



SUNNY MEADOWS MONTESSORI NURSERIES

Parents' Handbook

“The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say,

‘The children are now working as if I did not exist.’”

Maria Montessori

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WELCOME TO SUNNY MEADOWS MONTESSORI NURSERIES!

About Us

Established in 2012, Sunny Meadows is a family of two classic, Montessori nurseries. We are proud to offer a welcoming and family-oriented, international environment that is safe, happy and nurturing. We offer exceptional care for children aged 2 months – 4 years and provide classes in English, Arabic and French.

All of our staff have received professional Montessori training and are committed to delivering excellent standards of care following this world-renowned education system.

The Montessori method helps children find an inner confidence via creative child-centred learning that embraces individuality and a natural desire for independence. They learn through play, at their own pace, using beautiful, traditional Montessori materials amongst children of mixed age and nationality.

The curriculum has six different focuses – practical life exercises, sensorial play, maths, language, science and culture -all centred around a weekly theme. We carefully monitor the progress of each child individually via regular one-to-one sessions and appraisals. In addition, we offer a creative extra-curricular schedule of music, sport and art activities. Our specialist babies' room sets the pathway for our Montessori journey, offering daily sensorial activities, baby massage, music, messy play and more.

Famous Montessori graduates include the founders of Google and Facebook, the British Royal Family and even George Clooney! Where will Montessori take your child?

Our Vision

We aim to help each child find his/her inner confidence, calmness, and joy of learning while nurturing a natural independence.

Our Philosophy

Learning is a process that develops naturally within the child – we are here to foster, guide, and nurture that process.

We believe that when given the right environment and support, children's natural curiosity and ability to learn flourishes. Teachers or Directresses act as guides, understanding each child's uniqueness, and present appropriate experiences for each one to reach his/her full potential.

Our Mission

Sunny Meadows Montessori Nurseries offer a complete Montessori education for children 2 months – 4 years of age with the goal of nurturing each child's true potential and providing them with a strong foundation for life.

The Montessori Method.

Named after its founder, **Dr. Maria Montessori**, the Montessori method is an educational philosophy based on child-centred learning that was developed in the early 20th century by this visionary, Italian physician. It is much more than just an educational approach – it is a way of raising children and for many, it is a way of life.

Having become the first female to graduate in medicine at the University of Rome, Italy in 1896, Montessori dedicated her life to making extensive, scientific, observational studies into the way children learn and react to the world around them. She pioneered a series of holistic education methods and principles that have been widely celebrated and followed across the world by many different cultures and nationalities for more than 100 years. Her methods have stood the test of time and she was nominated for three Nobel peace prizes (1949, 1950 and 1951)!

The Montessori approach is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural physiological and social development. Its ultimate goal is to assist each child in reaching their full potential, at their own pace, via a natural desire and joy of learning.

In contrast to traditional nurseries where children follow a pre-determined curriculum, led and instructed by the teacher, Montessori offers the child the chance to be guided as an independent learner. The Montessori approach is inquiry based learning, where the focus is on the process rather than passing an exam.

Children absorb their surroundings and choose their own materials to work with, based on their individual interests and abilities, in a carefully prepared environment. The teacher acts as a 'directress' - a guide, facilitator and mentor, respecting and observing each child's unique abilities. Children learn freely, amongst others of mixed age and nationality, using traditional, multi-sensory, Montessori learning materials with no time constraints or limits (within reason).

The main principles of Montessori are:

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- Children possess an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from their environment. This ability is different from those of adults, both in quality and capacity.
- The most important years of children's growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.

Montessori Curriculum

The integrated Montessori curriculum shapes an individualised program for every child via six connected learning areas–

1. Sensorial Play
2. Practical Life Exercises
3. Language and Literacy (Arabic, English and French in dual language classrooms)
4. Mathematics
5. Science, Culture and Environment
6. Creative Subjects – Art, Music, Drama and Sport

We have a different theme each week and carefully monitor the progress of each child via regular one-to-one sessions and appraisals.

Each day, children are invited to participate in structured circle time sessions where the directress presents a theme using multi-sensory materials, including a song or story, for the children to explore. Circle times are offered in two languages, each day (Arabic, English and/or French.)

We also offer Islamic sessions to those that are interested.

Each term we have at least one event for parents to participate in and we regularly take children on outings and excursions based around a given theme that week.

The Montessori Classroom

The Montessori classroom is a comfortable living area for the child - stimulating, carefully prepared, beautiful and well-ordered. Each child chooses his/her activities from open shelves and works in their work areas – on tables or on rugs on the floor.

You will notice the following key areas in a Montessori classroom:

- **Practical Life Area:** The activities and materials in this area are carefully prepared and arranged by the directress on organized trays and allow children to practice and master practical, daily life activities which they may often have seen at home. You will see them pouring water, polishing and cleaning, arranging flowers and counting and moving small objects between vessels. These activities enhance the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of the self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy and refinement of movement and coordination, whilst also developing pre-language and mathematics skills indirectly.

- **Sensorial Area:** The sensorial materials enable the child to learn how to order, classify and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass and colour, etc. They do this by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting and listening – exploring the different properties of physical materials that are specially designed for sensory stimulation.
- **Mathematics Area:** The traditional Montessori mathematics materials are a further sensorial experience. They allow the child to understand fundamental concepts using concrete and physically manipulative implements. This allows the child to internalize the concepts of number, symbol, sequence and memorization of basic facts. You will see colored, numbered rods of different lengths, wooden blocks and amber beads which all emphasize the physical volume of different number values, helping children learn how to count, divide and organize at a very early age.
- **Language Area:** The language materials aid oral language development, written expression and reading. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters (loose alphabet letters) and tracing letters in the sand. Various other presentations and a variety of stimulating children’s literature in the nurseries’ chosen languages, allow children to effortlessly link sounds and symbols and to express thoughts in writing.
- **Cultural Area:** The cultural area encompasses the sciences, botany, zoology, geography, history, music, art and movement. Children learn about their culture, where they live and their past histories. There are flags, maps, puzzles and plants to water and watch grow. In our daily activities schedule, the children are also offered a rich variety of art, music and movement activities which they can join in with at their preference.

Multi-Aged Classrooms

The Montessori Method groups children of different ages together, in order that the younger ones might learn from the older and that the older ones mentor the younger ones. This cross-aged tutoring setup fosters responsibility, respect for others, and community.

In our nurseries, children are grouped as seen below:

- **Babies:** 2 months – 1.6 years approximately (or once walking)
- **Toddlers:** 1.6 years – 2.6 years
- **Montessori:** 2.6 years – 4.6 years

*Each grouping is subject to each child’s individual readiness and capabilities.

Babies and Toddlers

From as young as two months old, children in our nurseries begin their Montessori journey by exploring sensorial materials to develop their curiosity and ignite a desire for physical and cognitive development. Our babies' enjoy a schedule focused on heuristic play that ignites their curiosity for stacking and transferring items, ordering, filling and emptying. Their schedule includes sensorial play, messy play, baby massage and music with lots of time for naps and rest.

Our toddler's room introduces basic Montessori learning materials encompassing the six areas of learning. This prepares our younger children before they move into our traditional, children's house settings.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Meeting with Teachers

All teachers at Sunny Meadows Nurseries are very approachable and interested in knowing your questions, concerns, tips, etc. However, during the school day, the teachers' responsibility is to focus on the children; thus, if you wish to discuss a matter at length, please make an appointment with your child's teacher. If it is an urgent matter, please inform the reception desk, and they will pass the message on to your child's teacher.

Parent—Teacher Conferences

Twice a year, there will be a chance for you to meet with your child's teacher and to discuss his/her progress report. The meeting dates and times will be posted with the administration, and once posted, you can choose the available time that is most convenient for you.

Special Needs

We love children from all developmental backgrounds. Thus, we offer places to children with special needs. Please bring a copy of the doctor/psychologist's notes with you, as we need to know his/her complete background in order to best cater to his/her needs. If a shadow teacher is needed, there will be an extra fee.

Food

- We encourage healthy eating habits in our nurseries, and to do this, we ask for your help. Please provide a lunch box for your child that's easy for him/her to carry and open.
- Please pack a well-balanced, nutritional **breakfast/snack and lunch for each day.**
- We encourage children to bring fresh fruits, vegetables, juice/milk, sandwiches, etc. If food needs to be heated or refrigerated, we have the means to do so.
- Please **do not** include the following foods: nuts of any kind, sugary drinks or foods, candy or chocolate, etc.
- Any unhealthy food will be sent back home with the child with a note from the teacher.

School Hours

We follow the ADEC school calendar, meaning our terms and camps are structured according to their schedule.

Term Timings:

Sunday – Thursday: 7:30 am – 2 pm (optional late pick up until 5:00 pm)

Camp Timings:

Winter / Spring / Summer Camps: 8 am – 2 pm (extended hours available)

Drop Off

Sunny Meadows Nurseries open at 7:30am, and we kindly request that your child is dropped off no later than 8:30am. Early arrival ensures that your child is able to participate in all of the daily activities, along with allowing him/her to settle into the school routine and make solid connections with staff and children.

Pick-Up

Children must be collected by their parent(s)/guardian(s) or authorized persons specified by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Copies of Emirates ID must be on file for all persons allowed to pick up a child.

This information is to be provided when registering your child.

If you or the usual person to pick up your child is unable to do so, please call the administration to inform us who will be picking up your child. Children will only be released to authorized persons.

Children must be picked up at authorized times. A late pick up fee of AED 50 per day (charged if later than 10 minutes past the hour) will be strictly adhered to.

All children must be off-premises by 2:00 pm daily, unless enrolled in our extended-hours program.

Afternoon Club

We operate an afternoon club, every day, from 2 pm – 5 pm with our fully trained teaching assistants.

A typical day might include music, story reading, arts and crafts and free play. Many children are tired by this time and are invited to have a rest. Please let us know if you would like to see our timetable.

In order to allow maximum flexibility, our fees for afternoon club are just AED 50 per day. If you arrive later than 10 minutes past the hour, you will be charged the full AED 50 for that hour.

If you know in advance that your child will stay late every day, we will calculate the term fee including this and you will be asked to pay in advance.

Please let us know in advance if you will pick your child up later than 2pm.

Transportation

Sunny Meadows Nurseries provides transportation for children starting from 2 years of age. All buses and their drivers are certified, and there is a female assistant always present on each bus.

Transportation options are available within Khalifa City A and from Abu Dhabi. The fees are listed accordingly in each branch's registration forms.

Personal Belongings

Footwear

Please provide shoes that your child can play in and that are not too difficult to take on and off.

School Bags

Each child should bring with him/her a school bag that contains a complete change of clothes and food for a breakfast snack and lunch.

If your child is using nappies, you are required to supply them (at least 4 per day), along with wipes/nappy cream - these will stay on the nursery premises. When they need to be replenished, we will notify you.

Toys

Please do not bring toys to the nursery (unless they are for "Show & Tell").

Younger children who are just starting nursery are allowed to bring their comforter (i.e. favorite soft toy or blanket) until they settle into our routine.

We are not responsible for any lost items.

Lost Property

Any lost items belonging to your child will be kept at the reception desk. Please label your child's items in order to avoid confusion.

Birthdays

We enjoy recognizing your child's birthday and celebrating along with him/her. If you wish, you are welcome to bring a food item to share with your child's class in order to celebrate, but this is in no way mandatory.

If any food items or party bags will be brought for your child's birthday, they **MUST BE approved by management PRIOR to the celebration.**

NO sweets or bubblegum are allowed.

Illness

We believe that the health of your child is of utmost importance. Thus, we diligently monitor the children's health and ask that you do the same for your child. Some infectious diseases are common amongst school children and require specific medical treatment and/or time at home recuperating.

Time at home allows a sick child to recover and minimizes the risk of infecting other children and staff.

The following indications are reasons for your child to stay home:

- **Fever:** A child who has a significant temperature (38 degrees or higher) in the past 24 hours should not be at school.
- **Antibiotics:** A child should not be at school during the first 24 hours he/she begins antibiotics.
- **Colds:** Keep the child home if any of the following symptoms are present: fever, malaise, clear nasal discharge (or profuse nasal discharge), and sneezing. Watch for secondary problems such as tonsillitis or ear infections.
- **Infections:** Tonsillitis, Rhinitis, Sinusitis, etc. are all infections. Also, nasal discharge that is not perfectly clear may indicate an infection and require medical treatment. Please keep the child home until all symptoms subside.
- **Gastro-enteritis** (Diarrhea, Vomiting): Keep the child home for at least 24 hours after the last symptom has subsided.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Red eyes / yellow discharge – this requires specific medical treatment and is highly contagious. Keep the child at home until your doctor advises it is safe to return to school.
- **Head Lice:** Use proper treatment and keep the child at home until there are no signs of head lice.

Medication

In the event that your child needs to take medicine while at nursery, our staff (almost always the nurse) will administer this, provided the following is observed:

1. Written permission/request has been recorded
2. Medication is administered from its original container (with original label/instructions) and is not expired
3. Person administering the medication will do so in the presence of another staff member, and both will sign the child's medication record.
4. Prior to the child leaving the nursery, the parent/guardian must sign the medication record, acknowledging that the child has been given the medication.
5. In the event that the medication has not been given, the parents must sign a form stating that they are aware of this fact.
6. In the case of an emergency where only verbal consent was given for staff to administer medication, the parent/guardian who gave the consent must confirm this in writing within 7 days.

Emergency Accident / Illness Procedure

In the unlikely event that your child would need to be taken to the hospital, we will take him/her to the nearest hospital and call you to meet us there.

Fees

Fees can be payable annually, per term, or per month (with post-dated cheques for the remaining months in a term). Please find a copy of our fees and policies at the end of this handbook.

All fees are to be paid the first day of the year/term/month.

Sunny Meadows Nurseries offer the following forms of payment:

- **Direct Transfer:** Details are available from the administration
- **Cash:** Payable to the administrator
- **Credit Card:** Payable to the administrator (VISA and Master Card)
- **Cheque:** Payable to Sunny Meadows Nursery in UAE dirhams

Registration Fee – Non Refundable				AED 2,000
Fees (Per Term)				
Tuition AED	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
Per term	6,000	8,000	9,500	11,500
Optional Services (Per Term)				
Services AED	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
Transport (Per Term) Pick up & Drop off	1,200	1,800	2,400	3,000
Transport (Per Term) One way	600	900	1,200	1,500
Afternoon Club 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	AED 50 (Per Day)*			
Winter/Spring/Summer Camp	AED 600 per week AED 150 per day			

Absenteeism (Non-attendance of a Child)

Absence

Please notify the administration of Sunny Meadows in the event that your child cannot attend nursery – this helps staff properly prepare for activities, etc.

Sickness / Vacation

In the event that a child is sick or takes vacation during the term, no refund will be given and days will not be changed to accommodate this. Fees are not transferable – this is due to the continued running costs of the nursery.

Late Entry

If a place was reserved for the child and he/she joins during the term, then the full tuition fees for the term are payable. If a child joins any time during the term and no place was reserved, then the tuition fees will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for that term; however, the registration fees will remain the same. If a child is going to be absent for any period of time during the term, full tuition fees are still due to reserve a place when the child returns. This is due to the continued running costs of the nursery. All fees are non-transferable.

Withdrawing a Child

If a child withdraws at any time, or does not join, the registration fee is non-refundable.

Sunny Meadows reserves the right to:

- refuse re-admission unless all previous outstanding balances have been settled or if fees are not paid in the manner stated herein
- withhold the reports cards until settlement of all outstanding balances
- make any changes and exceptions to its fee policy at its discretion at any time

Grievance Policy

The staff at Sunny Meadows Nurseries are always open to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

By letting us know any issues as soon as possible, we should be able to resolve them without having to take more formal means.

However, if the need arises, all serious complaints should be in writing and addressed to the administration. We will then respond to your complaints within seven working days of the date we received it.

Sunny Meadows' Fees Policy, Terms and Conditions

Please read carefully

Registration Fee A one time, non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee of 2,000 AED is payable at the first time of registering your child at the nursery.

Tuition Fees All fees (tuition fees & optional services fees) are non-transferable, and cannot be carried forward to a subsequent academic term or year. The tuition fee is the same, per term, regardless of the number of weeks in the term - this is standard practice across all schools & nurseries in Abu Dhabi.

Due Dates Full tuition fees are due by the end of the first week of each term. Please refer to our academic calendar. Please note that your child will not be fully admitted or have their place reserved until all accounts are settled.

Late Payments Late payments will incur a penalty of 50 AED perday.

Payment Methods You can pay annually (10% discount available), per term or per month and by bank transfer, cash, credit card or cheque – payable to SUNNY MEADOWS NURSERY.

If paying monthly, we require post-dated cheques to secure your place for that term. We will inform you before depositing any cheques.

Late Entry If a child joins at a later date during the term, the full amount is still due for first time registration. However, the tuition fee will be calculated on a pro-rata rate for that term, depending on when the child joined.

Absences or Withdrawal If your child is absent, due to unexpected illness, for a vacation or any other reason, full tuition fees are still payable to keep their space reserved. This is due to the continued running costs of the nursery. Please note that all fees are non-transferable and Sunny Meadows reserves the right to refuse re-admission unless all previous outstanding balances are settled.

Optional Services Tuition fees exclude the cost of optional services – afternoon club, transport and certain extracurricular programs. These are payable per term at the same time as tuition fees.

Discounts Sunny Meadows offers a 10% sibling discount off tuition fees only – this will be no longer be applicable if/when the second child leaves the nursery. Further discounts may be applicable to you depending on place of work or home address. Please note that only one discount can be applied to each registration.

Late Pick up Fees Please inform us if you will be late to pick up your child. If you arrive later than 10 minutes past the hour that you have paid until, you will be charged an extra 25 AED (per hour) unplanned, late pick up fees.

Changes Sunny Meadows Nurseries reserves the right to change or amend its fees policies at its discretion.

You have signed a copy of these policies on our registration form.

WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR CHILD TO JOIN US.