

POLICY RE: Toddler Assessment, Observation, Documentation and Reporting at the Montessori School of Kleinburg

Established: OCTOBER 2018

Montessori education is designed to identify and meet the needs of children at every stage of development from the earliest years to the adolescent. This cohesive approach supports the child in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's world. Keeping track of children's progress and growth over time are critical tasks for Montessori teachers and deeply intertwined with the work of guiding children through the range of the Montessori curriculum.

In Montessori, continual assessment is organically built into the essential functioning of an authentic classroom, through constant observation of the students by the teachers. The daily use of observation, combined with the ability of the learning materials to reveal a child's understanding; along with rigorous Record Keeping, enables Montessori teachers to closely follow their students' development.

In an elementary class there are additional tools, such as daily recording of activities by the child and regular one-on-one conferences with the child that contribute to the teacher's effort to assess every child's progress. In Toddler, we use the power of observation, documentation and an Assessment Tool called the **NIPISSNG NDDS - Nipissing District Developmental Screen**. The **NDDS** is a universal, developmental checklist that covers vision, hearing, and communication, gross and fine motor, cognitive, social/emotional, and self-help. The tool assists parents, health care and child care professionals with a convenient and easy-to-use method of recording the development and progress of infants, toddlers, and children up to age 6. The screens coincide with immunization schedules as well as key developmental stages up to age six, and are the preferred tool used by Ontario health professionals for use at the enhanced 18-months well baby visit. Age appropriate activities accompany the screens and are designed to promote overall development.

Montessori School of Kleinburg--Toddler Program----Approach to Assessment and Reporting

The Montessori approach to assessment and reporting derives from the nature of the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy. It is based on the belief that each child is a competent learner, born ready to learn from the people and the cultural and material environment around them. The Montessori approach facilitates personalised learning

and development experiences for each child, the timing of individualised lessons **determined by the detailed observations of each child by the teacher**. Children work in specially prepared environments which contain materials specifically designed to foster the achievement of appropriate developmental milestones, and the sequential mastery of skills and concepts across the range of disciplines. There is a strong emphasis on individual choice and individualised teaching, based on the understanding that children do not achieve those developmental goals, nor master those skills and concepts as a standard method or procedure, but rather need to work at their own pace. Montessori students benefit from the opportunities the materials provide, they learn from and teach each other, are inspired by others, and learn to value helping others. Furthermore, Montessori education is specifically non-competitive, and does not promote rewards and punishment in favour of encouraging the development in children of intrinsic motivation for learning. Activities are open-ended, encouraging exploration and creative thinking, and **as such do not lend themselves to grading**. Toddler teachers observe skills, development, growth, progress with lessons/use of materials; they document their observations through Anecdotal Records and Record Keeping and base their assessments on those observations.

The Developmental/Curriculum Areas in the MSK Toddler Program are:

- **Physical Development- Fine and Gross Motor Skills**
- **Language Development**
- **Social Development**
- **Emotional Development**
- **Creative Development**
- **Introduction to Numbers 0-10**

Record Keeping

Records of each student's' development and achievements are individualised, highly detailed, and focus on the strengths of the child as well as areas where further development is needed.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal Records are kept for each student, outlining observations of the child in consideration of the following:

- Academic development
- Patterns of behaviours
- Social skills

- Emotional coping skills and self-regulation
- Concerns from parents
- Teacher concerns
- Documentation in regards to Communication with parents (meetings, phone calls, emails, etc.)

Toddler Report Cards

At MSK, we have two reporting periods. A formal REPORT CARD is written by the Toddler Teachers and is distributed to parents in January and June. The teachers base their report cards on the the Developmental/Curriculum Areas as outlined above. Teachers use their Record Keeping and Anecdotal Records/Observations, in addition to the Nippising Assessment Tool to formulate their evaluation of each child's progress. Two formal Parent/Teacher Interviews are also conducted (in November and April). Additional meetings may be requested or scheduled by teachers with parents if particular concerns arise. **A conference form (hard copy) is provided for any and all parent/teacher meetings at MSK. Parents must read, agree and sign the form to confirm their understanding of the meeting topics.**