



MINDFUL MONTESSORI

By Britney Traina

Mindful Montessori of Old Tappan was founded four years ago by Lina Masri, an experienced Montessori educator who has taught in schools all over the world. “I have always been passionate about the Montessori method of education, and I had a vision of creating my own school; a warm and nurturing environment where each child can reach their full potential,” said Ms. Masri.

Ms. Masri, who holds Montessori certification from the Center for Guided Montessori Studies, as well as a Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education from Montclair State University, started planning for Mindful Montessori during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the school opened its doors to 9 children. The program has grown to 50 children between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years old. Starting with just one large classroom, the school has been completely renovated and now houses three beautifully designed

classrooms. The school also grew from two to nine staff members, and Alexandra Lipov was appointed as the Assistant Director.

“It has been a wonderful journey being part of the Montessori family. I met Lina when she just opened the school in 2021 and my younger son became one of the first nine Montessori students. I believe because of such a nurturing environment and its positive impact on children’s confidence and love of learning, the school was able to grow so quickly. I am forever grateful to have the opportunity to contribute and grow with the rest of the Montessori team,” Ms. Lipov shared.



The school’s foundation room, for students between the ages of 2.5-3.5 years, is where children learn how to socialize, follow directions, and develop emotionally and physically. The second classroom is for children between the ages of 2.5 and 5 years old. The largest classroom is home to children between the ages of 3.5 and 6 years old.

Multi-age classrooms are an essential component of the Montessori approach, developed by Italian physician Maria Montessori over one hundred years ago. Laura Elmini, the first teacher at Mindful Montessori and the current teacher of the primary and kindergarten children, loves the Montessori approach for many reasons. "Not only does the environment foster a child's natural curiosity and independence," she said, "it allows for individualized instruction where each child explores and learns at their own pace. A favorite aspect is the multi-age classroom where older children get the experience of being leaders and role models for the younger children. Those younger children then have the opportunity to step into that role when they get older. It's a beautiful transformation that we get to witness and be a part of each and every day."

The kindergarten program offers a unique blend of academic excellence and hands-on, child-centered learning. "Rooted in the Montessori philosophy, we create an environment where children develop critical thinking, independence, and a love for learning—while mastering foundational academic skills that prepare them for lifelong success," shared Ms. Masri. "The Montessori Method encourages independence, self motivation, and exploration through carefully designed Montessori materials. Visitors to our school are always impressed by the calm and happy atmosphere. Young children love to learn, and we provide them with an enriching and carefully designed environment."

Mindful Montessori currently offers part time and full time programs. The part time hours are 8:45 a.m. to 12:00 or 1:00 p.m., and the full time hours are 8:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Before and After care hours are offered for parents who need extra care. Yoga and soccer are included in the tuition, and parents have the option of enrolling their children for three, four or five days a week. Over the summer, the school offers a seven-week Montessori camp staffed by their own Montessori teachers and assistants. "All lead teachers are Montessori certified and hold Master's degrees. The assistant Montessori teachers have all completed their Montessori assistant training, and all of teachers are CPR certified," Ms. Masri noted. "Our prices are very competitive in comparison to similar local Montessori schools." To learn more about Mindful Montessori, visit www.mindfulmontessori.us, call 201.559.5965, or email Lina@MindfulMontessori.us.



A testimonial from one of the school's founding families:

"We cannot say enough good things about our experience at Mindful Montessori the last 3 years. From the moment we first enrolled, we've seen such a positive impact on our daughter. The teachers are truly one of the highlights—they're so warm, caring, and dedicated. It's clear they see and nurture each child as an individual, and they tailor their approach to support their development in such a thoughtful way. The bond they create with the kids is amazing, and you can tell they genuinely care about their growth, both academically and emotionally.

Our son just started once he turned 2.5 this past January and we are already seeing the same positive impact on him as well. Our children have become more independent, confident, and excited about learning because of the teachers' consistent encouragement and personalized attention. It really feels like a second family, and we're so grateful for the nurturing environment they've created at Mindful Montessori."

Mike and Amber Cibischino, Mindful Montessori parents since September 2022

