

# *Little Maples*

## *Parent Handbook*



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# Table of Contents

## Page

• Introduction .....	1
• Baby Room .....	2, 3
• Wobbler Room .....	4,5
• Toddler Room .....	6,7
• The Montessori Classroom .....	8,9
• Sample Menu's .....	10
• General / Fees .....	12, 13

# *Introduction*

Welcome to Little Maples Crèche and Pre-School's Parent Hand book. The aim of this handbook is to give you a little background detail about the aims, ethos and running of the Crèche.

The Crèche aims to provide a happy, caring, secure educationally based environment for each and every child and parent.

All staff members are qualified within a specific area of childcare; they will guide and nurture your child. Each Member of staff has their certificates on display in their rooms. If you wish, a list of relevant qualifications can be given to you on request. A member of staff from each room is trained in Paediatric First Aid.

Little Maples works continuously to create an atmosphere that is relaxed and informal, hence providing a 'second home' for your child.

High Scope and The Montessori Method of care and education are the ethos behind the running of the Crèche. Dr. Montessori believed in creating a child centred environment where each and every child would be stimulated in each area of his/her development. She looked at the universal characteristics of the child and used these to promote and aid the child's well being. More recently our Crèches have employed the methods of 'High scope', an American pre-school method of teaching and caring for children, thus giving your child the best possible start in his/her pre-school years. If you would like to find out in more detail about Dr. Montessori's Teachings or the High scope method of play, please do not hesitate in requesting this information from Lynn or Glenda.

The needs of parents and Guardians are also taken into consideration. We do our utmost to accommodate parental wishes. We encourage all parents to get involved in the activities of the Crèche and welcome any suggestions or ideas that you may have. Two-way communication is an important part of Little Maples philosophy. We have a comprehensive Policy and Procedure Book [this is included in your parents pack] and we are always delighted for any type of feedback.

A health and safety document is also on display and copies may be obtained from Glenda and Lynn. Our Insurance and Fire Maintenance certificates are also on display in the hallway. A parent Notice Board is situated as you enter the Crèche and it holds weekly menus and other relevant information.

We are approved by the National Children's Nursery Association [NCNA], The Eastern Health Board and the Department of Environmental Health. Annual inspections are carried out to ensure a high level of care and education is maintained at all times.

We hope this handbook will be of help and look forward to welcoming you and your family to the Crèche.

# Baby Room

**Age Range**            3 months to 13 months [ guide only ]

**Ratio**                 1:3

## **Activities**

The Baby room is designed to aid the child's developmental needs and this is achievable by employing qualified, experienced and competent staff who understand the needs of children under the age of 15 months and can provide suitable stimulus and a productive environment.

*Age ranges are as follows: 3 – 6 months, 6 – 9 months and 9 –12 months. Your child will be provided with experiences relevant to their age and/or stage of development, encouraging physical and intellectual growth, whilst at the same time continually aiding your child's social and emotional development. Developmental charts are kept for each of the above stages and may be viewed by you at any time.*

Floor toys, activity mats, books, holistic baskets and construction boxes will help your child develop fine and gross motor control, whilst group activities such as painting, water play and play dough will aid in promoting confidence and self awareness skills. Weather permitting the babies will also venture out to the garden, where they can interact with the older children. We are delighted to welcome older siblings into our baby room at any stage to visit.

## **Routines**

We ask you to give us a written routine, prior to your child beginning in the Crèche. This routine should include: sleep and feeding patterns as well as play and nurturing preferences i.e. how your baby likes to be held or comforted, do they have a pet name etc. Once you and your baby have settled into Crèche life, we will discuss how we feel the routine is working and if there are any changes that we feel would be beneficial to you and your child. Routines are based on well-researched practises that are age appropriate and in accordance with childcare experts. We are also delighted for parental involvement and input.

We request you to remove your shoes before entering the baby room; this is to prevent any dirt from your shoes getting onto the carpet that the babies crawl on. Alternatively a member of staff would be delighted to take your child at the door.

A settling in period is recommended by us in order for you and your child to gradually settle into the Crèche. See Policy and Procedure Booklet.

A 'care book' is given to you each day, detailing your child's day i.e. bottles taken, nappies etc. All books must be placed in your child's bag to be filled in for the next day. Any comments you may wish to make may be written in these books, however we do encourage all parents to try and make time to talk to your child's carer each day in addition to the care books.

## **Clothes**

Please provide two changes of clothes for your baby and leave these in his/her bag. All of baby's belongings should be clearly labelled.

## **Rest**

The cot room is situated beside the Baby Room. There is a viewing window and baby monitor. Children are physically checked every 15 minutes whilst sleeping.

## **Food**

Once your child is fully weaned and has been introduced to a variety of solids, the Crèche will supply Breakfast, Lunch, and morning and afternoon snacks. All meals will be liquidised as necessary, when your child begins to grow teeth we will advise you when we feel your child's meals should become lumpier.

Please check our weekly menus posted on news board in the entrance hall to make sure you are happy for your child to eat the food supplied, if not you may supply an alternative. All food groups are adhered to and meals are prepared daily on site. We are fully HACCP trained – see policy and procedures

The crèche does not provide Milk or Baby juice. All milk should come to the Crèche ready made; the bottle should be clearly labelled. Please inform a member of staff how you wish you bottle to be heated. Milk, juice and food is placed in the refrigerator in the baby room kitchen.

## **General**

- *Nappy Changing*

The Crèche provides cotton wool for cleaning your child after each nappy change. Sudocream or Vaseline is provided if needed. If you wish your child to have Sudocream or Vaseline applied after every nappy change, please make this known to a staff member. If you wish us to use another cream, your child has an individual box where nappies and cream can be kept. Nappies can be supplied daily or for convenience you may supply a bag every couple of weeks. A note will be placed in your care book when you are running low. Nappies are changed at 10.30am, 2.30pm and 4.30pm or as and when necessary. See policy and procedure booklet for nappy changing procedure.

- *Soothers*

If you child uses a soother, blanket or comforter, these may be brought into the Crèche, please however double check that they are in your child's bag before you leave the Crèche. All soothers will be placed in sterile container in between use. This can dis-colour the teeth of soother after time.

# Wobbler Room

**Age Range** 13 months to 2 years [ guide only ]

**Ratio** 1:5

## General

This is the room to where your baby will graduate! The above age range is only a guide and depending on your child's overall development he/she may move at different ages. All children develop at different stages and we urge parents not to feel upset if your child does not move at approx. 12 months.

A period of time will lapse before your child will move down permanently. We encourage your child to visit at times where the Wobbler Room is quite and for short periods of time. We also use the 'pairing system', where if possible we move two children to a new room together, so that your child has a familiar face to play with, whilst making new friends. The visits may continue for some time, until we feel your child is comfortable with his/her new environment. Staff are always on hand to discuss your child's progress and two way communication is very important at this stage.

A communal 'care book' is used each day, detailing your child's day i.e. bottles taken, nappies etc, however a member of staff will always be on hand to talk to you about your child's day.

A detailed written report will be given to you every 6 weeks outlining your child's progress and interests.

## Routines and Activities

The routine in the Wobbler Room is a little more structured than the Baby Room. Appropriate activities are introduced to your child aiding all areas of development and in particular his/her intrinsic sense for independence and exploration. These are provided through short structured play programmes. Arts, crafts, music, books, puzzles, tabletop toys, construction boxes, home play, water play and sand play are just some of the activities on offer! Regular trips, weather permitting, to the garden take place.

## Clothing

We ask you to supply and leave a spare set of clothes for your child in the Crèche. Due to the creative [but messy] activities that the children participate in, we do advise you to dress your child in appropriate clothes and to leave your child's 'Sunday Best' for Sundays!! Aprons are provided however children of this age very often refuse to wear them and we like to include all of the children in our activities.

## Rest

We try to encourage your child to have just one nap per day. Naptime is between 12.30pm and 3.00pm. All children sleep on individual floor mats with sheets and a member of staff is in the room to monitor the children at all times. Please discuss with a member of staff, the length of time you wish your child to sleep if your child is awake outside of the set sleep times, depending on their age, they will either go up to the Baby-room or to the Toddler Room. Wobblers may sleep at any time during the day, either on a mat in the

room or in a cot if the sleep timetable does not suit your child or they need more than one sleep.

### **Food**

All meals are provided for your child. Please refer to Menu Board each week to see what your child will be eating. If you do not wish your child to eat something on our menu, please let us know. We do encourage children to try different foods – tastes and textures. Your child should be fully weaned at this stage.

Water flavoured with fresh Lemon/Orange slices is supplied at snack times and water is offered to your child throughout the day. Age appropriate beakers are introduced to your child in this room. Your child may still require a bottle of milk; you must supply this. It will be stored in the refrigerator in the kitchen.

## *Toddler Room*

**Age Range**            2 - 3 years [ guide only ]

**Ratio**                    1:6

### **General**

Your child will be introduced to the Toddler Room in the same way as they were introduced to the Wobbler Room. The transition is usually shorter as they are that little bit older and more confident in their environment as a whole, once again we do our best to move two children at a time.

A communal 'care book' is used each day, detailing your child's day i.e. bottles taken, nappies etc, however a member of staff will always be on hand to talk to you about your child's day.

A detailed written report will be given to you every 6 weeks outlining your child's progress and interests.

### **Routines and Activities**

Once again we focus on your child's overall development and use a variety of toys and equipment to aid and refine your child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social skills. The Toddler Room is divided into five separate work areas and autonomous play and exploration is encouraged. The children are still very young so short 'work' periods are encouraged. Tabletop activities such as jigsaws, sorting and pairing are introduced to promote motor skills, hand/eye co-ordination and basic numerical and literacy skills. Home corner and Role-play, music, arts and crafts feature also and continue to refine and aid your child in the promotion of self-awareness and confidence.

Pre-Montessori exercises are introduced towards the end of your child's time in the Toddler Room, this will help with their final move into the Montessori Classroom.

Garden Play is also extremely important all year round. We ask you to provide wellie boots and coats in the winter months.

### **Clothing**

We ask you to supply and leave a spare set of clothes for your child in the Crèche. Due to the creative [but messy] activities that the children participate in, we do advise you to dress your child in appropriate clothes and to leave your child's 'Sunday Best' for Sundays!! Aprons are provided however children of this age very often refuse to wear them and we like to include all of the children in our activities.

### **Rest**

We try to encourage your child to have a nap/rest each day. Naptime is between 12.30pm and 3.00pm. All children sleep on individual floor mats with sheets and a member of staff is in the room to monitor the children at all times. Please discuss with a member of staff, the length of time you wish your child to sleep if your child is awake outside of the set sleep times, they will either play in the Classroom. If you do not wish your child to have a nap, please inform a member of staff.

### **Food**

All meals are provided for your child. Please refer to Menu Board each week to see what your child will be eating. If you do not wish your child to eat something on our menu, please let us know. We do encourage children to try different foods – tastes and textures. Your child should be fully weaned at this stage.

Water flavoured with fresh Lemon/Orange slices is supplied at snack times and water is offered to your child throughout the day. Age appropriate cups are introduced to your child in this room. Your child may still require a bottle of milk; you must supply this. It will be stored in the refrigerator in the kitchen; we do however encourage your child to have all of his/her drinks from a cup.

### **Potty training**

At about [age range will vary from child to child] two years of age, potty training will be encouraged. This process takes time and patience. The child must be both physically and cognitively ready. The Crèche and parents must work together to make it an enjoyable experience for the child. Each child is different and will require different ways of training, hence when your child is ready, a member of staff will discuss with you, how best to make the transition from nappies to pants.

Child sized toilets are in the Toddler Room Bathroom and various sized potties.

# Montessori Classroom

**Age Range**            3 – 5 years [guide only]

**Ratio**                 1:8

In 1896 Dr. Maria Montessori was the first woman doctor in Rome. After many years practising as a doctor, she became involved in child Development. She studied and analysed their needs and looked for universal traits and characteristics amongst children. She believed that all children possess sensitive periods, whereby every experience the child has is soaked up by them and no matter who or where the child is, these sensitive periods would stimulate the child's whole persona.

From her research Dr. Montessori devised a method of Education where children would work with didactic [self- teaching] apparatus, the child would learn and refine areas of their development through this equipment. Along side the apparatus, the teacher directs and guides the child in conjunction with these universal traits and sensitive periods, so as the child's true potential would manifest itself.

There are 6 areas within the Montessori classroom: -

- *Practical Life*

These are every day tasks that children adore to complete, not just for the end result - such as polishing a shoe, but because they enjoy the activity in itself. Directly they teach the child a skill, indirectly they promote and refine the child's Gross/fine motor development, concentration, hand and eye co-ordination and independence. This in turn will encourage the child to be self aware and confident.

- *Sensorial*

These activities encourage the refinement of the child's senses and give them experiences that enable them to be more aware of the world around them. They enhance visual discrimination, auditory awareness and chromatic sense to name a few. Indirectly they prepare the child for later language and mathematical work.

- *Language and Arithmetic*

Earlier work with Practical Life and Sensorial exercises will have indirectly prepared the child for basic linguistic and numeral operations. The apparatus relevant to these areas introduces the child directly to the world of spoken and written language, as well as basic numerical and mathematical operations.

- *Cultural activities*

The world of Biology, Geography, Zoology and Science will be opened to the child. These activities are designed to promote experiences that encourage the child to see and involve himself in the world around him.

- *Creative Studies*

Through various group projects and activities, the child creative attributes will be explored. Thus encouraging self-awareness, confidence, self-esteem and a positive self image.

8

Our Montessori Classrooms is equipped with Dr. Montessori's apparatus; the teachers within them have the knowledge and experience to guide the child into self discovery and self construction of themselves and their capabilities.

Although Montessori education features primarily within our environment, not all children will benefit from it, hence if need be, our environment and teachers can adapt to suit the needs of each individual child. Providing traditional teaching methods and materials can do this.

Towards the end of their time with us, the children are slowly `weaned` so to speak away from the Montessori apparatus and taught by a more traditional approach - hence preparing the child for the next level of their schooling.

The child's day is structured around a three-hour work cycle in the morning; this includes one to one teaching, morning snack, and group activity, outside play, lunch and a group circle time. Monthly projects feature strongly within circle time.

After lunch, free play based on the High Scope Method of play is encouraged to promote an informal social situation for each child, so that friendships can be fostered through mutual understanding. After a mid afternoon snack , activities such as Arts and Craft, Music and Movement, Cooking etc., are provided, as well as outside play, weather permitting. The child's day winds down at 5.00pm with quiet time - puzzles, books etc. and home time.

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in clothing suitable for a day at school

### **Food and Drinks**

All meals and snacks are provided. Water flavoured with fresh Lemon/Orange slices and water is offered to your child throughout the day. If you would like your child to have milk, please bring in milk daily and it will be stored in the refrigerator.

# Sample Menus

## Sample Dinner Menu

<u>Monday :</u>	Tuna and Pasta Bake with Sweet Corn
<u>Tuesday :</u>	Chicken Casserole
<u>Wednesday :</u>	Shepherd's Pie
<u>Thursday :</u>	Spaghetti Bolognese
<u>Friday :</u>	Mild Chicken Curry

Our Menu changes weekly: below are some additional meals:

\* Ratatouille \* \* Mild Chicken Curry \* Vegetable Pasta Bake \* Vegetable Korma

All Meals are served with Vegetables and either Potato, Rice or Pasta

## Sample Snack Menu

### Morning Snack -

- Fruit - Apple, Orange, Pear, Grapes, Melon, Peach, Nectarines, Plums and Seasonal Fruits - Strawberries, Raspberries and Blackberries

### Afternoon Snack -

- Sandwiches - Ham, Cheese, Jam
- Crackers or Bread Sticks - Cheese, Ham, Jam
- Mini Muffin Pizza's
- Pitta Bread with Cheese or Ham
- Spaghetti/Beans on Toast
- Pancakes

Breakfast is served on arrival. There is a 10am snack. Lunch is served at 12pm and afternoon snack at 3.00pm.

# General

## The Garden

The garden area is so important for the development and happiness of children. It is vital that Fresh air and Gross Physical play is a part of daily life. Little Maples has a large garden. We have a cycling track to the perimeter of the garden and a soft play area in the middle. It is installed with 'Child's Play Grass'.

- Child's Play Grass is a synthetic Grass, it has been passed in accordance with the BS EN 1177 for critical fall height of 1.3 m
- It is soft to touch and safe if your child falls on it.

In addition we have plenty of garden toys – slides, climbing frames, bikes etc. We have a separate area for small babies to sit and play in the fresh air.

## Illness

Certain symptoms in children may suggest a presence of a communicable virus. Children who have the following symptoms should not come into the Crèche until

- a] A doctor has certified the symptom and are not associated with an infection or they are no longer in danger of infecting other children.
- b] The symptoms have subsided.

- **Fever** - any temperature over 98.6 degrees , especially if accompanied by vomiting, sore throat, diarrhoea, headache, stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.
- **Diarrhoea** - any abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours.
- **Vomiting** - any episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- **Eye / Nose** - thick mucous or pus draining from the eye or nose.
- **Sore Throat** - especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.
- **Skin Problems** - rash, undiagnosed or contagious. Infected sores with crusty yellow or green drainage, that are not covered.
- **Itching** - persistent itching of body or scalp.
- **Hair Lice**
- **Certain Vaccinations** - these must be reported.

All parents/guardians are asked to notify the Crèche where exposure has taken place.

We will not, under any circumstances, accept children into the Crèche, who appear to be a bit `under the weather`. We have a responsibility to other parents and children; therefore we cannot allow sick children to circulate with healthy children. We are sure that you can appreciate that this is both unfair to the sick child and to other children.

Should your child become sick or have a temperature during the day, it is the *policy of the Crèche* to call either the parents or guardians immediately and for the child to be sent home to recover.

We would ask parents to regularly check their children for Head Lice and notify us if necessary. Other parents appreciate knowing if head lice are about, so that they can check their children or `pre-dose` their own family.

## **Medication**

- No medication will be administered to children unless written consent has been given by parents/guardians - the necessary forms will be given to you to fill out, should your child need to be given medication throughout the course of the day.
- Children on antibiotics are requested not to attend the Crèche for 24 hours after course has commenced. They must also have a covering note from their doctor.
- Please inform the staff when your child receives their vaccinations, as the Crèche gives special precautions and care.

## **Bumps and Bruises**

All possible care is taken to ensure your child's safety, but we would ask parents to bear in mind that there will be the occasional bump or bruise as there would be at home. We will notify parents of incidences as necessary.

## **Hours of Opening**

We are open from 7.45am to 6.00pm\*\*, Monday to Friday. No child will be admitted to the Crèche before 7.45am. \*\* A fee of € 5 for every 10 minutes that you are late must be paid directly to the members of staff with your child.

## **Trips**

Children over two years of age have two organised outings a year. A Trip to the Farm in May/June and an outing to the Puppet Theatre for Christmas

## **Holidays**

Little Maples is open 51 weeks of the year. We close on Christmas Eve at 4pm for one week, re-opening the day after New Years Day, [ please note, if either Christmas Day, St. Stephen's Day or New Years Day fall on a Week end, the Crèche will re-open on the next working day]. The crèche is also closed for Bank, National and Public Holidays.

No fee concessions are given to children wishing to

- a] Take holidays throughout the year.
- b] Take extended periods of absence throughout the summer months.
- c] Shorten their hours at any time throughout the year.
- d] If their child is absence through illness or other.

## **Fees and Periods of Notice**

**€ 1050** per month

There is a non-refundable registration fee of € 100

We request one month's fees [€ 1050] as a deposit at the time of registration to secure your child's date and place within the Crèche. This is a non-refundable deposit and may only be used for your child's first month fees. One Calendar month notice is required if you wish to take your child out of a Crèche.

## **Methods of Payment**

Payments are due monthly and are payable by Standing Order or a monthly cheque in advance. Should a problem occur with standing Orders or cheques being returned, a fee of € 5 administration costs will be charged.