



Parents' Handbook

“Take the First Step with Montessori”

**This handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about our programmes and procedures. If you have any questions or concerns, you are encouraged to talk with the provider or your child's teacher.*

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME NOTE

Dear Parents,

First Step Montessori House team welcomes you to our school. The school is pleased to have you as a member of its family and trusts that our partnership will be happy and rewarding.

The Parents' Handbook has been written as a simple document to answer any immediate questions that might arise regarding the school's routines, practices and procedures.

With Best Wishes,

Ms. Priya

Head Principal

FIRST STEP MONTESSORI HOUSE

Come.....Join Us!!

Our Philosophy, Mission & Beliefs

About Us

Our Educational Philosophy

First Step Montessori House is committed to provide our children a holistic education that develops them physically, socially, academically, intellectually and emotionally in a safe learning environment.

Our Mission

We believe that every child is a unique individual and is special.

Our mission is to nurture the little ones in a caring and conducive environment based on the Montessori concept, through guided self-discovery and concrete hands-on approach.

Our Beliefs

- We believe that the early years of the child are important and a crucial influence on the later development and learning.
- With us, the child comes first.
- We believe that every child learns at his/her own pace and learning experience should be pleasurable.
- At First Step Montessori House, we keep our teacher-student ratio low so that the teacher is able to focus on each child's needs, interest and development.

The Montessori Education

At First Step Montessori House, we provide a holistic learning environment based on Montessori principles that guide and nurture the development of each child. We focus on the child's potential to be a lifelong learner and make a positive contribution to the community.

The Montessori Method of education instils a love of learning and acceptance of an individual's responsibility for intellectual, as well as social growth. The

Montessori philosophy is based on profound respect for each child. Our goal is to inspire our younger generation to think for themselves and for others in a unique and exceptional learning environment.

5 Montessori Areas

❖ Practical Life Skills

Practical Life exercises equip children with life skills. The activities are concrete exercises and daily routines such as pouring, spooning, threading, pegging etc. The activities provide real-life experience that help develop children's coordination skills, independence and concentration. They also learn self-control and co-operation.

❖ Sensorial

Children learn about the world around them through their senses. The Sensorial materials and activities are designed to develop the five senses of the children through colour, texture, dimension, size, weight, sound and smell. Sensorial materials develop essential skills such as differentiation, independent judgement, estimations, similarities and differences which also assist in laying the foundation for future Mathematics work.

❖ Language

The children learn to read through phonic sounds through various activities, recognizing and associating letters with phonic sounds. They start reading through blending sounds, digraphs and introduction to grammar.

❖ Mathematics

The Montessori Maths is a concrete method through which children learn concepts of mathematics using concrete materials such as Number Rods and Golden Beads. The material helps the child understand abstract concepts of mathematics through a hands on approach.

❖ Culture

Cultural Studies provide the foundation for children to learn about the world around them

Bilingualism

The school offers daily classes in Mandarin for all students.

Our Team

First Step Montessori House has a team of qualified and educated teachers and staff to provide quality early childhood care and education. We believe in a warm, nurturing and caring environment for our little ones.

Our teachers are interviewed and selected based on their experience and qualification. First Step Montessori House welcomes all new staff and teachers who join our family with a big heart and open arms.

All our teachers are trained Diploma holders in Early Childhood Education and Care or have attained a Diploma in the Montessori Method of Education. Our teachers and staffs are first aid trained too.

OUR PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE

We offer following programs Monday to Friday:

CLASS	AGE	SESSION
Playgroup	18 months to 2 years	Session 1: 8:30am – 11:30am or Session 2: 11:30am – 2:30pm
Nursery 1	2 years – 3 years	
Nursery 2	3 years – 4 years	
Kindergarten 1	4 years – 5 years	
Kindergarten 2	5 years – 6 years	
Extended programme	3 years to 6 years	6 hour session: 8:30am -2:30pm

School holidays

Scheduled School Holidays

Youth Day

Teachers' Day

Children's Day

Public Holidays

New Year's Day

Chinese New Year

Good Friday

Labour Day

Vesak Day

Hari Raya Puasa

National Day

Hari Raya Haji

Deepavali

Christmas

School Terms

The school term dates are as defined by the Ministry of Education (MOE)

1. School fees are payable four times yearly, two weeks before the last day of the school term
2. No refund or rebate or make-up class is given for absenteeism, public holidays and term breaks
3. Term breaks are as follows:
 - a. March : 1 week
 - b. May - June : 4 weeks
 - c. September : 1 week
 - d. November – December : 6 weeks

Fees and mode of payment

Registration form must be fully completed. Following fees are payable for admission:

- Registration Fees (Non-refundable): S\$ 100
 - Deposit (Refundable*): S\$ 200
4. School fees are non-refundable or non-transferable to another child or another term at any point of time

5. Payment may be made by Cash / Cheque (payable to “First Step Montessori House Pte. Ltd.”) or through Child Development Account (CDA)
6. School Fees Invoice will be sent to parents, two weeks prior to the end of the previous term.
7. Upon receipt of the invoice, parents are to pay the next term’s fees before the last day of the ongoing term by cash or cheque. If fee payment mode is through GIRO through the child’s CDA account, the GIRO deduction for next term fees will be done on the last day of the ongoing term. Parents are to ensure that there is a sufficient balance in the child’s CDA account so as to avoid late fee charge. 1st unsuccessful deduction: \$5 late fee charge. 2nd unsuccessful deduction: \$10 late fee charge. After the 2nd unsuccessful GIRO deduction, parents are to pay school fees by cash or cheque.
8. First Montessori House reserves the right to revoke the enrollment of any child at any time at its discretion. Upon such termination, all fees (except registration fees) and deposit paid will be refunded. Parents will be notified in writing if any child’s enrollment is revoked

****Written notice of withdrawal must be given to the school at least one month before the end of school term. Failure to give notice will result in forfeiture of the refundable deposit***

YOUR CHILDS FIRST DAY IN SCHOOL...

Your child is going to be in a new environment. It is normal for your child to have fears about being away from you. Do try and prepare your child for the changes. You can do this by talking about the new people and friends your child will meet at the new school. Also talk about the fun activities that he/she will do at school. Example: Building with Lego or play dough, singing and dancing to new tunes and many more.

If this is the first time your child is going to school, it is natural to show signs of anxiety. A cheerful good-bye, a smile and a positive reassurance from you is all that you need to do. Usually, the child settles down shortly after the parents leave.

For the first week of school, we recommend that you pick up your child in one hour after drop-off. Thereafter, slowly increase the time by half an hour till the child is ready to stay in school for the whole session. This helps the child to build and gain trust and thus helps him settle in the new environment.

Young children may experience and act out their feelings by:

1. Crying
2. Not eating well
3. Bed wetting
4. Thumb sucking
5. Throwing tantrums
6. Expressing a desire to stay at home
7. Clinging on to you
8. Having bad dreams

These problems are usually temporary. Support your child lovingly but firmly to help him/her cope up with these new changes and these symptoms will eventually go away.

What to bring to School

Please send your child to school in shoes or sandals that he can take off and put on independently.

The school bag should be child-size, which your child can carry easily. Each day, the bag should contain the following items, which are clearly labelled with your child's name.

- A small face towel
- A set of spare clothes
- Wet wipes and pull-up Diaper pants (if the child is not toilet trained)
- A snack and a water bottle/ a drink

Things to leave at home

- Please do not bring toys into the center except for special occasions.
- Jewelry or expensive items of any kind is discouraged.

The staff will make effort to safeguard personal belongings brought by the children, but shall not be responsible for lost or broken items.

Arrival and Departure

1. Children must arrive by 8.30 am unless other arrangements have been made with the Principal and/or teacher. Please notify your child's teacher in the event of an absence.
2. Upon arrival, a staff member will greet you and your child in a warm and friendly manner. Please sign your child into the programme and walk your child into his/her designated area/class to be greeted by his/her teacher.
3. Please note that we will observe children for contagious illnesses upon arrival each morning. If your child appears to be ill, please expect for your child's teacher to do a brief health check. In some cases your child will not be accepted into the school.
4. Please keep your child at home if your child has a temperature above 37.5 degree Celsius or higher, chronic cough, sore throat, pinkeye w/drainage, unusual skin rash, diarrhea and/or vomiting. If any of these symptoms occur while your child in our care, you will be contacted to come to school promptly to pick your child from school. Your child will be isolated until your arrival. Your child will be allowed to come back to school when he/she has a doctor's medical fitness certificate to return to school.
5. Parents must arrange for the child to be picked up punctually (late pick-up charges will be applicable) by an authorized person aged 16 or more. If anyone other than yourself and/or designated person will pick-up your child, you must complete an authorized consent form, text message, a WhatsApp message or an email to the school with the following information of the person:
Name, NRIC Number and relationship with the child

Teachers on dismissal duty are to ensure that they make a photocopy of the NRIC and keep it in the child's file. Teachers are to check with the child if the child is willing to follow this person out of school. Teachers are to ensure that they release the child to this person only with the child's consent

Employees of our school are not allowed to transport children in their vehicles. (No exceptions!)

Confidentiality

All information gathered about a child is kept confidential. Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel. No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian. On request, regulatory authorities have access to confidential materials.

Safety and Security

All parents are requested to sign in and sign out at the foyer every day to ensure the safety of your children, as recommended by ECDA. Parents are to stay until the child's temperature has been taken and the child has entered the front door

For security reasons and to ensure minimal disruptions to school activities, parents who wish to enter the classrooms are kindly requested to inform the Principal before doing so.

Parents will be asked to provide two local emergency contacts that can be reached in case parents cannot be reached during an emergency. Please ensure that the emergency contacts provided are aware of their responsibility and that their contact information is kept up-to-date.

Parental Involvement at our school

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the program in a variety of ways. Here are some examples of parent involvement:

- Parent surveys
- Volunteer in classroom as reading mums or reading dads
- Assist on fieldtrips
- Send treats to parties
- Volunteer your talent or work experience
- Help with fundraisers
- Help organize events
- Parent Advisory Board

If you would like to help us in other ways please let us know!

Parent Conferences/Communication

Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year in person or by telephone. Together you and your child's teacher will review your child's progress, needs and set goals for your child. Parents are also welcomed to visit the program at any time their child is present.

Other ways that we will communicate with you:

- Brief discussions upon arrival
- Daily/weekly reports
- Telephone calls
- Termly newsletters
- Open house events

Parent Support Group

Our aim is to involve parents to enhance the quality of care and experiences that the children have at our centre.

With this goal in mind:

- ❖ We encourage open communication with families about the children's progress and our schools curriculum
- ❖ We believe that the child's education and well-being is a joint partnership task of parents and teachers and children will positively benefit if both home and school work together
- ❖ We encourage parents to become active participants in all our school activities
- ❖ We encourage feedback from parents

Parties

Birthdays and Holidays are special events at our school. If you choose to celebrate your child's birthday, we will plan a birthday celebration on your child's birthday at snack time. Parents are welcome to the school to celebrate their child's birthday or send a cake or cupcakes to the birthday celebration. But parents are to inform the school about the cake shop name. Parents are to inform the school at least 2 weeks prior to the celebration date. If parents wish to give the child's friends goodie bags, they are to send a sample goody bag at least 1 week prior to the celebration date.

We will also be celebrating special occasions such as Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Lantern Festival, Hari Raya, Christmas, National day, Racial Harmony Day in school. If you would like for your child to celebrate any of the above events/holidays, please feel free to send only packaged or home-made items (only halal food items and no nuts) to the event or assist with the event.

Meals

Our school does not provide meals to children. Parents are to provide snacks of the child's choice in a box and a straw water bottle. Our school does not allow children to share food during snack time.

Medication Policy

We will not administer **Fever Reducers or any other medication in school.**

Field Trip Policy

Fieldtrips are scheduled two times a year if weather permits. Parents are informed in advance of outings and written permission must be obtained before your child can attend the fieldtrip. A notice will be posted reminding parents and staff of the trip, where the children will be going, cost, when they will leave and return to the center. At least three staff members accompanying the group will be first aid and CPR Trained. A first aid kit will be taken along and children's emergency information. Prior to the trip, procedures and safety rules are carefully reviewed with the children.

Children under the age of 4 must be accompanied by a parent or designated person.

Behaviour Management policies, and procedures

When behaviour problems occur, the child's age will be considered, to decide if the behaviour is age appropriate. You will be notified of behaviour problems such as: causing harm to others, disruptive behaviour or other behaviour concerns. We will then together develop a plan to improve your child's behaviour. We will continue to provide positive guidance and help your child gain self-control and take responsibility for his/her own behaviour.

Injury/Accident Prevention guidelines

If your child becomes injured other than a minor scrape or bruise you will be notified immediately. The incident will be assessed and documented. You will be given a copy of the incident report at pick-up time. In case of an emergency you must supply us with 2 back up contacts. **You must be easily reached during the hours your child is in our care.**

Other injury/accident prevention guidelines

- To prevent injuries on the playground please send your child to school with **sports shoes**. No open toe shoes on the playground.
- Loose comfortable clothes must be worn. Sweatshirts with strings around the hood are not allowed.
- An extra pair of clothing and wet tissues should always be kept in your child's school bag.

Fire Drills

- Our centre conducts fire drills and follows the set evacuation procedures to ensure that all our students and staff are aware of the evacuation and safety procedures in case of fire. These are carried out and recorded for each session every term. Principal plans the fire drills for the whole year. At the beginning of the year, these are planned drills and in the last two terms these are surprise drills arranged by the Principal.

LIST OF IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Centre Number: 67557552

Nearest Private Clinic Number: Pacific Medical and Dental Clinic 67524050

Nearest Polyclinic Number: Yishun Polyclinic 63553000

Nearest Family Care Centre: Care Corner Child Development Centre- 67560729

Nearest 24-hour Clinic: Central 24 hour Clinic Yishun 6759 7985

Fire / Ambulance: 995

Police: 999

Police Hotline: 1800 225 0000

KK Women's and Children's Hospital: 62934044

Nearest Hospital: Khoo Teck Puat: 65558000

Policies are subject to change and you will be notified of any changes

Whose child is this?

~Author Unknown

"Whose child is this?" I asked one day
Seeing a little one out at play
"Mine", said the parent with a tender smile
"Mine to keep a little while
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell him what he is to wear
To prepare him that he may always be good
And each day do the things he should"

"Whose child is this?" I asked again
As the door opened and someone came in
"Mine", said the teacher with the same tender smile
"Mine, to keep just for a little while
To teach him how to be gentle and kind
To train and direct his dear little mind
To help him live by every rule
And get the best he can from school"

"Whose child is this?" I ask once more
Just as the little one entered the door
"Ours" said the parent and the teacher as they smiled
And each took the hand of the little child
"Ours to love and train together
Ours this blessed task forever."