



Early Learning Centre Parent Handbook



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Early Learning Centre Hours

Elm Room (Infant & Toddler)	7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Willow Room (2-3 year olds)	7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Oak Room (3-5 year olds)	7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Maple Room (3-5 year olds)	7:30a.m. – 5:30p.m. 8:30 a.m. – 3:00p.m.

Messages and Phone Calls

Early Learning Centre Telephone:	(604) 533-5664
Executive Director Email	operations@murrayvilleacademy.ca
Early Learning Manager Email	elc@murrayvilleacademy.ca
Elementary Office Telephone:	(604) 532-5667
ELC and Elementary Facsimile:	(604) 532-5634
Web Site:	www.murrayvilleacademy.ca
Facebook:	Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre
W.C.M.S. PSG Email:	psg@murrayvilleacademy.ca
W.C.M.S Board Email:	board@murrayvilleacademy.ca

The School Principal, Executive Director, Early Learning Centre Manager, will be available to answer any questions in person or by telephone between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Updated January 2020



Welcome to Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre

We wish to extend you a warm welcome to the Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre community.

This handbook will give you a brief insight into how Murrayville Academy operates. There are additional resources available to you in the office that can help you become informed about Montessori & Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, teaching and curriculum.

Please note, this document is a fluid document and changes may be posted.



Our Mission

To excite your child's creativity, curiosity and imagination in a respectful learning environment.

Our Vision

To provide a stimulating and carefully planned environment where children may develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, and skills essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

Our Values

- Excellence:** We commit to excellence in academics and individual achievement.
- Respect:** We demonstrate and show appreciation for each other.
- Integrity:** We are consistently honest, open and sincere.
- Accountability:** We are responsible for our actions and decisions.
- Inclusivity:** We embrace and celebrate the diversity of perspectives and background of each person within our community.
- Creativity:** We foster a culture of innovation by encouraging new ideas and experimentation.

Key Areas of Strategic Focus

- Increase stakeholder engagement
- Deliver quality programs using while incorporating the methods of Montessori and Reggio Emilia
- Evolve financially and grow
- Assist with student transition to high school
- Improve collaboration and partnership within our Community
- Develop sustainable practices at Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre

Our Guiding Principles

- We are a learning organization.
- We are financially responsible.
- We are co-educational, non-denominational, independent school that provides a broad, comprehensive and enriched program for students.
- We assist students to overcome barriers to learning through accessibility.
- We support our students and staff to succeed.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Montessori Education

Origins

Montessori education began some eighty years ago with the work of Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Italy's first female physician and one of the great educators of this century. Her detailed observation of a group of children committed to her care led her to design unique learning materials, to train others in her teaching methods, and then to open schools, first in Italy and then in numerous other countries. During the war years, Montessori's educational approach was known as the movement for peace, for she saw the child as the hope for a new world. By the time of her death, Maria Montessori's philosophy of education had become influential internationally, and schools under her name had been established around the world.

The Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori approach to education is grounded in the belief that children have a dynamic inner desire to explore and learn about their environment. In the words of Maria Montessori, "Education is not something which the teacher does, but is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but by virtue of experience in which the child acts on his environment...We must offer the child the help he needs, and be at his service so that he does not have to walk alone."

Montessori believed that all children have within themselves the power to achieve their full potential. Given the proper measure of guidance and freedom, the children's inner spirit enables them to focus on what they need to know. Children then learn with wonder, confidence, and joy.

An Environment for Learning

An important part of Montessori's approach is an orderly and pleasant environment. This environment includes learning materials designed to meet the particular developmental needs of each child. Ideally, it also includes easy access to outdoor surroundings, the world of nature. Children are encouraged to explore activities that interest them most, and to experience the deep inner satisfaction of having achieved what they set out to do.

Each child is given guidance according to his or her needs and personal capability, allowing for individually paced development in a non-competitive atmosphere. The grouping of mixed ages in one classroom permits cooperative interaction and mutual assistance among the younger and the older children.

Reggio Emilia

The Hundred Languages is a key principle of the Reggio-inspired approach. It refers to communication and emphasizes the importance of providing children with one hundred ways to share their thinking of the world around them. Reggio Emilia educators believe that children have the right and the ability to express their thinking, theories, ideas, learning, and emotions in many ways. Teachers provide children with a wide range of materials and media and welcome a diversity of experiences so that children encounter many avenues for thinking, revising, constructing, negotiating, developing, and symbolically expressing their thoughts and feelings. In this way, teachers, parents, and children can better understand each other. These languages can include drawing, paint, clay, wire, natural and recycled materials, lights, and shadow, dramatic play, music, and dance. They can also include expression with words through metaphors, stories, or poems of the children's interpretations and constructions. Collaborative, inquiry-based projects demonstrate student learning. Extensive record keeping and analysis of the learning process is documented.



Classroom Teachers / Caregivers

A well-trained, sensitive and caring adult is the key link between the child and the environment. The teacher, specially trained in observation of child development, assesses when to offer a new challenge to the child and demonstrates the use of materials. The teacher assists the child's progress with attentive care, fostering a positive, loving atmosphere for the child.

All of our Montessori teachers have the necessary qualifications in accordance with the Fraser Health Authority, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Independent Schools.

Goals and Objectives

The primary aim of Murrayville Academy is to provide a stimulating and carefully-planned environment where children may develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, and skills essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

The School strives to assist the child to attain the following:

1. a positive attitude toward school and learning
2. self-discipline and independence within the context of community
3. a high degree of self-esteem
4. habits of concentration, initiative, and persistence
5. the ability to engage in team work
6. respect for others, for all life, and for the environment
7. development as a whole person, mentally, spiritually, and physically

History of the School

Langley Montessori School is an outgrowth of a private Montessori Preschool located in Langley City. Interest in having a kindergarten through grade seven program run as an Independent School, meant a school society with a Board of Directors was needed in order to meet the requirements of provincial funding. The West Coast Montessori Society and its Board of Directors took the initiative to find a permanent location for its successful elementary school program and restore a novel century facility at its current address. During the 2005-2006 school year, the West Coast Montessori Society and its Board of Directors consolidated its efforts to the current program and facility with plans to expand the adjacent property into an early learning centre. In July, 2007, the Early Learning Centre opened to focus on infant to grade seven programs in Murrayville, at the historic five corners.



School Governance

Murrayville Academy is governed by the West Coast Montessori Society which selects a Board of Governors to oversee operations. Final authority for the Society is vested in its Board of Directors. They are responsible for setting the policies and vision implemented in the School through the staff and administration.

The School Board is held accountable by following established accounting principles and audits, meeting the requirements for the Independent School Branch of the Ministry of Education, working with the Fraser Health Authority and remaining committed to principles of Montessori education.

Administrative Staff includes:

Executive Director, Principal, Vice Principal, and Early Learning Centre Manager

Our Strategic Directions

1. To enhance and expand the Langley Montessori's educational program from infant to Middle School.
2. To attract and retain committed, talented and highly skilled teachers, specialists and support staff.
3. To continue to develop the Early Learning Centre.
4. To attract and retain families who are committed to the purpose and vision of our school.
5. To put in place an effective school leadership structure, (board of directors, administration and committees) to guide Langley Montessori School in achieving its purpose and vision.

Licencing

West Coast Montessori Society is licensed to operate Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre under the Community Care Facility Act by the Province of British Columbia, Child Care Facilities Licensing Board. We are licensed as an infant/toddler program, group day-care.

Murrayville Academy is also an independent school through the Ministry of Education Independent Schools Branch. Murrayville Academy School is a Group 1 Independent School.



The Montessori Curriculum

Early Childhood

The child's mind from birth to age six is truly the "absorbent mind," to use the description of Maria Montessori. During these early years, children unconsciously absorb and accumulate impressions from which they will later develop their conscious life. Each child eventually brings these impressions to consciousness through movement. It is at this stage that the child enters the Montessori environment and follows a planned program of self-education.

Murrayville Academy's Early Learning Centre believes in creating a secure and nurturing environment in which the child feels comfortable to explore the environment. Emphasis is placed on creating a strong connection between child and teacher, to support the opportunity for development.

During the Infant and Toddler years, children maximize their development by freely exploring a stimulating environment. Opportunities to develop social, emotional, sensorial and language skills are created. Many activities are of a solitary nature but gradually expand to more social activities. After the Infant and Toddler years, between 30 and 36 months, children transition into the Preschool classrooms. Here the focus is placed on further developing independence and the routine becomes more structured in terms of academic activities.

Every child passes through successive stages of limited duration in which the sensitivity for acquiring certain knowledge and skills is at a peak. The abilities mastered in a "sensitive period" become the foundation upon which new skills are based. In the Montessori classroom a child learns, for example, to manipulate small inset puzzle pieces at 1½, thereby strengthening the hand muscles needed for writing at 3½ or 4.

By nurturing the child's own capacities for concentration, perseverance and thoroughness, the Montessori approach fosters feelings of security, self-esteem, competence and pleasure in accomplishment. The aim for the young child is to establish foundations for a lifetime of creative and joyful learning. The Montessori classroom presents several areas of learning to preschool children as appropriate to their stage of development. A brief description of these areas follows.

Practical Life Exercises

Children in their early years are very attracted to tasks which an adult considers ordinary such as cleaning furniture, wiping tables, ensuring a tidy environment, and so on. By engaging in these activities, young children follow one of their strongest inner urges which are to imitate the adult.

In the practical life area of the classroom, children develop and perfect their coordination. They gradually lengthen their concentration span and learn to pay attention to detail as they follow a sequence of actions. The children acquire good working habits as they complete each task and put everything away before starting another activity.

Sensorial Exercises

With the use of special sensorial materials-things to be touched, shaken, heard, smelled, and visually examined, children learn to distinguish and categorize, and to integrate new information. The child's acquisition of conscious knowledge thus takes place when the intelligence focuses in a concentrated way on impressions given by the senses.



Language

In the Infant and Toddler Program, the teachers model positive language skills and most are trained in Sign Language. The ability to communicate lowers frustration in younger children who do not possess verbal language skills. With a lower level of frustration, a more peaceful environment is created.

In the Montessori Preschool classroom, young children learn the phonetic sound of the alphabetical letter before they learn the alphabet names in a sequence. The phonetic sounds are presented first because these are the sounds children hear in words that they will shortly begin to read. As soon as a child exhibits interest in some area of language, the teacher introduces specific language materials to the child. Writing and/or constructing words with movable letters nearly always precedes reading in a Montessori environment.

Gradually, children learn the irregular words and words with more than one syllable. Whenever they are ready to read, their skill in phonics allows them to approach new words and not just a specific few which they might have been trained to recognize by sight. A child's interest in reading is cultivated as a most important key to future learning. The children are introduced to grammar by games which show them the difference between nouns, verbs and adjectives. This experience becomes the foundation of language analysis in the elementary years.

Mathematics

Given access to tangible mathematical materials in their early years, children can easily assimilate many facts and skills of arithmetic.

As children become interested in counting, they greatly enjoy touching or moving the items they are counting. The concrete Montessori materials for mathematics; designed to be combined, separated, shared and compared, enable children to discover for themselves the basic operations of mathematics.

In a Montessori classroom, there is a variety of materials that can be used for numeration, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. This variety maintains children's interest while giving them many opportunities for necessary repetition.

Geography

Large wooden geographical puzzles provide some of the most popular activities in the classroom. At first, the children use the maps only as puzzles and later, as tracing pieces to create their own maps. Gradually, they learn the names of countries, their land formations, climate and products.

History

The older preschoolers explore the concept of history with "time lines," long strips of paper which are unrolled and stretched along the classroom floor. The line is divided into segments which represent the consecutive periods of history. As an introduction to the understanding of history, the children make a time line of their own lives, beginning with their baby photographs.

Cultural Enrichment

Children enjoy the experience of other cultures including their customs, food, music, religious traditions, costumes, and language. Classroom presentations in these areas by parents and other guests gradually help the children to develop an appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage and an understanding of others.



Art

In the preschool environment, projects in art foster the joy which the young child finds in creating something. The children have the freedom to explore a variety of media and to express their imagination. The process, and not the end product, is the important element.

Music

According to Maria Montessori, the child absorbs the musical sound of the environment with the same ease as a native spoken language. The many benefits of incorporating music in the classroom are well-documented. Literacy skills, vocabulary, speech articulation and auditory processing are only some of the ways music can enhance children's learning. Singing, playing rhythm instruments, drumming and the Montessori bells all play a part in music instruction.

Science and Nature

Children's innate curiosity about the natural world is stimulated through nature walks, the sharing of special items discovered in nature, and later through projects and simple experiments. The enjoyment of the plant and animal kingdoms fosters a love and respect for all living things.



Admissions

The Infant, Toddler and Preschool program creates an environment where children can reach their full potential during the “Absorbent Years” as identified by Dr. Maria Montessori. In a warm and caring environment, children are given the opportunity to develop independence and a desire for learning. Life-long social skills are also established with an emphasis on respect for oneself, other people and the environment.

Admission Requirements for Early Learning Centre

- Age range of 11 months – 5 ½ years
- Previous Montessori preschool experience an asset
- Developmentally ready, as assessed through an interview
- Toilet trained for the preschool program

Admission Procedure

1. Forward your interest to: admissions@murrayvilleacademy.ca
2. Information will be provided, and interested applications will be encouraged to make an appointment to observe a classroom in session or meet for a brief orientation.
3. Applicants visit the school as part of the interview/application process.
4. Upon acceptance, completed registration form and fees are collected and details of enrollment and start date are confirmed.

Interviews

It is recommended that all parents/guardians of the child be interviewed as part of the admission procedure, as Montessori education is best carried out when parents/guardians understand and cooperate with the long-term program Montessori education requires. The following questions are among those to be addressed:

- Do you have a basic attitude toward the child and his or her potential which is compatible with Montessori education?
- Do you have the interest and financial resources to maintain your child in the program for an appropriate length of time (i.e. three years in the preschool program is an optimum time to receive the full benefit of early Montessori education)?

Decisions on Admission

All decisions on admission will be in writing and parents will be notified within 14 days of the interview. Decisions concerning admission are final.

Admission preference will be given in the following order:

1. Children presently enrolled in Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre
2. Siblings of enrolled children
3. New children with previous Montessori experience
4. Other applicants



In the event that a program or classroom is carrying a waitlist, when an opening occurs, children accepted will be admitted by the chronological order in which the applications were received. However, as the developmental timing of admission to a class is an educational decision, it may be necessary for the school to deviate at times from the policy of chronological admission.

An Evaluatory Time

A child enrolling for the first time at the Early Learning Centre will be accepted on a six week evaluatory basis. At the end of the evaluatory time, the teacher(s) and parents will meet to discuss the child's transition and orientation to the class. Any decision made will keep in mind the best interests of the child. The school reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child.



PARENT PARTICIPATION

Observing

Parents are invited to observe in the classroom when school is in session. Arrangements may be made by calling the office in advance.

Classroom Presentations

Parents with a hobby, talent or profession that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the classroom director to make a presentation to the class. Parents are also invited to loan books, artifacts and other resources to aid in curriculum studies, many of which are announced in advance in the school newsletter.

Parent Education

The School has several parent education evenings during the school year, at which the classroom directors or guests make presentations related to Montessori & Reggio Emilia education. There are also informal gatherings to familiarize parents with different curriculum areas of the classroom.

Parent Volunteers

School support hours provide expanded opportunities for parents and families to volunteer their time, experience and skill for the benefit of the school community. When parents and students volunteer their time to the school we all benefit. Therefore, each family is required to either volunteer a minimum of 20 hours per school year (2 hours per month) or contribute \$500 to the Society in lieu of volunteering. Volunteer opportunities will be posted throughout the year.

Parent Volunteer Policy forms must be completed and post-dated cheques must be provided at the time of registration.

Parent Support Group

Murrayville Academy Parent Support Group is a group of parent volunteers from the Early Learning Centre and Elementary programs. They meet once a month to plan events including our annual fundraiser and to discuss how to assist our school in making it an extra special place for our children to be. Being an active part of your child's education is a rewarding and fun experience.



Financial Information

Tuition and Registration Fees

Partial tuition for children enrolled after the fall commencement date shall be pro-rated as follows:

- Any child enrolled during the first three weeks of a school year shall pay the tuition for the entire school year.
- Any child enrolled more than three weeks after the beginning of the year will be charged tuition pro-rated for the remaining period of the year.

The Board obligates the staff to the full academic year and daycare requirements and given school expenses are not significantly diminished by a child's absence, regrettably, no tuition allowances can be made for illness, voluntary absences or school closures.

Closure dates are taken into consideration when calculating yearly tuition fees for our programs. The amount is then divided into monthly payments for convenience.

As any irregularity in payment causes disruption in the school's business affairs, the charge for a N.S.F. cheque is \$45.00.

Before any child can attend class, a completed registration form and all required fees must be received by the Executive Director.

Cancellation Policy

Upon enrollment, a position is reserved for the entire year. Murrayville Academy cannot reduce or remit fees for absence or withdrawal from the program unless written notification is received a minimum of 90 days (3 months) prior and must be given before the 1st of the month. Should a child be withdrawn without sufficient notice for any reason whatsoever, three month's tuition shall be kept by the school. There are no refunds for withdrawal after April 30.

Gift Acceptance Policies and Guidelines

West Coast Montessori Society is a non-profit organization that benefits from gifts received from individuals, charitable foundations and corporations whose support helps to further the school's vision. School administration is available to assist donors by informing them of funding needs and ways to donate, however, Administrators and volunteers shall not give tax or legal advice to prospective donors.

All donors will receive an income tax receipt for their cash donation and non-cash gifts will receive an income tax receipt when the value is \$500.00 or higher.

Valuations for non-cash gifts is the responsibility of the donor. Donors must provide an independent outside appraisal or purchase receipt from the vendor the gift was originally purchased. Purchase receipts must have a date no earlier than six months before donation date.



Gift Acceptance and Disposition

1. No gift of property will be accepted if the acceptance would cause the Society or School to incur a financial or other obligation (to display, store, insure, clear of legal restrictions, sell, etc.) which is deemed to be burdensome.
2. Investment decisions are made by the Society. No commitment will be made regarding the retention, disposition or investment of a gift asset unless specifically authorized by the Board of Directors.
3. The Society reserves the right to dispose of gifts of property at any time, unless a separate agreement is reached between the donor and the Society, subject to approval by the Board of Directors.
4. The terms of any restriction placed on a gift should be defined using preferential language that allows the Society some flexibility in the future. Such language allows the Society to use funds in the future should the donor's original purpose become archaic or non-existent.

Types of Gifts Accepted

Cash – Cash gifts include contributions in the form of cash, cheque, cashier's cheque, money order or Visa

Non-Cash Gifts or Personal Property – Gifts of tangible personal property (artwork, vehicles, computer equipment, books, furniture, collections, jewellery, etc.) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Gifts that are not used by the School for educational purposes will be disposed of in a timely and appropriate manner.

Types of Gifts Not Accepted

Certain categories of donations are not acceptable as charitable gifts. The Society or the School will not accept any gift that is inconsistent with the School's Vision, would jeopardize the schools tax exempt status or would improperly inure to the benefit of any individual. Additionally, gifts may be declined if they contain certain conditions including, but not limited to the following:

- The gift is restricted and would require support from other resources which are unavailable, inadequate, or may be needed for other institutional purposes;
- The gift would limit, or tend to limit, the academic freedom of the School;
- The gift could injure the reputation or standing of Murrayville Academy, or generate such controversy as to substantially frustrate and defeat the educational purpose to be served;
- The gift is known or suspected to come from illegal sources;
- The gift is subject to an adversarial legal proceeding or involves indebtedness which the Academy would have to assume;
- The gift creates a fund for scholarships or financial awards for which the donor or his/her representative reserves the right to designate the recipient.



Parent Referral Program

The highest compliment our parents can give us is the referral of family or friends to our school. The trust and confidence that you place in us regarding your child/children's education each day means a great deal.

We would like to offer all our parents an opportunity to save money and form a partnership with the school to increase our enrolment. Parents will receive a tuition refund of \$200 for each new child that enrolls in our school for next year and stays in the program for the entire year. At the end of the school year the referring parent will receive \$200 per each child that they brought into the school.

Students are only entitled to one discount per child.

Sibling Discount Policy

West Coast Montessori Society recognizes the impact that the cost of an independent school education can have on families with multiple children. In an effort to assist families, we have established a tuition discount for families with multiple siblings. The following applies:

Definition of sibling: The student must be one of two or more children having one or both parents in common. This discount is not available to family members outside the sibling relationship such as step brother/sister, cousins, spouses, etc. whose primary residence is not at the same address as the student currently enrolled.

Sibling discounts do not apply to International Students as West Coast Montessori Society does not receive a Ministry of Education grant for their attendance.

A 20% sibling discount applies to the 2nd and any additional children. Discounts apply to the lowest tuition fees.

Students in receipt of the sibling discount are not eligible for any other discount.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

The staff arrives at school early and the morning is a time to set up the classrooms and prepare for the day. Please wait outside of the classroom to be welcomed into the classroom by the Teacher at your child's scheduled time.

The importance of prompt arrival and pick-up cannot be overemphasized. All children should arrive on time before the start of class. Late arrivals disturb the entire class, especially the child who is late. The late arrival also misses a critical part of his or her class, the orientation time which sets the tone and agenda of the day. **The center closes at 5:30 pm and all remaining students must be picked up by then.**

Departure

At dismissal time, the classroom directors encourage each child to assemble all personal possessions and be ready when the parent arrives. Infant and Toddler parents are welcome to assist their children to develop independence.



At this time, the Teachers are unable to engage in lengthy conversations with the parents. Rather, they welcome phone calls from parents at other times and will also address concerns in personal interviews.

Late Pick-up Policy

The Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre operates under specific opening and closing times for which your child/ren is registered and for which the teaching staff is employed. Therefore, we respectfully request that you acknowledge and honour these times when collecting your child/ren at the end of the day.

We understand that there may be times when you may unfortunately be late for pick-up due to perhaps traffic problems etc. and in that instance, we ask that you communicate this information by way of a phone call to the ELC to inform your child's teacher of your expected arrival time.

Our staff also have families and commitments which they need to fulfill. A late fee, for the inconvenience that the staff may encounter having to remain in the centre with your child, of \$1 per minute is to be paid directly to the staff member upon pickup.

If a child has not been picked up from the centre at closing time the following steps will occur:

- Contact guardians
- Contact emergency contacts
- Contact manager for further instructions

**** If staff at the Early Learning Centre have not been able to make contact with anyone on the list of emergency contacts by 6:15 p.m. (45 minutes after the centre's closure), the Ministry of Children and Family and the R.C.M.P. will be contacted for support.***

Guiding and Caring Policy

We believe that children need adults to teach, guide, and support them as they grow and learn. We play an important role in guiding children's behavior in a positive, supportive, and age-appropriate ways. The most appropriate ways to guide behavior may differ from child to child and will depend on the child's age and developmental abilities and needs.

Positive and supportive guidance helps children as they learn self-regulation and find appropriate ways to express their wants, needs, views and feelings. Guiding children's behavior is an ongoing process.

The following strategies will be used to promote positive interactions among children and adults in this centre:

- We set clear and consistent limits by explaining what is expected of each child. We take the time to explain why a behavior is expected and we speak slowly and clearly using a calm, friendly voice.
- We reinforce appropriate behavior with both words and gestures. It is important to acknowledge positive behavior. This helps to encourage the child to repeat the behavior.
- We redirect or divert children when appropriate. This means changing the situation that is contributing to inappropriate behavior. Redirect children towards activities that meet their needs.



- We offer simple, positive reminders to clarify and reinforce limits. Children often become distracted when engaged in activities and will need to be reminded of appropriate behavior patterns.
- We encourage the children to use problem solving strategies or techniques. This helps to build their self-esteem and communication skills
- We encourage children to verbalize their feelings and needs at all times. This creates a sense of trust.
- We provide children with appropriate choices for their behavior. This gives them an opportunity to make decisions. e.g., "Would you like to wait her for your turn to paint or would you like to play somewhere else and I will call you when it is your turn?"
- We help children with natural and logical consequences so they understand the outcome of their behavior. E.g., "When you forgot to put your art away, it's hard to find it when it's time to go home." "I can see that the paint spilled. Here is a sponge for wiping it up."
- We can do not use corporal punishment (spanking, hitting, shaking, and deprivation of meals or snacks, washroom facilities) or verbal abuse (yelling, name calling) as a form of punishment in our center.
- If the child does not respond to the following strategies parents will be informed of the occurrences and be encouraged to work with us to amend the behavior.

Child Release Policy

Children will be released only to those stated in writing on their Medical/Emergency Contact information form. Children will not be released to people who are not on the authorized list unless staff, have written or verbal permission directly from a parent. Picture of photo ID is required if we have not met the individual. We will not release your child to a sibling or friend under the age of 12.

Please inform people listed on the Medical/Emergency Contact Information form as "alternate person to call in case of an emergency", that they may be called if needed. These people would be called if a staff member could not get in contact with either parent guardian. An "emergency situation" could involve injury to the child, sickness/vomiting, parent is late, and cannot be contacted past 20 minutes or an uncontrollable child who is putting staff and other children's safety at risk.

If an individual who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or who is incapable of providing safe care to your child, the staff will recommend an alternate person to be called to pick up your child. If a parent or alternate refuses our request, and we feel your child is at risk we are required by law to report the incident to the Ministry for Children and Families or the police if necessary.

If a custody agreement is in place for your child (ren), a copy of your custody or court order must be on file. Staff will act in accordance with this legal document. If issues around custody exist and there are no legal documents, the enrolling parent must provide written information about access. Staff will follow the information provided by the enrolling parent. The parent with whom the child resides will be deemed to be the custodial parent and staff will only follow instructions from this parent unless otherwise instructed by a court order.



Reportable Incident Policy

If there is an incident involving a child that is of a serious nature, we are required to contact our medical health officer within 24 hours of when we become aware of the incident. If possible, we will initially contact the parent to inform you of the incident and our obligation to report to our medical health officer. For an inclusive list of reportable incidents, please ask the facility manager

Medication policy

Medication consent forms will be completed by parents should children require medication during the school day. Prescribed medicine must be in the original container and have the child's name on the container. Over the counter medication needs a doctor's note. All medication with the completed form will be locked away in the classroom or the fridge in a lockable container. The key will be kept in a safe place out of reach of children.

Abuse Policy

We are required by law to report suspected or disclosed abuse. Failure to report abuse can result in prosecution under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act.

We are not permitted to contact the parent, unless specifically directed to do so by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, or Police. Our reporting procedures are designed to keep the child safe.

Our responsibility is to report suspicious/disclosures, NOT determine if abuse has occurred. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Services and Housing to investigate and decide if the child is in need of protection. Our concern is the safety and well-being of the child.

Active Play Policy

A new standard of practice for active play has been developed by the Director of Licensing. In accordance to the Fraser Health Licensing Practice for Active Play, we are dedicated to the overall health of each child in our care. In each of our programs we will have a planned Active Play sessions scheduled into the daily routine as well as incidental additions when time permits.

Active play is physical activity which includes moderate to vigorous burst of high energy, raises children's heart rate and may make them 'huff and puff' such as running or jumping. For an infant or toddler, active play may include reaching out for a toy, rolling over, balancing in a sitting position and crawling/walking. Each program will have planned age appropriate activities to successfully meet these daily physical requirements.

Active play helps to promote healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement. Active play can help build strong bones and muscles, improve balance, coordination and assists with the development of gross motor (large muscle movement) and fine motor skills (small muscle movement). Active play also helps to promote children's confidence, improves concentration and thinking and learning skills and provides opportunities to develop social skills and make friends.

Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre will follow the below daily requirements for daily active play:



Length of Program	Amount of Active Play Per Day
2-3 hours	30 minutes
3 hours or more	60 minutes

Active play may be accumulated through 15 minute portions of time throughout the day or continuously depending on the program and will take place outdoors when weather and/or space is appropriate.

Screen Time Policy

A new standard of Practice for Screen time has been developed by the Director of Licensing. In accordance to the Fraser Health Licensing Practice for Screen Time, we must limit screen time to 30 minutes or less a day. Our school does not have access to TV programs, computer, or electronic games. If there is a special occasion that we may have screen time, parents will be notified in advance to review content and suitability. Please note screen time will never be offered to children under two years of age.

Snow/storm closures

If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous, school may be postponed, closed early, or cancelled. Murrayville Academy makes this decision independently of the Langley Public School system. The decision will be announced on CKNW (dial 98) radio station and Global Television after 6:30 a.m.

Dress Code Policy

To uphold Montessorian philosophy and inspire children to learn in an environment of reality, we ask parents and caregivers to be mindful of the clothing children wear to school. Clothes should be in good repair, easily manipulated by the child, and comfortable. Children should be encouraged to prepare their outfits for the next school day. Violent and scary images, or fantasy images are distracting in a Montessori environment. To help your child learn to concentrate in a peaceful environment we discourage such articles of clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks and other paraphernalia associated with such articles. If your child insists on wearing items to school that are violent or scary in nature, we will ask her/him to wear it inside out, or encourage them to wear a different shirt from their change of clothes. All children should have a seasonally appropriate, complete change of clothes at school everyday. We are teaching children practical life skills by taking time to dress.

Rest / Quiet Time Policy

Any child, who attends the program for five hours or more, will have an opportunity to have a 30 minute rest. If the child falls asleep, they will be allowed to sleep until they wake up naturally or until the designated end of rest time, whichever comes first. Children, who do not fall asleep, will be provided with quiet table activities.



Toileting

At the Early Learning Centre, we ask that children be toilet trained before they start our preschool programs. We will of course support a child who is transitioning and needing reminders. As we all know accidents do happen so please be sure to send a change of clothes either to leave at school or send every day in their backpack.

Anaphylaxis Policy

In an effort to ensure the comfort and safety of all students at the school, we ask that the students, staff, parents and guardians are mindful of the allergies of those in their classes and school. At the time of registration, families will be advised as to the current status of any allergies in the school and if there are any items or products restricted in the classrooms (for example, nut products can be found in lotions, sunscreens, and hair products. Please read your products ingredients list). Should this change at any time throughout the year, families will immediately be advised through newsletters and notices.

Lunch and Snacks

Infant and Toddler children require all their food to be supplied by their parents. Preschool children have a snack sign-up sheet outside each classroom. Preschool children can share in the morning snack but also need to bring their own nutritious afternoon snack and lunch in their lunch boxes.

Children bring their own lunch each day. Parents are encouraged to provide a well-balanced lunch of reasonable size. Ideally, the child could pack or make some or all of the lunch. The lunch should be in a labeled lunch box which can be easily opened. **Due to supervisory needs, the teachers are unable to heat children's lunches. Hot lunches should be brought in a thermos.**

Due to the influence of diet on academic performance and behaviour, it is best that the following items not be included in lunches: candy, chocolate, gum, carbonated beverages, and highly refined sugar content desserts. Sugar should not be listed as the first or second ingredient. Also, please do not include any medication or vitamins in the child's lunch box (if such medication is required by the child it should be left with the teacher in a clearly marked container with a permission form filled out). We encourage the children to be environmentally friendly by using reusable containers.

Illness

If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school. We realize it is often upsetting to the child to stay at home on a school day, but at this age, colds and flu are easily transferred among children. If your child will be away please call or email the ELC Director to let them know. Ensure that your child's immunizations are up to date before entering care or if you decided not to have your child immunized, it is equally important. In addition, we must know within 24 hours if your child has been in contact with a communicable disease.

When is your child too ill to come to school?

Children are required to stay at home and parents need to seek alternate care arrangements under the following conditions:

- An acute cold with a fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing, sore throat and trouble swallowing.
- A fever (100°F/37.5°C)
- Vomiting, nausea



- Infected skin, eyes or undiagnosed rash.
- Headache and stiff neck (should see physician)
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps need to be excluded from the school.
- Severe itching of body and scalp (if diagnosed as lice the child needs alternate care for 72 hours).
- Any communicable disease which we need to report to licensing.
- A case of head lice.

If a child becomes sick while at school, he/she needs to be picked up as soon as possible by the parent or the emergency contact. We are unable to keep a child here at the school once they have vomited. The child needs to be free of symptoms for a minimum of 12 hours but up to 24 hours and must be able to **function as usual** before returning to school. In extreme cases, a doctor's note may be required before the child returns to school. Thank you.

Withdrawal of Services

Providing an environment conducive to our mission is one of our primary objectives. The safety of the community is a priority; therefore the provision of our service is conditional on both student behavior and parent treatment of the school and staff. Murrayville Academy & Early Learning Centre reserves the right to suspend, dismiss or withdraw services for the following reasons:

- Outstanding fees - tuition or other
- Inappropriate behaviour by a student towards staff or other students such as: being belligerent, swearing, violent or threatening
- Parent refusal or inability to abide by the policies and procedures as laid out in the parent handbook
- Student demonstrated unsuitability for our program
- If the school evaluates the student and concludes they are not benefitting from the environment and program we provide, or if the best interests of the school or classroom are being compromised by a student's ongoing enrolment
- If the behaviour of a parent or guardian is not conducive to our school values and mission

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Meeting Place

Staff and children will exit the building to safety, by following instructions from their teachers. We will be meeting around the back of the Murrayville Academy building or Murrayville Hall if our backyard is not safe.

Plan

Each family will receive notice at the beginning of the school year of our EPP plan. An updated medical emergency form needs to be filled out each beginning of the year. You will also be provided the out of Province contact person.

Staff/Alternate Caregiver Training

The staff policy will include the EPP in full for reference. The manual will be stored in an accessible area at all times.



A step by step emergency plan will be posted in plain view in the centre. A record form will be posted in each classroom to record the monthly practice drills.

Both emergency and/or fire drill procedures are practiced once per month to ensure staff and children are familiar with the safety procedures.

Storage of Emergency Supplies

Supplies will be stored in the shed in the back of the Murrayville Academy building.

Collection of supplies/Updating Best Before Dates

Each school year families will be notified through our weekly reminders to please provide the following supplies for their child. The school will review 'best before' dates and change any batteries to determine any items needing replacing.

Option A: For convenience and to have compliance with Fraser Health you will purchase a kit through school. The kit will be available at the beginning of the school year or when you register. This kit is valid for 5 years.

Option B: You can be provided a list at the beginning of the school year or registration that you will need to add into a large Ziploc bag with your child's name on it. Food and water must not expire prior to June of the following year.

Option A will be charged automatically unless told otherwise at time of registration or with the first month's fees.

The staff will do everything possible to make sure the safety and comfort of the children comes first in the case of an emergency. Please do not attempt to contact the school in the case of an emergency as this will tie up the phone lines necessary for emergency crews. We appreciate you're your support regarding our procedures. Please take the time to talk with your child(ren) about our emergency plan and we urge you to also consider having a plan at home.

Out of Province Contact

In the event of an emergency disaster parents can call Dan Bloch: 1-647-669-6738 (cell) 1-905-847-6868

Field Trips

During the course of the year, students take field trips to enrich their learning experiences. Generally, only small groups of children go on field trips at one time and all trips will be well chaperoned by teachers and/or parents. All field trips will be announced in advance and all children must have a signed permission form on file at the School before participating.

Please know that your children will be under the supervision of a teacher at all times. We will always be carrying each child's emergency contact info, a cell phone and first aid kit. Roll call will be taken at each uploading and re-loading of children at each destination. We will not leave any premises without all children being accounted for.



On some fieldtrips we go to there is an extra cost involved that is above monthly tuition. Fieldtrips that are not walking distance will require using our Murrayville Academy Bus. We have reliable and professional drivers available to us who are trained. You will be sent home a detailed permission slip which outlines the fieldtrip.

Birthdays, a Celebration of Life

Classroom Celebration

Birthdays are celebrated at circle time in the late morning. The parent usually provides a sugar free snack to be shared by all the children. Check on the number of children in the class. In order that treats do not spoil children's lunch appetites, birthday snacks could be muffins, vegetables or a special assortment of fruits. Thank you for not sending cake or ice cream.

The child is invited to bring photos of his or her past, i.e. birth, one year, two years, and so on, that tell the child's "life story" to the class. The birthday child may wish to present the class with a book in honour of the occasion. This is a means to expand the school library and it also enables the birthday child to experience the pleasure and value of giving rather than just receiving. Parents may wish to inscribe the book with the child's name and birth date. Regarding choice of books, parents may consult with their child's classroom teacher(s).

Playground

The playground activities during school hours is an integral part of our curriculum and is important in meeting our Daily Physical Activity requirements set forth by the Ministry of Education. We ask that parents and children do not use the playgrounds during school hours. All children must be supervised by a parent outside of school hours, i.e., or program hours.