

Monarch Montessori  
Preschool  
of  
*Family Pathways*



Parent Handbook  
2020/2021

Welcome to Monarch Montessori Preschool!

Thank you for choosing Monarch Montessori Preschool of Family Pathways. Formerly known in Butler as the YWCA Montessori Preschool, we are excited to continue our beloved Montessori program under the sponsorship and direction of Family Pathways.

A quality preschool provides a vital foundation for the future educational years of your child. The Montessori Method of early childhood education emphasizes and develops the potential of the young child by means of a prepared environment, giving the child free choice of activities once the child has been instructed in the use of the materials. It builds on a child's natural sense of curiosity, self-worth, and independence to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Our preschool teacher, Miss Chris Day, has been a pillar of Butler's preschool community, having taught over one thousand children over more than thirty years. She received her Montessori training under the direct supervision of Sister Mary Giuseppe, the original founder and director of Montessori education in the Butler area. After completion of her training, under sponsorship of the YWCA and with the support of former YWCA Executive Director Margaret Clawson, Miss Chris was able to start her own Montessori preschool and has provided outstanding preschool educations to two generations of Butler students.

Preschool Teaching Assistants Rita Yasinsky and Lisa Binus have been an integral part of the program and have brought their many years of experience to the classroom as well.

This Parent Handbook has been developed to provide you with the basic guidelines for policies and procedures. Please call Miss Chris after school hours if you have any questions or if we can assist you in any way.

Program Director and Preschool Teacher:	Chris Day	"Miss Chris"
Preschool Teaching Assistant (Retired):	Rita Yasinsky	"Miss Rita"
Preschool Teaching Assistant (Current):	Lisa Binus	"Miss Lisa"
Substitute Preschool Teacher:	Bethany Buzard	"Miss Bethany"
Executive Director and Principal:	Dr. Elan Welter Lewis	"Principal Elan"
Administrative Assistant:	Ricky Houk	

Monarch Montessori Preschool of Family Pathways  
Monarch Place 100 Brugh Ave  
Butler, PA 16001  
724-841-9307  
724-284-9440

## **Program Details and Class Sessions**

Parents have their choice of 2, 3, or 5-day programs:

- 2 Days – Tuesday & Thursday
- 3 Days – Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
- 5 Days – Monday through Friday

All class sessions run from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The school year begins with Orientation Day the Tuesday after Labor Day in September and ends with Graduation Day at the end of May.

We believe children do best with a consistent, predictable schedule. Each class includes choice time, large and small group work, and snack, offering a routine that provides a sense of security. Although each class may have a slightly different sequence, the daily routine remains the same.

Typical daily schedule:

- 30 minutes      Arrival and social time
- 30 minutes      Circle time and lesson of the day
- 60 minutes      Individual work time and seat work
- 15 minutes      Snack time and relaxation
- 30 minutes      Special of the day
  - Monday: Creativity
  - Tuesday: Special Day
  - Wednesday: Music
  - Thursday: Arts & Crafts
  - Friday: Physical Activities
- 10 minutes      Story time
- 5 minutes        Dismissal

## **Program Guidelines and Objectives**

The guidelines for parents and teachers of the preschool child include the following:

1. Respect the individuality of the child.
2. Create a calm and joyful atmosphere in an environment that allows each child to connect to productive work.
3. Permit the child to work to his or her full capacity, thus granting him or her proper freedom.
4. Foster growth toward independence and social responsibility.

Our program's objectives include the following:

1. To teach the child to live effectively within society.
2. To teach the child order and peace.
3. To teach good manners based on respect for others, the environment, and him/herself.
4. To teach the child to concentrate on what they are doing.
5. To teach the child great love of work, thus satisfying their inner growth and perfection of self.
6. To teach the child to become an independent being.

## Licensure

Monarch Montessori Preschool is fully licensed by the State of Pennsylvania under the Department of Human Services in accordance with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Copies of our license and applicable regulations, as well as our comprehensive emergency plan, are readily available for parents to view in both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor lobbies.

## Admissions

Monarch Montessori Preschool of Family Pathways admits students of any religion, race, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to students at this school. It does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, national or ethnic origin, or sex in the administration of hiring practices, educational policies, admissions, athletics, or other school administered programs.

Monarch Montessori Preschool of Family Pathways admits children ages 3 to 5 years to the program. Children must be at least 3 years of age and completely potty trained by September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to attend.

## Tuition

As a non-profit agency, Monarch Montessori Preschool of Family Pathways works to keep costs reasonable for area families.

The following tuition charges apply to the 2020/2021 school year:

<u>Days</u>	<u>Per Year</u>	<u>Monthly Rate</u>
5-day program	\$2250	\$250
3-day program	\$1620	\$180
2-day program	\$1215	\$135

Tuition is assessed on an annual basis, and payment must be made by August 1. As a convenience to families, monthly payments are available and are due by the first of the prior month, with September's payment due by August 1, October's due by September 1, etc. If the first day of the month falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the tuition payment is due on the following Monday. Checks are to be made payable to "Family Pathways." Tuition payments may be mailed or brought in person to 100 Brugh Ave, Butler, PA 16001. Payments must be kept up to date for a child to remain in the program. Any alternative payment arrangements must be made through the Executive Director.

## Arrival and Pick up

Students should arrive between 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Pick up is from 11:45 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

Please pull into the lower lot of the Monarch Building and park in a legal parking space, leaving the first space along the hillside open for the Executive Director. Please do not pull up and stop your vehicle by the door to drop off your child, as this blocks traffic through the lot. If the lot is full, you may temporarily park in one of the handicap parking spaces for drop-off or pick-up only.

Please walk your child to the door, where they will be greeted by their teachers. Students are not permitted to walk through the parking lot on their own. Students will wait in the lobby together until all children arrive and will enter the classroom as a group.

At dismissal, children will wait in the lobby with their teachers and will be released individually to their parents or designated individual. Please wait outside the door for your child to be dismissed to avoid confusion in the lobby. Please inform us in advance, verbally and in writing, if someone else will be picking up your child.

Please be punctual. Consistently being on-time is an important lesson and a good habit to develop in your child at an early age. As a parent, you are setting the example. At the beginning of each day, the child has a group lesson, and when the child is late, he or she is deprived of this. This is upsetting to both the child and teacher. Be sure to allow time for weather and heavy traffic, etc.

### **Inclement Weather**

Monarch Montessori Preschool will operate on schedule regardless of the Butler Area School District cancellations or delays. Unless you receive a phone call from us, school will be in session. However, your family's safety is our first priority, so please use your best judgement before traveling in inclement weather.

### **Field Trips**

During the school year, field trips will be scheduled to enhance your child's educational experience. Parents will be notified well in advance of each excursion. Parents will need to provide transportation to and from all field trips and stay to accompany their children during these fun events.

### **Dress Code & Personal Items**

Children are encouraged to wear simple, comfortable, practical clothes, which allow for free movement and are suitable for school activities, including sitting and playing on the floor. Fasteners, zippers, and buttons should be easily manageable for the child. Belts are discouraged, as they can be difficult for children to manage in the restroom. Jewelry is also discouraged, as it often becomes a distraction in the classroom.

Closed-toe shoes are preferred; sandals with backs are permitted. No flip-flops. Tennis shoes/sneakers are mandatory on Fridays for Physical Activity Day.

During the winter months, please do not send your child to school with hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, or boots. These items become a distraction in the lobby and often get mixed up and misplaced. If the weather is cold enough that your child requires these items, please remove them at the door upon arrival.

Please bring in a large Ziplock Bag of clothing – including pants, top, socks, and underwear – for your child, labeled with their name, to keep at school for emergency situations.

Children are not permitted to bring toys (except on Show-N-Tell days), gum, or candy to school.

## **Snack Time**

A snack calendar will be distributed monthly. Each child will be the snack helper once or twice per month. Each day, for snack, the child who is the helper will provide water, juice, or milk and a healthy snack for the entire class. A suggested snack sheet will be provided at orientation. Sweet snacks will be accepted only on holidays and birthdays. Please send in spoons or forks if the snack requires them. We will provide cups and napkins.

It is our policy to be sympathetic to those children with food allergies, especially nut allergies. Please let us know if your child has any food allergies at all, and the severity of the allergy. In order to maintain a safe environment for all children, in the event that there is a severe food allergy, we would request that foods containing those products not be sent to school.

Please make sure your child eats breakfast before arriving to school. Snack time is usually around 11:00 a.m., and hungry children waiting for snack as their first meal of the day are not as easily able to focus on their morning work as children who have had breakfast.

Please also make sure your child uses the restroom before arriving to school. All children will have the opportunity to use the restroom and wash their hands before snack time. Children are also taken to the restroom when they let the teachers know that they need to; however, it is an interruption to circle time at the beginning of the day when several children need to use the restroom because of not having gone at all yet before school.

## **Health Policy**

When children are in a group setting, it is a challenge to keep everyone healthy. There are several guidelines in place in order to prevent the spread of infection.

Parents need to keep children at home if they have the following symptoms or communicable disease:

Fever of 100 degrees or above. Your child should stay home until he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.

Intestinal problems with diarrhea or vomiting, within 24 hours of class time.

Any type of undiagnosed rash.

Any type of communicable disease (chicken pox, strep throat, influenza, measles, impetigo, head lice, pink eye, etc.). If your child has one of these, please keep them home but notify the school immediately. Your child will need a written note from their doctor stating that they are no longer contagious and are able to return to school.

Children on an antibiotic treatment for an illness must take the antibiotic for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.

In accordance with 55 Pa. Code § 3270.131, Monarch Montessori Preschool must have on file for each child a Child Health Report, written and signed by a physician, CRPN, or physician's assistant, no later than 60 days following the first day of attendance. The initial report must be dated no more than 1 year prior to the first day of attendance. Child Health Reports, including vaccination records or exemption statements, must be updated at

least once every 12 months. Emergency contact information needs to be reviewed and updated once in a 6-month period or as soon as there is a change in the information.

All children must follow the immunization requirements recommended by the ACIP, in accordance with 28 Pa. Code § 27.77 or have a signed exemption statement on file. Whenever your child receives a new vaccination, including their annual flu shot, please provide the school with a new, updated, current list of vaccinations for your child from their doctor to add to your child's school record on file. Yearly flu shots are required unless an exemption statement, signed by the parents, is on file.

## **Behavior Policy**

It is important to note that discipline is different than punishment. The goal of discipline is the developmental growth of the child. Children must always understand that although their actions may be in question, their value as a person is not.

Children will be disciplined in a positive manner as soon as possible after contentious behavior, and at a level appropriate to their actions and their age in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety, respect the rights of others, and maintain the learning materials. If a difficult situation or repeated incidents of a certain nature arise, this will be discussed with a parent.

Children who repeatedly disrupt or severely misbehave (i.e. aggressive behavior toward others) may be subject to suspension. Suspension will be to limit the number of classes the child may attend. If the behavior continues, teacher and parents will conference about the behavior and partner on steps to help the child.

If disruptive or severe misbehavior continues, the child may be subject to dismissal from the program. Dismissal will be for the remainder of the class session (parents will be called to pick up the child immediately) or the class year, as determined by the staff, teacher, and Executive Director.

## **Parent and Teacher Communication**

There are several opportunities for the teacher and parent to meet individually during the school year. For new families, the first meeting will be in October and provide an opportunity for the parents to become acquainted with the preschool program and Montessori philosophy.

For all preschool families, two conferences will be held with the teacher and parents in January and in May. At these conferences, progress reports will be distributed.

Parents may contact Miss Chris at 724-841-9307 any time after school hours with any questions or concerns.

## Holidays and Special Events for the 2020/2021 School Year

The following is a tentative list of special events and holidays/vacation days for the 2020/2021 school year:

Tuesday, September 8	Orientation Day
Wednesday, September 9	First Day of School
Monday, October 12	No School – Columbus Day
Tuesday, October 13	Field Trip to Cheeseman’s Farm
Tuesday, October 27	Conferences for New Families
Friday, October 30	Fall Party, Parade and Trick-or-Treat
Tuesday, November 10	Picture Day
Wednesday, November 11	No School – Veterans Day
Wednesday, November 25	Thanksgiving Feast
Thursday – Monday, November 26 – 30	No School – Thanksgiving Break
Sunday, December 13, 2:00 p.m.	Hanging of the Greens
Tuesday, December 15	Polar Express Party
Friday, December 18	Holiday Party
Monday, December 21 – Friday, January 1	No School – Winter Break
Monday, January 18	No School – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Tuesday & Wednesday, January 19 & 20	Conferences
Tuesday, January 26	Butler Blind Association Vision Check
Tuesday, February 9	Ice Cream Social
Friday, February 12	Valentine’s Day Party
Monday, February 15	No School – Presidents Day
Friday, February 19	100 <sup>th</sup> Day of School
Monday, February 22 – Friday, February 26	National Montessori Week
Monday, March 8, 6:00-7:30 p.m.	Open House/Registration for 2021/2022
Wednesday, March 31	Spring Party
Thursday, April 1 – Monday, April 5	No School – Spring Break
Tuesday, April 13	Field Trip to Butler Library & Dunkin Donuts
Tuesday, April 20	Parent-Child Day
Tuesday, May 11	Lifesteps Child Check
Monday, May 24	No School – Memorial Day
Tuesday, May 25	Field Trip to Butler Fire Department
Wednesday, May 26	Picnic at Memorial Park
Thursday & Friday, May 27 & 28	Conferences
Friday, May 28, 6:00 p.m.	Graduation

## Monarch Montessori Preschool Curriculum

The children will:

- Develop oral language competency.
- Speak in complete sentences.
- Express ideas clearly.
- Retell happenings in order.
- Be able to recite their name, address, and phone number.
- Increase speaking vocabulary.
- Enhance listening skills.
- Follow directions in sequence.
- Recognize rhyming words.
- Enjoy stories and poems.
- Listen to peers in conversation.
- Develop pre-reading and reading skills.
- Recognize left to right and top to bottom progression.
- Practice letter recognition.
- Work with opposites.
- Recognize their name.
- Develop writing skills.
- Hold pencil correctly.
- Form letters correctly.
- Write first name.
- Recognize and understand the meaning of the numerals from 1 to 10.
- Identify everyday uses for numbers.
- Practice counting.
- Participate in problem solving through materials and experience.
- Learn geometric shapes.
- Gain knowledge of time including month, day of month, and day of week.
- Be provided with opportunities to gain answers to questions through experimentation, research, and problem solving.
- Be provided with a variety of experiences which stimulate his/her curiosity.
- Be exposed to the following units: animal life, sea life, plant life, weather, five senses, road and fire safety, healthy living habits, and recycling.
- Participate in activities involving the following units: home and family life, community helpers, Indians and Pilgrims, patriotic and national holidays, transportation, communication, and current events.
- Be taken on a variety of field trips relating to units, such as Cheeseman's Pumpkin Farm, the library, the fire station, etc.
- Be involved in free and organized play.
- Be involved in indoor and outdoor play.
- Be given opportunities to participate in games that involve large and small motor skills, rhythmic activities, creative activities, physical movement with stationary and moveable equipment, manipulative activities like peg boards and puzzles, and constructive activities like blocks, boxes, and Legos.
- Use the following art media: painting, playdough modeling, drawing, gluing, and cutting.
- Experience music through listening, singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, and keeping a beat with rhythm sticks.
- Have opportunities to use puppets, doll house, play kitchen, and other props to identify with people, times, and places in a make-believe world.

## History of Montessori

*Adapted from The American Montessori Society*

Montessori education dates back to 1907, when Maria Montessori opened the *Casa dei Bambini*, or Children's House, in a low-income district of Rome. Her unique philosophy sparked the interest of educators worldwide, and in the following decades, Montessori schools opened throughout Europe, in North and South America, and finally, on every continent but Antarctica.

Maria graduated medical school in 1896 and was among Italy's first female physicians. Her early medical practice focused on psychiatry. She also developed an interest in education, attending classes on pedagogy and immersing herself in educational theory. Her studies led her to observe and call into question the prevailing methods of teaching children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In 1907 Maria accepted a new challenge to open a childcare center in a poor city district. This became the first *Casa dei Bambini*, a quality learning environment for young children. The youngsters were unruly at first, but soon showed great interest in working with puzzles, learning to prepare meals, and manipulating materials that held lessons in math. She observed how they absorbed knowledge from their surroundings, essentially teaching themselves.

Utilizing scientific observation and experience gained from her earlier work with young children, Maria designed learning materials and a classroom environment that fostered the children's natural desire to learn. News of the school's success soon spread through Italy, and by 1910 Montessori schools were acclaimed worldwide.

In the years following, and for the rest of her life, Maria dedicated herself to advancing her child-centered approach to education. She lectured widely, wrote articles and books, and developed a program to prepare teachers in the Montessori Method. Through her efforts and the work of her followers, Montessori education was adopted worldwide.

As a public figure, Maria also campaigned vigorously on behalf of women's rights. She wrote and spoke frequently on the need for greater opportunities for women and was recognized in Italy and beyond as a leading feminist voice.

Countless books and articles about Montessori have been published in nearly every language. Dr. Montessori first described her approach in *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all'educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini*, published in 1909. The book's English-language version, succinctly titled *The Montessori Method*, was a ringing success on both sides of the Atlantic.

## The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method is an approach to education that emphasizes the potential of the young child. It attempts to develop this potential by means of a prepared environment, giving the child free choice of activities after the child has been instructed in the use of the materials. These materials are designed to correspond with the child's physical and mental development, and emphasize these areas: motor education, sensory education, and language.

Each child approaches the materials and responds to them differently. The child is permitted to proceed at his/her own pace, learning according to his or her own individual needs and capabilities.

Children attending Montessori schools are quite adaptable when transitioning to a regular classroom, since they have learned to work on their own without constant supervision and instruction.

## Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori philosophy of education is that every child carries within them the person they are to become. This approach emphasizes the potential of the young child, giving them freedom to achieve order and self-discipline in a non-competitive atmosphere.

Montessori programs include multiage groupings that foster peer learning, uninterrupted blocks of work time, and guided choice of work activity. In addition, a full complement of specially designed Montessori learning materials is arranged and available for use in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

The teacher, child, and environment create a learning triangle. The classroom is prepared by the teacher to encourage independence, freedom within limits, and a sense of order. The child, through individual choice, makes use of what the environment offers to develop himself/herself, interacting with the teacher when support or guidance is needed. Each child approaches the materials and responds differently to them, and proceeds at their own pace.

In early childhood, Montessori students learn through language, sensory input, and motor activities, working with materials that develop their cognitive powers through direct experience: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and moving.

Multiage groupings are a hallmark of the Montessori Method: the younger children learning from older children; older children reinforce their learning by teaching concepts they have already mastered. This arrangement also mirrors the real world, where individuals work and socialize with people of all ages and dispositions.

## Reading List

If you're interested in learning more about Maria Montessori and the Montessori method, the following books will provide an excellent background.

Books written by Maria Montessori:

*The Secret of Childhood*

*The Absorbent Mind*

*Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*

*The Discovery of the Child*

*What You Should Know About Your Child*

*The Child in the Family*

*The Advanced Montessori Method*

*Volume 1: Spontaneous Activity in Education*

*Volume 2: The Montessori Elementary Materials*

Books written by other authors:

*Learning How to Learn: An American Approach to Montessori*, by Nancy McCormick Rambusch

*Montessori: A Modern Approach*, by Paula Polk Lillard

*A Montessori Mother*, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher

*The Montessori Manual for Teachers and Parents*, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher

*Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work*, by E. M. Standing

*Montessori and the Special Child*, by R. C. Orem