

## Montessori & More

SOUTHERN  
**STARS**  
K5 PREP - STEM - PRESCHOOL



### Thank you for your interest in Southern Stars Preschool

Southern Stars Preschool (SS), recognizes that learning comes in all shapes and sizes. At SS, our mission is to combine a STEM-based education, and kindergarten readiness prep with a Montessori foundation.

As a parent, you may wonder: **Why Choose Southern Stars Preschool?**

*Celebrating*  
— 20 YEARS —  
*in childcare excellence*

With 20 years of educational experience, Southern Stars offers **the most flexible preschool options to build your personalized preschool package to meet your family's needs.**

- ★ 9-month or 12-month school year
- ★ 5 days, 3 days or 2 day options
- ★ Traditional school day or an extended day
- ★ Meal options
- ★ Drop-in care
- ★ Drop-in extended care
- ★ Afternoon play time
- ★ Summer camp

Our teaching staff are highly qualified, highly paid, and backed and trained by our nationally certified in-house Montessori Trainer and Consultant. Our teachers receive continual training both inside their classrooms and in our on-site training room.

Our curriculum allows you and your child to grow at an individual pace. While many preschools focus on a singular facet of learning, SS and its teachers focus on every facet of learning, including:

- ★ Gross Motor Skills
- ★ Fine Motor Skills
- ★ Social Skills
- ★ Concentration & Focus
- ★ Literacy Skills
- ★ Art, Music, and Dance
- ★ Science and Math
- ★ History
- ★ Verbal Skills
- ★ Play Based Learning

Each of these **developmental and educational skills** will allow your child to transition into kindergarten with a sense of purpose and an understanding of the world.

Located near the Wedgewood/12 South/Edgehill communities, SS offers a community for parents and preschoolers alike.

Click on the links below to view 3 short videos about Southern Stars Preschool featuring our founder, Sharon Thomason-Sekyi. She shares her views about preschool education and the importance of STEM and a Montessori foundation.

[Montessori Foundation](#) [Kindergarten Preparation](#) [STEM & Montessori](#)

## Enrollment Process



1. **Review this inquiry package**
2. **Schedule a tour** (virtual or in-person).
3. **Parent Interview** Before your child is accepted, we want to make sure that Southern Stars is the best fit for not only your child but for the family as a whole. Both parents must complete an interview with the Director and/or a member of our office management team prior to admission. This interview may take place at the end of a tour or a Zoom call depending on your situation.
4. **Invited to apply:** The registrar will invite families to apply once it is determined that your family is a good fit with SS. Applications & fees can be completed on our [website](#) or by submitting the completed application form below with the application fee to begin your admissions process. Your application will be acknowledged, and if there is an opening for your child we will continue with the enrollment process! We balance our classrooms by age and gender. If the program is full, you will be placed on the waitlist. Don't be discouraged if your child is put on the waitlist; our wait list is constantly changing.
5. **SUBMIT REGISTRATION FORMS AND DEPOSIT FEES** Once your child is accepted, you will receive a registration packet containing required registration forms. You will also receive a welcome packet that contains our parent handbook, as well as general information about our daily schedule, etc. Once SS receives your registration forms, SS will charge your designated account the enrollment and materials fees to secure the spot for your child.
6. **ENROLLED:** You are welcome to **schedule a director/teacher meeting** at any time prior to your child's first day at SS.

910 Wedgewood Ave. Nashville TN 37203 615-509-9423

[www.southernstarsmontessori.net](http://www.southernstarsmontessori.net)

[southernstarsmontessori@gmail.com](mailto:southernstarsmontessori@gmail.com)

FB: [@southernstarsmontessoripreschool](https://www.facebook.com/southernstarsmontessoripreschool)

INSTA: [@southernstarspreschool](https://www.instagram.com/southernstarspreschool)

## Our Flexible Programs

We are a year-round, full-time, 5-day-a-week program, operating from 6:30 am-6 pm. We offer four educational programs, with three schedule options available:

Before Care: 6:30 am to 8:00 am (free of charge)

Full Day 8:00 am to 2:45 pm

Full Day + Afternoon Playtime 8:00 am to 6 pm

Afternoon Playtime Only 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

**12 month School Year** runs from August to August with June, July, and August curriculum focused on the outdoors and STEM activities with a summer camp feel

**9 month School Year** run September through May

**Weekly Summer Camp** runs June, July, and August with 14 unique weeks of STEM-based Science Experiments, Outdoor Exploration, and Lots of Outdoor Fun every child will LOVE! You pick the weeks that fit your summer schedule.

**Full-Time Enrollment** 5 days a week. Please review the Tuition Fee Schedule for cost. **Space**

**Share** (part-time - MWF or T/Th options) - Please review the Tuition Fee Schedule for cost.

**SS Life** (5 days, temporary) - 12 flexible weeks of care - Please review the details in the SS Life section below.

**Afternoon Playtime** - Monday through Friday, 3-6 pm. No enrollment fees or material fees. Cost depends on the child's age (see the Tuition Fee Schedule below).

## Space Share Program

Are you interested in Southern Stars Preschool, but only have a need for an abbreviated schedule?

SS offers a **Space Share Program** for families who are looking for an abbreviated week for their child. The Space-Share Program is a **perfect fit** for families interested in high-quality, affordable preschool but who have a primary caregiver at home or a nanny.

How does Space-Share work?

- Two families share the expense of one full-time spot in SS
- One family/their child attends three days a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) • One family/their child attends two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday) • Each Full day enrollment is from 6:30 am to 2:45 pm
- Each Full Day + Afternoon Playtime is from 6:30 am until 6 pm
- Additional Drop in Afternoon Playtime is available from 3 pm until 6 pm for additional fee • Enrollment is transferable to a full-time spot in SS, given availability **Space is limited! Enroll now!**

## SS LIFE

Introducing SS LIFE! -- The same great Montessori & More philosophy, designed to flex with your family's busy lifestyle!

Looking for flexible school options for your 2 - 5 year old? Look no further! SS LIFE flexes with your family's needs by allowing your family to sign up for up to twelve (12) consecutive or non-consecutive weeks of school (based on availability). Families can choose to submit an application to fully enroll their child at any point during the SS LIFE program, or after reaching 12 weeks; acceptance into the Full-Day or Space-Share program is based on availability.

### Key Features Include:

- COST: \$395/week, 6:30 AM - 2:45 PM payment IS required in advance of attendance; enrollment is not guaranteed until payment is received.
- Drop Off is from 6:30 AM - 8:30 AM; Pick-up is from 2:45 PM - 3 PM
- AFTERNOON PLAYTIME SEPARATE FEE: 3:00 PM - 6 PM (See tuition fee schedule for pricing)
- Separate program from Traditional Full Day and Space-Share. Only available as a Five (5) Day (Space Share is NOT an option).
- 12 week maximum enrollment, based on availability
- Partial access to SS parent community features
- Families must provide AM Meals and Lunch for their child.

SS LIFE is the perfect solution for your busy life. Call us today to inquire about availability!  
" Same Great Montessori & More, Designed to Flex with Families' Busy Lifestyles"

## Application for Admission - For ALL Programs

Please Return this application for Admission along with a \$75 non-refundable application fee payable to SW Stars LLC. Mail to: Southern Stars Preschool 910 Wedgewood Avenue Nashville TN 37203 or return in person to the school.

Date:	\$75 Application Fee Check #:
Name:	Gender:
DOB:	Desired Start Date:
Desired Schedule (Please Circle!):	
Full Time (M-F, 6:30 am - 3 pm)	Extended Day (M-F, 6:30 am - 6 pm)
Space Share 3 Days (M/W/F)	Extended Day (M/W/F, 6:30 am - 6 pm)
Space Share 2 Days (T/Th)	Extended Day (T/TH, 6:30 am - 6 pm)
Afternoon Playtime (M-F, 3 pm - 6 pm)	SS Life (M-F 6:30am - 3pm)
Tell us about your child's <b>personality!</b>	
Does your child have an IEP or medical diagnosis?	
What are a few of your goals/areas of focus for your child?	

### Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian Name(s):
Address:
Mother's Phone:
Father's Phone:
Email Address (Mom and Dad):
Custodial/Guardianship:

\*Southern Stars Montessori Preschool is a fully owned subsidiary of Southwest Stars, LLC.  
Southwest Stars, LLC is a privately-owned company.

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 FB: @southernstarsmontessoripreschool INSTA: @southernstarspreschool

## Tuition Fee Schedule 2024 - 2025

Below you will find the tuition fee schedule for the **2024-2025 School Year**. Please look at the fee schedule for the age of your child. All payments are made through SinglePoint or PayPal, the secure payment platforms used by Southern Stars.

### Ages 18 Months to 24 Months

	<b>Time</b>	<b>Enrollment Fee</b>	<b>Materials Fees</b>	<b>Monthly Payment</b>
<b>5 Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Monday - Friday	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1398.00
<b>5 Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Monday - Friday	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1798.00
<b>Three Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1058.00
<b>Three Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1333.00
<b>Two Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Tues/Thurs	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$710.33
<b>Two Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6 pm Tues/Thurs	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$893.63
<b>Afternoon Playtime</b>	3 pm - 6 pm	NA	NA	\$400
<b>Drop in Extended Day</b>	3 pm - 6 pm	NA	NA	\$40/day

Your tuition rate is based on your child's age on the first day of school. If your child is moved to another classroom during the school year, the yearly tuition does not change.

## Tuition Fee Schedule 2024 - 2025

Below you will find the tuition fee schedule for the **2024-2025 School Year**. Please look at the fee schedule for the age of your child. All payments are made through SinglePoint or PayPal, the secure payment platforms used by Southern Stars.

### Ages 2 to 3.5 year

	Time	Enrollment Fee	Materials Fees	Monthly Payment
<b>5 Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Monday - Friday	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1,368.80
<b>5 Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Monday - Friday	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1,618
<b>Three Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1043
<b>Three Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1,258
<b>Two Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Tues/Thurs	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$698
<b>Two Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6 pm Tues/Thurs	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$842
<b>Afternoon Playtime</b>	3 pm - 6 pm	NA	NA	\$400
<b>Drop in Extended Day</b>	3 pm - 6 pm	NA	NA	\$40/day

Your tuition rate is based on your child's age on the first day of school. If your child is moved to another classroom during the school year, the yearly tuition does not change.

## Ages 3.5 to 6 year

	Time	Enrollment Fee	Materials Fees	Monthly Payment
<b>5 Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Monday - Friday	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1275
<b>5 Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Monday - Friday	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1515
<b>Three Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$830
<b>Three Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$1,045
<b>Two Day School Day</b>	6:30am - 2:45pm Tues/Thurs	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$553
<b>Two Day School Day + Extended Day</b>	6:30am - 6pm Tues/Thurs	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$697
<b>Afternoon Playtime</b>	3 pm - 6 pm	NA	NA	\$400
<b>Drop in Extended Day</b>	3 pm - 6 pm	NA	NA	\$40/day

### Additional Fees

- Application: \$75.00 (for new students)
- Late Fees: See below for information regarding late fees on payments made after 5 business days of payment due date.
- Enrollment: \$250 per preschool year regardless of when the student enters the program •
- Materials: \$250.00 per preschool year regardless of when the student enters the program •
- Returned Payments: \$35.00



## Other Payment Information:

- SS recognizes some families will have quickly changing needs. You may enroll your child at any time during the school year. SS requires Eight Week (8) withdrawal notice of your child from our program. "Eight Weeks" means that you will continue to pay tuition for 8 additional weeks from the date of the written withdrawal notice. For example, you have paid September monthly tuition and you give notice on September 15th. You are now legally contracted to pay for the month of October and half of the tuition for November.
- For children who are registered during the school year, the first tuition payment is different from the payment schedule outlined on the tuition fee schedule. SS pro rates tuition installments in two segments: from the 1st of the month to the 15th of the month, and from the 15th of the month to the 30th of the month. For example: if your child begins school between the 1st and 15th of the month, the first tuition payment will be the entire month's tuition rate. If your child begins between the 15th and the 30/31st, your first tuition payment will be half the monthly tuition. This only applies to families entering the program after the beginning of the school year.
- A **late fee** of \$35 will be charged to your account for payments received after 5 business days of the payment due date.
- A **5% sibling discount** will be applied to the tuition fee for siblings. This discount is on the second child's tuition only. It does not apply to any other fees.
- SS asks that you do not switch payment plans during the school year. A change in payment plans will incur a \$35 change fee and forfeits all discounts for the plan.

Southern Stars reserves the right to change its prices without notice.  
For federal Income Tax Purposes, the school tax ID number is 201365655.

## SS Secure Payment Portal: Single Point/PayPal

SS has a secure and easy form of receiving tuition payments, summer camp fees, and other registration and enrollment fees associated with attending Southern Stars Preschools

**Single Point** -- Automatic ACH Transactions (No Processing Fee) a U.S. Bank service, SinglePoint uses high-security standards and policies, with communications that are securely encrypted through advanced industry standards. For additional security, tokens are required for ACH Transfer.

**PayPal** -- Automatic Credit Card Transactions (3% Processing Fee Attached to each transaction) PayPal uses data encryption, real-time transaction monitoring, and buyer and seller protection policies to keep your accounts and payments secure.

Please look over the attached "**Single Point/PayPal FAQs.**" There you will find answers to commonly asked questions concerning Single Point and PayPal, automated payments, and other payment concerns.

Transactions made through Single Point and PayPal are a win-win-win -- convenient for you, secure and safe, and efficient for everyone.

## FAQ SinglePoint

We are excited to offer automatic payments through SinglePoint by U.S. Bank as well as PayPal. With these services, it is not necessary for you to write a check for tuition and fees. Payments will be automatically debited from your bank account or charged to your credit card. All payments are secure and a receipt will be emailed to you after each transaction.

### **When I pay my tuition automatically, how secure is my account information?**

Very secure -- more secure than when you write checks. When checks are written, they have your name, address, phone number, and sometimes even your driver's license number on them. With this information, criminals have all they need to access your account, or worse, steal your identity. Automatic payments greatly reduce this potential by limiting the amount of information available and the number of people who have access to it.

SinglePoint uses high-security standards and policies, with communications that are securely encrypted through advanced industry standards. For additional security, tokens are required for ACH Transfer.

ACH services can reduce your risk of fraud since a transaction towards an account, be it debit or credit, cannot be issued without authorization from the recipient.

PayPal uses data encryption, real-time transaction monitoring, and buyer and seller protection policies to keep your accounts and payments secure.

### **What if my childcare provider makes a mistake and takes out too much money?**

Report the error to your childcare provider immediately -- it was likely an honest mistake. The childcare provider will adjust your account accordingly.

### **What if my child care center and I disagree about a payment?**

If you feel that the payment should not have been made, or of a different amount, you have the right to dispute the charge. Contact your bank or credit card company. SinglePoint and/or PayPal and your child care provider will work closely to resolve the issue in a timely manner.

### **Does this form of payment give the childcare center access to my account?**

Nobody at your child care center has access to your account. When you sign the payment authorization form for SinglePoint / PayPal, you only authorize your bank or credit card company to release the exact amount owed to your provider, when it is due and payable.

### **How will I know when a payment is taken out of my account?**

Your child care expenses will be taken out of your account on a schedule that you and the child care center agree upon. Your child care center has the ability to print statements for your records, prior to the withdrawal of any money. Payments made electronically and statements issued through your bank or credit card provider will post as "SWS LLC."

### **How will SinglePoint / PayPal help my childcare provider?**

Your childcare provider has chosen to offer automatic payments for several reasons. First, it will give you the convenience of not having to write a check every time tuition and fees are due. Second, it allows regular scheduling of your payments. Third and most importantly, automatic payments reduce the amount of time your childcare provider spends on administrative tasks, giving staff more time to spend with the children.

### **How do I get started?**

Simply complete, sign, and return the "Automated Payment Processing Authorization" form and return it to your child care provider. They will do the rest!

### **Do we accept American Express credit cards?**

At this point in time, we DO NOT. However, we do take Visa and MasterCard.

**Automated Payment Processing Authorization**

Southern Stars Preschool is excited to partner with SinglePoint and PayPal for your tuition payment solution. Both SinglePoint and PayPal have security measures and encryption technology that protect your card and account data and help prevent losses associated with data breaches. SinglePoint is a U.S. Bank platform that allows us to process ACH transactions, and PayPal will be used for all credit card payments.

**ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION FOR BANK ACCOUNT AND CREDIT CARD** I (we) hereby authorize (business name) Southwest Stars LLC (DBA: Southern Stars Preschool) to initiate debit entries to my (our) checking or savings account via SinglePoint, indicated below (Section A) OR initiate credit card charges via PayPal to the below-referenced credit card account (Section B) which includes a 3% service fee. To properly affect the cancellation of this agreement, I (we) are required to give 10 days' written notice. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial) Credit union members: please contact your credit union to verify account and routing numbers for automatic payments. For credit card transactions via PayPal, only Visa and MasterCard will be accepted.

**Bank Account, debited via SinglePoint (Section A)**

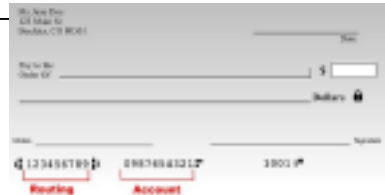
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name Phone # Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address City State Zip Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bank or Credit Union Name Bank or Credit Union Address City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Routing Transit Number (see sample below) Account Number (see sample below)

Checking Savings



**Credit Card, debited via PayPal (Section B)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cardholder Name Phone # Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cardholder Address City State Zip Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Account Number Expiration Date CVV #

**Authorized Signature (sign for Sections A and B) Date**

<b>FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY</b>	
Date Received _____	Employee Signature _____

## STEM Based Education

### Do STEM and Montessori really go together?

The world around us focuses more and more on science and technology. Many parents wonder how to best prepare their child for the technologically-savvy future and thrive in our ever-advancing world. This often leads parents to explore both Montessori and STEM-based education and wonder which is best for their child. Ultimately they may ask the question: can a Montessori curriculum blend a STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) into daily learning?

Historically, schools have often taken the approach that each subject is separate and can be taught by rote. English and math never meshed. History and science stayed totally separate. However, a Montessori-based curriculum reinforces that everything is related, showing the connection of topics across the five Montessori Learning areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Practical Life, Sensorial, and Geography/Culture

By nature, Montessori education shares many of the hallmarks of STEM education. Children often learn best when they can explore, experiment, and bring concepts together. That's a reality that Maria Montessori understood quite well, and it's something we bring to our classes.

Both Montessori and STEM teaching styles are based on the concept of child-led exploration which includes, question-based and hands-on learning, critical thinking, open-ended exploration, and applying self-initiative. It is also a natural place for STEM activities to occur. This is a result of encouraging students to be independent, curious, and innovative.

Our teachers provide guidance to your child that invites the type of programming STEM is known for:

- Opportunities for hands-on discovery
- Learning through experimentation
- Allowing for students to explore areas that draw their interest
- Bringing concepts together to create a more holistic academic experience
- Development of practical, real-world skills that move beyond rote learning

We offer many daily activities that tie in directly to learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, math, and the arts. Some learning activities your child may enjoy can include:

- Planting a seed and observing its growth from seed, to sprout, to leaves and flowers.
- Creating and observing rain gauges to learn about natural processes such as evaporation
- Blowing bubbles and watching how they respond to different environmental elements, such as breezes and different surface materials the bubbles may touch
- Learning about the design of things by playing with materials designed to nest into one another or connect with one another in a clear pattern
- Categorizing objects into groups that share the same trait (size, shape, color)

Students learn the core rules of math and science through the discovery of natural laws through manipulation of didactic materials and problem-solving with peers. The work engages the senses and ensures the internalization of concepts, not just the memorization of disjointed facts and figures. Through the Montessori concept of a Southern Stars Education, the curriculum reinforces that everything is interrelated; students see how math and science work harmoniously in nature, like in the [Fibonacci sequence](#).

It is worth noting that Montessori education has been linked to some of the greatest technology entrepreneurs of our time, including Google founders Larry Page and Sergei Brin, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, and Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales. They have credited Montessori for allowing them to ask questions, discover, and learn on their own terms. In fact, Amazon's Bezos has committed to funding the growth of high-quality, Montessori preschools.

The possibilities are endless for incorporating STEM into your child's learning. With our teachers offering thoughtful guidance, we equip your child to do well in a technologically-savvy future and thrive in our ever-advancing world.

## Kindergarten Preparation:

At SS our Montessori Curriculum based Foundation prepares your child for Kindergarten in 4 ways:

### Improve Concentration

It's hard for any child to sit and concentrate on a task they aren't interested in--especially when that task involves filling out a worksheet or completing another educational assignment they don't understand or have no interest in. When your child attends Southern Stars preschool, however, they'll gain the pieces to enhance their concentration in several different ways.

- They'll be encouraged to continue the learning process when something catches their interest, rather than having their learning time broken up arbitrarily.
- They'll have the opportunity to take advantage of hands-on materials in order to capture and hold their attention.
- They'll engage in solo learning as well as learning alongside their classmates, developing interpersonal skills along with academic learning.
- Enhanced concentration will help your child perform better as soon as they enter kindergarten. They'll be better able to pay attention to the teacher, sit down during circle time, and engage in the educational opportunities offered by the classroom.

## Enhance the Desire to Learn

When your child attends a toddler program based on the Montessori foundation, they'll be given the tools, not only to continue learning but also to enjoy the learning process. Many children enter kindergarten already disenchanted with the learning process. They're "bored," or they aren't interested in what the teacher has to say, or they're convinced that the best part of their day is recess or lunch. Through a Montessori foundation, however, your child will build a deep-seated love of learning that will have them excited about going to school every day. They'll engage with manipulative materials, dig deeper into subjects that interest them, and work to expand their skills under the guidance of teachers who are invested in seeing your child succeed.

There's nothing quite like knowing that your child is engaged in the learning process when you take them to school and drop them off for their first day. Getting to see your child thrive throughout kindergarten is one of the most rewarding parts of offering them a Montessori foundation from the beginning. No older sibling who hates school, fellow classmates who only want to go home, or a frustrated teacher who's counting down the days to retirement will be able to take that away from them.

## Instill Greater Self-Confidence

All too many children are already aware that they're behind their peers, and they've already given up on the idea that they'll be able to catch up with their classmates. Even children who have high skills in one area may be more likely to identify their failures in other areas. In a Montessori classroom, however, learning is highly individualized. Students are less likely to compare themselves to others because they are each able to learn at their own pace, rather than being held to the pace of the whole class. Montessori learning is designed to increase students' self-confidence throughout the learning process. Self-guided learning teaches students how to pursue knowledge outside the teacher's guidance. They'll learn how to turn to books, technology, and other resources to increase their knowledge about topics they're interested in.

Self-paced learning encourages children to proceed at their unique pace, rather than sticking to one arbitrarily created by the teacher and based on all of the students in the classroom.

Pursuing their personal interests in the Montessori classroom will teach your child how to better engage with all of their work, building their passion and giving them the tools they need to pursue it more deeply.

You want your child to proceed into their kindergarten classroom with confidence. A Montessori foundation provides them with the tools to develop that confidence, enhance their learning, and better develop the skills they'll need throughout their entire education.

## Promote Wider Creativity

In many traditional classrooms, creativity is quickly squashed out. Children are taught how they're supposed to use each of the materials that have been provided for them, and if they go outside those instructions, they may be reprimanded for it. That's the last thing you want for your child! The Montessori foundation allows for open exploration, encouraging your child to learn in the way that makes the most sense to them. They'll also be allowed to come at problems from their own direction, increasing their learning while improving their ability to guide the learning process. As they transition into a traditional classroom, your child will use that wider creativity to approach roadblocks in their own unique way, taking things from a different angle when they don't make sense and working them out again.

## The Montessori Advantage:

### How many students are typically in a Montessori class?

Unlike some private schools, which strive for very small classes, Montessori values the lessons of community when the size of the class is somewhat larger. Montessori classes for children above the infant & toddler level might include 20-30 students whose ages span 3 years. All members of the community benefit from this setup. Older students are proud to act as role models; younger ones feel supported and gain confidence about the challenges ahead. Classes for infants & toddlers are smaller, with typically 10-15 children.

### How can children learn if they're free to do whatever they want?

Dr. Montessori observed that children are more motivated to learn when working on something of their own choosing. A Montessori student may choose his focus of learning on any given day, but his decision is limited by the materials and activities—in each area of the curriculum—that his teacher has prepared and presented to him. Beginning at the elementary level, students typically set learning goals and create personal work plans under their teacher's guidance.

### Why are Montessori schools all work and no play?

Dr. Montessori realized that children's play is their work—their effort to master their own bodies and environment—and out of respect she used the term "work" to describe all their classroom activities. Montessori students work hard, but they don't experience it as drudgery; rather, it's an expression of their natural curiosity and desire to learn.

### If children work at their own pace, don't they fall behind?

Although students are free to work at their own pace, they're not going it alone. The Montessori teacher closely observes each child and provides materials and activities that advance his learning by building on skills and knowledge already gained. This gentle guidance helps him master the learning by building on skills and knowledge already gained. This gentle guidance helps him master the challenge at hand—and protects him from moving on before he's ready, which is what actually causes children to "fall behind."

### Do Montessori teachers follow a curriculum?

Montessori schools teach the same basic skills as traditional schools and offer a rigorous academic program. Most of the subject areas are familiar—such as math, science, history, geography, and language—but they are presented through an integrated approach that brings separate strands of the curriculum together.

While studying a map of Africa, for example, students may explore the art, history, and inventions of several African nations. This may lead them to examine ancient Egypt, including hieroglyphs and their place in the history of writing. The study of the pyramids, of course, is a natural bridge to geometry.

This approach to curriculum shows the interrelatedness of all things. It also allows students to become thoroughly immersed in a topic—and to give their curiosity full rein.

## **Is it true that Montessori students have the same teacher for all subjects rather than work with “specialists” in different curricular areas?**

Montessori teachers are educated as “generalists,” qualified to teach all sections of the curriculum. But many schools choose to also employ specialists in certain subjects, including art, music, foreign language, physical education, and science.

## **Can Montessori accommodate gifted children? What about children with other special learning needs?**

An advantage of the Montessori approach—including multi-age classrooms with students of varying abilities and interests—is that it allows each child to work at her own pace. Students whose strengths and interests propel them to higher levels of learning can find intellectual challenges without being separated from their peers. The same is true for students who may need extra guidance and support: each can progress through the curriculum at his own comfortable pace, without feeling pressure to “catch up.” We might note that from a Montessori perspective, every child is considered gifted, each in her own way. Every child has his own unique strengths—it is all a matter of degree.

## **Are Montessori schools expensive?**

Private Montessori schools are independently owned and operated, and each sets its own business practices, including the cost of tuition. Typically, tuition fees vary from region to region and from school to school.

Some private schools offer scholarships for families in need of assistance, and many offer reduced tuition when parents enroll more than one child.

There are also more than 400 public Montessori schools in the United States. These include charter schools, some of which enroll students through a random lottery process. Like other public schools, charter schools are tuition-free.

## **How well do Montessori students do compared to students in non-Montessori schools?**

There is a small but growing body of well-designed research comparing Montessori students to those in traditional schools. These suggest that in academic subjects, Montessori students perform as well as, or better, than their non-Montessori peers. In one study, for example, children who had attended Montessori schools at the preschool and elementary levels earned higher scores in high school on standardized math and science tests. Another study found that the essays of 12-year-old Montessori students were more creative and used more complex sentence structures than those produced by the non-Montessori group.

The research also shows Montessori students have greater social and behavioral skills. They demonstrate a greater sense of fairness and justice, for example, and are more likely to choose positive responses for dealing with social dilemmas.



By less stringent measures, too, Montessori students seem to do quite well. Most Montessori schools report that their students are typically accepted into the high schools and colleges of their choice.

And many successful grads cite their years at Montessori when reflecting on important influences in their life. For more information, see the "Overview of Research on Montessori Education" in our online Research Library.

## Safety and Security Procedures

SS provides a [safe and secure environment](#) for you and your family. SS Safety and Security Procedures are designed to keep you and your family safe within the walls of the SS school building. [Please note that enrolled parents are able to access the SS classrooms at any time.](#)

- All doors remain closed and locked at all times (parents may enter the school by ringing the doorbell on the main door)
- Each classroom has its own exterior door that ALWAYS remains locked and is utilized only during normal drop-off and pick-up times.
- All gates remain closed at all times
- Security cameras on the exterior of the building and playground
- Visitors are by appointment only and require State issued ID
- All windows and doors are coated on the inside with a clear ballistic film
- Privacy screening protects the visibility of our playgroup and outdoor classroom
- The Parking lot and the front door are visible from Director's desk
- Each classroom has walkie-talkies to communicate any needs or concerns with the Director throughout the day
- Background checks are conducted on all staff, enrichment instructors, and therapist
- IDs will be checked and validated with the approved check-out list
- We utilize the Kriyo app to send daily communications, safety updates and any emergency notifications
- There are seven evacuation routes depending on fire, safety, or weather emergencies. There are specific evacuation plans in place for the following emergencies: tornado, weather, police, or security-related matters. Fire and Safety
- Student and Staff Safety drills are conducted monthly

## Our approach to Separation Anxiety

Remember, separation anxiety is a phase, it is perfectly natural and it will pass. Our 20 years of experience gives us the following strategies that we encourage to help with the importance of a quick drop-off and early arrival.

- Make the goodbye prompt and positive. This sounds easy, but can often be one of the most difficult things to do. Giving your child "one more minute" or staying simply prolongs the inevitable. As a parent, the best thing you can do is give your child a hug and kiss, say, "I love you" and reassure him/her that you will be back soon.
- Do not linger. We understand how reassuring it can be to stay to peek at your child. However, for the child, it can be pure torture. As a child, seeing your parent when you are upset, but not being able to be with your parent is not a good feeling. Our suggestion to parents is to leave quickly and if you are feeling uneasy, we can send you a message in 15-20 minutes on how your child is doing. Chances are, he/she settled within a few minutes.
- Stay calm and be enthusiastic. Modeling the appropriate behavior is key to a smooth transition from home to our Montessori classrooms.

## Communication

- We use KRIYO - an app that all of our staff use in order to communicate throughout the day with our parents. Our staff sends photos and messages to each parent about your child's day. This includes potty training progress, naptime, and meal questions.
- Each week, we send out reminder emails about new policies, upcoming events, calendar reminders, summer camp information, enrollment opportunities, and new program implementation. ● When enrolled, parents are given a "classroom phone number" (a non-published number) so parents can easily contact our teaching staff.
- Parents are also given the business phone number for the school and the cell phone number of the founder.
- Parents are given all policies, procedures, and a parent handbook outlining all of our operations in the school.

## SS Daily Schedule

As a parent, it's **helpful** to know what your child's daily life in the classroom will look like! This daily schedule is a **reflection of the day-to-day activities** your child will become engaged in.

\*Please note that this schedule may be temporarily modified to accommodate for weather, early/late parent drop-offs and pick-ups, and the ever-changing needs of the Southern Stars students.

Approximate Times	Description of Activities
6:30 am - 8 am	<b>BEFORE CARE</b> – Children dropped off at this time will help teachers with age- appropriate tasks in setting up the classroom for the day.
8 am - 8:30 am	<b>DROP OFF</b> – At this time, children are encouraged to practice self-care routines, such as taking off shoes to put on slippers, putting backpacks away, hanging coats up, and saying goodbye to you as you go to work and they go to school <u>For Parents</u> -For the first few weeks, please allow plenty of time for your child to go through their new self- care routine.
8 am - 11 am	<b>MONTESSORI/STEM/KINDERGARTEN READINESS/WORK TIME</b> – The Montessori Work Period is an integral part of our day! Your child's fine and gross motor skills are engaged through age-appropriate and level-appropriate activities. Some weekly scheduled group activities include <u>yoga</u> , <u>music</u> , and <u>science</u> . *Self-Serve AM Meal is available to older students throughout the morning; AM Meal for younger students is teacher-assisted during a set time in the morning.
10:30 am - 11 am	<b>CIRCLE TIME</b> – Children gather for a group discussion about relevant topics, historical events, upcoming holiday traditions, or a fun weekly activity.
11 am - 12 pm	<b>OUTDOOR/INDOOR PLAY TIME</b> – <u>Weather permitting</u> , teachers lead children to our fabulous playground for some much-appreciated social play time with their peers! <u>If the weather does not permit</u> children and teachers to go outside, the classroom is engaged in a gross motor game or activity that allows for movement and play.
12 pm - 12:30 pm	<b>LUNCH TIME</b> – Students gather in self-chosen peer groups to eat their provided lunches. *Dietary restricted families sending in lunches, due to health and safety code, please label lunches with your child's name and the date. Masking tape is provided for this purpose. Also, please note that liquids that must remain cold need to be packed with an ice pack. If not packed with an ice pack, teachers are unable to serve the beverage to your child.*

Approximate Times	Description of Activities
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm	<p><b>ADVANCED MONTESSORI/STEM WORK TIME OR NAP TIME</b> – <u>Children who require naps</u> are encouraged to clean up their lunches by themselves, wash their hands, remove their shoes/slippers, and find their nap roll. Assistance by teachers is given when required. Children who wear pull-ups are awoken before 2:30 to allow ample time to change their pull-ups.</p> <p><u>Children who are not required to take naps</u> are encouraged to explore further their interests in math, writing, reading, history, etc. Age-appropriate and level-appropriate work is provided by the teachers to facilitate their exploration.</p> <p><u>At the end of nap time</u>, children are encouraged to use the bathroom, roll up their nap roll, find their shoes/slippers and put them on, and to find a space in the group circle. Assistance by teachers is given when required.</p>
2:45 pm - 3 pm	<p><b>END OF DAY PICK-UP</b> – Children whose parents are arriving are encouraged to begin their end-of-day self-care routine, including putting on coats and backpacks, putting on shoes/putting away slippers, and saying goodbye! <u>Please note that the After School Playtime Program starts promptly at 3 pm - any child who is still in the building at 3 pm is included in the After School Program attendance.</u></p> <p><u>For Parents</u> -Doors to the school are secured at all times. For the first few weeks, please have your <b>ID</b> available to show the teachers assisting in pick-up. Also, please allow extra time for your child to complete their new self-care routine!</p>
3 pm - 6 pm	<p><b>AFTER SCHOOL PLAYTIME (EXTENDED DAY)</b> – Children who are in the After School Playtime Program enjoy an afternoon of crafts, fine and gross motor skill play, a nature walk or playground time (weather permitting), and a snack!</p> <p><u>For Parents</u> -Doors to the school are secured at all times. For the first few weeks, please have your <b>ID</b> available to show the teachers assisting in the After School Program pick-up. Pick-up can occur at any time during the After School Program. Also, please allow extra time for your child to complete their new self-care routine!</p>