



Riverside Montessori Learning Centre Family Handbook

“Montessori for Everyone”

Riverside Montessori Learning Centre
717 Woodstock Road, Fredericton NB
E3B 5N8
506-454-2052

Website: www.montessorinb.ca

Owner/Senior Director – Holly Goodwin Pacey

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Mission Statement

Riverside Montessori Learning Centre (RMLC) is dedicated to providing an inspiring learning environment based on the Montessori and New Brunswick framework philosophies. It is our vision to guide our children to become responsible contributors in society with respect and maturity.

License to Operate

RMLC operates in full compliance with New Brunswick Regulation under the Family Services Act and Child Day Care Facilities Operators Standards, which govern how child day care facilities are managed and regulated.

RMLC is a Designated Centre that participates in subsidy programs through the province of New Brunswick.

We are licensed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood as a quality, open door, integrated child care centre, providing 40 spaces for children three (3) to six (6) years of age. We provide an afterschool program option for children age six (6) to nine (9) on occasion. Children with Montessori background will be chosen. Please inquire with the Director, as space is limited.

Inclusion Policy

Our centre strives to accommodate every student. Prior to enrollment, we collaborate with the parents/guardians of the student(s) and teachers to determine what resources are required to ensure the student can reach his/her/their full potential. When a parent/guardian comes to RMLC for their initial tour, we discuss our daily routine, our Mission Statement, the Montessori method, and our expectations for families and employees of the centre. At that time, we determine the appropriate resources required for the student. Prior to official enrollment, we ensure that all the necessary resources are available and in place to create a smooth transition and learning experience. It is important to note that RMLC is an open-concept learning space, and may present challenges for some students. Enrollment decisions are determined based on the collective comfort of all parties, but always approached with an open mind, open discussion based on needs, and a commitment to access appropriate resources. For more information please see "Supporting All Children" document.

Montessori Method, Our Programming, the Importance of Play

Maria Montessori had many famous quotes with regards to education. One of her most memorable is “play is the work of the child.” By this she means that work and play are interchangeable for children. Children love to help adults with everyday tasks, including sweeping, cooking, folding laundry, etc. They also desire to be independent, to have the ability to get dressed with ease, pour themselves a drink, or clean up a simple spill without relying on an adult. We foster all of these skills in our program. This is why you will find students assisting with classroom tasks such as folding clean cloths, setting out placemats, lining up the outdoor footwear, and sweeping/wiping up spills.

RMLC follows the Anglophone New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care, which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/ECHDPE/ELCC-Curriculum.asp>. These guidelines and principles encourage an open environment for our children to grow intellectually, socially, and embrace their sense of community. The classroom programs are planned by the educator(s) and are varied throughout the month, depending on the child’s progression. The program includes five (5) main sections of the classroom: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language Arts, Culture/Science (as well as Botany and Zoology). In Practical Life, children are taught and encouraged to perform tasks found in the real world and at home. Examples include sweeping, pouring water, folding, transferring small items from one container to another, wiping up a spill, tying laces, etc. Sensorial activities focus on the use of all the senses. Children work with specific material(s) designed to target fine and gross motor skills, visual discrimination, olfactory refinement, tactile distinction, etc. All sections in the Montessori classroom use a variety of tools and materials to ensure that the child is both stimulated and challenged. Once a child has mastered a skill, there are ample opportunities to expand on that knowledge base and explore the concept(s) further. When it comes to their activities, students use imagination and experimentation in all that they do. For example, when working with blocks such as the Pink Tower or Brown Stair, students can practice the method shown by their teacher but can also begin to experiment with trial-and-error. What happens if the smallest block is placed beneath the largest? What do the blocks look like horizontally versus vertically? These are important questions to ask and are created by a sense of wonder. We want to foster that natural curiosity in every aspect of their daily experiences at school.

At RMLC, we value outdoor play. We believe that there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing. We spend a considerable amount of time outside: first thing in the morning at drop-off, before lunch, and after school before pick-up. We recognize that our climate is predisposed to extreme weather. We will bring

the children inside when we feel the weather is too extreme for outdoor play. We will often take the children out, even if it is for a few minutes, to give them the chance to breathe fresh air and to practice independent dress (outdoor winter gear). We are firm believers that outdoor time is critical for students' healthy development. We ask that you remain cognizant of the forecast of the day and ensure your child has adequate outdoor clothing. All pieces of clothing (including spare) must be labeled with your child's name or initials. Please address any concerns you have about these guidelines with the teachers/Director right away so that we can discuss a possible solution.

Admission

Admission to RMLC is open to anyone. Upon expressing interest in our program, parents/guardians are asked to come in and view the facility. On the tour, we walk through the school and discuss the materials, talk about how our schedule unfolds, and allow for an exchange of knowledge and questions. This is an opportunity for the Director and teachers to get to know the parents/guardians and vice versa. If both parties agree that this is the best space for the child, parents/guardians will fill out a series of paperwork and provide the initial deposit. Priority is given to siblings of the children who have already attended or are currently attending RMLC.

Attendance

It is important for your child to attend regularly in order to fulfill your child's need for consistency and order. This also enables your child to participate fully in class lessons and other learning experiences. Parents must contact the school when a child is absent.

Parental Commitment

We begin our day with student-led lessons. This allows children the chance to engage in activities of their choice and have adequate time to fully explore ideas related to their tasks. Children who are late arriving are deprived of this time and routine. **In addition, when children enter the classroom after 9 am, it is disruptive to students and teachers who are engaged in lessons. Please enter the classroom quietly.**

RMLC is a full year program and does not pause programming in the summer months (with the exception of one week closure in August). Please ensure prior to enrollment that you consider your summer plans and commitment to RMLC. Parents and families are welcome and encouraged to take as much vacation/family time as they wish; however, in order to maintain a spot in the

program, payments must continue in a timely manner and at the agreed upon price based on full-time or part-time enrollment. Reductions in price for time away from school for vacations/travel will not be offered.

Registration Fees and Payment

A one (1) time, non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 is required at the time of acceptance into RMLC. Subsequently you will be providing a monthly payment due on the **first (1st) of every month**. Full time and part time tuition fees are \$18 and \$7 per day respectively, multiplied by the total number of monthly operational days. For example, a month may have 21 operational days and the fee would be calculated as such (18x21 or 7x21). Operational days change month to month, so please be mindful when tallying your tuition for the month.

Monthly payments are required. We accept e-transfers only, and payment must be deposited on or before the 1st of every month. If circumstances require that payment must be made by cheque, this will be pre-approved by the Senior Director, Holly Goodwin. Please note that any declined cheques will be charged a \$50.00 bank fee. The parent/guardian who signs the family contract is responsible for payment fees. *A **late fee of \$10 per day** may be applied to any late tuition payments. There is a five-day grace period before the late charge is applied. Should an alternate arrangement need to be made, please be sure to contact the Senior Director prior to the tuition deadline.* If tuition payments are repeatedly late or missed, RMLC reserves the right to terminate care.

Hours of Operation

RMLC operates five (5) days a week (Monday to Friday) from 7:45am to 5:15pm.

Late Pick-Up

RMLC's hours are indicated in this booklet. Parents/guardians are responsible for organizing their schedule in order to respect our staff's hours of work. Please call the school if there are emergency cases and we will be happy to assist in any way. Please note that there is a \$10 late fee for every 10 minutes beyond the regular closure time that will apply and is to be paid directly to the teacher that has stayed behind.

Statutory Holidays

RMLC is closed on the following days/holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, New Brunswick Day,

Labor Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas Eve through to the New Year, as well as one week attached to the August long weekend in the summer.

Please note that RMLC has two (2) full days and two (2) half days for professional development and will be announced during the calendar year.

Facility Closures - Storm Days and Loss of Power

RMLC closes in the event of inclement weather, or prolonged power outages/frozen pipes. In the event of inclement weather, the decision to close the school for a full or partial day is made by the Operator and/or Director. If the school is closed for the full day, an announcement will be made on the local radio stations and on our Facebook page by 6:30 am. Should we experience a power outage that lasts longer than 30 minutes, we will inform all parents, who will need to arrange for their child(ren)'s pick up within one (1) hour. Please have all emails and phone numbers up to date in the child's file.

Daily Schedule

7:45 - 8:55 am	Drop-off (typically outdoor play)
9:00 – 11:00 am	Morning Montessori lessons (including snack)
11:00 - 11:25 am	Morning circle time
11:25 am - 12:15 pm	Outdoor play and pick-up for morning students
12:15 - 12:45 pm	Lunch time
12:45 - 2:30 pm	Drop off for afternoon students and afternoon Montessori lessons
2:30 – 3:00 pm	Afternoon circle time
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Afternoon snack and clean up
3:30 – 5:15 pm	Outdoor play until pick-up

Probationary Period

All students will have an eight (8) week probationary period in the facility. In special and rare circumstances, situations may arise where the child is not adjusting well to our learning environment. In the event that this should happen, the Director/educators will work in conjunction with the parents/guardians to reach a peaceful resolution. Should this not resolve the issue(s), the Director/educators may determine that the child would be better suited to another environment and maintain the right to terminate the contract between the child, the child's family and the school. Two (2) weeks' notice will be given to the parents/guardians. After the eight (8) week probationary period, RMLC continues to reserve the right to terminate care if certain behaviours or situations arise that cannot be resolved through collaboration and intervention with the families.

If we feel that your child might benefit from additional support or assessment, the Director will reach out in conjunction with their primary educator to discuss any concerns or observations. This will begin with an in-person discussion and could include a letter outlining next steps/recommendations.

Withdrawal Policy

During the tour, we discuss with you the commitment level to our program before your child is enrolled. Should something occur where the parents/guardians wish to remove their child from the full program, we request a one (1) full calendar month notice in writing (email) prior to withdrawal. Without a one (1) full month notice, parents/guardians will be charged a full month fee.

Parent/Guardian(s) Concerns and/or Complaints and Behaviour Expectations

In the event that a parent/guardian has a concern or complaint, they are encouraged to address the matter with an educator. If the parent/guardian is not comfortable with working directly with an educator, they are encouraged to contact the Director and together with the educator devise an appropriate solution or strategy.

Parents and guardians agree to follow the rules and regulations of the school, as do the students. Adults of the community must serve as role models for the children. It is crucial that while on school property adults (including staff) conduct themselves in a professional and rational manner at all times. Any breach of the rules of civility and basic courtesy, or any behaviour deemed disrespectful and/or aggressive to the staff, students or environment of the school may lead to the dismissal of the family, or for the Director to implement measures deemed

necessary. Confrontational and abusive behaviour (verbal, physical, sexual, etc.), on the part of parents and guardians will not be tolerated and can result in immediate termination of care.

Discipline

At RMLC, we strongly believe that 'time-outs' in the traditional sense are not usually effective. Our first instinct is to redirect the child to a more appropriate activity or material of interest. Our secondary strategy is to provide the child with more responsibility, offering them an opportunity to channel their leadership skills in a way that better serves the learning environment. If the child still does not respond to these techniques, a 'time-away' may be used. This is not used as a punishment but rather a chance for the child to cool off or reflect on what has just transpired. This does not necessarily mean a time away in isolation. An educator may sit with the child to assist in any way. We believe in HUGS!

Student Files

Parents/guardians must notify the administration if there are any changes in address, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses. This information must stay up-to-date in the child's file at all times. For example, when you receive an updated Medicare card, please provide the school with the updated expiry date (and the change in number if applicable).

Health Policy

In order to prevent the spread of illness and germs, children must wash their hands immediately upon arrival to RMLC. For the wellbeing of the other children, ill children should not attend the preschool. If the educator or Director considers a child too ill to be exposed to other children, or in the event the child develops an illness at the school, the child will be removed from the classroom and the parents/guardians are notified, giving them one (1) hour to make arrangements for pick-up. Likewise, if a child has an injury that prevents them from fully participating in the program safely, they may be asked to remain at home until fully healed or until the child can navigate the classroom and outdoor time with proper supports in place (for example, crutches). A doctor's note might also be requested to ensure the child has been assessed and cleared by a medical professional.

Is my child well enough for school?

It is our community responsibility to err on the side of caution when evaluating whether a child is well enough for school.

A child may not return to school until:

- the child is fever free, without medication, (temperature below 100 orally) for 24 hours.
- the child is well enough to participate fully in the school program and play outside.
- the child's itchy, red and runny eyes from conjunctivitis have been under treatment for at least 24 hours.
- the child has been free from diarrhea and vomiting for at least 48 hours.
- the child has been shampooed with medicated shampoo and the nits removed completely in the case of lice.
- the child is free of any communicable disease or infection.
- the child is free of a productive cough with thick mucus from the mouth and/or nose (e.g. mucus will turn watery rather than thick).

These are some of the more common illnesses we see in the children at RMLC. If your child is ill with something not listed above, please speak with the Director to determine when your child may return to school.

What if my child gets sick at school?

When children are not feeling well, lethargic or have a fever and they are not able to participate fully in our program, the teacher will call the parents/guardians to take a child home. The parents/guardians have one (1) hour to pick up the child. The child will rest apart from the other children, with an educator or the Director, until someone arrives to pick them up. When educators cannot reach parents/guardians, they will call the Emergency Contact Numbers listed in the child's records. If necessary, professional help will be called. In an emergency, transportation will be provided by an ambulance service (call 911).

Plan for managing infectious disease

Children will be excluded from school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms: fever, abnormal behaviour (lethargy), vomiting, diarrhea, rash, productive cough with thick mucus from mouth and nose, skin or direct contact infection or any contagious condition. Children should be symptom-free, fever-free or on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school. Special precautions are necessary to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Children exhibiting any of the above symptoms during the school day will be separated from the group and rest apart from other children until parents/guardians or emergency contact person arrives. Parents/guardians must notify the school if their child has a contagious condition. Parents/guardians will be informed of contagious conditions in the school community by a posting on the bulletin board and an email will be sent to families.

Allergies

The Director will review all child files and note any allergies. All allergies are posted on the window beside the entrance of the school and in the kitchen, on the refrigerator. The educators are responsible for familiarizing themselves with children's allergies. Educators will observe children during snack and lunch times, as well as during activity times using related materials for any signs of an allergic reaction. Parents/guardians in each class will also be sent a list of the allergies in their class at the beginning of the year.

Plan for Administering Medication(s)

All medications will be administered to a child only if parents/guardians have completed and signed a Medication Consent Form. All medications will be kept in their original containers and labeled with the child's name. All medications will be kept out of reach of children, in the kitchen or the Director's office.

The school's policy for administration of prescription medication is to do so only with written parent/guardian authorization and a written order from the child's physician (which may be a prescription label). We will administer prescription medication as indicated on the medicine container and the Authorization for Medication. The school's policy for administration of topical medication is to administer the medication as indicated on the Medication Consent Form. Each time medication is given it is recorded in the Medication Log, which is kept in the Director's office. Medication forms that are no longer current will be placed in the child's file.

Immunizations

The child's health history and record of immunization must be completed by the parent/guardian and updated as changes occur. If the parents/guardian have chosen not to immunize their child, a waiver signed by the parents/guardians must be on file.

Lice

Upon discovery of head lice on a child's head, RMLC administration will remove the child from class and contact the parents/guardians for immediate pick-up. Administration will distribute information on the proper care and treatment for head lice and will not permit the child to return to RMLC until a thorough head check by a member of staff has been conducted and no nits and lice are present.

Procedures for Identifying Suspected Abuse or Neglect

To ensure the wellbeing of the children in our care, the staff has a continuing

duty under provincial law to report possible incidents of neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. In accordance to the guidelines set out by the Province of New Brunswick Child Victims Abuse/Neglect Protocols, we do not have discretion in this area, but must make referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone. To determine reasonable cause, the educators will consult with the Director and the Director will make the report to authorities within 24 hours.

The Director and educators are responsible for documenting and reporting suspected child abuse. The educators will keep careful documented observations for any child noting signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. The observations will include description of injury, date and time, how it was received if known, and any statement given by parents/guardians or child regarding the injury and treatment given.

RMLC staff shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect. In the event that a RMLC staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the school, the staff member will be removed from direct contact with the children until an investigation has been completed by RMLC and the Department of Social Development. In the event an accusation of abuse or neglect is made against a staff member, the Department of Social Development will be notified within 24 hours.

RMLC staff reserve the right to withhold a child should they suspect that the parent/guardian picking them up is driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Should this occur, the parent/guardian will be asked to contact someone suitable to pick up their child. If there is no one else available, or the individual refuses to follow through with this protocol, the authorities may be contacted.

Non-Smoking Policy

We promote a smoke free environment. Under the New Brunswick Smoke Free Act, smoking is prohibited in any workplace. RMLC does not permit smoking within 100 feet of the building and playground. Please BUTT OUT before entering the premises.

Additional Information

Clothes and “Show-and-Tell” Items

All clothing must be labeled. A full change of clothes must be included in the child’s backpack in a labeled Ziploc bag for easy access. Please provide a pair of indoor footwear for indoor use and always dress your child according to the

weather.

We ask the parents/guardians to **not** send toys to school unless the educator(s) indicates that a special show-and-tell day will follow. However, if there is a favourite toy that the child uses for relaxation purposes, we encourage it.

Snacks, Lunch and Beverages

Please remember to always feed your child breakfast (the most important meal of the day). Please let us know if your child did not eat breakfast; we may need to distribute snack to him/her sooner than the scheduled time. RMLC encourages a low sugar diet. At RMLC, we teach the children about health and nutrition, and encourage healthy eating every day. The parents/guardians are responsible for all their children's snacks, lunches and beverages. Please note there will always be water available for drinking.

**Hard candy will not be distributed to a child as it is a choking hazard.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays at school. If desired, a parent/guardian is permitted to bring a treat for the occasion that follows the guidelines for safe snacks. Snacks must be purchased from an approved food source (grocery store, bakery, etc.) with ingredient labels and not made at the home. **Please do not distribute invitations, gifts, or goodie bags at school.**

Riverside Montessori Learning Centre's registration agreement

I _____ have met with the Director of Riverside Montessori Learning Centre, and I have been given a tour through the building.

I have read a copy of the RMLC Family Handbook and have discussed the contents with the Director. At this time, I wish to enrol my child _____, at RMLC.

I agree to pay a \$100.00 registration fee immediately and agree to fill out the necessary forms required before my child will start, including providing immunization records or an exemption form if applicable. I will drop my child off at the centre no earlier than _____ and pick them up before _____.

I agree to pay \$ _____ (\$7 PT/\$18 FT) per day, providing an automatic e-transfer into RMLC's account at the 1st of each month for the number of operational days.

I understand that the preschool closes at 5:15pm, and I agree to be charged a **late arrival fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes** that I am late.

I agree that if my child is sick, I will keep them at home, and notify the preschool on that day before 9:00am for the morning program and before 1:00pm for the afternoon program that they will be absent.

I also agree that if my child becomes ill at preschool, I will arrive within the hour to pick them up.

Any food allergies should be reported to the Director/ Head Teacher before registration. If for any reason a child requires a certain diet, or food restrictions, it will be the responsibility of the parent.

The Centre operates on tuition payments, paid by the families of children enrolled in our program. Absences and vacations are non-deductible. Payments must be paid monthly. Scheduled payments are provided when your child starts school.

Past due payments, exceeding seven days, will place the child's space in jeopardy. After five days, ten dollars per day will be added to your bill, and the child will not be permitted to attend preschool after 14 days until the outstanding fee is paid in full.

****Please fill in the last 2 pages and return to the Director.**

Thank you,

Holly Goodwin

Senior Director

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____