



SA Montessori Pre-Schools

Parent Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for enrolling your child at *Lilliput Village Montessori*. We are so pleased to welcome you and your family to our Montessori community. Your child's early years are immensely important and we feel honoured by your choice to trust us to nurture and support these precious years. We value and respect your role in your child's life and we always welcome your input and ideas. We will also endeavour to provide you with support, information and opportunities for participation. We look forward to partnering with you throughout your child's journey of growth, discovery and development.

The following Parent Handbook is designed to help you approach your child's Montessori journey feeling informed and empowered. The Handbook covers areas including our philosophy and programs as well as practical information about our policies and expectations. We encourage you to read this Handbook prior to your child's first day but it is also important that you retain this book so that you can refer to it throughout your child's journey at Lilliput Village Montessori.



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WELCOME

The Director and staff of Lilliput Village Montessori warmly welcome you and your family to our centre. We trust that during your time with us, both you and your child will feel happy and secure. We also extend an invitation to you to take an active part in the centre's activities.

Parents are invited to provide suggestions and feedback on our service and policies at any time.

PHILOSOPHY

Our 'Statement of Principles' booklet sets out the philosophy, values and beliefs of the centre in relation to the desired outcomes for children and families in our care.

It guides the practices of the centre and is reflected in the program.

Our Goals are:

- To be a centre of excellence in the provision of high quality care and education for children
- To provide a safe, secure, nurturing environment
- To develop children's understandings, cultural and environmental awareness
- To enhance children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development
- To provide each child with equal opportunities regardless of their race, culture, background, ability or gender
- To provide spacious, aesthetically pleasant environments that allow children the opportunity to explore freely with materials and equipment and to interact with others
- To work in partnership with families to achieve the best outcomes for the children
- To employ professional staff who are experienced, caring, committed, alert and responsive to children's needs and safety
- To encourage staff to continue to pursue excellence through professional development

HOURS

The centre is open from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

We encourage families to plan their arrival and departure times around our formal Montessori Daily Program which operates from 9am to 4pm, but we welcome families for before and after school care around these times.

The centre operates for 48 weeks of the year and is closed for 4 weeks during the Christmas and New Year break.

SESSIONS

Children must attend a minimum of two days each week*. We recommend *consecutive* days for optimum continuity as it is our experience that this consistency is highly beneficial for children.

**Exemptions from our 2 day minimum attendance may be requested in instances where a child has particular physical or psychological needs that may prevent the child from benefiting from multiple day attendance. Exemptions are not guaranteed and are entirely at the discretion of the Director.*

LICENSING

The centre is licensed with the Registration and Standards Board of SA for 40 children under school age.

FEES and BONDS

Attendance patterns are booked upon enrolment by parents and subject to availability of places.

Fees are due at the end of each week of attendance. Fees apply for 48 weeks of the year including public holidays, holiday periods and sick days. Lilliput Village Montessori uses a payment system called 'Ezi-debit' to collect fees. This program coordinates payment details with the reporting requirements of the Commonwealth Child Care Benefit and Rebate (superseded by the Child Care Subsidy as of July 2018). It is a condition of enrolment that families agree to participate in the Ezi-Debit system. This involves weekly automatic withdrawal of fees from a nominated personal account.

An initial **BOND** is required to the equivalent amount due for two full weeks of fees. This will be refunded in full after the child's last day (subject to any outstanding payments) if 4 weeks' notice (in writing) has been given to inform the centre to cancel placement. Less than 4 weeks notice will proportionately forfeit the bond amount.

Lilliput Village Montessori accounts are payable by Direct Debit from Credit Card or Banks Accounts. Direct Debit is one of the safest ways to pay your bills; in fact, 85% of identity theft cases occur with *offline* transactions such as lost or stolen cheques, paper bills, or account statements (*Javelin Strategy and Research*). This approach also offers the convenience of ensuring that your Account is paid on time, without the hassle of having to manually process the payment yourself.

Lilliput Village Montessori has partnered with **Ezidebit** to provide you with this service. Ezidebit Pty Ltd is a fully compliant Direct Debit service. Ezidebit is an Australian Financial Services licensee (AFSL 315388) and has a stringent set of compliance and quality assurance measures in place.

"Ezidebit Australia" will appear on the statement of those parents who choose the direct payment option of paying through a Credit Card. "Lilliput Village Montessori" will appear on the statements of those paying from their bank accounts.

NB: Families that nominate a credit card (Visa/Mastercard) for account payment please be aware that an EXTRA SURCHARGE of 1.87% will be charged on each transaction. We encourage all families to nominate Direct Debit from a Bank, Building Society or Credit Union Account.

Payments will be collected weekly in arrears to keep in line with the Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy. (CCS)

LATE PICK UP FEES:

Children must be collected prior to 5:00pm so that staff can leave by 5:00pm. Where a child remains after closing time (5:00pm) a late fee will apply to cover the cost of overtime wages payable to the staff members who remain behind. The charge is \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$5.00 for every 5 minutes or part thereof. Parents / guardians are requested to contact the centre if they are delayed to alleviate unnecessary concern.

ACCESS PRIORITY

When the centre has a waiting list in effect priority for access will conform to the Commonwealth Government guidelines:

- **Priority 1** - a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- **Priority 2** - a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- **Priority 3** - any other child.

For a more detailed breakdown of the priority guidelines please visit:

<https://www.education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places> .

The centre may require evidence to establish the priority category.

ABSENTEEISM

It would be appreciated if parents would inform the centre by 8.30am if their child will be absent. Fees will still be due and payable. The Australian Government still provides Child Care Benefit / Rebate (superseded by Child Care Subsidy as of July 2018) payments for up to 42 days of absence per year (additional absences may be approved on an individual basis – please see the Department of Human Services website for further details).

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

It is a requirement of becoming an approved centre for Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy that the pre-school runs a continuous service for 48 weeks of the year. Therefore, school holiday programs will be conducted during breaks between school terms. **A child's placement is continuous throughout this period and fees must be paid accordingly to retain the placement.** However, we actively encourage families who are not in need of child care during this time to allow their child to experience this important "time off" to spend with family and older siblings. Parents/guardians are required to notify the centre at least two weeks in advance of any holiday periods for which their child will be absent.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

The centre uses QikKids Kiosk, a digital sign in/out system, to monitor each child's arrival and departure. Parents can access QikKids Kiosk on the iPad located at the entrance. Parents must sign their child/ren IN and OUT each day they attend, with the time of arrival and departure recorded. The accuracy of this information is important for our submissions for the Child Care Benefit/Rebate (superseded by the Child Care Subsidy as of July 2018) and is also vital for safety purposes as it is essential to know who is in the building at all times.

Parents/guardians must never drop off or collect a child without informing a staff member. Please ensure that your child is safely inside the classroom, and has been sighted by a teacher, prior to your departure in the morning. All children must be signed out at the end of their day.

RELEASING AND COLLECTING CHILDREN

Children will only be released to the enrolling parent or to authorised persons (as nominated on the enrolment form or advised by a parent/guardian). If those who are nominated are not known to staff, identification may be requested. Unknown or unauthorised persons seeking to collect a child will be

refused. Should parents call during the day to advise staff of collection by a person not already authorised, that person's name and contact details should be given so that staff can verify this upon collection of the child.

Please note that any person collecting your child should carry photo identification as staff members reserve the right to check this ID prior to releasing the child.

CUSTODY AND ACCESS

On enrolment, parents must provide information regarding any guardianship, custody and access details. Any change to these details during the child's time at the centre must be provided.

Requests for information about a child from a non-custodial parent will first be discussed with the custodial parent. Where a court prohibition order stands, and the centre has been informed of this, contact will be refused.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

It is essential that the centre be notified when the following details change:

- Change of address
- Change of phone numbers – work or home or mobile
- Change of name
- Changes to custody/access aspects
- Changes to emergency and authorised persons

Update slips are available from the centre. Please complete and place these in the correspondence box. Without updated information we may not be able to contact parents in an emergency.

STAFF

Staff employed at the centre hold the appropriate qualifications and are high quality professionals. Where possible, staff will have additional skills, such as a second language, or music. All staff at our centre complete an SA Montessori Pre-schools In-Service Training Course and all permanent staff are required to either have attained, or be studying to attain, a recognized Montessori certification.

Educators maintain current first aid qualifications including Asthma and Anaphylaxis training. All staff are mandated notifiers of suspected abuse and neglect and will act according to legislation to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Throughout the year staff will need to take time off for holidays or illness and wherever possible our regular relief staff will be used during this time.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

In the best interest of children, it is necessary to work closely with parents. We encourage regular exchange of information about the children and we encourage parents to feel valued in expressing their thoughts, ideas or suggestions.

It is particularly important to raise any concerns with the staff or the Director immediately. Problems or concerns can only be solved or answered if they are raised in an open, direct manner.

All decisions will be guided by the centre's policies and regulations. The centre has in place formal grievance procedures. A grievance form can be requested from the staff and an appointment can be made to meet with the Director if necessary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records are the property of the centre and are confidential. Access to information by staff is on a need to know basis, authorised by the Directors. No private information will be given out over the phone or in any other method without confirming such a need with parents. From time to time the centre may provide statistical information to relevant government departments to meet our legal obligations. The centre has a Confidentiality Policy we abide by.

ORIENTATION

The centre advises parents to make provision for a minimum of one visit to the centre to spend time meeting staff, other children and to become familiar with the centre prior to the child's first day of actual attendance. Parents are required to stay with their child during this visit.

SEPARATION

Initial separation can sometimes be upsetting for parents and children. When leaving your child we recommend the following:

- ▼ Always leave your child with a staff member.
- ▼ Always say goodbye to your child.
- ▼ Tell your child when you will be returning relative to a recognizable event for e.g. "I'll be back after Music Time".
- ▼ Do not prolong the goodbye. Say goodbye and leave.
- ▼ Try not to let the child see your distress.

Most children do not remain upset for very long and a child is usually able to calm much more quickly *after* the parent has left as they are no longer sensing the parent's anxiety. If your child is upset a staff member will offer some comfort and support. Be assured the centre will phone you if your child is very distressed and cannot be settled.

MONTESORI PROGRAMS

The centre provides a Montessori curriculum, which reflects the belief in the child as the creator of his own development. Each child is a unique individual and our Montessori approach nurtures and responds to the unfolding of readiness and sensitive periods for acquiring new skills. The child's environment is an essential component in facilitating the learning process. The Montessori learning areas are carefully prepared with resources and learning experiences that empower children with responsibility, choice and freedom to discover the inter-relationships of their surrounding environment. For children to flourish and grow in self-esteem they need to engage in purposeful activities that promote independence and concentrated effort.

The Montessori programs meet the developmental needs for each child. Programs will ensure that your child's physical, cognitive, social, emotional and language development is enhanced. Observations will be kept on each child, which allows for an individual focus. Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress, either informally at the conclusion of the day or by making an appointment for a longer discussion at a mutually convenient time.

Parents' suggestions, comments and participation in all our programs are welcomed. Please refer to the Parent Participation folder in our foyer for more guidance about how you can offer your input or feedback. We also value parent donations of cut flowers for our classroom and fresh fruit and vegetables for the children to use in their kitchen.

PARKING

Short-term parking is available at the front of our premises. Car park usage is for prompt drop off or collections only (approx. 5 mins). Parents who may need more time to separate from their child should park off the centre grounds. Any parent who stays during a session (for example a parent assisting with resource making) must park off the grounds. We do ask families to be considerate towards local residents when choosing parking spaces. For instance, please ensure that you do not block access to driveways or contribute to excessive congestion in a particular street.

We advise families to follow safety precautions at all times when in the car park or in surrounding streets and we remind you to be vigilant when walking to and from your car.

Never leave children unattended in your car.

INFORMATION

Various information pamphlets are available for parents. Please help yourself to any brochures and pamphlets. We encourage you to borrow from our library resources. We also have a Parent Information Area where items of interest to parents are displayed. Please check this area regularly.

Information about our Montessori program, and your child's individual participation and progress, is provided through our digital portfolio system 'KeptMe'. As soon as your child's KeptMe profile is set up by the centre you will receive an email link from KeptMe Customer Service to activate your account. We invite you to visit the parent portal regularly. Please speak to staff for information about KeptMe.

NEWSLETTERS

The centre issues newsletters and other information via email. These provide updates on the activities and events in the centre. Please also check your family 'pigeon hole' every time you attend to collect other related items.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Staff will take photographs and conduct video filming regularly during activities at the centre and on outings. Parents are required to give consent upon enrolment for their child to be included. Photographs and film are used primarily for parent communication and maintaining records of each child's development and are shared with families via our digital portfolio KeptMe. We reserve the right to use images for other purposes such as advertising, professional training and presentations. Professional photographs (group and individual) are taken annually at the centre and are available for purchase.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations are done with reflection of a child's journey through the years. If your child wishes to celebrate a birthday, please let the staff know in advance. Parents are encouraged to send photos of the child showing each year of their life. For those children turning five years of age we enjoy a special "Around the Sun" ceremony and focus on how the child has changed over time. This is a special time for the birthday child and does not rely on gifts or food. Please do not send cakes or any other treat or gifts.

NON-SMOKING

The centre, including the indoor and outdoor environment, is a smoke free zone at all times.

NUTRITION

Lilliput Village Montessori provides children with nutritious snacks for morning and afternoon tea. In most cases we empower children to participate in the process of making these light meals as food preparation is an important part of the Montessori 'Practical Life' curriculum. **Food to be consumed for lunch must be provided by each child's parent(s)/guardian(s).** It is our experience that children respond positively to a midday meal that was prepared at home. These individually prepared meals can better accommodate the child's unique tastes and health needs, reflect the family culture and provide an emotional connection to the home. Children's lunchboxes are stored in the refrigerator until required. It is the centre policy to encourage parents to provide nutritious, well-balanced and varied lunches. Due to the high incidence of nut and egg allergies **nuts (or nut products) must not be brought to the centre.** **We ask families to avoid supplying eggs (and egg products) if possible or to notify staff if eggs are included in a child's snack/lunch.** Parents are required to inform the centre if their child has any allergies and a completed health care and action plan will then be required.

Water is available for the children to drink throughout the day. Snack & lunch times will be as relaxed and enjoyable as possible. Children should have breakfast before attending each day.

REST

The centre will endeavor to meet the individual needs of each child. Children will be allowed to rest or sleep as desired. It is anticipated that children of pre-school age will not require a regular sleep during the session but opportunities for rest and relaxation will be provided. Children under the age of three will be supported to maintain their daytime nap routine and parents will be required to purchase bedding. Bedding should be taken home on a weekly basis for laundering.

The National Quality Framework requires all Australian centres and services to follow the evidence-based recommendations of 'Red Nose' (formerly SIDS & Kids) in determining safe sleep practices and procedures. We welcome input from families in developing an effective sleep and rest plan for your child but we advise parents that where personal preferences contradict recommended safety standards we must defer to the latter rather than accommodating the parent request.

VACCINATION

It is a policy that all children enrolling into this centre be vaccinated according to the Australian Standards Vaccination Schedule. Vaccination records will be required on enrolment and again throughout the time the child is at the centre to ensure ongoing participation in the vaccination program.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

The Directors and staff have made every effort to ensure a safe environment for your child. In the case of an accident or a medical emergency staff members will make every reasonable attempt to notify parents.

Where the parents are not contactable or if the centre deems the situation to be urgent, an ambulance will be called.

The centre will not accept liability for any medical or transportation fees incurred.

INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES

To prevent cross infection, children with infectious disease must be excluded from the centre. A medical certificate may be required to re-admit a child after an infectious illness. Please notify the centre when your child is away due to ill health.

The following exclusion policies apply:

Campylobacter	Excluded until diarrhea has ceased for 24 hours
Chicken Pox	Excluded until fully recovered or 5 days after the eruptions first appear, blisters dried
Conjunctivitis	Excluded until eye discharge has ceased
Diphtheria	Excluded until medical certificate issued following 2 negative throat swabs
Hand foot & mouth	Excluded until blisters have dried
Hepatitis A	Excluded until medical certificate is received or 7 days after the onset of jaundice/illness
Impetigo	Excluded until treatment underway. All sores must be covered.
Measles	Excluded for 4 days after rash appears
Meningitis (bact)	Excluded until well
Meningococcal infection	Excluded until well, antibiotic treatment
Mumps	Excluded for 9 days or until swelling subsides
Poliomyelitis	Excluded for 14 days and until medical certificate is received
Ring worm, Scabies, Lice, Trachoma	Excluded until treatment obtained
Streptococcal Infection	Excluded until antibiotics are taken for 24 hours and until well
Whooping Cough	Excluded for 5 days after treatment starts

Any other illnesses will be checked with the health regulations.

If your child becomes unwell at the centre you will be contacted to either collect or arrange to have your child collected as soon as possible.

When illnesses are present in the centre a notice will be posted for all parents.

Strict hygiene practices such as hand washing, use of gloves, and disinfecting equipment are implemented at the centre to reduce the risk of infection.

MEDICATION

Single course medication can **only** be administered by staff when a letter from the doctor is obtained, and parents / guardians complete the medication log. Parents should ensure that:

- ◇ the medication is in the original container
- ◇ the medication is clearly labeled
- ◇ the medication has not expired
- ◇ the medication is prescribed for the recipient
- ◇ the correct dosage and time is entered on the record sheet and signed.

Where a child needs to use medication on an ongoing basis (ie eczema cream) then a long-term medication plan is required from the doctor and the above criteria still applies.

ALLERGIES

The centre must be informed of any allergies at the time of enrollment (or at the onset / identification of the allergy) with details of the nature / cause of the allergy, what symptoms or effects can be expected and any treatment that will be required. A completed health care plan will be required.

ONGOING MEDICAL OR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Where a child requires regular medication or treatment to sustain their well-being, a doctor's letter detailing the condition, treatment and emergency action is required. A completed health care plan will be required from a medical practitioner.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

We believe that all children deserve access to a nurturing and inspiring early learning experience but we recognize that this journey is unique for each individual, particularly where a child has identified additional needs. Our team is always willing to partner with parents and professionals to ensure that a child's well-being is supported and his or her needs are being met to the best of our ability. When we welcome an individual with identified additional needs we will approach parents to request the appropriate information and advice, particularly regarding health care plans for those with physical or mobility difficulties. The centre and play spaces are accessible to children and adults with mobility difficulties and appropriate toileting facilities are provided.

ITEMS FROM HOME

We request that children do not unnecessarily bring items from home as they may become broken or lost. We recognize that some items, such as a comfort toy to help a toddler settle to sleep, may be required and we ask you to discuss these needs with an educator to determine an arrangement for supplying and storing these items.

CHILDREN'S PERSONAL CARE & COMFORT

We ask each family to bring the following items:

- A bag, clearly labelled with your child's name
- A complete change of clothes including socks
- A sun hat (hats mandatory October – March) labelled with the child's name
- A warm jacket, gumboots and a hat or beanie (hats optional April – September) for the cooler seasons
- Several sets of underwear

All clothing, bags and footwear must be clearly labelled with your child's **full name**. The centre accepts no liability for loss or damage. Please check the Lost Property regularly. The centre keeps a minimal supply of spare clothing for emergency use by children. Where any of the centre's spare clothing is supplied, parents / guardians are required to launder and return it to the centre as soon as possible. Our clothing has the name of the centre written on it.

Children still in nappies should come to the centre in a disposable pull-up nappy. Additional spares are required to be stored in our bathroom area for use throughout the day.

CLOTHING / SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Lilliput Village Montessori has designed a uniform that will enhance each child's sense of belonging within our community while also allowing for the flexibility and freedom of self-expression. A school shirt is required which bears our logo and centre name. This can be purchased prior to your child's first day. Children are required to wear this shirt while in attendance at the centre but the remainder of their outfit can be chosen by the child and/or parents to display personal preferences and adapt to the weather conditions.

Spare clothing, which must be provided in a child's bag each day, should allow for protection from the elements, be comfortable and allow children to participate in play experiences. Children will need:

- A warm coat for outside in the winter
- A sun hat
- Shoes or sandals. Children must not wear thongs or slip on shoes

The centre will provide smocks to protect clothing during creative activities wherever possible, but we cannot guarantee that clothing will not be stained or marked through art activities. Please do not dress children in clothing that is precious.

All clothing, bags and footwear must be clearly named. Warm winter coats/jackets need to be provided during cold weather. The centre accepts no liability for loss or damage. Please check the lost property regularly.

The centre keeps a minimal supply of spare clothing for emergency use by children. Where any of the centre's spare clothing is supplied, parents are required to launder and return it to the centre as soon as possible.

SUN SAFETY

The centre believes strongly in protecting children from the harmful effects of the sun. Children, staff and visitors must wear a hat in the outdoor environment between the months of September and May.

Children should arrive wearing sunscreen. Sunscreen will be applied in the afternoon for children going outside. If the centre's sunscreen product is not suitable for your child you will need to notify staff members and supply your own preferred brand of sunscreen clearly labelled with your child's name. Hats must be clearly labeled with your child's name and are to be taken home each day. Children who do not have a hat will not be allowed outside of shaded areas.

TOILETING

Where possible the centre prefers that children who join our Preschool group (3-6) are independently using a toilet or in the process of acquiring this skill. We respect, however, that each child will meet this developmental milestone at his or her own individual time and therefore it is not a prerequisite for enrolment. Children in our Bambini program (2-3 years) are also likely to still be in the earlier stages of the toilet learning process. Where children are not yet in control of their toileting, pull-up style nappies should be worn so that assisted toileting can be done in a dignified way for the child and can encourage independence as much as possible. Parents must supply additional spare clothing during the time the child is preparing for independent control and spare pull-up nappies should be provided. Parents and the centre should be working towards the same goal of facilitating the child's independent toileting control.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Every child and adult in the centre has a right to feel safe and happy and our policy aims to ensure this outcome. Our behaviour management policy is available from our office for parents to read. Where necessary, staff members will liaise closely with parents to ensure continuity of behaviour guidance between the home and pre-school environment.

STUDENT OBSERVERS / VOLUNTEERS

From time to time the centre provides on the job training for students who are studying a Diploma in Child Care, Bachelor of Early Childhood or are high school 'Work Experience' students. This is a vital part of their training and we closely supervise and monitor the placement. At no time are students left alone with the children. You will be advised when a student is present.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Lilliput Village Montessori aims to connect parents with relevant community resources as needed. The centre may be able to access other support services such as Inclusive Directions, speech pathologists and other specialists. Please let the Leadership Team know if you have any concerns about your child's development.

Members of the community, such as prospective parents, are able to book appointments to visit Lilliput Village Montessori. Other than staff, enrolled children and their parents/guardians, all other persons are considered as visitors. They will be required to sign a visitor's register at reception. Visitors will act in a manner consistent with the centre's policies or will be requested to leave.

The centre also believes in the value of participating in community activities. Upon enrolment parents / guardians will sign permission slips for local walks. All other activities will require notification from the centre to parents regarding the:

- Date
- Destination
- Times
- Costs if applicable
- Transport arrangements
- Staff attending
- Risk Assessment

Parents / guardians have a right to decide on their child's participation.

Excursions may include locations such as the zoo, local parks, the museum, concerts, the library, market, and theatre. Parents / guardians accompanying the centre on an excursion will need to comply with staff directives and act in accordance with centre policies.

TELEVISION AND VIDEO VIEWING

The centre has access to a TV/DVD unit for use with the children and/or for parent education events. The television is used selectively and only where it may support the educational program. Viewing is limited and offered only for short periods. Children are not obligated to participate in this viewing and appropriate alternatives are offered.

PHONE/CAMERAS

The use of photo phones/cameras/videos or recording devices by parents or visitors is not permitted whilst in the centre. Permission must be gained from the Director or staff prior to taking photographs during special occasions.

**Please feel free to talk to staff or the Director
about any questions or concerns you may have.**

**We look forward to a rewarding partnership
with you during your time with us.**