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MULBERRY TREE

WHERE LEARNING IS PART OF LIFE



Montessori & Reggio Emilia inspired learning for children

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WHY MULBERRY TREE 啟智?

Mulberry Tree began in 2013 as an alliance of progressive educators and parents seeking an innovative and child initiated form of pre-school education. Out of this need, a unique programme was developed based on collaboration between Montessori and Reggio Emilia inspired approaches. Today, Mulberry Tree is a dynamic, creative and welcoming community of inspiring young learners, active parents and passionate educators.

International and Multi-lingual

Uniquely, we offer instruction in English, Cantonese and Mandarin based on our current team of language facilitators. As new facilitators with different native languages join our team, we incorporate more languages into our curriculum. Teachers are able to move freely between languages depending on the given topic or child's needs. We welcome families from all over the world and celebrate the identity of all our children.

An Integrative Approach

We base our work with children on two educational philosophies, Montessori and Reggio Emilia. Both of which are inherently child-centred and holistic in their approach. Montessori educators celebrate individuality and respect the child's innate capacity for learning. We follow the Montessori Method in highlighting five main areas of learning; Practical life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language and Cultural. The materials in our classrooms have been carefully selected to engage interest and cultivate mastery in these subjects.

Crucially, Maria Montessori emphasized the importance of mixed-age grouping as a tool for social development and peer-led learning. We have a dedicated classroom for toddlers but also create regular opportunities for children across ages to work together. Younger children benefit from being exposed to more advanced work. Older students demonstrate leadership and care toward others. Our classrooms have a free-flow quality and children can move between activities of their choosing.

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Whilst Montessori provides a very strong platform, we wished to devise a curriculum that was even more ambitious and creative. By integrating the Reggio Emilia approach, we were more able to achieve this goal.

Reggio educators are mindful of the multiple ways in which children can express their understanding and creativity:

*The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking,
of playing, of speaking.*

In this respect, we offer an emergent, project based curriculum. Art, drama, movement, woodwork; the scope for artistic expression is endless. Our campus acts as a gallery showcasing the wonder and invention of the child's mind. Learning is often extended beyond the classroom into our garden, local village and regular field trips. The environment plays a key role in stimulating discussion and ideas for learning themes.

Community

Collaboration and co-operation are central to our philosophy. Children develop a sense of self and the world around them based on their social interactions. We focus strongly on developing social skills, respect for others and a sense of fairness. At the heart of Mulberry Tree lies a partnership between children, teachers and parents. We are a caring, inclusive community that nurtures and inspires young minds.

"We warmly welcome you to Mulberry Tree and look forward to being part of your child's unique learning journey."

- **Allison Lee**, Founder, Directress, Montessori Specialist



- IMAGE OF THE CHILD -

Children are capable.

Children can discover and do things by themselves.

Children discover things in their own time.

*Children own their emotions; they have the right to feel
whatever they feel.*

Children move at different paces.

Children are naturally curious.

They ask questions and formulate answers to questions.

They don't need to know the answer from us right now.

Children are unbiased.

Children are decision makers.

Children can be trusted.

They are worthy of our respect.

Children are creators.

Children are scientists, and play is their research.

Children construct their own knowledge.

Children are independent and strong.



WEEKDAY PROGRAMME SCHEDULE CATERPILLAR AND COCOON

AM Classes

Caterpillar Class (AM) for 18-24 months	Schedule	Cocoon Class (AM) for 24-32 months
10:00-10:15	Welcoming Classroom time	09:00-10:15
10:15-10:45	Activity of the day	10:15-10:45
10:45-11:45	Outdoor play	10:45-11:45
11:45-12:00	Get ready for lunch	11:45-12:00
12:00-12:30	Lunch / Pick up	12:00-12:30

PM Classes

Caterpillar Class (PM) for 18-24 months	Schedule	Cocoon Class (PM) for 24-32 months
/	Welcoming Classroom time	11:00-11:45
/	Get ready for lunch	11:45-12:00
/	Lunch and clean up	12:00-12:45
12:30-12:45	Welcoming Classroom Time	/
12:45-13:15	Activity of the day	12:45-13:15
13:15-14:15	Outdoor play	13:15-14:15
14:15-14:30	Get ready for pick up	14:15-14:30



BUTTERFLY

AM and Full Day Classes

Butterfly Class (AM) for 32 months-5 years	Schedule	Butterfly Class (FD) for 32 months-5 years
09:00-10:45	Welcoming Breakfast Unstructured play Community tasks Morning meeting	09:00-10:45
10:45-11:15	Activity of the day	10:45-11:15
11:15-11:45	Outdoor play	11:15-11:45
11:45-12:00	Get ready for lunch	11:45-12:00
12:00-12:30	Lunch / Get ready for pick up	12:00-12:30
/	Clean up Brush teeth	12:30-12:45
/	Story show & tell	12:45-13:15
/	Afternoon Activity	13:15-14:15
/	Get ready for pick up	14:15-14:30

- This routine is a general guideline. The actual timetable would depend on how our children are engaged in the environment.
- In order to safeguard the privacy of students, please DO NOT take photos on the school premise.



ACTIVITY OF THE DAY

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Activity	Music	Yoga	Field Trip	Field Trip Revision	Classroom Care & Baking/Party

- English will be used as our primary language.
- **Wednesdays' Field Trip will be held from 0900-1200 for AM, PM & Full Day classes.** Please note that the gathering/ dismissal point will be at Mulberry Tree.
- The purpose of the Field Trip is to carry out research for on-going projects and explorations in the classroom. It takes place in public facilities or nature, generally in Tai Po. A parent/caregiver must accompany a child under 3. It finishes at noon (no lunch provided).

CLASSES' DETAILS SUMMARY

Class Name	Caterpillar	Cocoon	Butterfly
Age Group	18-24 months	24-32 months	32 months-5yrs
Drop-off time	AM: 09:45-10:00 PM: 12:30	AM: 08:45-09:00 PM: 11:00	08:45-09:00
Attendance	3 or 5 days/week		5 days
Pick up time	AM: 12:00/12:30 PM: 14:30	AM: 12:30 PM: 14:30	AM: 12:30 FD: 14:30
Lunch	Not available for Caterpillar class	Compulsory	Compulsory
Settling-in period	Nil, accompany by 1 adult throughout	6 weeks	2 weeks
Facilitator : Child ratio	1 : 8	1 : 8	1 : 10



PROGRAMME FEES

Class	Time	Monthly Fee	
		Mon, Tue & Wed OR Wed, Thur & Fri	5days/wk
Caterpillar	AM: 10:00-12:00 PM: 12:30-14:30	\$4,800	\$5,400
Cocoon	AM: 09:00-12:30 PM: 11:00-14:30	\$5,500	\$6,500
Butterfly	AM: 09:00-12:30		\$6,500
	FD: 09:00-14:30		\$8,800

- Fees are calculated over 12-month period as we are open all year.
- No make-up classes, discounts, or deductions on tuition for bad weather, sick / vacation leave, holidays, or term breaks.
- Cocoon and Butterfly class lunch included.

ADMISSION FEES

School Tour	Free	● For parents only
Application Fee	\$480	● To be paid upon submission of application form
Deposit	\$5000	● <u>The deposit is deductible from the final month's tuition fee provided that the last day of attendance is no less than 12 months from the child's date of commencement and at least one-month withdrawal notice is given</u>

UNIFORM AND OTHERS

Uniform	\$150	Bug Repellent, Sun-screen, Art & Craft Material	\$1000/year
Raincoat	\$150		
Books	\$450		
Hat	\$50		
School Bag	\$180		
Total :	\$980		

- All fees and deposits are non-refundable and payable by bank transfer ONLY.



SATURDAY PARENTING PROGRAMME

The Saturday Parenting Programme is for parents of infants or toddlers to learn how to communicate with their child in a better, more positive way. This session is held in our infant/toddler room, designed for infants and toddlers up to age 18 months.

Filled with natural materials such as wood, mirrors, and objects of different colours, shapes, and textures, this space provides a safe environment for children to carry out sensorial exploration, including by mouthing things they find. They can crawl around safely with minimal supervision as the parents receive advice and methods for positive communication.

Allison, our resident Montessori and Early Childhood expert will be available to observe and offer advice, and address any and all specific issues or questions you might have, as your child plays and explores alongside you in this Montessori inspired enchanting world for infants and toddlers.

Parenting Programme	Time	Age	8 Sessions
	09:00-10:30	6-18mths	\$4,400
	10:30-12:00		

- Make-up classes allowed with notice except in cases of bad weather.
- Each block of 8 Sessions must be completed in 3 months.

ADMISSION FEES

Trial Class	\$300	• At least on a day before the trial date
Application Fee	\$480	• To be paid upon submission of application form
Deposit	\$4400	• To be paid upon submission of application form • The deposit is deductible from the last 8 sessions' tuition fee. **Please note that a 60-day written notice of withdrawal is required for processing.

- All fees are non-refundable and payable by bank transfer ONLY.



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Admission Process

We don't interview children as all students are welcomed at our school. We understand that each child is unique. We do see the parent as a teaching partner in our progressive education and parent involvement is an important part of our process. For this reason, we ask that each parent to attend a school tour to understand our philosophy and approach. If you wish to enrol your child, the application and enrolment fee must be paid within a week your visit to guarantee a place.

Settling-in Period

We understand separation can be a difficult experience for children and parents alike. If separation anxiety is dealt with in accordance with the principles of Attachment Theory, it allows for attachment and separation as a natural process, which enhances security in life.

When the child feels secure internally he can focus on the external world, rather than on his emotions. This allows for a space where the child can learn, work, explore, and develop. If the process is handled inappropriately, separation anxiety can have a negative impact on development, the effect of which could continue on into adulthood. Thus, we aim to make this transition as gentle as possible.

We ask that one parent/caregiver remain with the child for the first 2 weeks. The presence of a familiar adult tends to reduce separation anxiety and children quickly develop a sense of trust with our staff. By observing children in this initial period, parents are able to gain greater insight into our child-centred philosophy and see how we engage the children.

At the end of the 2 weeks, teachers and parents meet to discuss readiness for separation. If the child is still unsettled and it is in their best interest, the settling-in period may be extended. The settling-in period applies to children 2yrs and over. Children under 2yrs must be accompanied by a parent/caregiver.



FOOD AT MULBERRY TREE

When the kids arrive in the morning they are sometimes hungry. We always provide water, fresh homemade bread, hard-boiled egg, and orange. The children prepare their own breakfast or snack and serve themselves when needed.

We enable the children to trust themselves and develop self-confidence by allowing them to follow their own intuition and instincts until lunch. Lunch is a very important part of our day at Mulberry Tree. As with everything we do, eating lunch together is an opportunity for learning. We come together for a nutritious meal with locally grown vegetables that the kids themselves have helped to prepare.

Eating independently fosters a sense of self-worth to better face life's challenges and an intrinsic motivation to learn. Through this experience, we discover how capable children are when given opportunities that promote independence. Below you will see behind the scenes of the food we eat at Mulberry Tree.

MENU

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
GREEN (3-4 different kinds / colors)	CHICKEN & At least 3 kinds of vegetables	Field Trip No lunch	BEEF & At least 3 kinds of vegetables	PORK & At least 3 kinds of vegetables

FOOD SOURCE

Vegetables	4 - Grain Mix	Meat
From a trusted at the market who selects for us only local produce. Herbs and other ingredients come from our garden.	Millet Brown Jasmine Rice Quinoa Jasmine Fragrant Rice	We source our meat from Sadia. It has no added hormones and is a world-wide trusted brand.





To ensure a harmonious lunchtime, we follow 5 simple rules:

1. The kids serve and eat by themselves while parents sit aside, and a facilitator will always be present at the lunch table. If needed, the facilitator will invite the parents to get involved.
2. We ask the children to drink before or after the meal because we know drinking while eating negatively impacts absorption of nutrients, as it dilutes the digestive enzymes that break down food in the stomach.
3. We ask the children to take both the grains and the dish, and only the amount needed. They learn to calculate how much they can eat and be conscious of waste. Servings are unlimited but we eat what we take.
4. We also try to encourage the children to try new things before deciding whether they like it or not. In this way, we ask them to try at least one piece of each different item in today's dish.
5. Have a great lunch experience. Let's learn and have fun together!

At Mulberry Tree we have a healthy lunch experience with a variety of colorful and locally grown vegetables and meat from a trusted source. We make sure the kids have a balanced and nutritious diet while they are with us, and they always have access to food and drink when they feel hungry or thirsty.

If your child has allergies or any specific dietary needs we are happy to accommodate. Lunch with us is always a joyful learning experience.





Weather, Leave, and Holiday Policy

Weather	Leave	Holidays
<p>If typhoon signal 3 or higher hoisted before 9 am, there will be no school that day.</p> <p>If signal hoisted after school is in session, parents should make arrangements to pick up their child ASAP.</p>	<p>Please call the school if your child will be absent for any reason.</p> <p>If your child is absent for the whole month, a monthly holding fee of \$3000 can be charged rather than the normal monthly fee.</p>	<p>School is closed for all public holidays and for 5 Term Breaks: Fall, Winter, Chinese New Year, Spring & Summer.</p> <p>Tuition is calculated per month for the year.</p>

- Sick leave: must provide a doctor's certificate specifying the illness. The child must remain absent for the entirety of the infectious period for any and all infectious diseases. Please see Appendix 13 of Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools / Kindergartens / Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres provided herewith, for information on sick leave duration for common childhood infections. For more information, please visit the website of the Centre for Health Protection (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>).

Withdrawal Policy

We require 30 days prior written notice for weekday programme and 60 days for Saturday programme, if you wish to withdraw your child from our programme. The last month/s's tuition will be deducted from the deposit.



FAQ

Why did **Mulberry Tree** create a unique “**Mulberry Tree Approach**” by combining the Montessori method and Reggio approach?

The Reggio approach and Montessori method share many of the same common beliefs and are both committed to proactive learning and educating all-round developed children. The Reggio approach focuses on learning within a social context whereas the Montessori approach focuses on the carefully prepared learning environment. The combination of the two allows for children to be capable individuals with a sense of autonomy, able to also work within a group and society as a whole.

We need a highly adaptable approach to support our children to be able to thrive in any environment in their own future. That’s why at Mulberry Tree we created our unique approach that combines the best techniques and methods available in education.

How does the “**Mulberry Tree Approach**” work?

At Mulberry Tree we:

- Focus on Key Physical, Emotional, and Cognitive Developmental Stages
- Create a Tailored Learning Environment that is Child-Centred and Mixed-Age: As the environment is our “Third Teacher”, we provide a classroom and curriculum designed around their specific needs and abilities. This allows them to explore and learn at their own pace and on their own terms and encourages mentorship where older children can work with the younger ones. Learning comes as much from peers as it does from the facilitators.
- Facilitate Inquiry-based Learning and Inspire Creativity: Our teachers are guides who facilitate the learning experience, so they are called “Facilitators”. We use invitation and provocation to foster a child’s innate curiosity, support the hundred languages of children for a full expression of inner creative ability, and focus more on the process than the result. Children have rights when it comes to their learning. The child is put at the centre and is treated as a ‘knowledge bearer’ with an emphasis on really listening to the children and giving ample time and space to children to express themselves. They are encouraged to be ‘researchers’. Most of our educational experiences take the form of projects, where children have opportunities to actively participate, explore, and question things.



- Use Positive Discipline to enable Children to develop a Sense of Autonomy: Although our children are respected and given a wide range of choices, which is sometimes considered slightly out of the box and unstructured, there are still boundaries for the classroom that are constantly reinforced. In this way, the children learn to regulate their own emotions and behaviour.
- Create a Sense of Order: Some objects and activities have exact locations on the shelves in the classroom. When children are finished with an activity, they have to place those items in the same place they found them. It creates a sense of order, which has been proven that children thrive in this orderly way. When there is neatness and predictability the children can focus on the process of learning.
- Hands-on Learning and Emergent Curriculum: We focus on hands-on learning based on concrete, rather than abstract concepts. Children are allowed to explore and discover with all five senses in a supportive and rich environment where the children's interests helped determine the curriculum. All the activities they do inspire further learning in various areas of study. They are encouraged to focus on activities until they are mastered. Children are allowed to ask their own questions and discuss problems, which can lead the way for their educational journey. It gives them a sense of ownership over their own learning experience.
- Encourage Cooperative Play: Students learn to respect one another and build a sense of community as well as respect their environment.
- Focus on Relationships between the Children, Parents and Facilitators: Children benefit in being equal partners with parents and facilitators in the learning process. Everyone works together to form a spirit of cooperation and building the knowledge banks of the kids. Social collaboration is also important so that children learn how to work in groups and be part of a team. Parents are actively involved in the child's learning. There is also a very strong emphasis on the social development of children as part of a community and their relationships to other children, their families and facilitators.
- Use Documentation to Make Learning Visible: This helps facilitators assess each child's learning, develop curriculum, and show parents their child's progress. Photos of children's activities, displays of their work and even transcriptions of conversations are displayed around the classroom. Everything is displayed at eye level, so that the children can see their own work and that of others. The environment that they're in is part of the learning process.



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How will my child transition from Mulberry Tree to a more traditional approach either at a local primary school or an international school?

Through the Mulberry Tree approach, children have a strong sense of autonomy which enables them develop into confident adults that can adapt to and excel in any environment.

Although Mulberry Tree is play-based, we have a curriculum and regular assessments to ensure that learning does take place, as we support each child in their optimal development. Our curriculum is emergent and we integrate outdoor play, the arts, and other methods into learning, and thus learning is not limited to academics in the classroom. From the age of 4 our staff will gradually implement assessments according to the standards of the EDB so that by the time your child graduates, they will be best equipped to thrive whether they continue on in the local or international stream.

If outside Mulberry Tree, my child does not encounter the same nurturing environment, do I need to be concerned that they will find it challenging to adapt?

Your child will graduate from Mulberry Tree a confident, multilingual child who can think independently, who can and will stand up their rights or come to you for help if they need to. Our approach will put your child in a better position to handle any social or academic system or obstacle that life presents in their future. Indeed it is better to have a firm foundation at an earlier age when the **child's personality, character, and mental and physical development** are still forming, than none at all, or at a much later age, because it sets the tone for the rest of their life. Your child will be able to adapt to the traditional environment but still know their own mind. He will have a researching mind that will keep on seeking and keep on learning, because here at Mulberry Tree, learning is part of life.

Will my child be proficient in Cantonese, English, and Mandarin?

Although we have a multilingual environment supporting more than three languages, the primary languages of our curriculum are Cantonese, Putonghua, and English. Over time, because of this exposure, our students are truly multilingual in these three primary languages. We are able to achieve this because we give the children many opportunities to listen to and speak in these languages both with the Language Facilitators and their peers.

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What are the Montessori, Reggio, and Waldorf methods?

Method	Montessori	Reggio	Waldorf
Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Founded in 1907 Maria Montessori ● Age: Birth - High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Founded in 1945 Loris Malaguzzi ● Age: Infant - Middle School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Founded in 1919 Rudolf Steiner ● Age: Birth - High School
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child-centred ● Teacher = Guide ● Play = Work ● Academic Focus but the child works at his/her own pace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on being good citizens ● Exploration ● Project-based & emergent curriculum ● Documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play based with routine ● Focus on the arts & outdoors ● No media or electronics ● Anthroposophy
Teaching Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Same teacher for 3 years ● Mixed age ● Children work in different areas according to their interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Same teacher for 3 years ● Children work as a group on activities & projects that interest them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Same teacher thru primary ● Work as a class on activities that develop imagination & creativity
Classroom Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared by teacher who demonstrates & guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared by teacher who collaborates & co-learns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared by students ● Teacher directs
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dancing ● Singing ● Painting ● Sculpture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dancing ● Singing ● Painting ● Sculpture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eurhythmymy (movement art) ● Painting ● Singing
Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Required ● Flex adherence to methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None ● Flex based on locale / culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Required ● Strict adherence to methodology
Parental Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Occasional ● Extracurricular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frequent ● Extracurricular
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independence ● Leadership skills ● Mixed-age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good citizen ● Co-operation ● Conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individualism ● Co-operation ● Creativity ● Routine-based



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