



South
Suburban
Montessori
School

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION



South Suburban Montessori School creates an intellectual environment that fosters empathetic, confident, courageous self-learners.

www.ssmsmontessori.net

WELCOME TO SOUTH SUBURBAN MONTESSORI SCHOOL



South Suburban Montessori School dedicates itself to providing an authentic Montessori education to children between 18 months and 14 years of age. Our values of compassion, authenticity, respect and excellence inspire our school's rich tradition of nurturing each child's natural love of learning. Founded in 1970, South Suburban is located just 20 minutes from downtown Cleveland in Brecksville's beautiful Blossom Hill Complex.

What Our Families Say About South Suburban:

- Our students can accelerate their learning while working at their own pace.
- In our school, academic achievement and critical thinking skills are the cornerstones of preparing students for life.
- Our teachers are nurturing, caring and create a home-like, safe learning environment.
- We value the teaching of independence as it produces emotionally intelligent students who lead, not follow.
- In our school, the values of respect, honesty, fairness and acceptance permeate every classroom.

We look forward to sharing our school with you!

THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

South Suburban Montessori School is a private, non-profit school founded in 1970. We take pride in offering the unique teaching philosophies of Dr. Maria Montessori to our Toddler, Children's House, Elementary, and Middle School programs.

Dr. Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator and the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. Maria Montessori believed the purpose of education should be an aid to life. She believed education should go far beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge in various areas of culture.

Maria Montessori believed that children carry within themselves their own unique personality, pattern of development, strengths and abilities. When given an environment which allows for this natural development to occur, they will learn in personal and powerful ways. The Montessori Method assists the child in developing self-awareness, a positive self-image, independence, self-confidence and a life-long love of learning.

A few of the core Montessori principles on how children learn include:

1. Moving and learning are intertwined. Movement is critical to the child's learning experience.
2. Children naturally love to learn and are internally motivated.
3. Young children use all of their senses to learn...especially their hands. The hands are the instrument of the child's intelligence.
4. Children must be free (within the limits of safety) to explore and interact with their environment.
5. Extrinsic rewards interfere with true learning.
6. Learning occurs best within a meaningful context.
7. Learning occurs best when there is order in the environment.
8. Children pass through sensitive periods. Sensitive periods are segments of time when they are most motivated and capable of learning a particular skill.
9. Children learn through imitation, repetition, and trial and error.
10. Freedom to make choices is a necessity for true learning.

The Montessori approach to education embraces the dignity of the child as a person, the necessity of recognizing individual differences, the catalytic role of the teacher and the prepared environment designed to help each child actualize his/her potentialities. Everything we do originates from the deepest respect for and love of the child.



HOW TO APPLY TO SOUTH SUBURBAN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Applying to South Suburban Montessori School is straightforward and designed to be as user friendly as possible. Here are the four steps for application to our school.

Schedule a School Visit

Call 440.526.1966 or email admissions@ssmsmontessori.net to schedule a school tour. A good time to visit is daily at 9:45am. We generally are able to accommodate a different schedule if this time is not feasible.

Submit an Application

- We encourage you to submit an enrollment application after visiting South Suburban.
- Applications for enrollment can be downloaded from our website under the Admissions Forms tab.
- A copy of your previous school's records are requested for children who have prior school experience. A copy of any formal assessments is also helpful.
- A teacher recommendation is requested for children applying for grades 2nd – 8th.

Assessment

- We need to have the opportunity to determine your child's needs and whether or not the school has the resources to meet those needs.
- Our assessment is informal and generally considered 'fun' by most of our young visitors. The teacher will give a lesson and work with your child as part of this assessment. This will occur during your child's visit to our school.
- Depending on the age of your child, we welcome visits of anywhere from part of an hour to a full day. A longer visit may enable a child to meet other children in the class and see whether our school is a good fit.

Family Interview

- It is important for us to meet both parents wherever possible. In order for your child to have success at school, a strong relationship between school and home needs to be forged. The family interview is scheduled by the Head of School and is an opportunity to determine whether our philosophy is congruent with your own and to answer more detailed questions about the school year.
- Within a week of the family interview, you will be notified of the status of your application by the Admissions Director.

Waiting List

South Suburban may receive more applications than it has spaces available. If a space is not available, a child's application will be included on our waiting list. South Suburban will fill enrollment space(s) from our waiting list as they become available with consideration to maintaining a balance of age and gender within the affected classroom.

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PARENT COMMUNITY



Suburban Montessori Parent Association

South Suburban Montessori's Parent Association supports the children, parents and staff of the School. The Parent Association provides opportunities for community building and parent involvement in the school. It also helps provide both volunteer and financial support to increase opportunities for our students and our school. We encourage both parents to become involved in our Parent Association.



Parent Orientation and Education

A child's experience at SSMS will reach its fullest potential when her/his work at school is combined with the family's understanding of Montessori philosophy and parent's cooperation at home. Therefore, parent education is essential.

Parent orientation is usually held the week prior to the beginning of school. Parents of both new and returning students are expected to attend the Parent Orientation Meeting.



Parent education meetings include guest speakers, discussion or study groups, classroom material exhibits or any format from which our parents may benefit. These types of meetings vary from year to year and are developed with the needs and interest of the parents in mind. We encourage you to take full advantage of our various parent workshops, classroom observations, parent conferences and parent communications.



Education Committee

South Suburban Montessori School's Education Committee provides a venue for all School constituents (parents, faculty, etc.) to affect positive change and advancement within the School. The Committee can address any topics that affect the education of the students at SSMS. All parents are eligible to join the Education Committee. The Education Committee meets on a monthly basis between September and May.



Parent Volunteering

Parents are asked throughout the year to help the school with fund raising events, repairing classroom equipment, doing laundry, providing snacks, etc. All families are asked to donate a minimum number of volunteer hours.



Fundraising

As a Not for Profit Organization, SSMS relies on a certain amount of fundraising to help defray expenses that would result in higher tuition costs. Although there is no prescribed monetary amount, each family is asked to participate at the level they feel they can afford. Families are also welcome to help secure fundraising dollars, auction items and/or sponsorships through outside sources such as grandparents, friends, colleagues, United Way and company matching donations, etc.

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QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT MONTESSORI

1. What is the Montessori Method?

The Montessori Method is named after its founder, Dr. Maria Montessori. It is an approach to education which emphasizes the potential of the child from birth through adolescence and attempts to develop this potential by means of prepared environments of uniquely designed learning materials under the direction of trained Montessori teachers. Maria Montessori felt that the goal of early education should be the cultivation of the child's own natural desire to learn. It is a psychologically rooted method that takes the developmental needs of the child as the basis and foundation for learning.

2. How are the classes structured?

South Suburban Montessori School educates children from 18 months through 8th grade. The multi-age groupings are: The Toddler Classroom, 18 months to 3 years; The Children's House, ages 3 to 6 years; The Lower Elementary, ages 6 to 9 years; the Upper Elementary, ages 9 to 12 years and the Middle School, ages 12 to 14.

3. How does the classroom work?

The classroom is a scientifically designed environment, which includes developmental learning materials and activities that are sequential and meant to be experienced over a three-year cycle and not in individual successive one-year capsules. The classrooms are **child centered** compared to adult-centered classrooms in the traditional setting. A trained teacher is an integral component of a well functioning prepared environment. Children are allowed the freedom of choice, of movement and learn respect for self and for others, which all aids in the process of self-construction. Multi-aged Montessori classrooms offer an inherent motivator for the children to constantly challenge themselves. Younger children have models for emulation and older children have the opportunity to reinforce their knowledge by helping the younger ones while developing confidence, independence and leadership. Each child has the opportunity to experience being the youngest, middle, and oldest member of the group. Children are allowed to progress at their own pace and level of understanding. A child's progress is measured

against his or her own ability, not that of others. The Montessori classroom is able to adapt to the individual needs of each child and offers diversity, stimulation and the opportunity to develop the person within the child.

4. Are Montessori schools religious?

The Montessori philosophy itself is not religiously oriented. South Suburban Montessori School seeks to develop harmony within diversity. The celebration of holidays and traditions is treated as another learning experience in the classroom with the sharing of songs, foods and traditions from cultures around the world.

5. How will my child adjust to a traditional school after attending a Montessori school?

Studies show that generally Montessori children adjust well and are often among the better students. They spend their time more productively, are self-directed with a positive attitude towards learning, and are able to socialize effectively because of the benefit of the multi-age aspect of the classrooms and respect that has been cultivated for self and others.

6. Is the child free to do as he/she pleases?

Although a child is free to work at his/her own pace with materials he/she has chosen, either alone or with others, we should not be confused that this means the child does as he/she pleases. There are clear limits to be adhered to. Each classroom has basic ground rules which are based on respect for each other and for the environment.

7. If my child is left to choose his/her own projects, won't he do the same thing day in and day out, or do nothing at all?

At South Suburban Montessori School our staff is trained to observe children as they work. When a child has mastered a skill, the teacher will give the child the next lesson that is more challenging, giving attention to the age and interest of each child. The prepared environment offers many stimulating choices for the child and it is seldom that they "do nothing."

8. Are lunches and snacks provided by the school?

The children have the option of purchasing a hot lunch three days per week. Families are responsible for providing a lunch the remaining two days. In the Toddler and Children's House environments, parents volunteer to purchase snack items for one to two weeks for the school year. A grocery list is prepared for the parent by the classroom. Each day the snack is placed on a shelf in the classroom, which is then available for the children to individually prepare.

9. Why is a 5-day school week necessary for the younger Montessori child?

The Montessori classroom experience is structured around five consecutive days to allow the spontaneous learning of the child to flow smoothly. A child taken in and out of school every other day does not have the same opportunity to pursue her/his unfolding interests. Consistency develops the social and working community of the class.

10. What does the teacher do?

The function of the teacher in a Montessori classroom differs considerably from that of the traditional teacher; rather than instructing or teaching the children, the teacher guides the children's interest. The teacher prepares the environment, guides the child's interest to an activity and offers each child enticement and stimulation to ensure that the children's total development as well as their progress toward self-discipline occurs. Montessori teachers require specialized training for the age group with which he/she will work. The training is comprehensive and thorough for specific developmental stages.

11. What is the Montessori Curriculum?

The Montessori Curriculum at all levels is developed around the developmental needs of the child and is presented in the form of lessons as the child shows interest and readiness. South Suburban Montessori's curriculum emphasizes geography, world cultures, history, humanities and the arts, in addition to the core subjects or science, mathematics, reading and writing.



PROGRAMS

The importance of the three-year cycle:

Each of South Suburban's classroom environments are based on a three-year cycle. To receive the full benefits of a Montessori education, a child who begins any three-year cycle should complete that three-year cycle. Each step of a child's development and learning from the time he/she enters the Montessori classroom serves as a solid foundation for the next. The child who does not finish the program will never experience the same benefits, joy and satisfaction of having reached the end. The best analogy would be to say "having poured the concrete it also needs an opportunity to cure" for the foundation to be sound. A 'true' Montessori program works in the same way. Therefore, the importance of the 3-year cycle is so crucial in Montessori.

It is a clearly-defined and discrete educational unit with a beginning, a middle, and an end for each child, with the third year in each sequence a capstone year that becomes a culminating experience academically, emotionally, socially, and developmentally. If not followed, the child's work in that three-year sequence is simply incomplete.

Toddler Community:

Admission age is 18 months to 36 months for the Toddler Community. Children attend five days of the week, from 8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Toddlers will be moved into the Children's House after the child's third birthday and based on their readiness.

Children's House:

The ideal admission age is between 2½ and 3 years; however, exceptions are made if places for older children become available. Classes are five days of the week from 8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Children who are kindergarten level students attend school at 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

All Day Montessori:

This program is available Monday through Friday, for children three years old to six years old. There are two sessions offered: 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and 8:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**** Important: All new children to the above classes go through a gradual orientation.**

Elementary & Middle School:

Children who have completed the Children's House level, are six years of age on or before the thirtieth day of September of the year of admittance and are observed socially, emotionally and academically ready are eligible for the elementary level. Elementary children without previous Montessori experiences are individually evaluated for acceptance if space is available. The Elementary Classes are multi aged with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year students in Lower Elementary; 4th, 5th, and 6th year students together in Upper Elementary and 7th and 8th year students in Middle School.

Morning Care:

This program is available Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., for children enrolled in Children's House through Middle School.

Elementary Aftercare:

This program is available Monday through Friday, from 3:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., for children in 1st through 8th grade.

Specialty Programs:

All students at SSMS participate in an Orff Music program conducted by an experienced music teacher. Students in our Children's House, Elementary and Middle School environments receive Spanish language instruction and our Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle School students participate in Physical Education classes.

As part of their Physical Education program, Elementary and Middle School students annually participate in a 5-week ski program at Boston Mills Ski Resort as well as other physical activities such as swimming, golf, tennis and/or track.

After School Activities:

After school arts and crafts, dance, sign language, theater, Tae Kwon Do, and cooking classes are offered to all students enrolled in the Children's House, Elementary and Middle School programs. Each activity has specific dates, age requirements and costs for each session. Activities are scheduled alternatively and are held once a week for a period of six to twelve weeks.

Programs are subject to change based on availability of space and instructors.



South
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School

*Providing authentic Montessori education for
Toddlers (beginning at 18 months) – 8th Grade*

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AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives
Accredited Member School