



Rosemont House Montessori belongs to the 'SA Montessori' family of early learning environments. We are guided by the common values, principles and goals of the SA Montessori group, which are highlighted in our *SA Montessori Statement of Principles* and *the Whole Child* philosophy booklet. These documents provide the foundation for our practice at Rosemont House Montessori, yet our Statement of Philosophy emphasises the unique culture and individuality our passionate educators bring to our early learning and care environment.

There are several major characteristics that make the *Rosemont* philosophy unique; our "educarer" approach, our "village" atmosphere and the "prepared environment". Interwoven with these elements is the heightened level of "respect" that guides all of our practices and shapes our values and beliefs surrounding the development of each individual child within our Rosemont community.

Our Educarer Approach begins in the '*Montessori from the Start*' program. This refers to our youngest children at Rosemont House – 6 months of age through to 3 years. These children are vertically grouped to encourage a homely feel, developing a nurturing environment much like that of a sibling relationship, where children can observe and learn from their older and more mobile peers. Our model is founded on a deep respect for the needs and rights of the youngest members of our world. Dr. Maria Montessori said, "The greatness of the human personality begins at the *hour of birth*". This reverence for our youngest members is what informs all aspects of our care community. Our Educarers do not incorporate any feature, routine or element unless it is in the best interest of the child. In our '*Montessori from the Start*' philosophy there is no distinction between our 'curriculum' and our 'routines'. The *curriculum is the routine and the routine is the curriculum*. It is our belief that every element of the routine is an important part of the curriculum, and following the curriculum forms a part of our natural daily routines and rhythms. When an infant has a wet nappy, we respond to that individual's need and while we assist with applying a dry nappy we will engage in communication, eye-contact and interaction that promotes healthy development. There is no "nappy change time", it is simply that at certain points throughout the day a child's activity will be *changing my nappy*. The same principle applies to food preparation and meals, changing clothes and other practical elements of the 'routine'. Practical and necessary daily routines provide opportunities for meaningful learning and development. Children strive to achieve independence and through the 'routine' elements of our curriculum, they are continually given the opportunity to achieve this sense of independence. The term "Educarer" combines the goals and roles of education and care into one term, demonstrating that we do not treat one aspect as more important than the other. The idea of 'Educarers' ensures that we do not try to hurry children through the 'care' elements to make way for the 'education'. We know that education and care are equally important

to the child's security, wellbeing and development and the term 'Educarer' tangibly expresses this philosophy of equity. We also provide the freedom to take time, to move slowly, or to rearrange our routines based on the needs of the child. We do not try to define when the children will start learning and stop learning by suggesting that the Educarer planned activities are somehow more important or more impactful. We recognise that children are learning every single moment of every day. They are absorbing the world, engaging in socio-cultural experiences, so we celebrate the value of everything they do. If a child is possessed by an instinct, an urge or a curiosity then we recalibrate our plans for that moment. This does not mean abandoning the idea of intentional teaching, it simply means recognising that the children have the right to develop their own intentions too.

Our Educarers develop close relationships with their families, a significant benefit from working with them for several years within the same environment. They are the first point of contact for parents, the person who shares the joys of their child's day, challenges they may have faced and are the trusted adult who provides all of the care moments for their child. This approach develops a heightened level of trust between parent and Educarer, as they share a true sense of understanding, belonging and knowledge of their child. The child will instinctively look for their primary Educarer to gain emotional support, share a humorous moment or look for guidance, as their close relationship is a bond that is unique and precious. It is this bond that allows children to feel emotionally supported and secure and then free to set off and explore their world. Educarers follow the routines of each individual child, providing meal times, rest periods and bathroom requirements at an appropriate time for the individual child. Routines are discussed daily with parents to ensure a flawless transition between the home and care environment. It is this respect that is given to each individual child that makes *Rosemont* a unique learning and care environment. The same level of care is implemented to each child's transition into the '*Preschool*' environment, ensuring they are emotionally and socially ready to accept this next step in their learning journey. Within the '*Preschool*' environment, our '*Educarer Approach*' takes a more subtle model. Children of this age are supported with all of their care routines, yet the need for a close, intimate relationship lessens as children begin their journey towards independence and social relationships with their peers. The connection between *Educarer* and their families within the '*Preschool*' is just as significant, yet the Educarers within this environment continually assess and provide the emotional support appropriate for the ever-changing needs of their developing focus children.

Our 'It Takes a Village' Philosophy highlights the warm, home-away-from-home feeling that encompasses our unique environment and the programs offered at Rosemont House. The property itself - with its large grounds and homestead - encourages this sense of 'village' atmosphere. Our spacious front yard provides the opportunity for children to run, climb and engage in group games and activities. Located in our 'back yard and side yard', you will find our 'Nature Play Spaces', which allow children to climb trees, navigate tyre swings and extend their sensory experiences in the sand and mud pits. Children can explore the intricate details of nature similarly to the 'village lifestyle', where children

were free to venture off and explore. The children also develop their environmental awareness and responsibility through the composting, growing and harvesting of food, in the many garden beds located throughout the property. Upon entering the foyer you'll find yourself at a crossroads. You can choose to turn left to enter the *Montessori from the Start* environment, turn right to go into the *Preschool* space or you can ascend the stairs to visit the *Music Classroom* or pop into the SA Montessori Head Offices. All of these special elements create a little village; two neighbouring 'homes', in which the *Montessori from the Start* and *Preschool* families reside, together with the 'offices' upstairs and the 'farm' and park out the back. All of these environments interrelate. The people visit one another and the operations that occur within these spaces complement each other. The *Montessori from the Start* children pop across to visit their older neighbours in the *Preschool* room, carry their washing through to laundry and collect items from the pantry each day. The *Preschool* children deliver fruit and vegetables to the *Montessori from the Start Environment*, happily engaging in this very 'grown-up' task. The children take great pride in our sustainable practices and travel out to the farm to collect a harvest to prepare and cook for afternoon tea. The SA Montessori owners and administrators come down to visit the classrooms and share resources. We have established our own little village and the children benefit from having not just a single space with a limited set of adults but a broad range of inviting environments with an ecosystem of caring and connected people. These unique philosophical elements are the heart of our practice and also help contribute to the natural *rhythm* of life here at Rosemont House. Embedded in all of our philosophical values is the idea that children deserve an atmosphere that is *unhurried*. Our *Montessori from the Start* children are not expected to be rushed into becoming *Preschoolers* and so we did not simply provide them with a condensed version of our *Preschool* program. Instead the younger children are recognised and valued for their own unique life stage and therefore given their own approach that is consistent with our overall ethos but perfectly reflects their specific needs. Eventually they will flow naturally through the transition to our *Preschool* room with a sense of confidence and continuity. Our 'village life' reinforces this idea of *unhurried* time and flexibility in our daily rhythms. The children can flow from the classroom to the farm simply because they spontaneously decided to make strawberry jam. As they move from classroom to garden to the kitchen – that forms the heart of our home – they develop an understanding of the processes from farm to table. This shows the child the rhythms of life, just as we develop our own unhurried streams and tempo.

Our Prepared Environment is a particularly important aspect of our curriculum. Our Educators view our Rosemont environment as 'the children's space'. Therefore, all elements of the environment relate directly to the children's unique needs and interests. If we witness an unease within the environment, our Educators will alter the space to support a positive change. Children are not simply expected to conform or 'fit in' to our adult imposed ideas, but rather our deep reflection allows our Educators to incorporate materials or alter the layout to ensure all children feel a sense of calm and enjoyment. We carefully prepare the environment with purposeful materials and present specific experiences. These materials and presentations are sourced from the Montessori curriculum and are designed to support the child's innate needs. For babies and toddlers, the materials focus on promoting movement,

coordination, communication, sensory awareness and blossoming independence. These areas are extended within the Preschool environment, as children begin to explore more complex concepts in relation to their growing maturity and cognitive development. Our Educators document extensively for each of their focus children, which provides a holistic approach to their learning and development. Their planned experiences are incorporated into the Prepared Environment, allowing others to be drawn into an exciting new learning opportunity. The vertical grouping of our children also provides the seamless opportunity for extension within the classroom. Our Emergent Curriculum is another aspect of our Prepared Environment and ongoing planning cycle. It refers to 'the children's voice' within our curriculum, as it incorporates those spontaneous moments that arise when engaging with the children. It may be that a child brings in an old toy from their grandparent's house and this leads to an inquiry into the history and development of toys or that a cocoon was found in the Nature Play Space and therefore a unit on lifecycles and insect discovery is incorporated into the environment. We are very passionate about our *Prepared Environment* and ensure the same level of detail and care is given to every space – both inside and out. At Rosemont House we are strong believers in demonstrating care and respect for all - our property, our environments and the people we have the privilege in engaging with. We believe that the heightened level of respect we exhibit, allows the children to take ownership and responsibility for their environment, instilling an important sense of value and worth within themselves.