



Frequently Asked Questions

What programs does The Portland Montessori School offer?

We have a variety of schedules to suit the needs of the families we serve. Half-day classes run 8:30–1:00 p.m. Full-day classes are 8:30–3:00 p.m. for both primary and elementary. All classroom programs are Monday through Friday. We also offer optional before-school and after-school Enrichment programs for either three or five days per week for children enrolled in the Full-day program; as well as holiday camps and our summer day camp program called Camp Vida.

What is Montessori, and how is it different from daycare?

It is important to clarify that Montessori is a method of education, not a daycare. The Montessori approach includes mixed-age classrooms, which allows students to learn from their peers, and provides the opportunity for the student to develop as compassionate leaders. Children ages three to six in the Primary Classroom are given the freedom to learn academic lessons independently with the guidance of a Classroom Guide (teacher) who focuses on each child's learning style and readiness to learn a new skill, and presents the materials of the building curriculum in a way that is best suited for each child. You will learn more about the Montessori approach and how The Portland Montessori School implements Montessori methods on your visit to our school.

What do the children do in the before-school and after-school Enrichment Programs?

The Enrichment Programs provide a continuation of the Montessori philosophy of mutual respect, independence and cooperation that the children are accustomed to in the classroom. Children are given the opportunity to explore a wide assortment of materials and develop their own creative style and expression through the Arts. The Enrichment studios provide unstructured time for children to read, play, write, create, and just be together. Children are free to choose the activities that interest them. Throughout the year, special guests are invited to come and share talents with the students. Guest instructors from the community offer optional classes such as sewing, cooking, dance, and music.

What is the ratio of adults to children at The Portland Montessori School?

The State mandated ratio is 1:10, and Portland Montessori maintains that ratio or better.

Is the application fee refundable?

The application fee is non-refundable. We really want families to carefully consider their decision to apply here. This fee helps to cover the administrative work to prepare and assist incoming families for the best possible transition into the school. We do refund the application fee on the rare occasion we are not able to place your child during their first eligible full year.

Are there any animals on-site?

We have fish, birds, a rabbit, and guinea pig on site. Occasionally we have hosted guest animals. If your child has an allergy to any animals, please let us know.

What are the enrollment requirements?

Children must be at least two and a half years of age, and fully toilet trained to apply for enrollment (see MINW's "Helps to Functional Independence" handout). Our license is for children who are reasonably independent in the bathroom and no longer wearing diapers or pull up products.

Do you ever enroll children at 4 or 5 years of age?

Our classroom curriculum builds and emerges over three years. It is anticipated that children experience all three years, but we are able on occasion to serve older children. This is determined on an individual basis and spaces for older children are limited. Families of potential students age four or older with no Montessori experience should tour our facility and speak with our Head of School about the potential enrollment of their child.

I have turned in an application with the application fee, when will I hear about placement?

A period of priority re-enrollment is given to current families during the month of February. After this period of re-enrollment, we begin reviewing applications for new students. We begin matching new students to available classroom spaces in March. Typically, beginning in the first week of April you will receive a phone call from the office to inform you as to the availability of placement. A classroom Guide will contact you within one week of placement recommendation to invite you and your child to come for a private visit to the classroom. Confirmation of enrollment is made at this meeting. Due to the limited availability of Guides during the summer months, applications may take long to process during this time.

When will my child have an opportunity to visit the school and see the classroom?

After our Head of School reviews the information you have provided and makes a recommendation for your child to a classroom, the Guide will contact you to schedule an introductory meeting with your family. During much of the year, we will schedule this meeting within a week of receiving your application. Applications submitted in summer months may take longer to schedule.

Is The Portland Montessori School accredited?

The Portland Montessori School is associated with AMI – Association Montessori Internationale. All Classroom Guides and many of our Assistants are AMI trained and certified to teach in Montessori schools internationally.

Are there materials available for parents to learn more about Montessori?

Parents are welcome to attend our parent education events even before their student is confirmed for enrollment. Please visit our school website often for the latest event information: www.portlandmontessori.org. Two good websites for learning more about Montessori are www.montessori-nw.org and www.montessori-ami.org.