced curriculum including numeracy, literacy, science, history, geography, music, art, games and dance, languages and social skills.

* **Babies and children pass through 'sensitive periods'**

These are phases in a child's life when he becomes particularly interested in certain skills, and learning is therefore especially fast and acute. For example, young babies spend their first months exploring the properties of materials through their mouth. As they grow out of this period they move into their sensitive period for language development. In our nursery your child is given the freedom to choose activities and therefore can focus on his particular interests until he moves on to his next sensitive period.

Aims

To understand how the Montessori philosophy translates into a method of care and education, let us look at the most important of Maria Montessori's aims - to assist the development of the **whole** child, with equal emphasis being given to his emotional, social, physical and intellectual development:

* **To facilitate the development of your child's unique personality**

This is achieved through providing a secure, calm, ordered environment with a happy family atmosphere where your baby or child's rights and individuality are respected. Learning is not imposed; rather your baby or child is guided within a carefully structured environment rich with learning opportunities.

* **To encourage your child to become a balanced, independent member of society**

The Montessori materials and the structure of the day help your child to develop independence, confidence, self-control and respect for his environment and others. Multi-cultural issues are an important feature of the curriculum.

* **To encourage your child to become physically competent**

Your child learns primarily through 'doing'. The early materials in particular encourage your child to become dextrous, develop hand/eye coordination and concentration. Other activities refine gross motor skills such as PE, dance and our popular excursions to the adjacent common.

* **To help your child to reach his full intellectual potential.**

Through the use of the Montessori materials, over time your child will become an independent learner and will therefore be able to develop at his own pace following his inborn motivation. The huge scope and versatility of the materials provides equally for the child with special needs, the less able and the very able child. They are designed to encourage your child to explore, experiment and develop his creativity. Even the earliest activities start your child on his path to literacy and numeracy. The cultural and aesthetic subjects are also important, providing both breadth and depth to his learning.

By the end of his stay with us we hope that your child will be able to go out into the world with happiness and confidence, ready to extend himself to the full and equipped with a love of learning and the necessary skills to enable him to reach his potential in life.

The Structure of the Day

With careful planning and attention to detail we cater for every aspect of your child's needs from play and progress to diet, exercise and sleeping.

Our nursery is governed by the requirements of 'The Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. This sets out both the regulatory and legal framework for early childhood education and care, together with wider guidance for 'best practise'. It provides a coherent and flexible approach to care and learning and must be followed by all childcare providers in receipt of government funding. It therefore ensures that whatever setting you choose you can be confident that your child will receive a quality experience that enables him/her to feel safe and supports his/her development and learning.

Babies and children aged 3 months to approximately 2½ years

Our babies and youngest children spend much of their time in the company of children of similar ages, and with adults who are specialists in providing for their needs.

Our daily plans allow for access to activities to promote the six areas of learning identified in the EYFS framework. These areas together make up the skills, knowledge and experiences appropriate for babies and children as they grow, learn and develop:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication, Language and Literacy

Mathematical Development

Creative Development

Physical Development

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

We provide these learning opportunities in both our indoor and outdoor play areas, through the use of our messy play areas, creative and problem-solving activities, concentrated one-to-one learning opportunities, lots of snugly moments, and during meal times.

Potty training is also part of our remit, and when your child is in need of rest and recuperation we have dedicated areas of our nursery where your child can sleep and relax.

The Structure of the Day (continued)

Children from approximately 2½ years to school age

As your child matures (usually from the age of 2½ onwards) he/she continues to enjoy activities under the remit of the Early Years Foundation Stage, but gradually becomes more and more involved with our dedicated Montessori materials. This is a beautiful, broad range of equipment designed to lead your child from simple short activities to those that are more challenging for the more mature child.

These resources are freely available and within reach of your child so that for considerable periods of the day your child will be busy selecting equipment of his choice and suitable to his particular level of learning. He will take his equipment to a space - be it table or floor or outside - use it and then return it to the exact same spot, ready for the next child to use. There is a wonderful peace and quietness throughout the room brought about through concentration on the task in hand.

Many of the early activities use objects often found around the home, such as small jugs for the ever popular pouring activities; dusting and polishing exercises; folding and buttoning activities to name just a few. These are designed to teach the children life skills, increase their dexterity and concentration. Soon afterwards your child will be introduced to the Montessori materials specifically designed to help develop his sensory awareness and his ability to make fine discrimination in size, shape and colour for example. These are later followed by materials ingeniously designed to develop the child's *concrete* understanding of language, maths and all the other areas of the curriculum. When reintroduced to these concepts in his primary school, this physical understanding will be invaluable to him.

Each day your child will be involved in one or more small group activities. Group work is considered important especially in developing social skills and is used particularly when teaching the cultural subjects, art and craft, drama, music and games. (A more detailed description of the Montessori activities is given on the following page).

During the day there will be the obvious breaks for meals and snacks shared with friends and adults and rest times if and when they are required.

At the end of a busy, fulfilling day, your child is ready for collection and may tell you nothing, or very little, about his day! But in time you should notice differences, perhaps subtle, perhaps very obvious that will tell you that the magic of Montessori is working for yet another child.

The Montessori Curriculum

* **Life Skills**

These activities are the 'beginning point' in a Montessori environment. They are designed to develop independence, confidence, social awareness, care of the environment, motor coordination and concentration.

* **Sensorial Exercises**

The Sensorial activities are another central element of Montessori education. They help to refine the senses, allowing the child to detect and understand differences in colour, weight, texture, size, sound, etc.

* **Language**

Including speaking, listening, reading, writing, spelling, grammar, prose and poetry appreciation.

* **Numeracy**

The child learns to understand number in a concrete way through handling the 3D materials. This gradually leads to a more symbolic appreciation of number. The curriculum includes counting skills, measuring, sorting, an understanding of the decimal system, addition, subtraction, division, multiplication and geometry.

* **Science**

Including zoology, botany, and simple physics experiments.

* **History**

An understanding of the concept of time through timelines and project work.

* **Geography**

The Montessori materials encourage a concrete understanding of physical geography and the study of other cultures, customs and traditions.

* **Art, Craft and Cookery** * **Drama and Music**

* **PE and Dance**

We offer 'Forest School' sessions and therefore regular excursions will be made to Wheeler End Common.

Staffing

Our staff are considered to be our most important resource! Staff ratios are in line with the regulatory guidelines: one member of staff to three children for children under 2 years of ages, one to four for 2-3 year olds, and one to eight for 3-5 year olds.

In building our team I aim to balance youth with experience and therefore employ a range of staff to create a family atmosphere and to fulfil the needs of the nursery. All undergo national regulatory checks before starting work, and follow high quality induction and ongoing training throughout their time with us, including health and safety, first aid, food hygiene and child development courses.

Partnership with parents

We recognise that parents are their child's first and primary carers and educators and that developing and maintaining strong links and lines of communication are important in providing the partnership that so benefits the child. We therefore provide

- * Weekly newsletters that can be emailed to your inbox to keep you informed of our activities and events.
- * Your child has a 'key-worker' who knows your child very well and will be available to answer your queries and concerns.
- * Detailed confidential records of your child's achievements are kept and there are regular formal and informal opportunities to discuss your child's progress.
- * Events and days out are organised with the hope that you can sometimes take 'time out' of your busy schedule to come and enjoy some 'special time' with your child in the company of like-minded people.

Meals

Meals are freshly prepared on a daily basis with regard to current legislation on food handling. The menus are carefully planned to provide a well-balanced diet and having regard for medical requirements, and as far as possible, cultural wishes.

Nappies

From January 2011 an individual storage place for your child will be provided to enable you to bring in and use your own nappies and creams, suncream, comforters etc. From this date onwards nappies will not be supplied by nursery.

Settling-in

Thinking about the prospect of leaving your child in the care of others can be a worrying time - I have been a working parent all my life and know some of the heartaches that may be making you feel anxious. At Sunshine Montessori we will aim to provide as positive a settling-in period as possible. We do this in a number of ways:

* Newcomer's welcome sessions are organised for you and your child to come together and enjoy all that our nursery has to offer in advance of your child starting.

* We ask you to provide as much information about your child as possible by completing our 'child profile' so that, as far as possible, we can adjust our routines to your child rather than the other way around.

* True to the Montessori ethic, we provide a flexible settling-in period in which you are welcome to stay with your child until he/she settles before, in consultation with you, arranging for you to leave, initially for short periods if this is deemed in the best interests of your child.

* Whilst you are away from your child we are happy to answer queries by telephone during the day.

* Your key worker will be available to feed back on your child's day at picking-up time. Confidential discussion times can be arranged at short notice to discuss the needs and interests of your child.

We aim, and will do all that we can, to ensure that your child's first few weeks at Sunshine Montessori Nursery will be the foundation of a very happy, secure, fulfilling childhood whilst your child is with us.

Practical Information

Location

The Old Village School, Bullocks Farm Lane, Wheeler End, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 3NH

Correspondence

Please address all correspondence to 20 Commonsides, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 5XG. Phone: 01494 442057.

Email: roden-sunshine@tiscali.co.uk

* Opening times

The nursery is open from 8am – 5.45pm all year from Monday to Friday, closing the days between Christmas and New Year and bank holidays.

Full Day: 8am – 5.45pm (including breakfast, lunch and tea)

Mornings 8am-12.00pm (including breakfast)

Lunch 12.00-1pm

Afternoons: 1.00pm- 5.45pm (including tea)

Sessional: 3-5 year olds Montessori morning session (9am-12.00pm)

3-5 year olds Montessori afternoon session (1pm-4pm)

Occasional hours can be booked depending on availability.

* **Fee Structure** – see page nine and ten

* School Visiting

Viewing the school is welcome by appointment.

* Registration

Reservations are made on a first-come-first-served basis. To reserve a place please fill in and return the form enclosed. You will be advised by post when a place is available.

* Terms and Conditions

To help build a fair and trusting relationship between parents and the nursery we ask you to read and agree to our terms and conditions which are given to you upon our offer of a place for your child.

Fee Schedule

Full week and full day rates (These include meal costs and are offered at a discounted hourly rate as follows)

Session	Hours	Cost for child under 3	Cost for funded child (from the term <u>after</u> your child's 3 rd birthday)
Full Week Mon to Fri 8am-5.45pm	48 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours per week	£ 235 per week including meals equivalent to £4.82/hr	15 hours out of the total weekly 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours will be FREE for 38 of the 51 weeks (ie during term times)
Full Day 8am-5.45pm	9 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours per day	£ 55 per day including meals equivalent to £5.64/hr	Up to 15 hours per week will be FREE for 38 of the 51 weeks (ie during term times)

Part-day rates (These are calculated on an hourly basis)

Session	Hours	Cost for child under 3	Cost for funded child (from the term <u>after</u> your child's 3 rd birthday)
Mornings 8am-12.00pm (plus breakfast)	4 hours	£26.40 plus breakfast	<p>You will be entitled to 15 FREE hours per week for 38 weeks of the year (NB see limits of offer on page 1 for other conditions)</p> <p>Additional hours over and above the 15 FREE hours per week will be charged at the current rate for our nursery.</p>
Lunch 12.00-1pm (plus lunch)	1 hour	£6.60 plus lunch	
Afternoons 1.00pm-5.45pm (plus tea)	4hr 45mins	£31.35 plus tea	
Morning Montessori Session for 3-5 year olds. (9.00-12.00 pm)	3 hours	£15.50	
Afternoon Montessori Session for 3-5 year olds. (1.00-4.00pm)	3 hours	£15.50	
Occasional hours For one-off requests	1hr	£6.60	

Meals are charged as follows:

Breakfast £1.50 per meal	Lunch £3 per meal	Tea £2 per meal
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Fee Schedule (continued)

Fees are calculated on the basis of the weekly charge for the sessions attended, multiplied by 52 weeks and divided by 12 months to create a fixed monthly charge. Fees are paid by bank transfer monthly and are due by the first day of the month to which they relate. Alternative methods of payment are available by special arrangement only.

15 hours per week FREE Early Years Education

From the term after your child reaches 3 years old, he/she will become eligible for up to 15 hours per week of FREE nursery education over a 38 week period per year (ie during term times). The conditions of the offer are:

- * No sessions can be longer than 10 hours or shorter than 2.5 hours
- * The full 15 hours per week can be taken over no fewer than 3 days
- * You will be able to access a maximum of 2 providers at any one time.
- * Additional hours over and above the 15 free hours per week and over and above the 38 weeks will be charged at the current rate for our nursery.

Childcare Vouchers

Through your employer it is possible to save up to £2,392 pa on your child's place through using childcare vouchers. Childcare vouchers are non-taxable and exempt from National Insurance Contributions up to a limit of £243 per month or £55 per week per parent. This means that in families where both parents are taxpayers there are potential savings of between £1,924 to £2,392 per annum dependent on your tax status. The provision of vouchers must be part of an employer's scheme, but because vouchers are exempt from both employer and employee NICs, your employer benefits too. You will need to ask your employer if your company is a member of a nursery voucher scheme.

These fees are correct at the time of going to press. They are reviewed annually and therefore may have changed by the time your child starts. You are welcome to ring to check price details at any time.

Registration Form

(Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr) _____

(Postcode) _____

E-mail _____

Day _____ Evening _____

Desired Start Date: _____

Session Requirements (please tick):

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Full Day (8am-5.45pm)					
Mornings (8am-12.00pm)					
Lunch (12.00-1pm)					
Afternoons (1.00pm-5.45pm)					
Morning Montessori Session for 3-5 year olds. (9.00-12.00 pm))					
Afternoon Montessori Session for 3-5 year olds. (1.00-4.00pm)					

I enclose a £50 (non-refundable) administration fee. Please make cheques payable to 'Sunshine Montessori Nursery'.

Signed: _____

Date _____

We will inform you as soon as possible whether your application for a nursery place has been successful as well as providing you with a full list of our terms and conditions