

Our Programs

Rosemont House provides a home for two separate programs of care. Our community of children is divided into two separate living areas inside Rosemont House. The Infant and Toddler community functions in rooms that have been safely and carefully furnished to cater to their growing developmental needs. The Pre-school community enjoys a separate learning area that includes access to the children's kitchen and food preparation areas.

- **'Montessori From The Start'** is the name of the specialized program designed for the needs of the Infant & Toddler community, being children from 6 months to 3 years.
- **The Montessori Pre-school Program** is for children aged 3 years (or slightly younger if assessed as ready) up to school age. A more formal program of learning is introduced during the pre-school years as children progress through the Montessori curriculum.

It is not a requirement that children attending the Pre-school program have first been members of our Infant & Toddler community. Our goal, however, is for 'Montessori From The Start' to provide the first steps on a child's ongoing Montessori journey. We therefore aim to help our youngest children to transition smoothly into a Montessori Pre-school program. An obvious continuum for a child who has completed the 'Montessori From The Start' program is for them to remain at Rosemont House Montessori and complete their pre-school program in a familiar environment. However some families may take the opportunity at this stage to enrol their child at another of our SA Montessori pre-schools. Transferring from our 'Montessori From The Start' Program will give families a status of priority at all of the SA Montessori centres. (All placements are subject to availability).

Our Infant & Toddler program is based on a unique model of care called "Montessori From The Start". This program has been developed to provide the youngest members of our community with a level of care, attention and personalisation that reflects the dynamics of a home environment as closely as possible. Our approach is informed by the latest research in infant development and neuroscience and incorporates world-renowned practices in care and education.

Our Pre-school program is as nurturing and personalised as our Infant & Toddler environment but with an emphasis on supporting the burst of energy and curiosity that drives the child between the ages of 3 to 6. This is an inimitable age with an unparalleled potential for learning. The pre-school age child maintains the absorbent mind of the toddler, that allows effortless but deep learning, but develops a new sense of focus and purpose. Any parent of a pre-school child knows that this is an age of questioning, exploring and discovering. It takes a special program to keep up with this intrinsic energy, and that is exactly what we offer. The Montessori Curriculum offers an enriched program for learning and exploration as children work at their own pace discovering their place in the world. Our Montessori program is delivered by qualified Early Childhood trained teachers and Childcare Professionals. Our aim is not only to provide your child with the foundation skills for all future learning but also to ensure that we create happy childhood memories of feeling valued and loved.

The Infant and Toddler Community: “Montessori From The Start”

Montessori From The Start is “childcare” for babies and toddlers - but not as you might know it. When most people think of “childcare” for babies and toddlers they picture challenging environments filled with crying children, chaotic mess, endless check-lists and impersonal assembly-line nappy changes. Many childcare professionals - and parents - mistakenly believe that these challenges of childcare are an inherent part of the process. That common model is so pervasive that many people find it difficult to imagine childcare occurring in any other way – but there *is* another way and you will find it at Montessori From The Start. Our model is founded on a deep respect for the *needs and rights of the youngest members of our world*. Dr. Maria Montessori said “the greatness of the human personality begins at the *hour of birth*”. This reverence for the baby is what informs all aspects of our care community. We do not incorporate any feature, routine or element unless it is in the best interest of the child.

We make no distinction between our ‘curriculum’ and our ‘routines’. Just as we use the term ‘*educarers*’ to highlight the symbiosis between ‘education’ and ‘care’, we must also highlight the fact that the *curriculum is the routine and the routine is the curriculum*.

Most childcare centres treat ‘curriculum’ and ‘routine’ as two separate entities. The adults in these other environment physically and intellectually place distance between the two aspects. They view the ‘curriculum’ as the stacking toys and books placed in the classroom and view the ‘routine’ as the nappy-changing and feeding that must be ticked off the checklist. This distinction between two separate aspects inevitably has two unintended results; it creates an *implied hierarchy* and it leads to *assembly-line attitudes*. The sense of implied hierarchy manifests when childcare workers believe that ‘routines’, such as nappy changing, must be rushed through in order to get to the ‘more important’ curriculum experiences. This tends to subtly promote the assembly-line mentality, when every child is changed one-by-one at a pre-determined set time so that it can be done ‘as quickly as possible’. The child experiences these rushed routines as impersonal at best and uncomfortable at worst.

It is our belief that every element of the routine is an important part of the curriculum, and the following of the curriculum forms a part of our natural daily routines and rhythms. When a baby has a wet nappy, we respond to that individual’s need and while we assist with applying a dry nappy we will engage in communication, eye-contact and interaction that promotes healthy development. There is no “nappy change time”, it is simply that at certain points during the day a child’s activity will be *changing my nappy*. The same principle applies to food preparation and meals, changing clothes and other practical elements of the ‘routine’. Practical and necessary daily routines provide opportunities for meaningful learning and development.

We also carefully prepare the environment with purposeful materials and present specific experiences. These materials and presentations are sourced from the Montessori curriculum and are designed to support the child’s innate needs. For babies and toddlers the materials focus on promoting movement, coordination, communication, sensory awareness and blossoming independence.

The Pre-school Program

The Three-Year Montessori Pre-school Curriculum

The Montessori Pre-school program is a continuum of learning which begins when a child is seeking more formal interactive learning with the educators. This usually occurs around the age of two and a half to three years. When children enter the Pre-school program, they begin a cycle of learning that is defined as the Montessori Curriculum. This curriculum is offered over a three-year period with various learning experiences that lead a child to new levels of understanding. The teaching materials are sequential and build skills to match each child's individual pattern of development. Optimum learning takes place when a child has progressed through the full three year learning cycle prior to starting Primary School. The program can be likened to a jigsaw puzzle with various pieces of the puzzle representing each separate learning experience the child is exposed to throughout their three-year program. In the year prior to a child starting school, the last pieces of the puzzle come together as the final challenges of the Montessori equipment are introduced to the child. The picture would not be complete without the previous pieces of the puzzle forming the foundation and so it is with the Montessori resources that continue to challenge and build upon previous levels of achievement. We encourage all children to complete their full three-year cycle of learning by staying with us until they graduate into Primary School.

Having acknowledged that optimal benefit is gained when a child completes the full three-year Montessori program, we recognise that it is not always possible for every child to do so. We know that every child who spends time at our pre-school will gain very valuable and unique learning experiences irrespective of the length of time the child remains in the centre. We are confident of providing a positive outcome for all children and that is why we sometimes accept children in to our pre-school programs who are not able to commit to the full 3-year program.

Children in our Montessori Pre-school program are exposed to sequential learning in all of the core curriculum areas of Literacy, Numeracy, Practical Life Skills, Sensorial exploration, Science and Cultural studies. The Montessori materials have been specifically designed to provide a wonderful foundation of knowledge upon which each child can progress according to their readiness and interest.

Rosemont House Montessori provides high quality programs for every child. In order to achieve this we employ **qualified educators who can offer the expertise, experience and the educational pedagogy to nurture the important developmental stages of a child's early years.** We carefully select our staff with an aim to ensure that we have a team of educators who are passionate and committed to the care of children. Our teachers have a range of experience and qualifications that may include a combination of the following; **Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Montessori Teaching Diploma, Montessori Advanced Certificate, or Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.** We understand how important it is for children to have primary care-givers in their life who provide excellent role modeling, quality use of spoken language, gentle and consistent guidance, and most importantly, genuine love and respect.