



Little Llama
Montessori Academy

Parent Handbook

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Our School

Little Llama is a locally owned small business dedicated to educating preschool students. Our approach involves creating a social setting that supports each child's unique development. Beyond a classroom, our Montessori preschool program provides a collective and expressive environment where children are respected and valued as individuals. Personalized attention fosters a balanced atmosphere that is cheerful, nurturing, and organized.

Our classrooms are filled with hands-on activities that promote age-appropriate tactile experiences. This environment encourages children to explore their curiosities and challenges them to master skills such as self-care, language, social interactions, music, art, and mathematical concepts.

Montessori Method

Montessori education offers our children opportunities to develop their potential as they step out into the world as engaged, competent, responsible, and respectful citizens with an appreciation and understanding that learning is life.

- **Each child is valued as a unique individual.** Montessori education recognizes that children learn in different ways, and accommodates all learning styles.
- **Beginning at an early age, Montessori students develop order, coordination, concentration, and independence.** Classroom design, materials, and daily routines support the individual's emerging "self-regulation" (ability to educate one's self, and to think about what one is learning)
- **Students are part of a close, caring community.** The multi-age classroom 2.5 - 5 years re-creates a family structure. Older students enjoy being mentors and role models; younger children feel supported and gain confidence about the challenges ahead. Teachers model respect, loving kindness, and a belief in peaceful conflict resolution.
- **Montessori students enjoy freedom within limits.** Working within parameters set by their teachers, students are active participants in deciding what their focus of learning will be. Internal satisfaction drives the child's curiosity and interest and results in joyous learning that is sustainable over a lifetime.
- **Students are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge.** Teachers provide environments where students have the freedom and the tools to pursue answers to their own questions.
- **Self-correction and self-assessment are an integral part of the Montessori classroom approach.** As they mature, students learn to look critically at their work, and become expert at recognizing, correcting, and learning from their errors.

Little Llama Montessori Academy not only adheres to the core Montessori curriculum but also incorporates additional areas of learning that enhance the educational experience. These include the introduction of a second language and engaging in community activities. We also acknowledge that there are various early childhood education (ECE) activities that children genuinely enjoy, such as circle time, blocks, puzzles, and caring for baby dolls. LLMA integrates these activities into our classroom using Montessori methods, where children work on mats and learn to clean up after themselves. Moreover, LLMA offers Yoga, Art, and French lessons, as well as visits to the library and nature outings, providing students with a diverse range of enriching experiences.

Famous Montessori Graduates: Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Jimmy Wales (Wikipedia) Julia Child (Chief) Sean Combs (Grammy award winning musician) Larry Page (Google) Helen Keller (Political Activist) Yo Yo Ma (Cellist) Andrew Loyd Webber (Composer) Brene Brown (Author) Beyonce Knowles (Grammy award winning musician) Taylor Swift (Grammy award winning musician)

Mission

Our mission at LLMA is to inspire, educate, and nurture active learners who will play a transformative role in shaping a positive future. We are dedicated to upholding professionalism and ethics in our pursuit of educational excellence. We strive to consistently deliver a high-quality education by continually enhancing our existing programs and exploring innovative and creative approaches to better serve our students and community. Our commitment lies in providing an educational environment that fosters growth, curiosity, and the development of critical thinking skills, empowering our students to make a meaningful impact on the world around them.

Objectives

We will provide quality early childhood education by utilizing the Montessori Method. We will also offer language, music, art and opportunities to be involved within the community. We will strive to create lifelong active learners by encouraging, exploration, effort and excitement. We will cultivate a child's desire to learn. We will promote confidence and self-discipline by respect and kindness in all of our educational activities.

Enrolment Requirements

All families interested in registering their child are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.) Criteria for Eligibility

1. Children must be between the ages of 2.5 to 5 years
2. We appreciate children being potty trained.

Additional Admission Requirements

1. Enrolment Form and Registration Fee
2. Caregivers and children must schedule a meeting to view the school and meet the teachers.
3. A four week probationary period and evaluation process may be implemented.

Little Llama Montessori Academy Tuition Fees

5 DAYS A WEEK 8:45 to 3 p.m	PRICE \$360 week \$1440 month
4 DAYS A WEEK 8:45 to 3 p.m	\$290 week \$1150 month
3 DAYS A WEEK 8:45 to 3 p.m	\$215 week \$860 month
2 DAYS A WEEK 8:45 to 3 p.m	\$144 week \$576 month
1 DAY A WEEK (Monday or Friday) 8:45 to 3 p.m	\$300 month

* Prices are \$12/hour

We accept the Affordable Child Care
Benefits Plan:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

Days and Hours of Operation 2024/2025

Little Llama Montessori Academy primarily follows the academic calendar of Comox Valley School District 71. Our academy remains operational throughout the year from Monday to Friday, operating from 8:45 am to 3 p.m.

Please note that we will be closed on the following specific days:

2024

September 2nd, 2024 - Labour Day

September 30th, 2024 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

October 14th, 2024 - Thanksgiving Day

November 11th, 2024 - Remembrance Day

December 23rd - January 3rd 2025 - Winter Break

2025

February 17th - Family Day

March 17th - 28th Spring Break

April 18th - Good Friday

April 21st - Easter Monday

May 19th - Victoria Day - LLMA participates in the Cumberland Parade.

July 1st - Canada Day

July 21st - August 1st - Summer Break

August 4th 2025 - B.C Day

September 1st - Labour Day

Children are welcome to arrive between 8:45 and 9 a.m

Pick-up time is 3 p.m

If you anticipate arriving later than the designated drop-off or pick-up time, kindly notify Little Llama Montessori Academy via text message. We greatly value punctuality during our Montessori work period. Upon arrival, a staff member will be available to greet your child at the rear entrance of 368 11th Street. Please ensure to sign your child in and out using the attendance sheet located at the door. To avoid disrupting the children who are already engaged in their work, we kindly request that you refrain from entering the primary working area of the classroom.

Little Llama Montessori Academy Daily Schedule

8:45 - 9	Children arrive at school
9	Lessons/Montessori work period
11	Circle Time - Stories - Music - Dance
11:30	Outdoor Adventure
12:30	Lunch
1	Nap/Quiet Activity
1:30	Lessons/Montessori work period/ Arts & Crafts
2:30	Dancing/Stories/Puppet Show/Circle Time
3:00	Pick Up

Parent Code of Conduct

- Demonstrate respect towards their own children and other children, both in verbal and physical interactions.
- Treat each other with respect on the school grounds
- Maintain a soft and considerate voice while inside the school.
- Encourage your child to develop independence when managing their belongings in the cubby area, including clothing and shoes.
- Ensure all required forms are kept updated with correct address, phone number and list of emergency contacts
- Promptly pick up your child on time

Parent Communication School Phone 778 881 5513

Email: littlellamamontessori@gmail.com

LLMA believes in regular and open communication. An integral part of a parent's involvement in your child's education is through effective communication with the teachers. If you should have any immediate concerns please don't hesitate to touch base with a staff member. We can either discuss the matter then or set up a time outside of class hours to talk in person or over the phone. LLMA will send pertinent school information such as events and news via HiMama. There will also be a notice board at the entrance which should be checked for important news. LLMA will respond to emails between the hours of 8 am - 6 pm, Monday to Friday (not including statutory holidays), unless there is an urgent matter. Please type URGENT in email if it needs our attention right away.

Parent Volunteers

Throughout the year teachers may need some assistance with a special activity. If the caregiver has spare time and would like to help out they are encouraged to advise the teachers. The teachers will keep a list of volunteers.

Parking Guidelines

We kindly request that you drive at a slow and cautious pace while in the parking area. For the safety of all children, we ask that you refrain from allowing your child to play in the parking lot during school hours. Ensuring the well-being of every child at LLMA is our top priority. If you would like to engage in conversations with other caregivers, we suggest visiting Cooper Park, which is just a few minutes away and provides a much safer environment.

Drop off and Pick Up Policy

Drop Off

For the sake of all the students it's best that the caregivers leave once a teacher has received their child. This may be difficult to do, for those that experience a little anxiety, but it is in the best interest of your child's development as an independent learner. Please message the school if you have any concerns in regards to your child. We will send you an update. If class is in session you are welcome to escort your child to the cubby area if you feel they need extra help but please try to respect the peaceful classroom environment.

Pick Up

It is imperative that all children are picked up promptly at 3 p.m. If, for any reason, a child is not picked up by 3 p.m. on their scheduled day, a late charge of \$20.00 will be applicable for the caregiver. We understand that emergencies may arise, and in such cases, we request that you contact the school to make appropriate arrangements. It is essential to note that no child will be released to an individual who has not been approved in writing by the caregiver. This protocol ensures the safety of the child and instills confidence in the school's commitment to prioritizing safety. In the event of continuous lateness in picking up your child, LLMA will issue a written warning. Failure to address the issue may result in the withdrawal of your child from the school, with no refund provided for that week of attendance.

A caregiver has the authority to designate up to three individuals as authorized to pick up their child from LLMA. It is mandatory for authorized individuals to present valid identification when picking up any child from the school. LLMA strictly prohibits the release of any child to an unauthorized person without prior permission. This policy is in place to ensure the safety and well-being of your child. All parents and authorized persons are required to sign the attendance sheet when signing the child in and out. In the event of an emergency that requires someone else to pick up your child, please notify the school in advance via text message or email. Kindly provide the name and description of the person who will be arriving, as identification will be necessary. If a parent or authorized person arrives to pick up a child and appears incapable of providing safe care, LLMA reserves the right to request another person to pick up the child. In extreme cases, where the safety of the child is a concern, LLMA may be obligated to contact the Police or the Ministry of Family and Child Development.

Punctuality

LLMA places strong emphasis on the importance of punctuality for students, encouraging them to arrive on time for the start of class. When a student arrives late, it can disrupt the ongoing learning process and create distractions for both the teacher and fellow students. Therefore, we kindly request that all students make every effort to arrive on time and be considerate of the classroom environment.

Separation

Separation is a process we go through all of our lives. Though often challenging and exciting, this growth towards independence can be painful and scary, especially for small children. Parents and teachers working together collaboratively can show children that they trust and believe in one another. This offers a foundation of support when the world suddenly seems a new and different place. Independence is one of the key Montessori philosophies, but many children have second thoughts about being away from their family initially. LLMA encourages a quick drop off, but realizes that the transition from parent to teacher can sometimes be challenging. Remember that sometimes staying only makes it more difficult for your child as well as for yourself. LLMA encourages parents to message on HiMama once they have left the school. If they are feeling anxious about leaving your child LLMA can send a photo and an update. Please don't leave the school without letting your child know that you are going.

Hints to minimize separation anxiety

Express your enthusiasm about the new experience that is coming for them. If you are in the area drive by the school and show them where they will be attending.

On the first day of school, try to have things organized so there is minimal rushing while preparing for school

Tips for saying good-bye:

Wish him/her a wonderful day in their new classroom and let him/her know that you will be back shortly for pick up. Give a kiss and then leave with a big, confident smile on your face regardless of the reaction. It may not show but your child will feel a huge sense of security knowing that you feel comfortable.

Discipline Policy

At Little Llama Montessori Academy we promote a positive approach to discipline keeping in mind the best interests of the child. Through explanations, talking through feelings, showing ownership in apologizing for mistakes, redirection and positive

reinforcement. We inspire the virtues of thoughtfulness, kindness, respect and love for one self and others through example. Guidelines and limits, along with corresponding reasons are established and clearly explained at the beginning of the year. The explanations help the children remember the limits and the purpose behind them. Discussing these limits may be done in small groups or at circle time. By facilitating the use of kind words and open communication we can help children gain confidence and develop the skills necessary to resolve conflict on their own.

When a situation of safety may occur the child may be removed temporarily to an area in the class away from the other students.

In extreme situations the parent may be called to remove the child from the class setting. The teachers will always treat each child with kindness and respect.

Positive guidance techniques will be used to encourage appropriate behaviour. Including:

- establishing clear, consistent and simple limits
- stating limits in a positive, rather than a negative way
- focussing on the behaviour, not the child
- providing choices
- reinforcing and modelling appropriate behaviour through words and gestures
- encouraging children to resolve issues on their own and use teachers as a resource in the event that their attempts fail
- biting or other violence will be documented and reported as deemed necessary by Public Health
- in the event of unsafe play, the child will be asked to desist, communicated with regarding his/her actions and ensured that they understand why the teacher has stopped their play.

All children participate in lessons of “Grace and Courtesy” this provides children the opportunity to understand polite social norms. The older children are encouraged to act as mentors to the younger children and model positive behaviours.

LLMA encourages acceptable behaviour such as being respectful to ourselves, to others, to school property and walking calmly when inside the classroom.

Unacceptable behaviour can consist of but is not limited to: fighting (or play fighting), lack of respect for others, teasing, throwing objects and running inside the classroom. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, LLMA will respect an individual’s rights and take into account their age, maturity and special needs, if any consequences they will be restorative rather than punitive. LLMA will:

- gain attention in a respectful way
- remind children of appropriate behaviour
- acknowledge feelings before setting limits
- redirect or divert when appropriate
- model problem solving skills
- offer appropriate choices
- use natural and logical consequences
- provide opportunities for children to make amends

Harassment and Bullying Prevention

LLMA believes that all children have the right to learn in a safe, caring and orderly environment with a focus on physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying or violence, regardless of a child's gender, race, culture, religion or gender identity. LLMA's approach to behaviour guidance is to assist children in developing self control, self-confidence, and ultimately self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. LLMA's discipline is positive, pro-active and consistent with the developmental age and stage of each child.

Health and Safety

Please ensure that we have the most up to date immunization records for your child.

Breakfast: Children should have a nourishing breakfast before arriving at the facility. Due to the daily schedule and flow of work in the classroom, and in order to respect the concentration and focus of other children in the school. Unless under special circumstances children are asked not to eat their breakfast at school.

Packed Lunch: Children attending need to bring a lunch from home. LLMA asks that lunch be nutritious and with as minimal packaging as possible. Unfortunately there is no stove or microwave at the school so any hot foods should be prepared to be eaten cold. Please remember to put an ice pack in your child's lunch if their food items require it. Please do not include candies, sugary drinks, chocolate milk, sugary cereals ect.

Peanuts: In order to ensure the safety of all children, LLMA operates as a nut-free facility due to severe allergies among some students. If you wish to provide an alternative nut butter for your child's lunch, kindly include a note specifying the type of nut butter being brought. This will allow us to be aware of its contents and ensure a safe environment for everyone. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our facility nut-free and safeguarding the well-being of all our students. Weather:

Please keep in mind that we will be going outside on a regular basis, so it is important to send in appropriate clothing dependant on the weather (rain boots, rain coats, gloves, hats etc.) We encourage you to purchase a muddy buddy and leave it in the school cubby so your child can enjoy outside play during any weather conditions.

Sunscreen: Please provide personal sunscreen with your child's name on the bottle for your child to keep at the school. This will be applied on days where it is required.

Smoking/Vaping/Cannabis: The school, including any outdoor areas and driveway, is a no smoking zone. Smoking of any kind of any product including vaping will not be permitted anywhere near the school. Smoking is also prohibited in any vehicle the children may be transported in. Parents are asked to refrain from smoking during drop off and pick up.

Illness and Wellness policy

The health and well being of the children is our main concern at LLMA.

In order to promote a healthy environment LLMA will undertake to ensure:

- Proper hygiene is maintained
- Children are educated on the importance of proper hygiene
- Universal precautions are used for handling of all bodily fluids
- Proper hand washing techniques are used by all children and adults;

LLMA understands that parents may choose to bring their children to school even with a mild sickness. However, LLMA has an obligation to all parents to ensure a healthy atmosphere for all. If a child has a bad cold with a runny nose or cough and comes to school, the chances are increased that a number of children at the school could also contract the cold, as well as staff. With your cooperation, we can establish a healthier environment for all the children if, when your child is sick, he/she is cared for at home. We ask that parents keep their child home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Please Note: **If LLMA feels that your child is not feeling well, we will call you to pick him/her up right away.**

Below is a general list of illnesses that would prevent your child from being allowed to attend school as well as a general guideline for LLMA to call you to pick up your child from school.

- A fever exceeding 38°C or 100°F
- Pain - any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- An infection for which the child has not been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.

- Nausea and vomiting
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stools
- A child who has been constantly coughing or has a runny nose, particularly green-coloured discharge.

Parents should notify LLMA immediately if their child contracts a communicable disease.

In summary, if your child becomes ill at school, We will call you or your authorized alternative to come and pick up the child. We will endeavour to keep the child comfortable and in good spirits until you arrive. If we feel it is an emergency situation, we will call an ambulance for the child and contact you immediately.

Staff Illness/Time off

If a staff member is ill or needs time off for a personal matter during LLMA hours, a substitute teacher with first aid, Montessori training or ECE experience will work at the school.

Potty Training

Children enrolled and attending Little Llama Montessori Academy must be potty trained and come to school free of diapers or pull-ups.

Nap/resting time

All children will be offered a rest time after lunch. Please let us know how long you would like your child to nap. We offer a nap between 12:30 - 2:30 p.m

LLMA has a separate nap room so children that choose to nap are not disturbed.

If you would like your child to nap please provide a mat, pillow, stuffed animal and blanket

Here is a link to a toddler nap mat:

https://www.amazon.ca/Removable-Fastening-Microfiber-Preschool-Sleeping/dp/B09BCVHMLY/ref=lp_21364141011_1_1?th=1

We understand that not all children nap so we will provide them with a peaceful activity.

Clothing and Possessions

Each child should have the following kept full time at the school:

Muddy Buddy or Rain Jacket and Pants

Sunhat and Personal Sunscreen (spring/summer)

Second set of clothing in case of "mishaps"

Indoor/Outdoor Shoes (Boots)

All children must have a pair of shoes for indoor use as well as a pair of outdoor shoes appropriate for the daily weather outside for the playground. We encourage Crocs or anything similar for inside use because they are the easiest for children to put on independently. Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriate for the weather and with clothing that they can easily put on and take off themselves. Please remember to bring a spare set of clean clothes if the previous ones were taken home to be washed. It is best if jewelry is not worn to school. Small, tight hoop earrings or studs are allowed.

Toys

Personal toys and treasures are better kept in your car or at home. The caregiver is encouraged to ensure that their child leave all personal possessions at home where they can access them after school. The article may become lost or damaged if they are brought to the school, and they may serve as a distraction to the other students. If a child does bring a toy to the classroom, they will be asked to keep it in their cubby until the end of the class at which time they can bring it home. If a child has a special possession (no toys please) that they would like to share with the class at circle time. the caregiver is to advise the teacher prior to make arrangements.

Items from School

Many of the classroom materials consist of small attractive objects that are appealing to children. If you find any "mysterious objects" in your child's possession, please return them to the school. It may be part of a larger set belonging to a puzzle or other "set" of materials. These sets can be expensive to replace and often impossible to replace individual parts.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are such an exciting part of childhood and we feel is it important to celebrate each child's special milestone with the class. Parents are encouraged to come to our birthday celebration and enjoy the festivities. We have a special celebration in Montessori where we include photos of the child and sing a special song. Caregivers can provide goody bags/ healthy snacks or small cupcakes (made in a nut free facility) to share with the class.

Accidents/Incidences

All accidents/incidences involving children will be documented at the school.

In case of a minor accident or incident:

The child/children will be tended to immediately and appropriate first aid will be administered if necessary (soap and water and/or an icepack/bandage) and comfort and support. Any accidents will be shared with the caregiver picking up the child that day as well as being documented in the classroom daily log book and on the Incident Report Form which is kept on file for the School year.

In case of a Serious Accident:

The child will be tended to immediately to ascertain the extent of the injury and begin first aid if it is appropriate. Parents/caregivers will be notified. For serious injuries, LLMA will call 911. Should the child need to go to the hospital and parents cannot be reached, the child will be accompanied by a staff member who will take along all their necessary medical information; care card number, family doctor etc.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

LLMA has an emergency evacuation policy that is reviewed, practiced and recorded on a regular basis for preparing for emergency situations.

Earthquake Kit - Please bring on your child's first day

All items stored in a large ziplock bag with your child's name on the front:

1 flash light

2 non perishable snacks

Small bottle of water

Family photo

List of emergency contacts

Emergency blanket (can be purchased at Canadian Tire)

Small toy (car/plush toy)

Photographs

Photos are taken through the school year to communicate celebrations, activities and achievements. If you not wish to have your child's photo posted within the school, please advise us. Likewise, if you are taking photos of your child on school grounds, please refrain from posting photos with other children on social media websites (i.e. Facebook). Photographs will never be posted to social media or shared with outside

persons unless specifically requested by LLMA and authorized by the respective child's parent.

HiMama App

Once your child is enrolled you will be sent a link from HiMama. With the HiMama App you will be able to receive photos of your child in real time updates about their activities. Keep track of allergies and emergency information. With autopay management parents have the ability to pay with direct payment of credit card.

<https://support.himama.com/s/parent-guides>

Withdrawal Policy

Little Llama Montessori Academy has a two-month withdrawal notice for each child enrolled in our program. This policy has been put in place to ensure the smooth operation of our preschool facility and to allow us to plan and allocate resources effectively. It also helps to maintain a stable and consistent environment for all the children under our care. We understand that circumstances may arise where you may need to withdraw your child before the two-month notice period. In such cases please be aware that you will be responsible for paying the fees for the two-month notice period or until a replacement can be found for your child's spot. Each withdrawal will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Thank you for choosing Little Llama Montessori Academy.

We look forward to a fantastic school year.