



Montecito School
Montecito School – 1468 Grant Road, Los Altos, CA 94024
www.montecitopreschool.com; Tel: (650) 968-5957
Serving the Bay Area for 65 Years!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) AND ANSWERS **FOR PROSPECTIVE & CURRENT FAMILIES**

For additional answers & program information, refer to the Parent Handbook, Disaster Booklet, Montecito's website, and schedule a phone tour with our Director Miss Erin. You can follow the link on our website or email Erin directly at erin@montecitoschool.com.

1. How do I schedule a tour?

ANSWER: You can schedule a tour by call us at 650-968-5957 or by going to our website and clicking on "Schedule a Tour" at the top bar of our website and/or by selecting the "Contact Us" menu. Complete your contact information on the form provided and information about your child's age and your needs. Our Director Miss Erin and she will send you information and schedule a phone tour with you. Erin's email address is erin@montecitoschool.com, if you would like to request a tour via direct email.

2. What is the enrollment process?

ANSWER: To enroll in any program at Montecito, go to our website and select the "Forms and Admission" page on the menu bar. To enroll, complete & submit to admin@montecitoschool.com the following 2 forms:

1. "Application for Enrollment" per child for the school year you're enrolling in; and
2. Sign one "Signed Admissions Agreement" for your family (even if you have enrolled more than one child).

Email these to us and we will process your enrollment within 48 hours. Once processed, we will send you the details of your enrollment and the enrollment fees due to complete your enrollment. Enrollment each year for the following school year begins the December before the school year begins.

For Summer program enrollment, you would complete the "Summer Application for Enrollment" and email that to our office at the same email address listed above. Summer enrollment begins at the end of February or early March each year.

3. How old does my child need to be to attend Montecito?

ANSWER: Your child must be 2 years old to attend Montecito, and children may start attending mid-year if they turn 2 later in the year. Montecito has a preschool license for

children ages 2 through Kindergarten and an elementary/K-5th license for children ages 5 to 11.

4. Are immunizations required for enrollment?

ANSWER: According to the Dept of Social Services Community Care Licensing (aka Licensing), all children attending a licensed preschool facility like Montecito must provide their child's immunization records. If your child has a medical exemption for immunizations, please submit the exemption signed by your child's pediatrician.

The following forms are required by Licensing, all of which must be submitted by your child's first day of attendance (for new parents only):

- Immunization Record
- Physician's Report
- Personal Rights
- Parents Rights

These forms can be found on our website under the menu item "Forms and Admission."

Montecito is required to send all immunization records to the Board of Immunization annually for all enrolled children.

5. What is the cost of tuition?

ANSWER: Miss Erin emails prospective families our current school year List of Fees, Drop-in Care only List of Fees, and our current Summer Camp List of Fees upon receiving a tour request. Montecito's policy is to not post fees on our website, as Miss Erin helps families understand our fees and programs during the phone tour. If you would like current pricing, please email Miss Erin at erin@montectioschool.com.

6. What is Montecito's educational philosophy?

ANSWER: Montecito's whole-child approach helps children learn through their play and experiences at school – including learning academic skills organically through the hands-on activities and learning social/emotional and life skills as well. Montecito also understands that a solid growth mindset empowers children to survive and thrive from preschool and throughout life. A child's bonds and engagement with their bodies, peers at school, teachers, parents, friends, with animals and nature are all essential to developing each child's innate sense of wonder, strengthen their self-confidence and their ability to navigate the world on its terms in school, at home, professionally and in relationships. We understand that the first 5 years of a child's life is when they develop all these basic skills they need to survive and thrive. Teaching these children to treat others the way they want to be treated (The Golden Rule) is also an essential principle and life lesson children learn at Montecito.

7. How many children are in each classroom? What is your Teacher: Child Ratio in each classroom?

ANSWER: The Teacher to Child ratio is 1 to 4 or better at all times for all of our classrooms and programs (every age group). CA state Licensing requires a 1 to 12 ratio (1 teacher for

every 12 children); however, Montecito has always chosen to have a much lower ratio, for higher quality engagement and care.

8. What does a typical day look like?

ANSWER: The Daily Routine is listed on Montecito's website under the "Classes and Programs" menu. This is a year-round daily routine for all classes (each age class) for the morning and afternoon sessions. The themes change each week; however, the staff and children are consistent and the daily routine is consistent, as young children thrive on a predictable routine. As a result, the children can happily and safely make their own choices during this consistent daily routine and daily structure. We stay together as a class so that we keep our 1:4 or better ratio at all times. The daily routine includes: Opening Circle Time (AM & PM); Activity Hour (AM & PM); Small Group (AM & PM); Bike Time (AM & PM); Group Circle Time (AM & PM); Snack Time & Lunch Bunch Time (AM & PM snacks & Lunch 12-1 pm daily); Playground Time (multiple times every day - each classroom has its own playground); and Closing Circle Time (AM & PM).

9. Does my child need to be potty trained & how do you handle toilet training?

ANSWER: No, children are not required to be potty trained by a certain age to attend Montecito. Montecito staff understands that there is not one age for a child to be potty trained. Of course, occasional accidents are the norm for preschool children and also a part of learning how to listen to your body (self-regulation). The school supplies a changing space/table, diapers and wipes for all children not yet trained. We will change a child's diapers and/or clean up any accidents when necessary, although we do not use pull-ups at school (child wear a diaper or underwear at school). Teachers will help children learn their self-help skills in this area as they work towards self-autonomy and independence. When you do begin the training process with your child, we ask that you notify your child's teaching team so that we can work with you to make sure that your child receives assistance in learning these skills. We also keep a change of your child's clothes in the classroom so that we can change your child into his/her own clothes following an accident.

10. Do you provide snacks and lunch?

ANSWER: Montecito provides snacks to all children twice per day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The snack includes organic fruits and vegetables fresh delivered each week, various types of cheeses, crackers, raisins and filtered water. Parents send their child to school with their own lunch if the child is attending during the lunch time.

11. Is there a nap time and must my child nap?

ANSWER: Yes Montecito offers a nap time but we do not require that your child takes a nap. Naps are from 1:00 to 2:30 pm and are based upon parent request. Montecito provides the mats, space and staff for nap time in each classroom. Montecito teachers don't force children to nap or to sleep, and some children may just rest for a short period. Napping children will not miss out on any portion of the daily routine.

12. Are you a nut-free school?

ANSWER: We are not a nut-free school. All our teachers and staff are aware of all allergies in each classroom and are CPR/First Aid and allergy trained and certified (including our Director, the office staff and the classroom staff). Each classroom contains emergency supplies, medical/emergency forms for all children, and medications and Allergy Action Plans for children with allergies. Children and teachers wash their hands before and after snack time, and children don't share food during snack and lunch times. During snack and lunch time, all the children sit and eat together for inclusion purposes, and children with allergies sit together and near the class group, but children with allergies will not sit next to children who have food containing allergens. We address all allergies on an individualized basis and keep all Allergy Action Plans and medications for our children safely stored in each classroom. Health and Safety information is available on the home page of our website, in our Admission Agreement and in every family's Parent & Disaster Handbook. In addition, Miss Erin reviews allergy and health/safety information during your phone tour.

13. Can I visit the classroom and/or campus during the day?

ANSWER: Prospective and current/enrolled parents can visit the Montecito campus with their family on their own time during the weekday evenings and on the weekends throughout the year. If a prospective parent wishes to visit the campus during school time (7:30 am to 6:00 pm M-F), they may schedule an observation whereby they come with their child to participate during class time to meet the teachers and participate in a portion of the class before enrolling. Enrolled parents may visit their child's classroom by scheduling with their teachers once their child has transitioned into the classroom.

Current parents also may attend all campus events offered throughout the year with other parents (e.g., Ice Cream Social, Family Movie Night, Orientation, Halloween Sing, Holiday Sing and Campus Picnic).

14. Does Montecito offer a summer program?

ANSWER: Yes Montecito offers many part-time (PT) and full-time (FT) themed summer camps, for children ages 2 to 11 years.

15. How do you handle challenging behavior and/or discipline?

ANSWER: Montecito uses "positive guidance" to help children build their social and life skills and to handle challenging behaviors during school. Our children have so many activities from which to choose that they are typically happy and engaged. Montecito will not use any form of corporeal punishment to address behavioral problems with children. When appropriate, we use natural and logical consequences and redirection; for example, if your child is throwing sand in the sandbox, he/she must get out of the sandbox until he/she can remember the rules about keeping sand low (the child will make another choice and go with a teacher to another area of the playground and/or classroom). We guide children to learn how to make good decisions about their behavior. Teachers will encourage and support children to build their problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Your child will be encouraged to use words rather than actions to solve a problem. Our staff members support the development of

empathy in all children by pointing out the other child's tears or hurt feelings. The teachers will meet with the parents when a child needs additional help following the rules. Parents are encouraged to partner with us in helping their child understand our policies.

16. Does your program offer Special Education services or programs for children with special needs?

ANSWER: Yes all Montecito programs are open to all children of all abilities, disabilities and/or special needs. Curriculum includes culturally inclusive meaningful activities and activities are adapted to meet the needs of all children, including those with disabilities and special needs. We embrace all learning differences, abilities and styles and will make reasonable adjustments to our activities to ensure success, regardless of the ability, disability or special need.

17. What if my child does not speak English?

ANSWER: Language development is the number one learning goal of all Montecito activities in all classrooms and across all age groups. Many children attending Montecito initially come to school not speaking English; however, they leave Montecito as multi-lingual children. We have a diverse student body and staff and speak many languages with our children. Children first learn receptive language (understanding English) and then expressive language (speaking English) once they become more comfortable, as they're immersed in English and many other languages being spoken all around them.

18. What does inclusion look like at Montecito?

ANSWER: All Montecito classes have specific age-appropriate routines that are designed to give children the opportunity to make their own choices. This daily routine is predictable and promotes a sense of security and self-confidence, which allows children to deeply engage in play, with one another and in learning activities. We stay together as a class during all class times, including during snack and lunch times, and our daily routine remains the same while the weekly themes change throughout the year. Our Montecito curriculum includes culturally and personally inclusive meaningful activities. We learn from families and our peers about their culture and incorporate activities so that others can also learn.

19. How will you prepare my child for Kindergarten?

ANSWER: Throughout our 2s, 3s, 4s and Young 5s programs, your child's academic, life and social skills have been fine-tuned and fully developed. By the time they are ready to go to Kindergarten at age 5 and following the completion of the 4s class, they have experienced engaging and fun field trips, campus events, lots of social/emotional and cooperative play opportunities, learning how to share by taking turns, exploring their fine and gross motor skills, they've learned a wide range of academic skills, handling animals to build their natural empathy and they have learned how to treat others the way they want to be treated (The Golden Rule). Our young 5-year-olds are ready to attend Kindergarten and elementary school, as their learning, skills and personalities are well developed by that time, and they've attended a child-centered preschool that will prepare them for life and for elementary school.

Montecito offers a free Kindergarten Readiness class each year in January (taught by Stephanie Agnew from Parents Place).

20. Does Montecito offer Transitional Kindergarten? How is TK different from a fours class?

ANSWER: Montecito does not offer free Transitional Kindergarten (TK) like public schools do. Montecito offers a Pre-K/Young 5s program, as well as a high quality 4s program each year, for the year before children attend Kindergarten. Pre-K and TK programs traditionally are for Young 5-Year-Old children who miss the 5-year-old cut-off date of September 1st and for children who have already attended and completed the 4-year-old program. Most children go from a quality 4s program directly to Kindergarten. For those who miss the age cut-off, the public school system provides TK programs as a “gap” year in elementary school. For more information, see the article called “Why Not TK?” on our website (under the “About Us” menu).

21. How is my child’s learning shared with me?

ANSWER: Teachers maintain close personal contact with parents to effectively meet the needs and share the growth of each child. Our low ratio (1:4 or better for all classes) helps us to do this. Teachers send home daily photos, incident reports, videos, daily reports and observations through our Tadpoles program (received as emails by parents). Montecito teachers are always willing to discuss any problems or concerns after hours by phone or at school by appointment. We also have brief conversations and updates with parents during daily drop-off and pick-up times. We also conduct teacher/parent conference 1-2 times per year and upon special request.

22. How do you ensure quality care and teaching from substitute teachers?

ANSWER: Montecito’s substitute teachers are also our regular teachers, and they are familiar with your child and your family. They are all cross-trained and CPR/First Aid certified, and they all follow Montecito’s curriculum design and philosophy. Teachers who work only as substitutes teachers are also well-known to our children, families and teaching staff, as they work during our summers and school breaks, and many substitute regularly as a permanent teacher in your classroom, and for other teachers in other classrooms on campus. All teachers, including our substitutes, have many years of experience in working with young children, most have child development units and degrees, and they are all fully trained and meet all Licensing requirements to work in a licensed preschool facility. All teachers and substitutes also attend Montecito’s annual and semi-annual training.

23. Tell me about your drop-in care, holiday care and back-up care programs.

ANSWER: Montecito’s Drop-in/Back-up care programs are available to preschool and Elementary children, beginning at ages two (2) years through 5th grade (11 years old), whether they are enrolled in another Montecito class or not. This care program also includes children attending through back-up care (through Care.com or Bright Horizons), and education activities and specialty classes, such as language, basketball and movement classes or field trips offered throughout the year. All children in these programs are split into their own

age group and classroom and they will remain in their classroom and playground through the school day and participate with the enrolled children and teachers in that class.

To use these Care programs, parents must purchase Prepaid Hours (discounts and scholarships are available and back-up care is paid through Bright Horizons or Care.com). The Prepaid Hours will allow you to use our drop-in care program during our program hours on any day, in 15-minute increments. Prepaid Hours are electronically maintained at the Montecito office, and parents will be reminded when their hours are getting low or they have a negative balance. At the time of enrollment, students are issued 2 free Prepaid Hours to be used at any time.

Children may attend our daily drop-in care during our campus hours (7:30 am to 6:00 pm) and we ask you give us 24 business hours advanced notice for using this program (excluding holidays and weekends). Your Prepaid Hours and/or back-up care requested hours may also be used during our regular school year (mid-August to mid-June), during our summer programs (mid-June to early August) and/or to attend our Holiday Care. Holiday Care is offered during Montecito's school breaks throughout the year, in December, January, February, April and June.

24. Is there a calendar available?

ANSWER: Yes. Montecito's Annual Calendar of Events is located on our website under the menu item entitled "Parent Info" and also in your Parent Handbook, given to all families on your child's first day of attendance (mid-year or at the beginning of each school year). Our Calendar & Events is updated by August 1st of each year.

25. Is Montecito open all year?

ANSWER: Yes Montecito is open year-round. The annual calendar of events is located in your Parent Handbook and our website under the menu item "Parent Info." The closure dates are very few but are also included on our Calendar & Events in these locations.

26. When is the school closed?

ANSWER: Please refer to Montecito's Calendar & Events on our website or in your Parent Handbook. Montecito is only closed on observed national holidays when the holiday occurs during a weekday. These observed holidays include New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr holiday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (W-F of Thanksgiving week), and Christmas Day. Montecito is also closed the week before school begins in August (after summer camps have ended & before the school year begins). Montecito is OPEN on Indigenous People's Day (Oct.), Veterans Day (Nov.) & President's Day (Feb.). Montecito is OPEN and provides part-time and full-time holiday care for all ages during school breaks in December, January, February, April and June.