



# Little Willow

## Montessori Pre-School

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### Hayley Fisher

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**“We cannot make a genius, we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities, to become secure in his individuality and a really balanced human being”. Maria Montessori**

### What is the Montessori method?

In our community there is a general confusion about what the Montessori approach to education is all about:

The system was developed by Maria Montessori one of the most influential pioneers in education this century. She became interested in education when she worked, as a doctor, treating children with special needs. Her medical background influenced her approach in scientifically observing children. All over the world the Montessori philosophy is being adopted as the premier method of pre-school education.

### The Montessori Approach:

The Montessori approach aims to allow learners to grow naturally, to retain their individuality and develop their own, unique personality. Montessori educational principles are based around the following ideas outlined below:

All children want to learn:

- When children are given the freedom to investigate the world around them, they become active learners.
- From birth to six years of age, children have an absorbent mind.
- Children pass through sensitive periods at which they absorb information effortlessly.

### The Montessori Environment

The Montessori classroom is specifically designed with child sized furniture and equipment to

encourage comfort and independence. The Montessori environment is unique with its approach and function to educate the learners holistically.

The environment is ordered and well planned. The activities are placed on the shelves from easy to more difficult and the curriculum and unique teaching materials are carefully selected and presented to the children.

### Intellectual Apparatus

The Montessori apparatus is easy to handle and the child can work alone with a reasonable chance of success. This encourages a healthy self-image critically important to future learning. The Montessori materials cover developmental activities designed to meet the needs of children in five curriculum areas:

- Practical life skills
- Sensorial activities
- Language skills
- Math skills
- Cultural knowledge

### Freedom

It is freedom to work undisturbed and not freedom for lack of discipline. The child becomes an active learner, choosing his/her own activities and pace and whether to work in a group or alone. The activities are all within reach and thereby allowing for free choice. In this way children are encouraged to develop self-discipline.

## **Social and Emotional Environment**

The learners are vertically grouped and not segregated by age or sex. The children are encouraged to act for the common good, developing a sense of respect for others. There is an atmosphere of co-operation in the classroom, not competition.

## **Nature and Reality**

There is emphasis on bringing about the awareness of the real world and the children are encouraged to take care of and learn to understand and respect each other and the world around them.

## **Special Qualities of a Montessori Directress**

Maria Montessori saw the role of the teacher directing and guiding activities rather than actually teaching, so she preferred to use the term directress.

- The directress has had a professional preparation and has undergone a process of self-evaluation
  - The directress has a well-developed attitude and respect for the children in her care.
  - The directress is responsible for selecting and making available the appropriate developmental activities.
  - The directress guides the children learning, helping them develop independence, concentration, self-motivation and self-discipline.

## **School Terms and Hours**

The school terms are followed as stipulated by the Department of Education and takes all public holidays including Ascension Day.

### **School Hours:**

7.30am - 13h 00 (Monday-Friday)

Please ensure that your child arrives before 8.30 so as to prevent any interruptions to the school's academic programme.

### **Departures:**

Children must be collected by 13h00 and may only be collected by persons indicated on the application form. All children collected later than 13:00 will automatically be slotted into the aftercare program and billed accordingly.

### **Aftercare Programme:**

Little Willow operates a full time aftercare programme from 13:00 to 17:30. Parents who wish to use the ad hoc aftercare facility has to inform the school on the day. An aftercare payment contract will be available for parents wishing to use this facility.

### **Notice of Absence - Health Policy**

Parents must inform the school if a child is to be absent for any reason. The policy of the school is that no medication will be administered at school. Parents will be contacted immediately if any child shows any signs of illness.

### **Lunch:**

Each child is to bring along their own healthy packed lunch. No food is prepared on the premises. No sweets etc., is allowed, chip day is

every Friday. A list of requirements will be issued each term for extra snack time.

### **Birthdays:**

Parties are always a fun time for kids. The policy of the school is that no party packs are allowed. Treats/ cake may be sent to school to be shared.

### **Reviews and reports:**

Verbal or meet the teacher reports will be hosted in April and September and written reports handed out in June and December. Work envelopes will be sent home each term.

### **Outings:**

An outing is planned for each term. Parents are required to pay for these outings which normally include transport and entrance fees.

### **Optional Extra mural Activities**

These extra mural activities are presented by trained professionals during school hours. Fees for these optional extras are payable in advance at the beginning of each term.

### **Available this year:**

- ★Creative movement
- ★Speech and Drama
- ★Music - recorder

### **School Fees**

On application there is a non-refundable R500 enrollment fee required. All fees are payable either, per term or in 11 monthly payments. A fee contract, stipulating all other information, will be entered into and signed by parents.