



## Montessori School in Kleinburg Inc.

July 1, 2022

*Dear MSK Parents and Family Members,*

As a trusted and valued part of our community, we are reaching out to provide you with an important update. You may be aware that Ontario announced an agreement with the federal government to lower childcare fees for parents to an average of \$10 per day by September 2025. Under this agreement, licensed early educators can choose to participate in the CWELCC program.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Education provided further clarification about what this agreement would mean for our school community. Upon reviewing this guidance, we have concluded that the Ontario childcare agreement is highly problematic for Montessori schools. Therefore, we have made the difficult but necessary decision that Montessori School in Kleinburg Inc, together with many other Montessori schools, will not be participating in the province's child care agreement but will instead continue to provide a private Montessori and Ministry based educational program.

We know our parents choose our program for a reason. Authentic Montessori schools provide a learning environment based on the Montessori method, filling the gap in traditional education and providing students with a notable skill set.

The Montessori pedagogy was founded on the principle that children, given the freedom to develop at their own pace, and choose areas of study that interest them, become adults able to think creatively and with the self-discipline to be successful. Our integrated curriculum and inquiry-based teaching methods encourage the development of the whole child, building the critical skills necessary for success and happiness in the future. This unique type of education is an important service, though it comes at a cost to provide.

As educators, we believe that joining CWELCC would have serious impacts on families, teachers and our school community. Specifically, participating in the Ontario childcare agreement would:

- Decrease the quality of our education – A Montessori education depends on resources such as high-quality, costly educational materials specific to the Montessori classroom; highly trained Montessori teachers; an environment that encourages learning; and French, music and gym classes to allow our students to explore their creativity and culture. Participating in the Ontario childcare agreement would require our school to spend the same amount of money per student as childcare centres, decreasing our ability to provide the quality of education we proudly offer and are known for.
- Prevent our school from offering a specific curriculum – Montessori learning is based on the idea that every child has individual interests and needs which should be nurtured to maximize their educational experience and early development. Participating in the Ontario childcare agreement would empower government employees who have no understanding of Montessori pedagogy to review and make decisions about our teaching style, curriculum and teachers.
- Decrease wages for our teachers – Montessori teachers are experts in a unique style of teaching and learning and are paid accordingly. The Ontario childcare agreement would provide schools with just \$15 per hour to pay our teachers' salaries. This would make it extremely difficult to retain the staff who are specifically qualified in the Montessori pedagogy.
- Lead us to become financially untenable – The Ontario childcare agreement places stringent financial conditions on educational institutions and childcare providers. Schools that sign up for the agreement are not permitted to pay basic expenses, including property tax and interest on mortgages and loans which many early education providers used to survive during lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care providers are also limited to an inflation rate of just 2.6% in 2022 – despite real inflation reaching 6.8% in April 2022. In addition, the agreement creates an unfair administrative burden where schools are required to negotiate individual expenses with Ministry of Education officials who are not familiar with our schools, students or Montessori teaching methods. In summary, participating in this agreement is not a financially viable business option for us as a Montessori school.

We support the goal of providing affordable childcare, but also believe affordability cannot come at the cost of quality.

Montessori School in Kleinburg call on the government to take action to amend its regulations and put forth a framework for childcare which allows us to continue to provide the top-quality care our children and families deserve.

We will continue to serve families and operate independently to maintain the curriculum, resources and teachers which parents choose to entrust us with their children.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

We sincerely appreciate your understanding and ongoing support.

Thank you,  
Principal Vincenza Marzano-Kooner